

D&D
ADVENTURERS
LEAGUE



LINKS CON 2017



CHAMPION OF THE PEOPLE

A persistent ghost has been spotted in Phlan, flitting from building to building. The residents say that it stands in front of the Laughing Goblin every night, eyes wide and full of terror. If approached, it screams and disappears. In the wake of the town's re-opening and the retreat of the thick winter fogs, peace must be returned before people leave for good. A D&D Adventurer's League adventure set in the town of Phlan.

A 4-hour Adventure for 5th – 10th Level Characters

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Introduction

Welcome to *Champion of the People*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system. This adventure takes place after the events of *DDEP4 Reclamation of Phlan*.

This adventure is designed for 5th through 10th level characters, and is optimized for five 9th-level characters. Characters outside this level ranges cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure takes place in the town of Phlan. Knowledge of the events of the *Tyranny of Dragons* adventures (DDEX01 series), specifically DDEX01-10 *Tyranny in Phlan* is helpful for both the player and the Dungeon Master.

The D&D Adventurers League

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their story.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a DCI number. This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the D&D Adventurers League home at:

<http://www.dndadventurersleague.org/>

Preparing the Adventure

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the *D&D Basic Rules* or the *Player's Handbook*.
- 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.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

Before Play at the Table

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players with ineligible characters can make a new 1st-level character or use a pregenerated character. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character.

Ensure that each player has an official adventure logsheet for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player fills out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for experience, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she fill in the other values and write notes at the

conclusion of the session. 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 Player's 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. Alternatively, 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 the Adventure

Throughout this adventure, sidebars provide information to assist you in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups and characters of higher or lower levels than the adventure is optimized for. This is typically used exclusively for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five characters of level 9**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters.
- Divide the total by the number of characters.
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down.

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

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

Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

Running the Adventure

As the Dungeon Master of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. Doing so is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating one. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.

- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since 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. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. Doing so helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide*™ has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

Downtime and Lifestyle

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the D&D basic rules or the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

Spellcasting Services

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services. Alternatively, if the party finishes an adventure, the characters can be assumed to return to the settlement closest to the adventure location.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. An organization providing spellcasting services can provide no more than **three spells per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

Spellcasting Services

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

Spellcasting Services

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds (1st level)</i>	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing (2nd level)</i>	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp
<i>Resurrection*</i>	3,000 gp
<i>True Resurrection*</i>	50,000 gp

*These spells require an additional expenditure of downtime days (150 for resurrection and 350 for true resurrection). This cost can be reduced by 50 days for each faction rank above 1 that the character possesses. This downtime is spent in community service for the church that provided the spell in question. The Acolyte Background feature does NOT reduce the gp or downtime cost for either of these spells.

Acolyte Background

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

The only active temple in Phlan now is dedicated to **Kelemvor**. As such, only acolytes that worship **Kelemvor** are eligible to receive the benefit of this background in this adventure.

Character Disease, Death, and Recovery

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or are killed. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

Disease, Poison, and Other Debilitating Effects

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the *D&D Basic Rules*).

If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

Death

A character who is killed during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player

would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. Faction Charity is not available in this adventure, as the Faction Charity only affects characters of levels 1 to 4.

Background

Phlan has undergone many periods of unrest over the last several decades, and the most recent three years have been no exception. The city was central to the pursuit of the Pool of Radiance by a bloated, villainous green dragon, it was attacked directly by that same dragon, found itself covered in a dense canopy of briars, was smothered by thick, chilling, otherworldly fogs and mists, and was overrun with undead. Brave adventures have stood against these threats every time, and for a few weeks things seemed to be on the mend.

Calypso, the new tiefling regent of Phlan, has taken it upon herself to breathe new life into trade and tourism during the town's rebuilding efforts. Many of the citizens have moved back, and things seem to be progressing – but in the last few days, more and more ghosts have been showing up. Some are aggressive, while some seem to simply “passing through”.

There is some concern that the increased ghostly activity is due to outside influence, though Calypso and her forces are unlikely to admit that yet another threat is now pressing upon Phlan...

Overview

The characters find themselves in The Laughing Goblin, a common watering hole for adventures, sailors, and locals alike. As they mingle and relax, they are surprised with an impromptu show by a famous bard – “Rooster” Cinderelm.

Unfortunately, adventurers rarely receive positive surprises. Ghosts sweep through the tavern and possess a number of the patrons, leaving the heroes to defend the spellbound crowd (Rooster is a very talented bard). Once the threat is resolved, they

learn that not is as it seems, as Rooster tells them of some strange people that he has met in Phlan.

During the investigation, the characters are menaced by a powerful zombie. This zombie is the corpse of “Far” Markoth, a known person from Phlan that perished during the recent dragon attacks and resultant liberation of the city. Putting this creature to rest may or may not be a priority for the characters, depending upon their decisions and history in this region.

Once the main suspects – the people that Rooster met with – have been questioned, the characters should have enough information to piece together what is happening and why the ghosts are menacing the town. They take this information to the town guard and may call out the villain – or if they’re wrong, they may falsely accuse someone instead!

Dungeon Master Insight

This adventure features a significant number of incorporeal undead (and a pesky returning zombie). It is important that the players do not feel entirely overshadowed, but instead feel harried and pressed to find results.

In most of the combat encounters, the ghosts have possessed specific hosts. They do not abandon those hosts unless absolutely necessary, so the characters must decide if they are going to kill their opponents or merely render them unconscious. If they utilize a method that forces the ghost to abandon its possessed host, it is entirely likely that the former host is now incredibly confused as to why adventurers are attacking them and will fight back as best they are able.

Be sure to drive home the concept of consequences for the characters’ actions. Leaving a trail of dead bodies is unlikely to win favors with the new leadership in Phlan.

Adventure Hooks

This adventure does not require many specific story hooks and can easily be inserted into other long-running adventures:

Characters that participated in DDEP4

Reclamation of Phlan: Characters that participated in DDEP4 are known as heroes of the town. The new regent, Calypso, sends for them saying that there is a new undead menace that has begun to show its face in Phlan, and that she will meet with them in the morning. She has arranged for them to have free room and board in The Laughing Goblin for their first night.

Faction duties: Phlan has been receiving a lot of external aid now that the dragon Vorgansharax has been driven out, and they’ve even gone so far as to elect a tiefling regent named Calypso to lead the municipal affairs. The factions are keenly interested

in gauging Calypso’s ability to effectively bring Phlan in-line with the other cities around the Moonsea. The faction heads have arranged for the characters to have a pre-paid night at The Laughing Goblin so that they might prepare to investigate Calypso’s abilities.

Already in Phlan: The characters are here in Phlan due to whatever reason – though this is likely due to them recently finishing another adventure. They have camped out The Laughing Goblin to shake off the dust of the road and to relax their weary limbs. This adventure picks up very easily after their previous efforts – or perhaps even in the midst of another adventure!

Part 1. Fest Hall Facts

Expected Duration: 45 minutes

This adventure takes place entirely within the town of Phlan. If the characters wish to depart the town for some reason, they certainly may - but there is no guidance in this adventure for those events.

DM Suggestion – Story and Dice

As a roleplay- and investigation-focused adventure, it is strongly encouraged for you to roll certain skill checks and saving throws for the characters. This may not be an ideal arrangement for some players, though, but making those rolls for them can help build a stronger sense of “who done it?” Allowing the players to roll their own dice will likely lead a less-immersive, shorter game but the choice is ultimately yours – you know your talents and should trust them!

Suggested skills and saving throws:

- **Saves.** Wisdom
- **Skill Checks.** Insight, Investigation, Perception, Sleight of Hand, Stealth

It Always Starts in a Tavern

The Laughing Goblin, once a run-down and battered old tavern on the docks of Phlan, has been repaired and greatly improved by the Welcomers – the local thieves guild, but don’t call them that! – and the coin donated by those giving tribute at the memorial locally termed “Hero’s Rest”. By no means is this place a “high end” facility, but it finally sports clean mugs, polished flatware, and arguably cleaner tables.

The Hero’s Rest memorial is located outside the doors of the Laughing Goblin, and serves as a marker for the heroism of one “Fat” Markoth, Protector of the Goblin and Savior of Phlan. A brass plaque stamped into the base of the statue of the rotund, flexing man declares that “Fat” Markoth was responsible for motivating the adventures that helped drive out the dragon, but without his ferocious charge and leadership qualities all the liberations efforts would have been for naught. Flowery language aside, characters that participated in DDEX01-10 *Tyranny in Phlan* likely remember Markoth’s actions very differently.

The adventure picks up at the end of a very long day for the characters, and it is assumed that they are either fresh off their most recent assignment

(adventure) or have only recently arrived in Phlan. The sun has already gone down, and the Laughing Goblin is bustling with activity, full of sailors and serving staff alike.

The chill winter and unearthly fogs have finally retreated from Phlan, and trade is beginning to return to the beleaguered port town. Calypso, the new regent, has worked diligently to broker new deals with ships as well as the other cities around the Moonsea. Even so, the Laughing Goblin continues to be one of the town’s focal points for new arrivals. Rumor even has it that Calypso has been cracking down on rampant violence, even going so far as to present aggressors with bills for funerary expenses.

It may be run down and stink of fish, but it’s homey and they don’t ask a lot of questions. And it helps that the food and drink is cheap.

As the characters begin to relax after a hard day of adventuring, training, or traveling they can listen in on other conversations taking place around the bar. There is plenty of chatter; feel free to roleplay through the following points if time allows:

- Calypso, the new regent, is a tiefling and has garnered a reputation for being stern and direct on town matters
- Calypso has introduced a new town law: anyone determined to be guilty of murder (or violence leading to death) is required to pay the funeral expenses of that person. This money in turn pays the victim’s family, with a portion of it going towards town improvement and repair efforts
- The fall of the dragon during the long winter may have driven out the dragon cultists, but other mercenaries took their place
- The port tariffs are steep but mostly fair; the people are returning to the town and the inbound goods are mostly food, clothing, and other necessities
- Word is, there are lingering spirits of the restless dead around the city. This may be due to the damage caused to Valinghen Graveyard and the near-absence of the Kelemvorite clergy; at any rate, they are sightings only but it’s only a matter of time before one attacks a helpless citizen.
- The monument outside the Laughing Goblin is dedicated to Markoth, one of the heroes of the assault on Phlan, who selflessly defended the tavern so that others might escape and survive.
- “Rooster” Cinderelm, an elf bard, is performing here in the Laughing Goblin tonight. This is the

cause of much excitement, as he typically only performs in more expensive venues.

Interactive History

Several of the above points are shaped by the decisions and actions of characters throughout Adventurers League history. Characters that played through these adventures automatically know the following points, but you could add in these points on a DC 14 Intelligence (History) check:

- **Calypso.** Calypso is a tiefling character that was elected to the post of Regent of Phlan by the attendees of Winter Fantasy 2017. This was done with the cooperation of the D&D AL administrative team. The events leading up to her election can be found in the CCC-BMG-PHLAN1 series; as a player character she does not exist in that series. This character is now part of the Moonsea's roster of NPCs and has since been retired from direct play.
- **Fall of the Dragon & Valinghen Graveyard.** These events were set up in DDEX1-10 *Tyranny in Phlan* and were later resolved in DDEP4 *Reclamation of Phlan*. The lead cleric of Kelemvor in Phlan was turned into a vampire and ultimately escaped when a character turned over the stake of the Gilneas Tree, the only weapon known to be able to defeat him.
- **Monument.** During the events of DDEX1-10 *Tyranny in Phlan*, "Fat" Markoth did indeed die outside of the Laughing Goblin after charging into battle. However, in truth he was not a trained fighter and fell almost immediately. His actions inspired a group of heroes to fight back. Later, a monument was erected in his honor and dubbed "Hero's Rest".

Eventually the din of the tavern dies down as the lights are brought low. A brightly-dressed elf steps out on the small stage as several magical, dancing lights materialize around him. He takes a long draw of his draught, and addresses the crowd:

"Are you ready... are you *ready*... to CELEBRATE?"

He takes a moment and runs his fingers along the strings of his hand-held harp, which has seemingly appeared from out of nowhere. The notes are rich and a hush falls across the room.

For the next several minutes the bard regales the assembled crowd with tales of vicious battles between the guards of Phlan and the massive dragon Vorgansharax; characters that were present for the events of DDEP4 *Reclamation of Phlan* recognize the events as being spot-on, first-hand accounts of the battle though they do not recall Rooster being

present on that day. This would be a great opportunity for the other characters at the table to share their knowledge, or you can summarize as follows:

- The Maimed Virulence, Vorgansharax, was a tremendously large green dragon with a damaged wing took Phlan by surprise with the aid of the Cult of the Dragon.
- After the initial attack, a heavy winter moved into the town. For the first time in decades (or longer!), the Moonsea froze solid for many miles around Phlan.
- The dragon caused a great tangle of briars to grow above and around the town of Phlan. This served as a shield against the elements, but also helped the dragon protect its new borders.
- The citizens that fought back were killed in most cases, though a few were exiled. Very few exiles were heard from again.
- A thick fog rolled in, and with it came a tremendous number of undead horrors. Zombies, skeletons, and even a few vampires began to attack the residents of Phlan.
- Heroes from all around the Moonsea gathered and launched an attack under the cover of a thick winter fog. They came from the south, across the sheet of ice and struck forcefully, eventually winning a hard-fought victory.
- This victory was not complete, however; the vampire of Valinghen Graveyard managed to escape once a charmed adventurer surrendered the only weapon known to be able to injure him – a stake made of the Gulthias Tree.
- Once the dragon fell, the vampire fled the town. Winter has finally broken, the briar patch has collapsed and has since been cleared, and spring is here – heralding a new beginning for the port town.

Despite the heavy content in the song, Rooster manages to keep the tone upbeat and lively and even convinces most of the crowd to sing along at times. When the song winds down, he tells the crowd that he needs a moment to catch his breath.

The bard's eye-searingly bright clothes make it impossible for him to hide. He makes his way across the tavern with great dexterity, speaks a few words to the bartender, and returns to the stage. Rooster again addresses the crowd:

"Friends! We are gathered here today to celebrate the break of winter and the return of spring to this beautiful town! Growth and good life to you all!"

He sips from a newly-delivered steaming mug of mulled cider. His eyes sparkle as he begins another melody, this time about the perseverance of the people of the North.

This time the notes are more forceful and he uses a lower vocal register, but the tune is no less entrancing. The crowd is pleased to be so highly regarded and are fully in-sync with the bard.

If the characters succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check, they can begin to tell that something is off. The assembled people are ignoring everything around them save for the bard; their attention is rapt and focused. Characters that hail from exceedingly hot backgrounds (such as Chult, or a character whose chose fire genasi for their race), wizards with the specialty of necromancy, and characters that worship Kelemvor have advantage on this check, as the temperature in the room drops by several degrees.

Those that succeed on the Insight check may immediately attempt a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot some ethereal shapes moving among the crowd. These shapes are three **ghosts** entering the bodies nearby; succeeding on the Perception check prevents the character from being surprised in the coming combat.

Any character that succeed on the Insight check but fail the Perception check are not surprised and may act normally. Any character that failed the Insight check must make a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or else be incapacitated by the bard's song until they take damage or one minute has elapsed after the bard's song has stopped.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak or weak party:** no adjustments
- **Strong party or very strong party:** add one **ghost** (not possessing anyone at start of combat)

This encounter is further complicated by the spellbound attendees. They are conscious but unresponsive – treat them as helpless (AC 8; all melee attacks automatically hit and are

treated as critical hits; 14 hp). Until the ghosts are dealt with and Rooster's song is stopped, they cannot move from their spaces. The attendees are indicated with 'X' marks on the map.

If the characters are very combat-oriented, consider adding more attendees to the map. This can cause the characters to rethink their standard tactics and can also hamper line of sight, as the attendees are neither allies nor enemies.

Be sure to record how many attendees are killed – the characters may be penalized at the end! Each innocent attendee has a funeral cost of 100 gp.

Tactics

The **ghosts** have entered the bodies of three people in the crowd: one half-orc **champion** and two halfling **master thieves**. They have used their possession ability, and if they are forced out (or if their mortal shells are defeated), they flee into the ethereal plane and escape through the floor.

The ghosts are smart enough to avoid the other assembled patrons of the Laughing Goblin, and take full advantage of the halfling's small size to nimbly move through occupied spaces and take cover beneath tables where possible. In the half-orc body, the ghost seeks to cause as much damage as possible. If the patrons are injured (use the commoner stats), they have an even chance of fleeing, aiding the ghosts, or aiding the characters; they cannot see the ghosts.

Through it all, the bard plays a frenzied tune from his space under the stairs. If the characters attempt to attack him from with ranged weapon attacks, he deftly deflects their missiles. If targeted with spells, he uses *counterspell* as a reaction (up to three times), and if hit with a melee weapon attack a misty form exits his body and escapes through the floor leaving him dazed and confused. If the ghosts and their mortal shells are defeated and the characters have not yet interacted with the bard, he simply cackles as his ghostly form escapes through floor before he can be targeted by an attack. If Rooster's mist moves to escape or flee, it does not provoke attacks of opportunity (even to those with feats or spells that might otherwise negate this benefit). Beyond this, Rooster is a noncombatant.

Once the characters learn that the people are possessed or otherwise entranced, they should be encouraged to refrain from killing the attendees.

At the end of the second round the front doors crash open and an obese **greater zombie** enters the space – this is the corpse of "Fat" Markoth. The characters may recognize him from previous interactions or even from the songs that Rooster has

performed (Insight DC 14). This undead beast targets the characters, and if reduced to 0 hit points collapses into a pile of foul-smelling table scraps and foul liquid (this is not typical for zombies, and characters should recognize this immediately).

Development

After combat has concluded, the characters can learn the following:

- Rooster and the other formerly-possessed patrons do not recall the moment that the ghosts entered their bodies, but they remember the actions they took while possessed.
- The thieves and champion are sailors and remember passing through a very cold zone surrounding the Hero's Rest monument outside the Laughing Goblin, though they simply believe this to be part of the spring evening and nothing significant. Their port has just arrived just today from Hillsfar.
- Rooster has been cold all day. He can recall meeting with some potential benefactors, including a deeply-robed wizard named Marigold Butterleaf, a dwarf merchant named Regis Brightgem, and a human druid named Bitter-Blossom. All three of these people live in Phlan and Rooster can provide directions to each.
- The remaining patrons flee in terror from the Laughing Goblin as soon as they regain their faculties.

Rooster Cinderelm is shocked by what happened, though on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check (NOTE: you should roll this secretly) the characters notice that he has some questionable belongings jutting from his pack, including a disguise kit and a pouch of rations that smells like fragrant, perfumed mushrooms. The characters may find this strange or not, allow them to play this out. Regardless, he is honestly impressed with the abilities of the characters and shakes their hands and claps their shoulders while showing his appreciation.

Once the characters have had a few moments with the bodies (and possibly speak with Rooster about his pack), they can follow up on the given leads. Additionally, the owner of the Laughing Goblin addresses the characters:

"Markoth's chins! I can't do anything without you adventuring types getting in the way! Go-go-go-go-go!"

She ushers you outside as quickly as possible, complaining loudly about needed to repair her tavern yet again due to "those meddling adventurers".

Once outside, she adds the following:

- She is tired of adventurers and rowdy sailors destroying her furniture and damaging her bar.
- She says that she has to close for the next several days now that everyone has fled the Laughing Goblin and caused much damage in the process, and she will have to have yet another massive discount sale to recoup her losses.

Rooster has taken this opportunity to disappear into Phlan and away from the characters. He has not left any sign of his passage on the cobblestones.

Hero's Rest

Outside of the Laughing Goblin, some twenty-five paces away is an obelisk-shaped monument. It is large, fifteen feet tall and five feet thick at the base, and it has a copper plaque embedded on the side facing the door of the tavern that reads:

*Markoth
Our larger-than-life hero
May his boldness last forever
And his strength be unyielding*

Above plaque, etched into the stone, is a finely detailed carving of a rotund man with large, broad shoulders carrying a tray of drinks.

Characters that played any of the season 1 adventures (DDEX01-xx, also known as the *Tyranny of Dragons* season) are likely aware of "Fat" Markoth and his role as the head server and attendant of the Laughing Goblin. That the citizens of Phlan erected a monument to him is flattering, as he has a special place in the memories of Phlan's long-time residents.

Below the plaque is a curious mark on the stone. It looks like the condensation ring that a sweaty mug might leave on a tabletop, and measures about 4 inches across. Characters with a passive Perception of 16 or above can plainly see an identical mark on the exposed flesh of one or more characters (anyone that Rooster touched). A *remove curse* spell will

remove the mark from a character's flesh, as will death.

Once the characters have had a moment to observe the statue, they catch a glimpse of a ghostly figure nearby, heaving with sobs. This ghost, unlike those in the tavern, has a large, soft shape and mostly undefined features. Once the characters notice him, he looses a soul-wrenching howl of despair and disappears into the wind.

Treasure

The ghosts and their mortal shells have no treasure. If anything, the characters likely spent money (or donated it to the Laughing Goblin) in this part of the adventure.

Advancing the Adventure

The characters have a number of leads to follow up on: the wizard, the dwarf merchant, or the human druid. Of course, they could also turn in for the night if they so choose; in doing so, they would have to find another inn and would likely be harassed by undead until they resolve the investigation.

Advance to Part 2: The Investigation.

Part 2. Investigation

Expected Duration: 30 - 45 minutes for each investigation site

The following investigation events assume that the characters are simply walking into each business without subterfuge. If the characters attempt to use the cover of night, invisibility spells, and so on feel free to adjust as-needed. There is basic guidance to account for these decisions but some creative storytelling may be needed if your players think outside the box!

Investigation Flow

The characters should have the opportunity to interact once with each of the potential suspects: Marigold Butterleaf, Regis Brightgem, and Bitter-Blossom. Each conversation may bring more information to light about people the characters have already spoken with; this is covered in the next part.

As the characters travel to each investigation site, they may run across a fat, shambling corpse. When starting each scene or when indicated roll a die: on an even number, nothing additional happens; on an odd number, though, the animated corpse of “Fat” Markoth (a **greater zombie!**) arrives with an initiative of 17 and an entourage of three **ghosts**. He always has full hit points when starting each encounter, and at the end of the third round of combat or if the characters manage to reduce his hit points to 0 he dissolves into a foul-smelling pile of table scraps and watered-down liquor (similar to the effect that a vampire uses when turning into mist). This combat takes place on the street outside of the business and does not include the NPC. It is strongly encouraged that the characters have this encounter on their way to the first or second investigation, and definitely before the third (though this is DM discretion; use your time and the ability of the players wisely).

Once all three investigations have been completed and the characters have encountered Markoth’s zombie at least once, proceed to the **G-G-G-GHOSTS!** section.

Themes & “Feel”

There are many “campy” moments in the following encounters. The adventure works best if you play into them – this will encourage the players to stay involved in the events and story, and will help them

to build connections into the story. Don’t take the story too seriously, and be ready to roll with the proverbial punches that the players give you!

Furthermore, there are references to other events in the D&D Adventurers League catalog. Some people (such as SEER and her former ally Bitter-Root from [DDAL05-08 Durlag’s Tower](#)) are referenced but it is not important to know their full history in order to deliver a powerful experience in this adventure. Their inclusion is merely an easter egg – a hidden surprise – for deeply invested players.

Maps

The focus of the adventure from here out is the investigation. As such, no tactical maps are provided. If you need to create maps for your players, using 10- and 15-foot wide alleys, 25-foot roads lines with closed businesses, or even a densely packed plaza (using methods similar to the Laughing Goblin encounter) would work really well.

In short, you know your players and you are strongly encouraged to tailor the game to their desires!

Running an Effective Investigation

This section is very open for the characters. They should feel that the town is available and “alive”. If the characters get silly, don’t be shy about playing along – much of what happens is a mix of farce and scare tactics. With luck and intrepid inspection, they may even discover who has animated Fat Mar’s corpse!

Some things to consider when working with very crafty characters and players:

- what will a potential *legend lore* spell reveal?
- what if the characters have contacts within the Welcomers?
- Consider moving one or more clues about Rooster to a ‘note’ or similar piece of physical evidence if your table is very combat-oriented
- what if one of the characters is a necromancer and attempts to control Markoth?
- what if one of the characters attempts to turn Markoth?
- What if a character consumes spiritroot?

Prepare for these contingencies and be ready to keep the action light and lively. The intention is to use scare tactics, not to decimate the characters!

It is immaterial what order these encounters take place in, but once an NPC has been interacted with or interviewed, they leave the area and go about their business (and cannot be found again until the end of the adventure).

The locations of each of the persons of interest has been indicated on the map of Phlan. "G" is the Laughing Goblin.

Marigold Butterleaf and the House of Gentle Necromancy

Mapping

Marigold is located at location "M" on the map of Phlan.

Marigold Butterleaf is a rotund female human with a sallow complexion. Her voice is still chipper and she exudes a palpable positivity, and seeks to instill this positivity in those around here. Because of this mindset, the residents of Phlan have come to accept her – even with her strange choice of occupation.

Marigold – "Mari" to her friends, which she says is pretty much everyone – firmly believes in the positive qualities of necromancy. She will resurrect beloved family pets and preservation spells on them so that children do not have to be parted from their trusted friends and protectors, and can, for an appropriate fee, raise a number of corpses (humanoids and beasts of burden) for farmers outside of the town.

Mari has the following to offer if the characters ask:

- **"Do you know Rooster Cinderelm?"** *Oh yes, I know him. He stopped by today so that we could discuss my sponsorship of his next tour. (she then proceeds to discuss at-length the benefits of 'gentle necromancy' and its positive cultural impacts)*
- **"Have you heard about the sobbing ghost outside of the Laughing Goblin?"** *They say that the spirit of Markoth – "Fat" Markoth to those that did not know or respect him – lurks outside of that monument, and bemoans the state of his beloved town and tavern. He only comes out at night, and only a few people have seen him. Curiously, he has not been aggressive.*
- **"Have you heard anything about Markoth being a zombie?"** *Vile! Vile abominations! Family members should never be raised in their suits! Zombies are the work of lazy necromancers, and they give us all a bad name. Did he hurt you?*
- **"Have you noticed an increase in the number of ghosts around Phlan?"** *Yes, indeed! Those spirits are just looking for a little home to escape to. With the Doomguides gone – you know, the clerics of Kelemvore – they're just so lost. I help where I can, but I can't catch them all.*

- **"What about other types of undead?"** *Well, there are more zombies lurking around but the city guard have eliminated most of them. Zombies just need some guidance, they're only as evil and misguided as their creators. I feel especially bad for the ones that can't get out of the harbor – they'll probably be there forever at this rate.*
- **"What can you tell me about Regis Brightgem?"** *Regis is an adorable dwarf, and he'll be quick to tell you that he's not "that" Regis. But he's an opportunist, for sure, and he deals in objects that have questionable histories. More often than not the previous owners aren't available, but he does not source any of his goods from Phlan so we tend to leave him to his own devices.*
- **"What can you tell me about Bitter-Blossom?"** *Bitter-Blossom is a curious druid, indeed. She's not been quite as bubbly since her sister disappeared but she's good people anyhow. I raised a rabbit companion of hers once. She was pleased so it was a win all around!*
- (if the characters have already visited Bitter-Blossom and learned about the spiritroot) **"What can you tell me about spiritroot?"** *That herb is contraband in Phlan. Bitter-Blossom asked for some, and I sometimes find little bits of it here and there. It is exceptionally potent and can tether your lifeforce to the spirit world for a time. Be careful, though; touching it often leaves an indelible mark upon your flesh, and this mark acts as a beacon for the restless dead.*
- (if the characters have located the mark on their bodies) **"What can you tell me about this mark?"** *That's it! That's the mark that spiritroot leaves upon your flesh. I urge you to be wary, for the dead cannot be far off. Should the worst come to pass, might I take possession of your corpses? I can think of a number of docks and farmsteads that would benefit from your strong backs. Truly, the people would appreciate it!*

She appears sincere in her desire to be helpful for the characters, and a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check confirms this. If a character exceeds this check by 5 or more and also asked about her thoughts on Regis, they can tell that there is some friction there. If pressed on this, Marigold explains:

"I don't mean any ill will here, but between us I think that Regis spends a little too much time sourcing things from expired adventurers and visiting mages. You know, wizards that wear a certain kind of reddish robe?" she winks as she finishes.

“He’s fine enough, but he’s got something to hide. I strive to see the best in people, but he just rubs me the wrong way.”

If the characters press Marigold about the curious nature of Markoth’s zombie (that it collapses into table-scrap and watered-down liquor instead of a corpse when defeated), she says:

“It certainly sounds like there is an enchantment upon him. Why him specifically, I cannot say – but that is not normal behavior for one of the shambling dead. Whomever animated the poor server’s remains should have at least had the decency to let him be properly defeated.

That must be frustrating for everyone. My condolences.”

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this investigation encounter. This is not intended as a combat encounter, and provides no combat experience.

- **The characters are invisible or break in.** Marigold is a talented wizard and has secured her business with permanent alarm spells. The windows are secured (sleight of hand DC 16) with strong locks, and if unlocked by any means the alarm is triggered – she is mentally notified. As a fairly well-off member of the community, she summons 2d6 **guards** before confronting the characters.
- **The characters threaten Marigold.** Although she is quite chipper, she does not take threats lightly. She is treated as an **archmage**, and is accompanied by four invisible assistants. She gently encourages the characters to stand down, drink some tea, and rethink their approach before any combat begins.
- **Marigold is killed by the characters.** If the characters kill Marigold, they may find it difficult to successfully complete the adventure. However, they may be able to frame her for the events – be ready to adjust the Conclusion section!

Treasure

If the characters peacefully interact with Marigold, she hands them a *scroll of protection (undead)*. She says that everyone should be protected and ready for even the best intentions to misinterpreted sometimes; she asks the characters to lure the undead out of Phlan so that she can assume control of them if possible.

Moving On...

If the characters have not yet met with Regis or Bitter-Blossom, this would be an ideal time to do so.

If this was the final investigation site, proceed to **G-G-G-GHOSTS!**

Regis Brightgem, Lightly Used Goods

Mapping

Regis is located at location “R” on the map of Phlan.

Regis is tall for a dwarf at a little over four feet. He smells strongly of old, wet tobacco leaves and has just about as many teeth as he has fingers. He is a dour figure, preferring to dress in blacks and greys and has a tangled, greasy mat of hair that looks like one big, nasty comb-over. His shop is tiny but stuffed full of used equipment and gear, from scroll cases to weapons and suits of armor. He makes no secret about his Zhentarim affiliations. He resents his name for several reasons, not the least among them being that a halfling hero from decades past also had this name.

Regis has the following to offer if the characters ask:

- **“Do you know Rooster Cinderelm?”** *That snooty bard came sniffing around for a magical harp earlier today. Said he heard I acquired one from a Waterdhavian noble awhile back, some specific piece made from maple and platinum. Asked too many questions and didn’t seem right, so I told him to hit the road. Said he was creating some interactive masterpiece here in Phlan. Kept trying to shake my hand; the guy makes my skin crawl, to be honest.*
- **“Are you related to...”** *I’m not that Regis, no. That’s my great-uncle, six times removed on my mother’s side. He ran around with that dark elf for awhile and really has his own legacy. Also, if you believe that I’m related to a halfling, I have a summer home in Thay to sell you.*
- **“Have you heard about the sobbing ghost outside of the Laughing Goblin?”** *I’ve heard of moaning ghosts and screaming ghosts, but sobbing? That’s pretty weak.*
- **“Have you heard anything about Markoth being a zombie?”** *I knew Fat Mar. He didn’t have much motivation, and I don’t think that he possesses the motivation to be a zombie. Too much work and not enough ale for him, trust me.*
- **“Have you noticed an increase in the number of ghosts around Phlan?”** *I... guess? I don’t know. I’ve been around Phlan most of my life but don’t take much notice of weird magic stuff.*

- **“What about other types of undead?”** *I don’t think I’m your guy for this type of inquiry. I deal with items, not things that don’t understand how to stay dead.*
- **“What do you sell here?”** *I’m a big fan of fewer questions and more solutions. You tell me want a shiny new mace with emeralds in the haft, I’m your halfling. Just give me a few days, maybe a tenday. Don’t ruffle my feathers and I won’t keep strict records, is what I’m sayin’.*
- **“What can you tell me about Marigold Butterleaf?”** *Anyone that is that chipper has something to hide. Or something to sell. Either way, I’d steer clear of her. The locals say that she’s into ‘gentle necromancy’ and that she’s trying to promote the restless dead as a positive thing... y’ask me, she’s about as nutty as a walnut tree.*
- **“What can you tell me about Bitter-Blossom?”** *I don’t deal with her very often any more. We worked together once, long ago, on a project that was... let’s just say ‘delicate’. Her sister disappeared not long after that and she went from a happy-go-lucky earthy druid-type to seeking answers in a bottle or poultice. She’s talented, but has walled herself up. Gotta accept the past, y’know?*
- (if the characters have already visited Bitter-Blossom and learned about the spiritroot) **“What can you tell me about spiritroot?”** *Stay away from that stuff. They say that once you use it, you’re changed. Marked. Some mage-friends of mine – we go way back – harvested some once, said they couldn’t shake the ghosts and other undead for weeks.*
- (if the characters have located the mark on their bodies) **“What can you tell me about this mark?”** *Yeah, I’ve seen that before. The goofy bard had a similar mark on his hand earlier today. That like a family mark or something?*
- If the characters have not yet located the mark on their bodies, Regis points it out and gives the above information.

Regis, for all his bile, does not seek to hide information from the characters; this can be confirmed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check. If a character exceeds this check by 5 or more and also asked about his thoughts on Bitter-Blossom, they can tell that there is some friction there. If pressed on this, Regis explains:

“Look, we worked together for some Lords’ Alliance stuff way back when. Me, ‘Blossom, her sister ‘Root, and some kooky elf mage by the name of Fulton Stormweather. Our patron, this really intense Shou woman, wanted discretion but this was a couple years back...

We were to infiltrate a Zhentarim trade caravan headed east to Hulburg. Along the way we were supposed to grab an amulet and a spellbook and leave some fakes in their place, but the job went sideways. Turns out that the caravan was moving some Red Wizard of Thay and his entourage.

Bitter-Root snagged the necklace before taking a nasty spell to the face. She disappeared with a pop and we didn’t see her again after that. ‘Blossom searched for her for awhile but never found her, so she returned here and has just been playing at being alive ever since.

It’s a shame, really.”

The characters may decide that Regis feels bad for Bitter-Blossom, and they would be correct. ‘Blossom has been unable to find her sister and Regis has been watching her tumble further and further into depression and sadness. If pressed, he reveals that he sometimes delivers food and other goods to her shop by courier but will under no circumstances allow her to discover that he has been sending her these gifts. If the characters ask about Fulton Stormweather, he shakes his head and says that he knows nothing further.

If the characters ask him about his relationship with “Fat” Markoth, Regis can add the following:

“Fat Mar was a good-for-nothing, gossiping lout. He would sometimes tell stories about how his father was some wartime hero from Cormyr, but he was just a server. Couldn’t take a joke, couldn’t serve food and drink on-time, and couldn’t keep himself from smelling like a demon rolled in dragon offal. He spent way more time grumbling about watermarks on the tables than he did actually putting food and drink on them.

He’s better off dead, if you ask me. He wouldn’t have survived the occupation of the city.”

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this investigation encounter. This is not intended as a combat encounter, and provides no combat experience.

- **The characters are invisible or break in.** Regis’ shop is full of “stuff”. The characters can root around for an hour or so before finding his ledger; in it is a record of Rooster coming

to the shop asking about a ‘special harp’ with a note in the margin about ‘tapping suppliers’.

- **The characters threaten Regis.** Regis smiles broadly, displaying the remains of his teeth like a badge of honor. “Pleeeeee, I’ve been threatened by bigger, meaner things than you.” He cannot be intimidated and is immune to fear.
- **Regis is killed by the characters.** If the characters kill Regis, they may find it difficult to successfully complete the adventure. However, they may be able to frame him for the events – be ready to adjust the Conclusion section!

Treasure

If the characters interact with Regis peacefully, he is willing to sell them up to 2 potions of greater healing for 225 gp each. If the characters ask Regis to secure a *spell scroll*, he can produce a single spell scroll of either 1st (75 gp) or 2nd level (300 gp) from his stores (choose spells from the *Player’s Handbook*); he simply asks that the characters ignore the small amount of blood splattered across the end of the metal scroll case.

Moving On...

If the characters have not yet met with Marigold or Bitter-Blossom, this would be an ideal time to do so.

If this was the final investigation site, proceed to **G-G-G-GHOSTS!**

Bitter-Blossom’s Medicinal Greenery

Mapping

Bitter-Blossom is located at location “B” on the map of Phlan.

Bitter-Blossom is a human druid and owns the Medicinal Greenery, near the outer wall of the town. This shop is eternally warm and overly humid; it is overflowing with all manner of plants and promises a wide variety of flowering plants. She sells plants for both decorative and medicinal use. A Nature or Medicine check at DC 12 reveals that most of these plants are folk remedies and not truly effective for healing though they may have other uses – especially as mind-altering substances. She also has a pet blink dog; it has a brown coat with large black spots and is large for its type, measuring almost five feet at the shoulder. If asked, Bitter-Blossom simply says that the dog – “Croody” – got into an unknown blend of herbs one night and is now “like, giant, man”.

Bitter-Blossom has the following to offer if the characters ask:

- **“Do you know Rooster Cinderelm?”** *He came here earlier, yes. Wanted some spiritroot. Something to slip loose this mortal coil for a little while... drift among the spirits. I didn’t have any, though. I don’t deal with that kind of product. He made an off-hand comment about how fun it would be if Phlan were a ghost town. If he meant it as a joke, I didn’t understand it. People are weird. That’s why I like plants.*
- **“Have you heard about the sobbing ghost outside of the Laughing Goblin?”** *That sounds pretty strange, yeah. Ghosts that cry? It’s a big weird world out there.*
- **“Have you heard anything about Markoth being a zombie?”** *Markoth was such a sweetheart. A gentle soul. Whoever made him a zombie should be ashamed. He deserves better than that.*
- **“Have you noticed an increase in the number of ghosts around Phlan?”** *I think that until Kelemvor comes for us, we are just splinters of a single spirit. One creature with many faces, am I right? I’m right. You know it, thank you.*
- **“What about other types of undead?”** *Sure there are. I hear them at night. They scratch at the walls and sometimes even wander the streets. I don’t go out at night, though, especially when they’re out there. That’s a bad idea. I used to have a shambler out back on a chain, but it got away I think. Or someone let it loose. I don’t know, but it’s gone now and that’s okay.*
- **“What do you sell here?”** *Just look around, friend! Flora from all over the Moonsea and beyond – herbs and flowers and roots and medicinals like you’ve never seen before. If you want a colorful lily for your lapel, I’ve got you – or if you want a little nibble of spiritroot so you can see your granny one more time, I can do that, too. Rooster bought the last of it earlier, so I’m clean out right now.*
- **“What is spirit root?”** *Spiritroot is amazing, friends! It’s not cheap and only grows in some pretty terrible places like graveyards and under witch cauldrons and inside the skulls of dead dragons. It’s pretty awesome, really. Tastes a bit like dwarfstone and slimy acid, but... wow. It lets you talk to your dead friends. And sometimes enemies. But usually friends, yeah, let’s go with that. Totally worth the cost if you can find it. I’ve only been carrying it a couple days.*
- **“What can you tell me about Marigold Butterleaf?”** *She’s witchy. Like, for serious. A witch. She raises the dead and commands them and... and... like, she’s a witch, man. That kind of power isn’t right and is pretty foul, I say. It’s just not good*

for the land, friends. Don't let her fool you with her honeyed words.

- **“What can you tell me about Regis?”** *Regis and I are buddies. Pals. We go way back, years and... you know... he just reminds me of my sister. I can't look him in the eye anymore. We lost her. My sister, Bitter-Root. Our parents weren't very creative but we loved little Bitter-Root anyways. She's been gone awhile and I can't find her. I think Regis tries to help, but it hurts too much to talk to him. I don't think I'll be able to trust anyone from the Lords' Alliance ever again.*
- (if the characters have located the mark on their bodies) **“What can you tell me about this mark?”** *Ooooooh yes, I've seen that. The bard came in with the same thing. I think it comes from careless contact with spiritroot, because it kind of looks like the coiled roots of the plant, I think. Where did you get it?*

Bitter-Blossom isn't in her right mind and will almost certainly be caught in a lie about her sale or possession of spiritroot. If pressed on this, Bitter-Blossom explains:

“Sure, yeah, maaaaaaaybe I used to have some spiritroot. Possibly. I remember trying some, once. I think – no, I'm pretty sure – that I got it from Marigold. She's pretty sketchy. She came to me, was pretty pushy about spiritroot. Brought me some, said she'd teach me how to grow it if I only tried this little bit. So I did. It was pretty amazing. Tasted bad, but powerful for sure.

I saw Bitter-Root and we talked for a little bit. I know now that it wasn't really her, at least I hope it wasn't, because she talked about demons and possession and it was pretty scary. ... anyways, don't listen to Marigold's lies. She's creepy and hiding something, I know it. Stay clear if you want to live.”

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this investigation encounter. This is not intended as a combat encounter, and provides no combat experience.

- **The characters are invisible or break in.** Several of the plants in Bitter-Blossom's shop have been awakened and are drawn to sources of heat. These plants cannot 'see' the characters, but lean in the direction of the characters. They can discover the spiritroot sample if they succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check made with disadvantage (thanks to the heat-seeking plants and the fact that Bitter-Blossom sleeps under the tables in the shop).

- **The characters threaten Bitter-Blossom.** Bitter-Blossom does not appear to be threatened, likely due to her constant usage of various herbs and balms. She is preternaturally calm, though casting *lesser restoration* or *greater restoration* will restore her clarity for ten minutes.
- **Bitter-Blossom is killed by the characters.** If the characters kill Bitter-Blossom, they may find it difficult to successfully complete the adventure. However, they may be able to frame her for the events – be ready to adjust the Conclusion section!

Treasure

If the characters interact peacefully with Bitter-Blossom, she will sell them antivenom for 40 gp (discounted from the *Player's Handbook*). She will provide one herbalism kit free of charge to up to two characters, citing “We should all be doing our part to keep Faerun green, am I right? Of course I'm right.”

Furthermore, if the characters are peaceful and succeed on a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Bitter-Blossom can provide a small sample of spiritroot. It's only enough for one dose, and she says “I don't really need this any more. I've talked to my sister, I guess, right? This may open doors for you in the future, my kindred spirits.”

Moving On...

If the characters have not yet met with Regis or Regis, this would be an ideal time to do so.

If this was the final investigation site, proceed to **G-G-G-GHOSTS!**

G-G-G-GHOSTS!

DM's Note:

This encounter only takes place once all three investigations have been completed and Markoth's zombie has been encountered. However, if the characters have encountered Markoth's zombie multiple times or you are in a time-sensitive environment, you may wish to skip this section in favor of moving forward.

A chill wind, unnatural for the summer in Phlan, rolls through the streets, stirring up debris. A low moaning sound builds up and grows gradually louder.

The night grows long and rain is beginning to fall on Phlan. As the temperature drops, characters that succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence (Nature or Arcana) check realize that the temperature drop is not natural. Characters that succeed on this check are not surprised in the following combat.

Spirits rise from the streets of Phlan, intent on striking the characters down and feasting on their life essences. Two **wraiths** and three **ghosts** emerge to assault the heroes! The ghosts have possessed two **champions** and an **assassin**, who is well-hidden (passive Perception of 18 required to spot her).

encounters) has been completed, proceed to **Part 3. The Villain's Unmasking!**

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this investigation encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak or weak party.** Remove one **ghost**.
- **Strong party.** The undead have advantage on saving throws against effects that would turn undead, and the assassin has an initiative of 23.
- **Very strong party.** As **Strong party**, the creatures all have maximum hit points instead of the normal listed values, and add another **wraith**.

As each of the undead creatures are destroyed, they leave behind a curious little puff of dust and a scent not unlike a mixture of mushrooms, tobacco, and perfume.

Tactics

If the ghosts are ever ejected from their hosts, they use *Horrifying Visage*, then attempt to use their *Possession* ability again if possible. They are intelligent enough to target meatier, “fighter”-types over clerics and magic users when choosing targets for possession. If one ghost successfully frightens a character, the rest will forgo their *Horrifying Visage* in favor of striking with their *Withering Touch* attack or more powerful melee strikes.

Finally, the wraiths are nearly-mindless with rage and hunger. They strike with reckless abandon and seek out the nearest living target whenever possible and do not consider more efficient tactics.

Treasure

The undead do not carry physical treasure, but once combat is concluded the characters can hear the pattering of feet running away down a nearby alley. On a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check, they can identify the tracks of a medium-sized humanoid; if they succeed on this check by 5 or more, they can identify that the tracks were left by a heavy human woman.

Moving On...

Once all the investigation sites have been visited and this encounter (or a suitable number of other

Part 3. The Villain's Unmasking!

Expected Duration: 75 minutes

The characters have gathered some basic evidence, and now are faced with a surprise visit from Rooster Cinderelm and the sobbing ghost, then must determine who has been controlling the incorporeal undead in Phlan.

General Features

The features listed here are present for the entire facility.

Light. It is well past midnight, and the moon is hiding behind thick cloud cover. There is no light.

Rooster Returns

The characters have had a chance to interact with each of the three suspects and hopefully have had the opportunity to begin deciding who may or may not be responsible for the undead attacks. While they have this discussion, Rooster calls to them from a nearby wastebin.

"PSST! PSST! Friends, over here!"

A familiar face peeks out from under the lid of a metal wastebin, his eyes wide with fear. Rooster Cinderelm beckons for you to join him.

Rooster has been hiding out for the last few hours, and has a pretty amazing story to share: after sneaking away from the characters (he was scared), he too saw the fat, sorrowful ghost at Hero's Rest. This terrified him and he spent the next few hours running from empty house to empty house, but every place he went he heard the moaning of the disembodied dead and more than once saw shuffling zombies in the streets. Panic-stricken, he took refuge in a metal wastebin until he heard the characters nearby. He can add the following information:

- While running, he passed Marigold's shop. There were some strange flowers growing out back that he had never seen before (these match the description of spiritroot flowers as given by Bitter-Blossom).
- An amazingly bloated zombie can sometimes be spotted shuffling to and fro in front of certain

taverns, like The Laughing Goblin and the remains of Madame Freona's Teakettle. It saw Rooster once and shuffled after him, but he lost it.

- Rooster is convinced that his new harp is cursed. Arcana checks reveal nothing, but if the characters use an *identify* spell or *remove curse*, they can confirm that the harp was never cursed.

As Rooster wraps up his tale, a wet shuffling sound comes from the end of the alley as the **zombified corpse of "Fat" Markoth** (greater zombie) comes into view and roars. It is joined by three **ghosts** as combat commences. The ghosts have possessed two **champions** and an **assassin** prior to combat commencing.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak or weak party:** remove one **ghost**
- **Strong party:** the **ghosts** have advantage on their initiative checks as they rise out of the street within 10 feet of the characters; additionally, the **zombie** is immune to effects that would turn undead
- **Very strong party:** as above, and the **zombie** is resistant to damage from weapons

Markoth's zombie does not escape this combat and can be defeated normally, unlike previous encounters.

Tactics

Rooster hides inside the metal wastebin for the duration of this combat.

If Markoth's zombie acts before the characters in initiative, or if nobody has attacked it or affected it with spells and abilities when its turn in initiative comes up, it shuffles towards the wastebin. Characters that succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check realize that the zombie is seemingly focused on this and has not yet taken offense to the presence of the characters (though it is still aware of them and does not grant advantage). Unless the characters intervene, Markoth will open the wastebin, beat Rooster to death, and then turn on the characters.

The ghosts begin combat by attempting to get advantage through their *Horridifying Visage* ability, and follow up with *Withering Touch*. They seek to provide a distraction for the zombie.

Treasure

When the zombie dies, noxious odors escape its bloated body as it deflates. A very sturdy sash – in

truth, a belt of hill giant strength – is on the corpse and shows no sign of debris or age. Additional notes can be found on the handout.

Moving On...

Once the characters have defeated the bloated corpse of Markoth, the sobbing ghost appears at the end of the alley. It can plainly be seen as the ghost of Markoth, and it points to each character (including Rooster) that bears the strange mark from earlier in the adventure. After pointing at the final person, it looses a final primal howl and disappears into the wind, leaving behind an identical mark on the ground.

Rooster's Ruse

Rooster isn't actually Rooster – rather, he is Doomguide Glandon, a former resident of Phlan and outcast priest of Kelemvor. He has been using magic to adopt the bard's guise, and has become fairly adept. The characters may pick up that something is "off" with Rooster, but thanks to spells like *mind blank* and *Nystul's magical aura*, he does not detect as undead or evil. Instead, he is scared – but not of the ghosts... but of the characters.

If the characters decide to attack Rooster, they may do so. He spends the first round pleading for his life, then in the second round he makes full use of his vampiric abilities. He does not have a stat block in this adventure, as he would be an incredibly difficult foe for characters at this level – he has been granted abilities beyond those of normal vampires by the Mists of Barovia. This combat, if played, is best resolved by narrative and culminating in Glandon escaping into the night. Be ready to adjust the ending of the adventure if this happens.

At this point, the characters may wish to question Rooster:

- **“Do you know Markoth?”** *I've been through Phlan before, and he served me several times. Not a very pleasant person. Not a bad person, just... a gossip. He ruined everyone's secrets.*
- **“Where did you go earlier tonight?”** *While we were leaving the Laughing Goblin, I got frightened and fled into the city. I found my way through alleys and streets, pursued by undead monsters and took refuge here.*
- **“Have you heard anything about Markoth being a zombie?”** *He's a zombie AND a ghost? Is that even possible? That would make a very interesting stage production...*
- **“Have you noticed an increase in the number of ghosts around Phlan?”** *That is kind of why I'm*

here. Rumors spread quickly, and I wanted to see it first hand – the City of the Dead, some call it! Ok, so nobody calls it that. But it has a certain ring to it.

- **“What do you know about spiritroot?”** *Spiritroot is potent stuff. You probably shouldn't mess with it; I hear that it catches the attention of ghosts and all sorts of undead nasties. They say that it allows you to speak with the dead, but if you can talk to one, well, you'll certainly gain the interest of others. Yuck.*
- **“What can you tell me about Marigold Butterleaf?”** *Would you believe that she tried to slip some spiritroot into my pack when I visited earlier? I just wanted to speak with her about the sponsorship of my next Moonsea tour, and she plants illegal herbs on me!*
- **“What can you tell me about Regis?”** *For a dwarf, he's not so ba... oh who am I kidding? He's pretty rough, even for a dwarf. I heard from a friend who heard from a Zhent agent that a certain musical instrument was here in Phlan, but Regis... nooooooo.... he claimed he didn't have it.*
- **“What can you tell me about Bitter-Blossom?”** *After I found that Mari had planted that stuff on me, I went to Blossom's place. I've heard she's a little goofy, and I was really just hoping to dump the root in her shop and be on my way. She must've seen it, though, because she kept talking about it even though I only mentioned lilies and orchids – I was trying to confuse her and she's, I don't know, a savant or something. Left as soon as I could.*
- **“What can you tell me about this mark?”** *Oh, you have that too? So do I. Maybe... is this why those undead keep pestering us?*

At this point, Rooster pleads with the characters to get the authorities involved. He believes that Marigold is attempting to frame him for possession of spiritroot, and that the spiritroot is causing the undead to become agitated and attack those that have touched it.

The characters should have enough evidence now to form an opinion about who is responsible for the attacks.

Advancing the Adventure

Once the characters have decided who the culprit is and have confronted or defeated them, the town of Phlan must deal with the results of this accusation.

Proceed to **Conclusion** when everyone is ready.

Conclusion

The characters have heard conflicting stories from several key personalities here in Phlan, but they have the opportunity now to accuse one of those people of being the agitator of the undead.

The characters can approach the city guard, where they see the tiefling Calypso embroiled in a heated discussion with several high-ranking guards about how to best defend their town against the rising threat of the undead. Once they gain her attention, they should present their evidence and name the accused. The accused character does not need to be present.

“Rooster” Cinderelm is declared the villain:

The bard’s eyes bulge as you declare him as the agitator of the undead. He sputters for a moment, then exclaims:

“So what if I am! Turning Phlan into a ghost-infested City of the Dead would be great for tours, and adventurers, and... and... and I would’ve gotten away with it, too, if it wasn’t for you meddling fools!”

One of the guards reaches to restrain him, knocking Rooster’s wig off in the process. As the wig leaves his head, Rooster’s face shrivels and changes into that of a human male with grey skin, as if he were undead. He hisses at you as he bares massive fangs, and you see the holy symbol of Kelemvor branded into his forehead.

There is a collective gasp, and Rooster’s form dissipates into mist.

“I don’t think that was Rooster – at least, not any more.” Calypso turns a wary eye out towards the city. “You’ve helped more than you know, adventurers. Take our thanks, and go carefully in the coming days – you have likely earned the ire of a powerful creature. Though he was once a Doomguide, the trusted clergy of Kelemvor, he is now an abomination that must be hunted down.”

Characters that played in DDEP4 *Reclamation of Phlan*, have a character background in Phlan, or that have previously interacted with Doomguide Glandon (from the DDEX1-x series) immediately recognize the man as Glandon. A DC 12 History check prompts characters into recalling that Glandon was a high-ranking cleric of Kelemvor and was turned into a vampire several months ago, but had escaped the town.

Marigold Butterleaf is declared the villain:

The guards arrest Marigold based upon the evidence you present. The following morning she is allowed to face you, and with a sad smile on her face, says:

“My art is woefully misunderstood. I meant no offence; gentle necromancy benefits everyone. I didn’t work my magic inside the town walls... I don’t know what convinced you to shame me in this way, but I do not begrudge you. I only hope that your eyes will one day become open to the truth.”

Later that day and after a thorough investigation of Marigold’s shop and ledgers, the town guard are convinced that your assessment was made in error. They present you with a bill for their time and escort you to the town walls, and ask you to not return for at least a month while this blows over. Calypso’s view of justice is stern, but fair – especially considering that you accused the wrong person.

The characters earn the **Enmity** story award for their false accusation, and are each faced with 200 gp in fines.

Regis Brightgem is declared the villain:

The guards bring a wriggling, writhing, dirty dwarf before you. He spits on your feet and spews out several dwarven obscenities, with a few “I’m innocent” statements mixed in. He glares at you while the guards read the formal charges and carry him off to a holding cell.

Later that day, Calypso finds you. She tells you that for all his venom, Regis is innocent – “of these charges”. She warns you that he will likely be waiting for a chance to get even, possibly through other Zhentarim agents. Because of this, she asks you to leave the city or face imprisonment; Phlan has a lot to overcome, and she has a stern view on how justice should be meted out – especially considering that you accused the wrong person.

It seems that the undead threat here in Phlan will become someone else’s problem.

If any of the characters are Zhentarim, they lose 1 renown for falsely accusing Regis of this crime. Furthermore, Calypso presents all of the characters with an invoice of fines amounting to 200 gp per person.

Bitter-Blossom is declared the villain:

The city guards arrive with a limply-wriggling Bitter-Blossom in their grasp.

“I mean, like, it’s just not me! I’m innocent! I work with herbs, please!”

The guards haul her off for further questioning. After a few hours, Calypso approaches you and tells you that the guards were unable to secure a confession... mostly because of the fact that they entered a similar mental state as Bitter-Blossom after the first hour. “Apparently,” Calypso says, “she has a certain air about her.

That said, I am unconvinced that she is indeed responsible for our troubles. Her wits are not about her, and her shop is clean enough. We found a small amount of spiritroot residue, though I do not believe that she truly knows how to use it.”

The characters have falsely labeled Bitter-Blossom as the criminal. They each earn the **Enmity** story award.

Wrapping it all up

If the characters correctly determined that Rooster was the responsible party, they are rewarded by Calypso for their service. Each character receives a pendant with the sigil of Phlan on it; while valuable, these pendants mark the characters are valuable allies of the city guard. If the characters choose to keep these amulets, they earn the **Friend of Phlan** story award; otherwise, they can sell the amulets to Regis, who is more than happy to funnel them off to his Zhentarim allies. If the characters choose to sell them to someone else, they are only worth half of the gold piece value listed in the **Treasure Awards** section.

For each possessed host that the characters killed, Calypso presents the characters with an invoice for appropriate funerary and estate costs equal to 10% of their experience value. For example, if the characters killed a possessed champion, each character is expected to pay 500 gp for that person’s funeral and final proceedings. If the characters killed 10 or more people in this manner, or if they decide not to pay this amount, they earn the **Reviled in Phlan** story award. Although Bitter-Blossom and Regis do not have stat blocks, their costs are 500 gp per person; if Marigold is killed, the townspeople are cautiously relieved as they didn’t really like “gentle necromancy” anyhow and no additional fines are assessed.

Rewards

Experience

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Assassin	3,900
Champion	5,000
Master Thief	1,800
“Fat” Markoth (Greater Zombie)	1,800
Ghost	450
Wraith	450

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Correctly identify Rooster	300

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 6,000 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 7,500 **experience points**.

Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP value
Pendant of Phlan	1800
Fines (for falsely accusing)	-200 per person

Funerary costs 5% of xp value in gp, billed to character on a per-person basis

NOTE: the pendant is only worth 900 gp if it sold to anyone other than Regis

Spell Scrolls (Variable)

Scroll, common or uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*.

“Fat” Markoth’s Cumberbund

Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)

Markoth – “Fat Mar” to those that didn’t truly know him – treasured this reinforced, velvety waistband above all other possessions. He wore it every day in life but was never able to fully grasp its benefits despite being attuned to it: while attuned, the wearer’s strength becomes 21 and, once per day, the wearer has advantage on one saving throw that might otherwise result in a level of exhaustion. A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master’s Guide* under the entry ‘Belt of Giant Strength (Hill)’.

Permanent Magic Item Distribution

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character’s logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item’s owner is determined randomly by the DM.

Renown

All faction members gain one renown point for completing this adventure.

Any **Zhentarim** faction member that falsely accused Regis of being the responsible party in this adventure gains **no renown**, and instead **loses one point of renown** for failing to support their peers appropriately. Apparently Regis knows the right people to smear someone’s reputation.

Story Awards

Enmity. You have earned the enmity of an influential person in Phlan. Additional details are located on the handout.

Friend of Phlan. You have performed a significant service for Phlan – and for Calypso, the new regent. She has marked you as an ally of the guard so long as you openly wear the pendant.

Reviled in Phlan. If a character is unable or unwilling to pay the fine, Calypso makes it well known that they are not welcome in the city any longer. They must serve 30 days of hard time (downtime days; the character does not have to pay living expenses but can perform no other downtime activities during this time) before they are allowed to enter Phlan again. Furthermore, all social checks with Calypso, residents of Phlan, and city guards in any city in the Moonsea region are made at disadvantage until this story award is removed. Paying the 30 days of hard time does not remove this story award, but it does allow the character to re-enter the town.

Downtime

Each character receives **ten downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

DM Rewards

You receive **10 downtime days**, **1,900 experience points**, and **950 gold pieces** for running this adventure.

Appendix: Magic Item and Story Award Handouts

“Fat” Markoth’s Cumberbund

Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)

Markoth – “Fat Mar” to those that didn’t truly know him – treasured this reinforced, velvety waistband above all other possessions. He wore it every day in life but was never able to fully grasp its benefits despite being attuned to it: while attuned, the wearer’s strength becomes 21 and, once per day, the wearer has advantage on one saving throw that might otherwise result in a level of exhaustion. A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master’s Guide* under the entry ‘Belt of Giant Strength (Hill)’.

Description from *Dungeon Master’s Guide* (this text may be updated in future errata): While wearing this belt, your Strength score changes to a score granted by the belt. If your Strength is already equal to or greater than the belt’s score, the item has no effect on you. This belt is a belt of Hill giant strength, and grants a strength of 21.

Story Awards

Enmity. You have earned the enmity of an influential person in Phlan. Select from the following list:

Calypso	Rooster Cinderelm
Marigold Butterleaf	Regis Brightgem
Bitter-Blossom	

You have disadvantage on social checks with the noted person until you find a way to remove this story award.

Friend of Phlan. You have performed a significant service for Phlan – and for Calypso, the new regent. She has marked you as an ally of the guard so long as you openly wear the pendant. This grants you advantage on social and investigation checks made in the presence of the town guard.

Reviled in Phlan. If a character is unable or unwilling to pay the fine, Calypso makes it well known that they are not welcome in the city any longer. They must serve 30 days of hard time (downtime days; the character does not have to pay living expenses but can perform no other downtime activities during this time) before they are allowed to enter Phlan again. Furthermore, all social checks with Calypso, residents of Phlan, and city guards in any city in the Moonsea region are made at disadvantage until this story award is removed. Paying the 30 days of hard time does not remove this story award, but it does allow the character to re-enter the town.

DM Appendix: Phlan and the Regent's Election

Phlan

The town of Phlan has seen an excessive amount of damage due to the dragon Vorgansharax's attack. However, they are rebuilding and expect to live as normal a life as possible as the years go on. Their trade routes have been restored now that the dragon and its minions have been driven out or destroyed – but those that escaped may still terrorize the town in the coming years and decades.

Election of the Regent

As the Mists of Ravenloft receded from the area, the residents of Phlan agreed that it was time to elect a new leader. As part of the Convention-Created Content program, Baldman Games was approved to create a storyline and interactive event that culminated with a player character being elected to this role. The character, a tiefling named Calypso, was retired from Adventurers League play and has become part of the Moonsea narrative. Other organizations are not beholden to this narrative decision, though many content creators are striving to work together and embrace significant events such as this.

Calypso worked as an adventurer and mercenary for several years before deciding to try her hand at local politics. She has a peaceable nature, and is known to be stern yet fair in the affairs of Phlan. The residents have a neutral-to-positive view on her abilities and presence as a leader, and many are expecting her to serve the town for a long, long time.

Appendix: NPC/Monster 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 +7, Int +5

Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +11

Damage Resistances poison

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Thieves' cant plus any two languages

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

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 (1/Turn). The assassin deals an extra 13 (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:* +7 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:* +7 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.

Champion

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidate +5, Perception +3

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 shortbow.

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.

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

"Fat" Markoth (Greater Zombie)

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 97 (13d8 + 39)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	4 (-3)	6 (-2)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Wis +1

Damage Resistances cold, necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

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

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Turn Resistance. The zombie has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

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

Actions

Multiattack. The zombie makes two melee attacks

Stone Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

Necromancer

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +7, History +7

Damage Resistances necrotic

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elven, Ancient Netherese, Thayan

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. The fanatic is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The necromancer has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *mending*

1st level (4 slots): *false life**, *mage armor*, *ray of sickness**

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *ray of enfeeblement**, *web*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead**, *bestow curse**, *vampiric touch*

4th level (2 slots): *blight**, *dimension door*, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *Bigby's hand*, *cloudkill*

6th level (1 slot): *circle of death**

*: Necromancy spell of 1st level or higher

Dark Harvest (1/Turn). When the necromancer kills a creature that is neither a construct nor undead with a spell of 1st level or higher, the necromancer regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or three times if it is a necromancy spell.

Actions

Withering Touch. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) necrotic damage.

Ghost

Medium undead, any alignment

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

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

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

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.

Master Thief

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +3

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +3, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, thieves' cant

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

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

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The thief 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 thief that isn't incapacitated and the thief doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. The thief makes three attacks with its shortsword.

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

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. The thief halves the damage that it takes from an attack that hits it. The thief must be able to see the attacker.

Wraith

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The wraith 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.

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

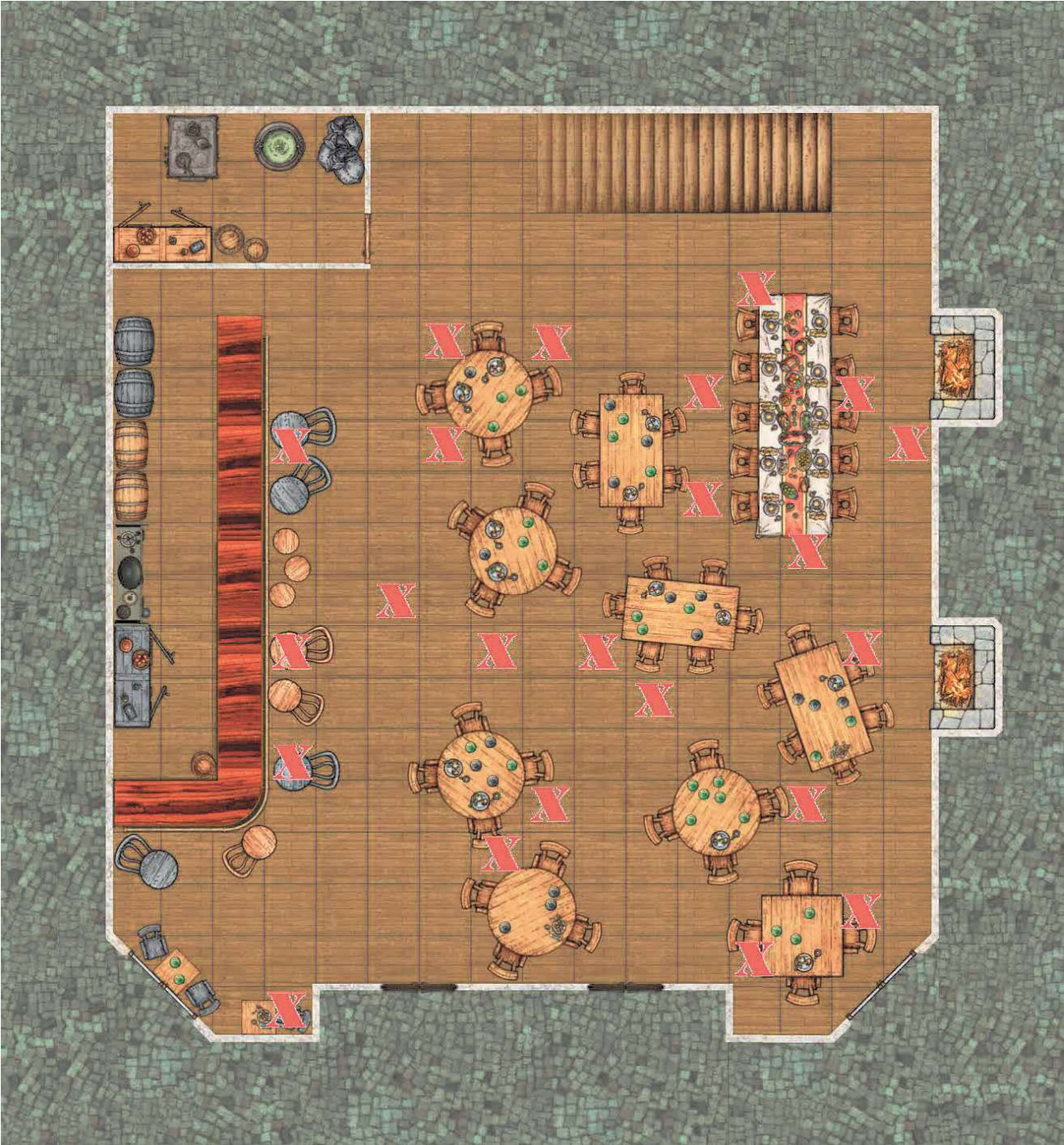
Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Create Specter. The wraith targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the wraith's control. The wraith can have no more than seven specters under its control at one time.

Map Appendix (The Laughing Goblin).

Cartography by Alan Patrick



Bystanders are indicated with red 'X' marks.
This adventure only requires the first floor, but [the full map can be purchased on dmsguild.com](http://dmsguild.com).

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Map Appendix (Phlan & investigation locations).

Cartography by Derek von Zarovich



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