

Ravenloft®: Mist Hunters

# THE AMBER DIRGE



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*By Claire Hoffman*

① AN ADVENTURE FOR 4TH LEVEL CHARACTERS ②



# THE AMBER DIRGE

## *A Ravenloft: Mist Hunters Adventure*

Your benefactor, Alanik Ray, has dispatched you to Har'Akir to investigate rumors of the White Oasis. Residents of the nearby River's Shelter are all dying and seek to cleanse themselves in the oasis's waters as hauntingly beautiful reed pipe music accompanies their passing. Something isn't quite right, however. Are there more nefarious deeds afoot?

The fourth in the *Ravenloft: Mist Hunters* series of adventures.

A three-hour adventure for 4th level characters



CONTENT WARNING: Terminal illness, self-harm (suicide), grief, depression, abduction, murder, thoughts of dying, denial of the peace of death

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

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# ADVENTURE PRIMER

*Death is a commingling of eternity with time.*

— Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

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

The *Amber Dirge* occurs in the area around the White Oasis in the domain of Har'Akir.

## BACKGROUND

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

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

Alanik calls upon the characters once more to venture to **HAR'AKIR**—a domain of desert sands, tombs, and mummies—to seek out White Oasis and discover its secrets.

## OVERVIEW

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

**Call to Action: The Sands Call.** The characters are summoned to Alanik's residence with their next assignment—to investigate the White Oasis and its surroundings in search of clues.

**Part 1: On the Water's Shore.** The characters arrive on the shores of the White Oasis, just outside of River's Shelter. During this part of the adventure, the characters experience the melancholic community and its dying residents, all eager for their transition into the afterlife.

**Part 2: The Allure of the Afterlife.** The following morning, the characters find that one of the villagers has gone missing, and witness another similar "abduction," but no one recognizes the description of the perpetrators.

**Part 3: Descent into Darkness.** The characters have lost the sacred dead, but they were heading towards a vast limestone quarry ahead. There, the characters encounter a group of sacred dead.



## STORY AWARDS

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

## CHARACTER HOOKS

Every adventure needs some way for player characters to become involved. This series of adventures has a very specific method. They are hired by Alanik Ray or are members of the Order of Guardians assigned to work with him. This is an ongoing event for characters who have played the earlier adventures in this series. For those who have not, Alanik Ray has heard of their exploits and recruited them, or they have heard he is hiring people.

## ENTERTAINER & ARCHAEOLOGIST

Characters with these backgrounds may find that they have a pre-existing bond or familiarity with the people of White Oasis in Har'Akir. Music and tradition drive many people, and many of the residents of White Oasis find comfort in their instruments and stories. These characters may find it easier to relate with the people of White Oasis due to these factors and have advantage when dealing with situations that arise from music-related elements in this adventure.

## AKIRAN CHARACTERS

These characters know that the area around the White Oasis is riddled with numerous limestone quarries used throughout the centuries. The quarries often are used for a specific project and then abandoned. Depending on their background, they might be aware that the oasis is sacred to Neb, who guards the pathways of the dead.

### PREPARING YOUR PARTY

This adventure features themes relating to the trauma of impending death: depression, thoughts of suicide, and any number of conflicting emotions (fear of death and fear of the process of dying; gratitude for the time we have together and the grief of each loss leading up to death).

These themes could bring up fears of mortality or memories of caring for a loved one in their last moments. It could be reminiscent of some of the ableist ways people are treated for having a chronic illness or other disability.

For help on session zero/pre-game discussions and how to run horror adventures, see the [Mist Hunters Safety Kit article](#) and chapter 4 of *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.



# CALL TO ACTION: THE SANDS CALL

**Estimated Duration:** 20 minutes

**A**lanik Ray reveals that through mesmerism, he has gleaned two names from Radaga: White Oasis and Amber Temple, as well as something about a device called the Apparatus. He has already dispatched a team to Barovia in search of the Amber Temple but asks that the characters venture to Har'Akir and seek out the White Oasis and discover its connection to his investigation.

**Themes.** Book clutter, comforts of home

## DEMENTLIEU: THE DOMAIN OF DECADENT DELUSION

**Darklord:** Duchess Saidra d'Honaire

**Hallmarks:** Masquerades, decadent aristocracy, social decay

Every night brings another glittering affair: the citizens of Dementlieu live such glamorous and exciting lives. They enjoy the finest clothes, elegant jewels, grand ballrooms, and most extravagantly, every seventh day, the Grand Masquerade hosted by Duchess Saidra d'Honaire at her island estate. Everyone who is anyone attends the Duchess's balls, and everyone who longs to be someone tries to wrangle an invitation or sneak in uninvited. But Duchess Saidra's wrath upon those who dare to set foot where they do not belong is truly horrible—and inevitably fatal.

For more information about this domain and the people that reside there, refer to *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.

## CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

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

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

## OUTFITTING FOR THE INVESTIGATION

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

**Mundane Equipment.** The Order of the Guardians has offered the characters access to its substantive resources to aid in their investigation. Each character has access to any mounts and nonmagical equipment from the *Player's Handbook*, as well as the material components for any spell they themselves have prepared—provided

the gp cost of the mount, item, or material component doesn't exceed 200 gp. The characters are still bound to the normal rules regarding carrying capacity and, at your discretion, may find themselves in a situation that precludes being able to haul around too much. While their resources are great, the Order discourages excessively frivolous requests.

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

## EXAMPLE: OUTFITTING FOR INVESTIGATION

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

## ORDER OF THE GUARDIANS RING

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

## ALANIK'S HOME

The adventure begins in Alanik's chateau. The characters have been summoned here by Alanik's associate, Kabe Whippoorwill, and are waiting in a small hallway outside of Alanik's offices.

## AREA INFORMATION

Alanik's chateau has the following features:

**Furnishings.** Alanik lives with his husband Arthur in a sprawling two-story chateau in Dementlieu. Most of the second story is uninhabitable (in true Dementlieu fashion) and the once elegant furnishings are dulled with age. The spacious room has two walls lined with



bookcases, while a large cabinet rests against a third, and bench seats occupy the walls on either side of the door. A large desk takes up the center of the room.

**Lighting.** The room is brightly lit from the combination of the chandelier overhead, sconces on the walls, and the lamp on the desk.

**Smells.** Leather, mint, and sandalwood.

## NPC INFORMATION

Kabe opens the office door and waves the group in, nodding to those they have met before. Alanik welcomes them into his office. Alanik Ray works out of his home and the characters gather in a sitting room adjacent to the office until he is ready for them.



### KABE WHIPPOORWILL

*Halfling interdomain informer*

Secretly a member of the Keepers of the Feather (a fact known to Alanik only), Kabe (KAYB WIP-er-will) is Alanik's scout, associate, and friend. A lightfoot halfling with a quick smile and a mean right-hook, Kabe possesses a dark gift that allows them to traverse the Domains of Dread. Acting as both a ferry for the characters and a field contact, they're an invaluable member of the investigative team.

**What They Want.** Their line of work is dangerous, so they want to ensure everything goes smoothly. Losing an agent is never the desired outcome.

**Mist Walker.** Kabe is Alanik's scout, investigatory partner, friend, and an invaluable member of the team. They also work as the party's field contact.



### ALANIK RAY

*Elf investigator*

Alanik (uh-LAHN-ick RAY) is confident and insightful, a shrewd investigator, and one of the most well-traveled mortals in the Domains of Dread. Alanik is a master of insights and deduction; he can learn details about others after a few moments of meeting them. For example, he can almost instantaneously deduce a character's native domain from their accent and mannerisms. An accidental fall during an investigation caused a spinal injury that paralyzed Alanik's legs. He uses a custom wheelchair that he created with the assistance of his husband, Arthur Sedgwick.

**What They Want.** Alanik is curious to see what the situation's connection to Har'Akir could be, and how the settlement of White River managed to get involved.

**No Loose Ends.** Having solved Radaga's disappearance, he's moved on to investigate the reasons behind it. More information on Alanik can be found in *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.

Alanik explains that while the search for Radaga was successful, the scholar lost some memories of her experiences while missing—something that might indicate a brewing problem.

Though Radaga agreed to be mesmerized, the process revealed little useful information; Alanik learned only of the names of two locations—the White Oasis and the Amber Temple—and the existence of a device that Radaga referred to as “the Apparatus.” Alanik has already dispatched a group to Barovia in search of the Amber Temple but asks the characters to venture to Har'Akir, a domain of sand, hidden tombs, and ancient, slumbering evil. There, the characters will find the White Oasis and near it, the settlement of River's Shelter. Alanik believes that there's a connection between the White Oasis—which is dedicated to the god, Neb—and the Amber Temple. He charges the characters with discovering what it is.

“I admit I am giving you very little to go on for this investigation, but I have learned to trust my instincts and they are shouting that there is something of importance happening at the White Oasis; whatever it is, this is a vital key. Anything that is odd or seems unusual should be investigated.”



## RADAGA: DARK OUTFITTER

Before leaving, Alanik instructs the characters to visit Radaga in the study (the detective has given the scholar the use of a disused wing of his chateau to further her studies). The room is dimly lit from a few tarnished sconces on the walls. A nearby desk is littered with tomes and papers and an unlit candelabra. The faint smell of candlewax and lemon furniture polish hang in the air.

### NPC INFORMATION

The characters find Radaga sitting in a delicately carved chair staring out of a nearby window. A decanter wrapped in red leather and stoppered with a cobalt glass sits on a table at her side.



#### RADAGA

*Human scholar of the Dark Powers*

The initial object of the Order of the Guardians' search, Radaga (ruh-DAH-guh) is a scholar and arcanist who has delved far into the nature of the Dark Powers—some say a bit too far. She's brilliant but obsessive in her desire to catalogue the sinister, as well as a bit possessive of her knowledge. Radaga has olive skin and dark hair.

**What They Want.** Because Alanik suspects that Radaga was possessed by creatures unknown, he insists that she avoid venturing out into the world. For now, she uses her knowledge to search the Order's accumulated treasures for items she feels might assist Alanik's investigators with their work.

**Obsessed with Forbidden Knowledge.** She is angry and laments the loss of time due to her recent possession. She chomps at the bit to get back to her life and studies.

"Since you are going to a land that is mostly desert, I could find nothing more appropriate than *Malik's Decanter*." She picks up a red leather-covered bottle with a crystal blue stopper.



### LET'S GIVE HER A HAND!

Characters who earned this story award during RMH-EP-01 *The Grand Masquerade* see Radaga's familiar—a desiccated animated hand—straightening the papers on Radaga's desk.

#### DESICCATED MAGE'S HAND

*Crawling claw familiar*

Once the hand of a powerful mage, Radaga's undead familiar is fiercely protective of its friend. (Note that this isn't the spell. This is a hand, like Thing from *The Addams Family*)

**What They Want.** To protect its friend, Radaga.

**Best Familiar Forever.** The desiccated mage hand worries about Radaga. It is willing to fight sinew and nail for her.

#### MALIK'S DECANTER

*Malik's decanter* (handout 1) bears a potent curse. Radaga describes how the item works as well as its curse. Radaga expects the decanter to be returned upon the completion of their mission to Har'Akir.

## KABE'S EXPRESS

Kabe is a mist walker and as such, they take the characters to the domain they are to visit and even gets them within view of their destination. That isn't to say that their journey isn't fraught with horror. Roll on the Misty Visions table provided in appendix A.

Kabe explains that, though they're escorting the group to their destination, there are a few other rumors they need to hunt down, and they need to check in on the other group in Barovia. Therefore, Kabe gives the group a mist talisman so they can return to Alanik when the investigation is complete.

As you walk out of the Mists, Kabe grins at you. "How's that for service?" They point toward a sand dune; about 100 feet beyond the dune, chattering black and white birds flit about in the tops of tall trees.

Kabe gives the characters a familiar mist talisman—a mask similar to one that might be worn to a fancy-dress ball. The mask is made of frayed silk and glass baubles and the design is such that depending on the light it appears as a beautiful woman or a skull. It is instrumental to the characters' successful return to Dementlieu.



# PART 1: ON THE WATER'S SHORE

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

The characters arrive on the shores of the White Oasis, just outside of River's Shelter. During this part of the adventure, the characters experience the melancholic community and its dying residents, who are eager for their transition into the afterlife. As the characters rest for the night, they hear hauntingly beautiful reed pipe music.

**Themes:** Malaise, fatalism, inevitable death

## HAR'AKIR

**Darklord:** Ankhtepot

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

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

## THE WHITE OASIS

The White Oasis is sacred to the god Neb, who guards the Path of the Dead (though it is the Dark Powers who grant the god's "priests" their abilities).

From the top of the sand dune, you see through the trees to a pond that stretches almost two miles wide and half of a mile across.

The characters arrive from the north.

## AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

**Terrain.** Most of the northern and southern areas adjacent to the water are forested. A dry riverbed starts at the far eastern edge of the oasis and meanders off into the distance. The land around the western edge of the water is marsh.

**Weather.** This area is dry but extremely hot; it's easily in excess of 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade (when there is any shade).

**Water.** The pool of water varies in depth even along some of the edges. It is approximately 2 miles long and 800 yards across. In the shallow area of the southeastern edge of the pool two columns rise up out of the water.

**Marsh.** The area along the western edge of the pool is a marshy wetland home to reptiles and snakes.

**Crocodiles** lurk in the murky waters—eager to snatch up unwary creatures that venture too close to the edges.

**Trees & Plants.** Along the northern edge and part of the southern edge are fertile areas with date palms, fig trees, millet, and vegetables growing in neat plots. **Ibises** nest high in many of the trees.

**Ritual Area.** The southeastern side of the pool is mostly sandy beach with a few outcroppings of rocks. On the shore is a rectangular, open-air shrine with tall pillars at each corner and an altar in the center (the pillars in the water are of the same design). On the ground near the ritual area sit an empty jug (2 gallons), a pole, and two large pails that have hooks to attach to the pole.

**Sound.** Occasionally, a breeze ruffles the leaves on the trees. The honking of the ibises intermingles with more melodious bird calls and the croaking of frogs. The gentle sound of a harp being played intermittently drowns out the sounds of nearby creatures.

## NPC INFORMATION

Besides the abundant flora and fauna, a man named Pawero sits on a rock near the Ritual Area playing a harp. He explains that the daily cleansing ritual has already ended. He stayed behind after the day's ritual to practice where the false notes or mistakes would not bother anyone. He still has to bring his contribution of water back to the village.

### PAWERO

*Human musician*

Pawero (puh-WEAR-oh) offended a priest in his youth—an insult that the priest thought appropriate to correct by removing Pawero's hand. Despite this, he carries his family's harp everywhere he goes and sits on the oasis's banks playing with one hand. Pawero's eyes are tinged a yellow color—no doubt a symptom of illness.

**What They Want.** He wishes to return to a place of balance between the music in his head and what he can play before he dies.

**Melancholic Dreamer.** Having retreated here to avoid further loss, he clings to his family's harp as he prepares his soul for death.

Pawero accompanies the characters back to River's Shelter playing a happy tune on his harp if they bring him water for him. If they were helpful, they're welcomed to the village and offered lodging and a meal at the inn without charge.

## EXPANDING THE ADVENTURE

If you wish to extend the play experience of this adventure, use one of the two following encounters. Both occur in the immediate vicinity of the oasis, and at least one could be used on the way to interact with Pawero.

**What a Ripper!** The edge of the oasis is a broad, marshy area where various reeds and plants grow. A middle-aged person harvesting reeds shouts in fear as an undead **crocodile** erupts from the waters and grapples them—intent on dragging them into the water. The characters can kill the crocodile or drive it away, perhaps by offering it meat or using spells. Joba (YO-buh), wears a sleeveless linen tunic over their gaunt frame. Their work with the plants in the marshes has stained the tunic in a motley of colors. They thought their time had come, that the crocodile would take them before their illness did. It surprises them to feel a mix of relief and disappointment to survive. That said, they're glad for whatever assistance the characters are willing to provide (such as helping to carry water in large clay jugs or filling reed packs full of marsh vegetables).

**Ibis Attack.** The characters pass too close to an ibis nest and the whole colony of twenty **ibises** swarms them. Most of the birds do no more than flap their wings and honk at the characters instead of attacking them (ibises have black heads, necks, legs, and feet, but their body feathers are predominantly white). Only one bird per character attacks. Once out of the immediate area (30 feet), the ibises stop attacking and return to their nests. **Complication:** if a character backs up from the birds, they could find themselves on the bank of the water with the possibility of falling in.

## RIVER'S SHELTER

A well-worn path leads from the oasis through a pair of sand dunes to a stone plateau out of which a very large hole has been cut. A ramp leads down into what was once a functioning quarry. The walls have oblong openings at various heights where stone was excavated. On its side in the middle of the crater lies the broken remains of an obelisk.

### AREA INFORMATION

River's Shelter has the following general features.

**Dimensions & Terrain.** The floor of the quarry is bare rock; the walls are 30 feet high, and aside from the ramp down from the oasis, there two paths cut through the rock out of the village. The quarry is massive but sparsely populated: rarely more than sixty people live here. Caravans come here about every three moons, occasionally leaving people behind to join the village.

**Light.** The high walls and limestone detritus provide occasional shade throughout the day. At night, oil lamps and peat-fired stones provide both heat and warmth.

**Sound.** In general, the songs reflect the melancholy of the villagers, but until sunset and the evening meal, snatches of song can be heard from various areas of the village constantly. It might be vocal or percussive with a regular beat to make work easier. Nights are cold and the village becomes quiet as they seek the warmth of their beds.

**Residences.** Enterprising residents have taken discarded limestone blocks to make shelters against the towering remains. Some have thatched reed roofs, and others seem to have made roofs from tents. The village is a bit of a labyrinth as people built and renovated shelters with no organization.

### NPC INFORMATION

Any villager the characters meet isn't surprised to see new people arrive, but neither are they enthusiastic. The villagers are from all walks of life, but all have looming death in common. They are traveling with their family and caretakers to cleanse their souls in the waters of White Oasis. They generally have an air of melancholy or depression. Below are a few of the villagers the characters might meet in the Inn or as they move about the village:

- Ahomse (AH-moe-SAY) is an old, wicked merchant who spends his time trying to wash away his guilt in the waters of the oasis.
- Amasis's (uh-MA-seez) body is covered in boils—a curse bestowed by a bitter rival in response to underhanded business dealings on Amasis's part. The curse can only be cured by paying restitution, which Amasis would rather die than do. As such, he's resigned his soul to its fate and stares into the water, waiting for death to claim him.
- Mehnt (MENT) suffers from an illness that has weakened her muscles. Other members of the community assist her by carrying her to the oasis each morning. Mehnt worries that she hasn't sufficiently cleansed her soul and won't join her family in the afterlife. She assists the priestess Kawab to the extent that her body permits.
- Redij (ruh-DEEJ) is no more than twenty-five; she coughs up blood but has no other physical signs of ill health. She carries a silken handkerchief.
- Henete (huh-NET-tay) has been here a long time; she killed a powerful person and has been in hiding ever since. She has expected someone to come and arrest (or kill) her at some point, but they haven't yet. She has learned what plants in the marsh are edible and harvests food for the village. She and Joba supply most of the raw foodstuffs that the village uses.
- Joba (YO-buh), another of the River's Shelter "caretakers," wears a sleeveless linen tunic over their thin frame. Their work with the plants in the marshes has stained the tunic in a motley of colors.

### AKIRRANS: BIDDING THEIR TIME

The denizens of River's Shelter all have one thing in common: they all have terminal illnesses or curses. Whatever the cause, everyone here has made the pilgrimage to White Oasis, seeking to cleanse their souls in anticipation of meeting their end. This isn't to say they're in a hurry to die or that they're content with their fate. Many residents are afraid, grieve, have depression, or have hopes of their coming death being a reprieve from their pain. Some try to live life to the fullest, and some act without concern for risk.

### EXPLORING RIVER'S SHELTER

If he accompanied the characters to River's Shelter, Pawero directs the characters to the inn and hands them a few clay coins as thanks for assisting him.



He waves his goodbyes and enters a nearby residence. A few moments after he shuts the door behind him, a candle on the sill of the front window flares into life.

## INN

Aside from residences, the inn is the most oft-used permanent structure in River's Shelter. Built and improved upon over generations, it consists of two stories around a central chimney with stairs running along the outside. Most of the furniture is made from either stone or pillows, with a few rare and treasured pieces of wooden furniture such as a cabinet and old palanquin converted to a comfortable seat. The inn features a small outbuilding containing a bakery used by anyone in town who knows how—though grain is usually hard to come by.

The inn is mainly used as a small hospice and by new arrivals who haven't decided where to live, and it provides meals for those who don't know how or are unable to cook (often taking the time to deliver meals to the homes of those who are unable to leave). If the characters helped Pawero bring water to the village, the coins he gave them cover the group's food and lodging for one night. Otherwise, Akhom is more interested in exchanging chores or a useful item over coins they have little use for.



### AKHOM (AH-COMB)

*Human cook*

They are the closest thing to an innkeeper that exists in River's Shelter—they mind the inn simply because no one else appears to have an interest in doing so. They're a skilled cook and have a shrewd acumen for business. Unlike others in the community, Akhom isn't ill; they serve out of devotion to Neb.

**What They Want.** "Neb guards the passage of death, and this is a service I can do for those who prepare for death. One day, I shall also begin to walk that path."

**Stoic Host.** They know their time will come as Neb decides; until then, they do their best for the village and any guests of the Inn. The work is exhausting, and it consumes all of their waking time; it gives them little joy.

## MORTUARY TEMPLE

The sides of the quarry have holes at various heights, places where stone has been removed. A series of them on the lowest level have been converted for use by the resident priestess of Neb so that the dead may be prepared properly before burial. Kawab (kuh-WAHB), a priestess who oversees rituals conducted at small shrine nearby, leads those present who would listen in prayer to Neb.

Unless approached after Pawero's disappearance, she doesn't share her growing belief that he is being enticed to leave by a priest of the rival god Anu, the Judge of the Dead.



### KAWAB (KUN-WAHB)

*Human acolyte*

She is the priestess who oversees rituals for the cleansing of the soul that are conducted at the White Oasis shrine. She also prepares those who have died for burial. Though she is in her early thirties, she looks ten years older.

**What They Want.** To perform her duties well and serve Neb in the afterlife soon.

**Dour Fanatic.** She has no illusions that anyone is going to replace her, but that doesn't impact her devotion to her duties.



## EXPANDING THE ADVENTURE

Additional locations follow that can be explored before nightfall or the following day as the characters try to find Pawero.

**Exchange.** When someone dies, if they have not left instructions, then their property ends up here. People bring items and exchange them for what they need. There are a number of useless items, at least as far as the villagers are concerned, as gems are of little value. It is very disorganized, as so many have simply left instead of dying in place. Consider rolling once per character on the Horror trinket table (found in chapter 1 of *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*), ignoring those that are linked specifically to a character, or the Trinket list in the *Player's Handbook*. There are also mundane items made from local materials. Sabaf (Suh-BAF), a warrior whose team failed a mission for the Darklord Ankhtepot and was cursed with a wasting disease, oversees the Exchange.

**Workshops.** More a series of rooms cut out of the wall of the quarry than a separate building, villagers come here if they need to make something for themselves or to trade. One room has chisels for stonework while another has planks with pegs for weaving reeds into rope or cords for basket making. Dedyet (DED-yet) is in the stonework shop attempting to repair the small mill used to turn millet into grain.

## MUSIC IN THE NIGHT

Unbeknownst to the characters, a mysterious figure named Anatsu'Peh emerges each night and, using his reed pipe, lures residents of River's Shelter to the nearby limestone quarry. There, they are slain and raised as undead.

Deep in the night, characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 (18 if asleep) or higher hear the haunting sounds of a reed pipe being played in the distance, though they can't discern the music's source or direction.

Characters looking out of their window into the sleeping village see a group of four strangely dressed people with elaborate, amber headdresses walk into a nearby home—the same residence that Pawero entered. Moments later, the candle burning in his window goes out.

## PAWERO'S RESIDENCE

If characters investigate (whether they do so immediately or in the morning), they discover the modestly furnished home unoccupied. The candle on the windowsill is marked to denote the passage of time, but appears to have been extinguished before burning away completely. The only trace of the musician or the visitors is a small shard of amber beside Pawero's bed, and the door leading into the alleyway behind his home, slightly ajar.

## TREASURE

Pawero's fine harp, *Sensurset's Lament* (a *Mac-Fuirmidh cittern*), rests against the wall by his bed. Characters also find an oblong, finger-length piece of amber resting on the pillow of the reed mattress in a corner of the single room.





## PART 2:

# THE ALLURE OF THE AFTERLIFE

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

The following morning, the characters find that Pawero, one of the residents they spoke to the day before, has gone missing (though they may learn this during the night of his disappearance). In their investigations as to Pawero's whereabouts, the characters learn that many residents disappear during the night, but no one recognizes the description of the people wearing amber headdresses.

**Themes:** Helplessness, bided time, willfully unaware

## QUESTIONING THE VILLAGERS

Many residents are at the oasis ritually cleansing themselves or fetching water, while others tend to chores around the settlement. They have no problem answering questions, so long as the characters don't interfere with their tasks. Similarly, they don't care if the characters investigate Pawero's residence (see part 1).

## NPC INFORMATION.

A few dozen people (most are **commoners**) are in the village (not including the two women who went out to work in the fertile gardens before the heat of the day). Speaking to them, the characters can learn one of the following details per NPC spoken to:

- It is a bit odd, sometimes people just seem to disappear.
- Ahomse' originally had a servant with him who claimed there was a festival being held near here; he could tell because the music would wake him. He disappeared shortly after that.
- No one else has heard any music late at night.
- Besides being cold at night, the desert has many dangers, and it is easy to get lost.
- Maybe the missing people found some place else to live, it matters not to me.

If the characters approach Kawab, the acolyte knows that the disappearances happen in patterns: one a night for seven to nine consecutive nights, followed by a lapse of varying lengths. Pawero marks the sixth disappearance, so it stands to reason that someone else will disappear tonight. A character with a passive Wisdom (Insight) score of 15 or higher detects concern in her voice—some aspect of this worries her. If pressed, Kawab expresses that without the proper rites, the dead (if they are, in fact, dead) won't be able to serve Ankhtepot if he has need, and she will somehow be found to blame for it. She is also concerned that a rival priest is enticing villagers away in an effort to lessen her standing with her god.

Akhom, on the other hand, isn't concerned at all; the disappearances are why they began partaking in ritual cleansing. While they don't feel their purposes have been fulfilled, neither did some of the others who have gone missing.

## LYING IN WAIT

The characters have most of the day to plan how they are going to be able to observe what happens when a resident goes missing.

The light from the full moon bathes the village as a haunting melody begins. As the piper weaves their tune, tall forms walk toward a nearby house. In the light of the moon, amber stones glint from their elaborate headdresses. Each figure carries a falchion on their back.

Shortly after entering the home, the visitors emerge with the occupant calmly walking between them.

## CREATURE INFORMATION

These are the seven **sacred dead** sent by Anatsu'Peh to gather people that he later raises as zombies to work in his quarry. Three in front, the villager and one dread warrior in the middle, and three behind. They ignore taunts and only engage if attacked or someone tries to stop the villager.

Though afraid, the villager (a halfling commoner) is at peace—Neb has finally come for them. They plead with characters intent on "rescuing" them, and may resist with violence; in their eyes, their suffering is finally at an end.

### WHAT DO THE CHARACTERS DO?

Hopefully, they follow the group out of the village to discover who is doing this and why. Perhaps the sacred dead are the connection they were sent to find. If they decide to fight, survival is very chancy as this would be a deadly encounter. They also risk not learning anything of value—the sacred dead yield no clues.

There is little need for stealth unless the characters want to be closer than 30 feet.

## HABOOB

As they follow the strange visitors, the characters encounter a sandstorm.

The group takes the path that leads out of the village toward the northeast. The winding path narrows and is rarely more than a few feet across. High canyon walls rise 30 to 40 feet above you, blocking the moon's silvery light.

Fortunately, the strange visitors' footprints are easy to follow on the sandy ground; unfortunately, you hear the wind whistle as it picks up speed and clouds cover the sky. Without much other warning, a wall of blowing sand consumes you!





The characters have been traveling for a half hour when wind-whipped sand swirls around them, deafening and blinding any creatures within. At the beginning of their turn on every third round, each character must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. If successful, they're able to push on through the abrading wind, though a creature that fails the saving throw by five or more falls prone takes 3 (1d6) slashing damage. Flying creatures make this saving throw with disadvantage. Characters that try and find shelter to hunker down behind make the saving throw with advantage. At the end of their round, characters must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or swallow a mouth full of sand. If they fail, they have the poisoned condition until the sand stops blowing. The blowing sand continues for one minute.

After the wind stops and the sand settles (after another minute), there is no trace of the visitors. Anyone who was prone discovers sand inside their gear (which is an annoyance but does not otherwise affect their supplies).

The undead creatures continued walking though the wind, carrying the human. While the sand didn't slow them, a few small pieces of amber dislodged from their headdresses, and individual finger or toe bones are found nearby, clueing the party into the fact that the creatures are undead and the direction they were going. Characters with a feature or trait that pertains to this situation should be allowed to showcase it.





## PART 3: DESCENT INTO DARKNESS

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

The characters have lost the sacred dead but track them towards a vast limestone quarry ahead. There, the characters must navigate a field of quarried stone and construction materials. They also encounter a group of sacred dead.

**Themes:** Exploration, surprise, improvisation, and death

### THE PIPER'S QUARRY

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

The narrow canyon curves once again and then opens to a large quarry with walls towering up 40 feet. The moonlight dimly illuminates the large, oddly shaped white stones, crates, and other equipment blocking the view deeper into the area.

### AREA INFORMATION

The quarry has the following general features.

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

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

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

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

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

**Large White Stones.** The two large stones are covered in a fine coat of sand and dust. One is roughly the shape of

a pyramid, 6 feet wide on each side, and reaching 6 feet in height. The other, larger stone shows signs of chisel work, but the edges are still rounded, and it is 15 feet tall.

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

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

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

**Traps.** In addition to the undead creatures and various insects, the quarry is trapped. The traps are sprung by pressure plates, tripwires, and other mundane triggers. Place triggers in the area where you feel it best.

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

### CREATURE INFORMATION

Aside from the **scorpions** and the **swarm of centipedes** found above, there are four **sacred dead** shambling around the room. The halfling commoner lies atop one of the sarcophagi, likely dead.



### ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

**Weak:** Remove one **dread warrior** and one limestone sphere

**Strong:** Add one **dread warrior** and one **swarm of centipedes**

The sacred dead attack if the characters trigger a trap or approach within 10 feet of a sarcophagus. At the end of each round, a powerful wind fills the quarry. Roll a d6; if the result is odd, sand swirls in the western half of the map, totally obscuring the area. If the result is even, the eastern half of the map is obscured.

### TREASURE

A *potion of greater healing* is found packed in one of the crates (provided the characters look).

## WRAP-UP: THE PIPER REVEALED

Upon defeating the sacred undead, Anatsu'Peh reveals himself.

The portcullis grinds open, and a dark-skinned man emerges, dressed in simple linen, with black, oiled hair festooned with amber jewelry.

The man plays a long, discordant note on a reed pipe and the sarcophagi burst open, revealing, among others, Pawero—all obviously undead.

The pitiable undead groan aloud in unison, "Anatsu'Peh."

The story continues in RMH-04 *The Amber Secret*.

### INVESTIGATION JOURNAL

Provide each player with a copy of the Investigation Journal (handout 2). Before the session is over, each player must choose which of the items found during the adventure they'd like to keep, and line out others.





# DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure.

## ALANIK REY

*Elf investigator*

Alanik (uh-LAHN-ick RAY) is confident and insightful, a shrewd investigator, and one of the most well-traveled mortals in the Domains of Dread. Alanik is a master of insights and deduction; he can learn details about others after a few moments of meeting them. For example, he can almost instantaneously deduce a character's native domain from their accent and mannerisms. An accidental fall during an investigation caused a spinal injury that paralyzed Alanik's legs. He uses a custom wheelchair that he created with the assistance of his husband, Arthur Sedgwick.

**What They Want.** Alanik's concern at the moment is discovering the fate of the investigators sent to Barovia.

**No Loose Ends.** Having solved Radaga's disappearance, he's moved on to investigate the reasons behind it. More information on Alanik can be found in *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.

## KABE WHIPPOORWILL

*Halfling mist walker*

Secretly a member of the Keepers of the Feather (a fact known to Alanik only), Kabe (KAYB WIP-er-will) is Alanik's scout, associate, and friend. A lightfoot halfling with a quick smile and a mean right-hook, Kabe possesses a dark gift that allows them to traverse the Domains of Dread. Acting as both a ferry for the characters and a field contact, they're an invaluable member of the investigative team.

**What They Want.** Their line of work is dangerous, so they want to ensure everything goes smoothly. Losing an agent is never the desired outcome.

**Mist Walker.** Kabe is Alanik's scout, investigatory partner, friend, and an invaluable member of the team. They also work as the party's field contact.

## RADAGA

*Human scholar of the Dark Powers*

The initial object of the Order of the Guardians' search, Radaga (ruh-DAH-guh) is a scholar and arcanist who has delved far into the nature of the Dark Powers—some say a bit too far. She's brilliant but obsessive in her desire to catalogue the sinister, as well as a bit possessive of her knowledge. Radaga has olive skin and dark hair.

**What They Want.** Because Alanik suspects that Radaga was possessed by creatures unknown, he insists that she avoid venturing out into the world. For now, she uses her knowledge to search the Order's accumulated treasures for items she feels might assist Alanik's investigators with their work.

**Obsessed with Forbidden Knowledge.** She is angry and laments the loss of time due to her recent possession. She chomps at the bit to get back to her life and studies.

## PAWERO

*Human musician*

Pawero (puh-WEAR-oh) offended a priest in his youth—an insult that the priest thought appropriate to correct by removing Pawero's hand. Despite this, he carries his family's harp everywhere he goes, and he sits on the oasis's banks playing with one hand.

**What They Want.** To return to a place of balance between the music in his head and what he can play before he dies.

**Melancholy Dreamer.** Having retreated here to avoid further loss, he clings to his family's harp as he prepares his soul for death.

## AKHOM

*Human cook*

Akhom (AH-comb) is the closest thing to an innkeeper that exists in River's Shelter—they mind the inn simply because no one else appears to have an interest in doing so. They're a skilled cook and have a shrewd acumen for business.

**What They Want.** "Neb guards the passage of death, and this is a service I can do for those who prepare for death. One day, I shall also begin to walk that path."

**Stoic Host.** They know their time will come as Neb decides; until then, they do their best for the village and any guests of the Inn. The work is exhausting, and it consumes all of their waking time; it gives them little joy.

## KAWAB

*Human acolyte*

Kawab (kun-WAB) is the priestess who oversees rituals for the cleansing of the soul that are conducted at the White Oasis shrine. She also prepares those who have died for burial. Though she is in her early thirties, she looks ten years older.

**What They Want.** To perform her duties well and serve Neb in the afterlife soon.

**Dour Fanatic.** She has no illusions that anyone is going to come and replace her, but that does not impact her devotion to her duties.

## OTHER VILLAGERS

- Ahomse (AH-moe-SAY) is an old, wicked merchant who spends his time trying to wash away his guilt in the waters of the oasis.
- Amasis's (uh-MA-seez) body is covered in boils—a curse bestowed by a bitter rival in response to underhanded business dealings on Amasis's part. The curse can only be cured by paying restitution, which Amasis would



rather die than do. As such, he's resigned his soul to its fate and stares into the water, waiting for death to claim him.

- Mehnt (MENT) suffers from an illness that has weakened her muscles. Other members of the community assist her by carrying her to the oasis each morning. Mehnt worries that she hasn't sufficiently cleansed her soul and won't join her family in the afterlife. She assists the priestess Kawab to the extent that her body permits.
- Redij (ruh-DEEJ) is no more than twenty-five; she coughs up blood but has no other physical signs of ill health. She carries a silken handkerchief.
- Henete (huh-NET-tay) has been here a long time; she killed a powerful person and has been in hiding ever since. She has expected someone to come and arrest (or kill) her at some point, but they haven't yet. She has learned what plants in the marsh are edible and harvests food for the village. She and Joba supply most of the raw foodstuffs that the village uses.
- Joba (YO-buh), another of River's Shelter "caretakers," wears a sleeveless linen tunic over their thin frame. Their work with the plants in the marshes has stained the tunic in a motley of colors.





# CREATURE STATISTICS

## KAWAB (ACOLYTE)

Medium humanoid (any race)

**Armor Class** 10  
**Hit Points** 9 (2d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Skills** Medicine +4, Religion +2  
**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** any one language (usually Common)  
**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Spellcasting.** Kawab is a 1st-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Kawab has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*  
1st level (3 slots): *bless, cure wounds, sanctuary*

### ACTIONS

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

## CROCODILE

Large beast

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 19 (3d10 + 3)  
**Speed** 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

**Skills** Stealth +2  
**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

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

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.  
*Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

## COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race)

**Armor Class** 10  
**Hit Points** 4 (1d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** any one language (usually Common)  
**Challenge** 0 (10 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

### ACTIONS

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

### UNDEAD CROCODILE

This creature uses the crocodile stat block, but it is an undead creature immune to poison damage and the poisoned condition. It also has the Undead Fortitude trait:

**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.

## IBIS (VULTURE)

Medium beast

**Armor Class** 10  
**Hit Points** 5 (1d8 + 1)  
**Speed** 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)

**Skills** Perception +3  
**Senses** passive Perception 13  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 0 (10 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Keen Sight and Smell.** The vulture has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

**Pack Tactics.** The vulture has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the vulture's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally is not incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

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



## SACRED DEAD (DREAD WARRIOR)

Medium undead

**Armor Class** 18 (chain mail and shield)

**Hit Points** 37 (5d8 + 15)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Wis +3

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1 (2800 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the dread warrior 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 dread warrior drops to 1 hit point instead.

### ACTIONS

**Multi Attack.** The dread warrior makes two melee attacks.

**Battleaxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 +2) slashing damage if wielded with two hands

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

## SWARM OF CENTIPEDES

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (5d8)

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

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

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

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

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +2

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

**Paralyzing Bites.** A creature reduced to 0 hit points by a swarm of centipedes is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

### ACTIONS

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

## SCORPION

Tiny beast

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 1 (1d4 − 1)

**Speed** 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (−4)	11 (+0)	8 (−1)	1 (−5)	8 (−1)	2 (−4)

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** —

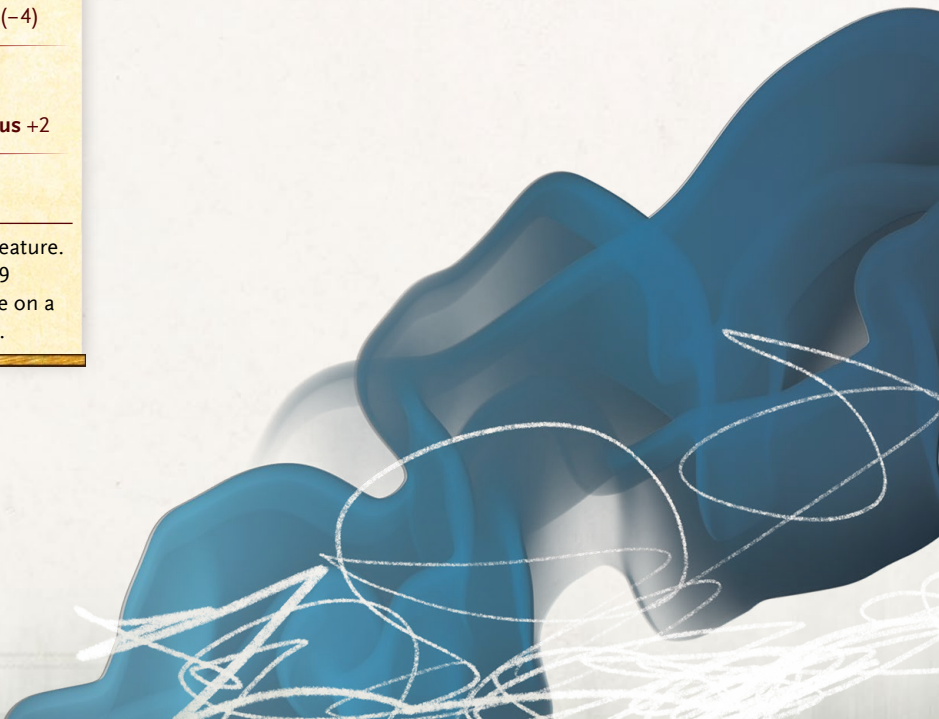
**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +2

### ACTIONS

**Sting.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.

*Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 9 Constitution saving throw, taking 4 (1d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.





# HANDOUT 1: MALIK'S DECANTER

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

## MALIK'S DECANTER

*Wondrous Item, uncommon*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Stream:** 1 hit dice

**Fountain:** 3 hit dice

**Geyser:** The user gains one level of exhaustion

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

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



## HANDOUT 2: INVESTIGATION JOURNAL

I do not envy the unfortunate souls of River's Shelter. But despite their unique fates, they are good people; it makes their plight that much more difficult to bear.

The fate of those "taken" by the bizarre undead creatures is regrettable, and those who would prey on the grieving are deserving of so much worse than mortals such as you or I are able to inflict upon them.

Hopefully, you will be able to glean some insight into the reasons behind these actions.

Yours in reason,

Alanik Ray

PS: I will hold onto the items you found at my chateau. Pray call upon me should you need it in the future.

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

- Potion of greater healing*
- Sensurset's Lament\**

\**Sensurset's Lament* functions as a *Mac-Fuirmidh cittern* which is found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. When used, roll a d6. On a result of 1, a string breaks, lashing out at a random creature within 5 feet of the instrument (+4 to hit). On a hit, the target takes 5 (1d10) slashing damage. The instrument can't be used if more than four of its strings are broken. Each dawn, the harp magically repairs any broken strings.



# APPENDIX A: MISTY VISIONS

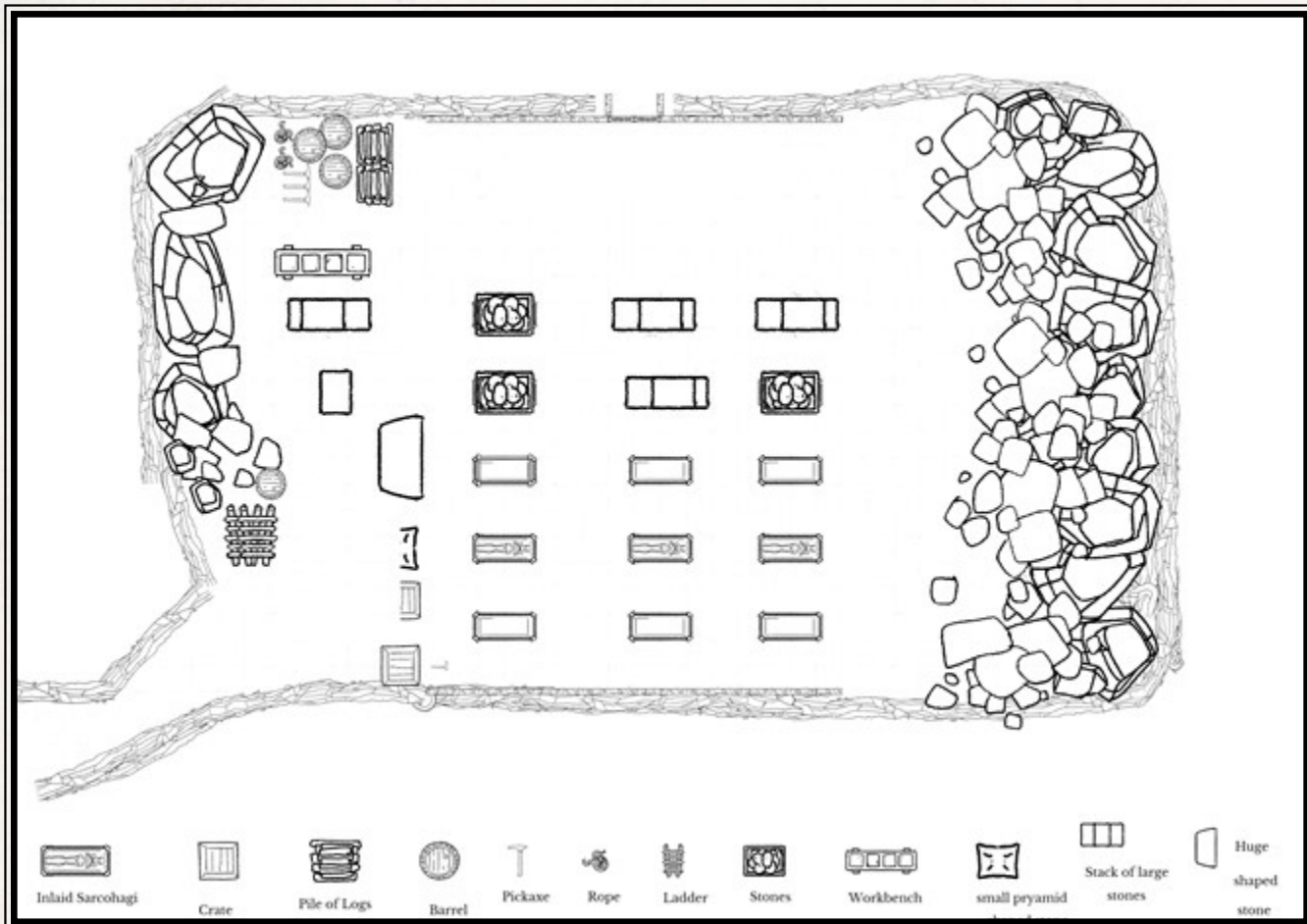
This adventure begins with the characters traversing the horrors of the misty borders of the various Domains of Dread. When instructed, roll on the table. If time permits, roll once for each character. Otherwise, roll once for the entire group. These effects end when the character leaves the domain.

## MISTY VISIONS

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



# APPENDIX B: QUARRY MAP





# APPENDIX C: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

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

## NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

Information about the Adventurers League, including finding places to play, organizing events, and a list of supporting resources and documents, can be found here: [https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal\\_general](https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal_general)

## PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

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

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

## PREPARING THE CHARACTERS

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

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

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

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

## NEW PLAYERS? NO PROBLEM!

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

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

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

## ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

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

### DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

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

## SAFETY TOOLS

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

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