



TORCHBEARER

The Dread Crypt of Skogenby

A starting adventure
by Thor Olausrud

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Published by the Burning Wheel, New York, NY 11102

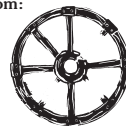
Digital Edition | First Release | Fall 2013

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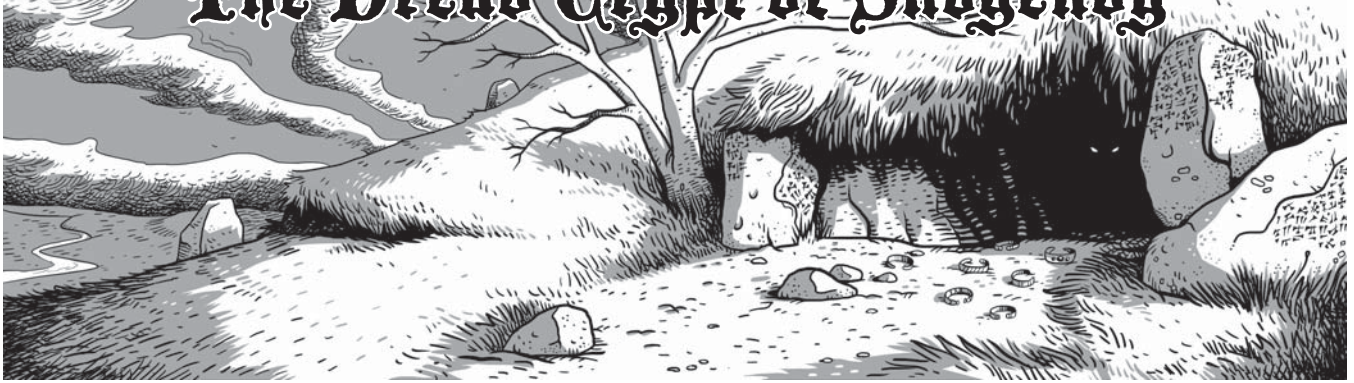


This game is based on and derived from:

Burning Wheel
and
MOUSE GUARD
ROLEPLAYING GAME



The Dread Crypt of Skogenby



Horror stalks the ill-fated village of Skogenby. Just a few days past, some youths clearing a new field for planting managed to move a stubborn boulder only to reveal an ancient rune-covered dolmen that framed a narrow tunnel into the earth. Jora, the bravest among them, dared to crawl through the narrow passage and disappeared down the tunnel, only to return a short time later. From the far side of the narrow passage she excitedly told her friends a tale of moldering crypts rich in grave goods, tossing out a set of fat, heavy silver arm rings as proof. But as she was crawling from the tunnel, she was abruptly pulled back into the crypt with a bloodcurdling scream.

Jora's companions fled as quickly as their legs would carry them. But horror followed them, for now some dread thing haunts the village at night, slaying but leaving no marks save a look of terror.

The people of Skogenby are desperate. Perhaps you can help them appease the ancient evil that stalks them. Or perhaps the lure of treasure is stronger. Whatever your goal, the Dread Crypt of Skogenby awaits.

Introductory Adventure

The Dread Crypt of Skogenby is an introductory adventure for *Torchbearer*. It is designed for novice players and GMs, but should provide enough challenge to make it interesting for veteran dungeoners & dragonslayers. It's designed for three to five players and a GM to complete in one to two sessions. A cleric, elf and/or magician would be very useful in this adventure—clerics especially offer a number of useful options—but none of them are strictly necessary. It's possible no one in the party will have skills like *Lore Master* or *Theologian*, but there's always *Beginner's Luck*!

As the GM, you'll want to read the adventure through at least once before running it.

Setup

Usually the character who dug up the lead for the next adventure assumes the leader role for that adventure. But if this is the group's first game of *Torchbearer*, the players need to choose a leader for this adventure now. Everyone in the group should offer suggestions and participate, but if there's ever a disagreement about how to proceed during the adventure, the leader has the final say.

Tell the party leader that the village elders of Skogenby have explained the problem: After Jora disappeared, Marius told the village elders the story of what happened and gave them one arm ring. The others he left on the ground at the entrance of the tomb. None of the villagers were brave enough to enter the crypt to find out what had happened to the girl. Then something evil began to stalk the village at night, breaking into homes and leaving the inhabitants dead, seemingly of fright. Each time it has been the family of one of the children that was with Jora that day. The elders give the party the arm ring Jora had found and beg them to destroy or appease the awakened evil before sending you off with directions to the crypt.

Take note of which character takes the silver arm ring. It is hand (worn) 1 or pack 1 and worth 2D of cash. The character carrying the ring may be at risk of possession once the monster at the crypt's heart becomes aware of the adventurers in her domain.

Goals

Instruct the players to write their goals now or choose from our examples:

I WILL DISCOVER WHAT HAPPENED TO JORA.

I WILL BRING JORA OR HER REMAINS BACK TO HER PARENTS.

I WILL DETERMINE THE SOURCE OF THE EVIL THAT STALKS SKOGENBY.

I MUST DRIVE OUT THE EVIL SPIRITS FROM THE CRYPT.

I MUST APPEASE THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD.

I WILL LOOT THIS PLACE FOR ALL IT'S WORTH.

I WILL IMPRESS MY COMPANIONS WITH MY BRAVERY.



A Note for the GM

In crafting this adventure, I have attempted to imagine the actions players are likely to take and provide appropriate obstacles and possible failure consequences if the rolls fail. I have drawn from the Ability & Skill Factors chapter to set these obstacles. However, the obstacles are not a checklist; they're merely some of the possibilities. Invariably, your players will attempt some action I haven't anticipated. When that happens, consider which ability or skill is likely to cover that action and use the Ability & Skill Factors chapter to set an appropriate obstacle and ask the players to roll the dice. It's easier than you think!

If the roll fails, give the characters a condition and let them succeed, or go with a twist—I've provided some Wandering Monsters below to guide you, but you could also use the Wandering Monsters chapter in *Torchbearer* to guide you or simply go with your gut.

Death and Danger

It's possible for you to kill the characters in the first conflict. Cavalier players will often charge heedlessly into a pack of skeletal tomb guardians and try to destroy them. That is a kill conflict. And even though the tomb guardians are Might 2, they can still kill the characters if they reduce the players' disposition to zero.

That said, play conservatively in early conflicts. Stick to Attacks and Maneuvers, don't bust out tricky Feint actions on the third action just yet.

Once the players confront Haathor-Vash, unleash your inner evilness. Play that conflict to win. There's nothing like slaying all of the characters in a glorious final confrontation!

Skogenby

The lonely village of Skogenby sits on an infrequently used byway connected to the Post Road, about a day's travel from the House of the Three Squires. It butts up against the verge of a vast spruce forest in the foothills of the Iron Mountains, and its stoic, hardworking people eke a meager living from the stony earth. Skogenby is the fief of Lady Gry, a vassal-knight in the service of Earl Jermond the Lamé. She is largely an absentee landlord, leaving the village to fend for itself.

Regardless, the focus of this adventure is the crypt. Don't linger in the village, and certainly don't let this turn into an investigation scenario. The villagers tell all they know and willingly hand over anything the characters ask for—including the silver arm ring.

Skogenby Laws

- ⊕ All inhabitants of Skogenby must work Lady Gry's lands 2 days out of every 7 (Ob 2 Peasant test)
- ⊕ At the conclusion of the adventure, Skogenby will enact a new law: Defiling a tomb is a capital crime, punishable by public execution

Hidden Information

There's a lot of hidden information in this scenario, like the fact that the whole crypt complex is a temple intended to help an ancient hero ascend to become an Immortal Lord, or the ways in which the Chamber of Ablutions and the Chamber of Vigils can be used. The information has been put there for players to discover, but only if they are cunning or lucky. None of the information is necessary to complete the adventure. I urge you not to give the information away for free. Let it be a reward for clever and inventive play.

Background on the Crypt

The tomb discovered by Jora and her friends is ancient. It was crafted a thousand years ago or more by a people long since forgotten. It is the tomb of Haathor-Vash, a barbarian hero who entombed herself alive, along with her consorts, slaves and bodyguards, as part of a ritual to make herself a Lord. Whether she succeeded or not is left to you, the GM, to decide. But at least a part of her spirit lingers here in her spirit house and enforces a terrible curse on any who would rob it.

That's where Jora comes in. By taking the arm rings, she brought the curse upon herself. And worse, her friend Marius picked up one of the rings when she tossed them from the tomb, unwittingly carrying it with him back to Skogenby and spreading the curse there.

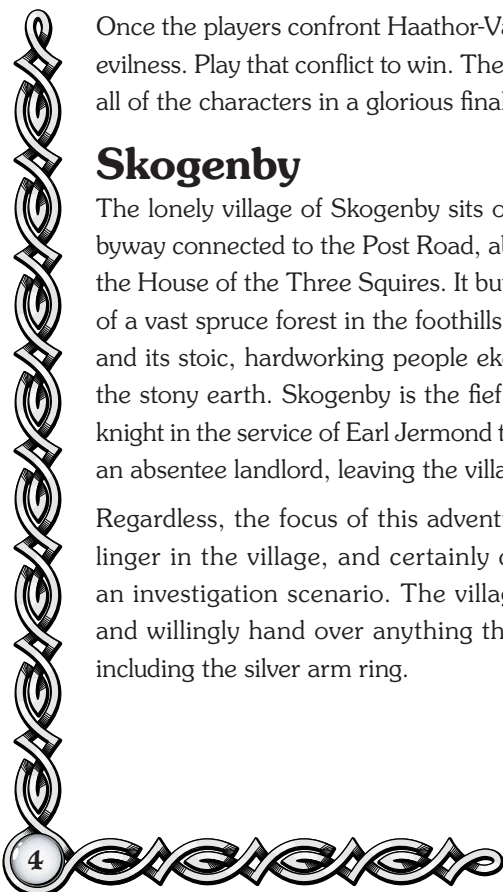
Jora still lives, for now, but has been possessed by the spirit of Haathor-Vash. Whether Haathor-Vash is an evil scourge or merely vengeful is also left to the GM to decide. Regardless, the spirit is using the possessed girl's body to leave the tomb at night to search Skogenby for her missing treasure, draining the life of any villagers that disturb her search.

In the meantime, Haathor-Vash has done little to care for the body she has possessed. It has been several days since Jora last ate or drank, and she will not survive much longer.

Dealing with Haathor-Vash

The players have several options for resolving this mess:

Slaying Jora will bring the murders to a halt for a time, though the spirit of Haathor-Vash will remain awake and her anger and need for vengeance will grow. Any skeletons she has animated will remain. Perhaps her vengeance will erupt again many adventures later—skeleton apocalypse, anyone?



The players may capture Jora and drag her into the purifying light of the sun, breaking Haathor-Vash's hold upon her. The spirit will flee back to the tomb. However, much like slaying Jora, this will leave Haathor-Vash's spirit awake, restless and plotting vengeance.

Returning the stolen ring may allow the players to attempt to appease the spirit with a Convince conflict if they are willing to leave behind any items they may have stolen from the dead themselves. If successful, Haathor-Vash will release Jora and return to a fitful slumber until some other grave robber chances upon her spirit house.

The players may banish/abjure the spirit from the tomb, breaking the curse and allowing them to abscond with the grave goods.

The players may come up with a completely different plan! You'll have to decide whether it can work and what will be required to enact it.

You'll find stats for Haathor-Vash at the end of the scenario.

Wandering Monsters

- ⊕ *Tomb Guardians*. 1d3+2 skeletons armed with spears and shields. One of them wears chain armor
- ⊕ *Damaged gear*. Some important bit of gear—rope, a grappling hook, a lantern, a backpack—is broken, ripped or otherwise damaged as a result of the failed test
- ⊕ *Eerie wind*. A stray gust of wind extinguishes torches and candles
- ⊕ *Creeping Ooze*. An alien slime, drawn by the necromantic energies in the tomb, drops on the unwary
- ⊕ *Corpse Candles*. These ghostly fires wink in and out of existence

Tomb Guardians

Might: 2	Nature (Undead): 3
Descriptors: Guarding, Watching, Pursuing	
Conflict Dispositions	Conflict Weapons
Kill: 5	Kill Weapons Defend: +2D, <i>Shield</i> Maneuver: +1D, <i>Spear</i>
Drive Off: 8	Drive Off Weapons Defend: +2D, <i>Shield</i> Maneuver: +1D, <i>Spear</i>
Flee: 4	Flee Weapons Feint: +1s, <i>Heavy Tread</i>
Armor: The leader wears chain armor, the rest are unarmored.	
Instinct: Never leave the tomb unguarded.	
Special: Some tomb guardians also use swords. All are immune to magic that affects the senses or the mind. Can only be engaged with the listed conflicts. They are immune to or ignore all others.	

Creeping Ooze

Might: 4	Nature: 6
Descriptors: Creeping, Dissolving, Smothering	
Conflict Dispositions	Conflict Weapons
Drive Off: 10	Drive Off Weapons Attack: +2s, <i>Mindless Hunger</i> Defend: +2D, <i>Hydra</i>
Trapped: 13	Trapped Weapons Attack: +1s, <i>Pseudopods</i> Defend: +1D, <i>Unflinching</i> Maneuver: +2D, <i>Oozing Mass</i>
Flee: 6	Flee Weapons None
No other conflicts allowed	
Instinct: Creep into a crevice and drop down on unsuspecting prey.	
Special: Bladed weapons count as fighting unarmed against this creature. Creeping ooze attacks when characters are trapped and can't flee. See below.	

Corpse Candles

These ghostly lights, the spirits of Haathor-Vash's slaves, flicker in and out of existence in the darkness of the crypt, ready to lure trespassers to their doom.

Trigger

Simply gazing at a corpse candle is enough to snare an unwary adventurer.

Trap

Anyone who looks upon a corpse candle must make an Ob 3 Will test.

Suggested Will failure result (choose one):

Twist: The character is entranced by the ghostly fire and will follow the corpse candle, which either:

- ⊕ Lures the character into an ambush of the tomb guardians in areas 3 or 7
- ⊕ Draws the character to the basin in area 4, where the character attempts to drown himself or herself. If you invoke the drowning twist, drowning characters must pass an Ob 4 Health test. Success indicates the character breaks free of the compulsion before suffering harm

Suggested Health failure results (choose one):

- ⊕ *Condition:* afraid and the character breaks free of the corpse candle's enchantment
- ⊕ *Condition:* The character becomes sick from sucking down a lungful of water but breaks free of the enchantment

Resisting the Corpse Candles

A character who successfully resists the lure of the corpse candles may attempt to restrain a companion who has been entranced. This is a dangerous proposition, as entranced characters will fight tooth and claw to follow the corpse



candle. Restraining an entranced character requires a versus Fighter test. The GM rolls for the entranced character, who does not gain a test for advancement from the roll.

Suggested Fighter failure result:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Angry, but you successfully restrain the entranced character until he or she snaps out of it

Using the Wandering Monsters

Use this list as inspiration if you need a twist for a failed test, but don't hesitate to use a twist of your own if you have a better idea! Treat these potential twists as a guide rather than as a prescriptive list. Also, make sure to throw in a few conditions here and there. Conditions often hurt, but they keep the action moving by allowing the characters to continue making progress. Try to find a healthy balance between twists and conditions. If you focus too much on conditions, players will feel that they're constantly getting beat up and ground down. If you focus too much on twists, players will feel that they never make any progress.

Tomb Guardian Twist

The tomb guardians make great general-purpose twists, especially if you and the players are hungry for a bit of action. You can use them multiple times if necessary. Keep in mind that tomb guardians have a Might of 2, so adventurers will receive +1s to tied or successful tests against them. If the

players successfully deal with this twist, make sure to roll on Loot Table 2 (*Torchbearer* page 144) to determine what loot they've won. Note that unless weapons or armor come up on the Loot roll, the tomb guardians' weapons and armor are useless, rusted junk.

Damaged Gear Twist

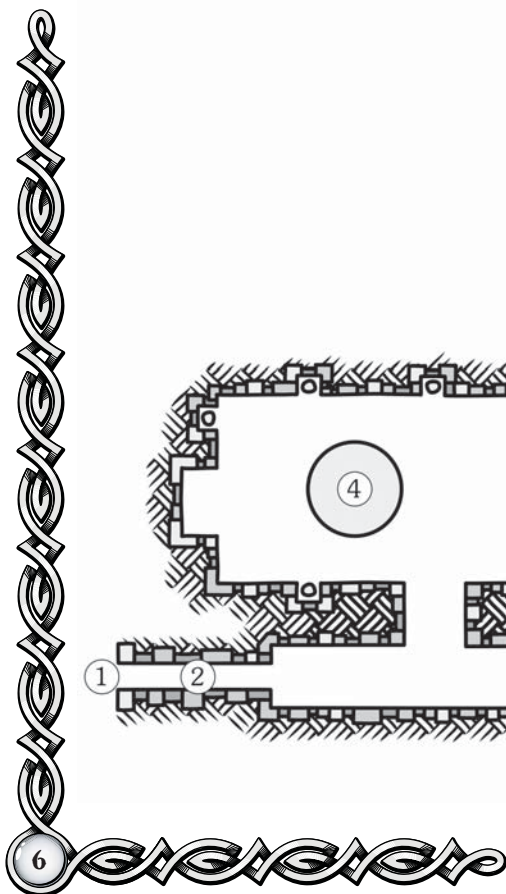
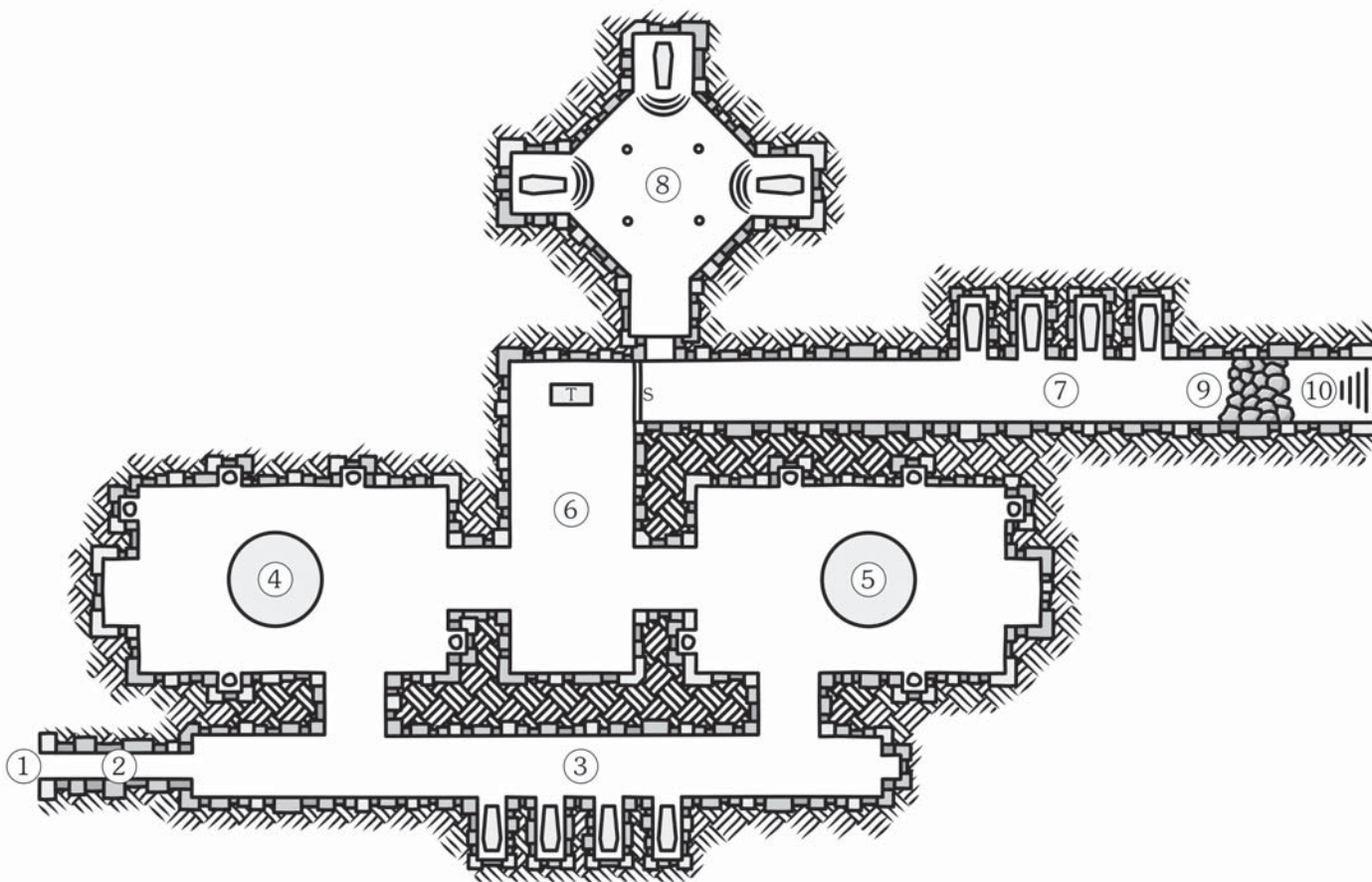
Damaged gear is another excellent general-purpose twist. It's especially relevant any time the players fail a test that relies on a useful bit of gear.

Eerie Wind Twist

The eerie wind is a useful twist for extinguishing the group's light, but save it for when the party has gotten wet, is attempting to outrun an enemy or otherwise in a tense situation that wouldn't allow them to simply stop for a moment and rekindle their light.

Creeping Ooze Twist

The creeping ooze makes a great and horrific—if dangerous—encounter, but it really only works once. I suggest using it in a failed test involving the font in area 4, but don't hesitate to use it in some other place if you think it would be fun or if the characters manage not to encounter it in area 4. If the players successfully deal with this twist, make sure to roll on Loot Table 2 (*Torchbearer* page 144) to determine what loot they've won.



Corpse Candles Twist

Finally, corpse candles make for a nice creepy twist, especially as twists for tests that involve magic or miracles. Corpse candles carry no loot—they're a trap, not a monster. Also, note that corpse candles can eat up turns in a flash. A failed Will test could lead to a versus Fighter test leading to a Health test—that's potentially 3 turns!

Map Key

1. The Rune-Covered Dolmen

The sky is dark and overcast, threatening rain. Two rune-scrawled standing stones capped with a table stone, all covered in crumbling soil, frame a narrow, forbidding passage into the earth. A tortuously twisted yew tree squats above the passage, its serpentine roots visible along the ceiling of the low tunnel. A chill seems to emanate from the stones.

Inspecting the Tunnel

A cursory inspection down the tunnel to the crypt reveals scratch marks in the earth underneath the dolmen, as if someone struggled mightily but was dragged inside. There is also a broken fingernail, torn at the root.

If a character looks for tracks or other signs of recent disturbance, ask the player to make an Ob 2 Scout test. Success reveals that while there are signs of a number of individuals in the area, most of the tracks are older. However, there are also more recent signs that something or someone has emerged from the crypt and returned several times.

Suggested Scout test failure results (choose one):

- ⊕ *Condition:* Afraid and the character is able to read the signs
- ⊕ *Twist:* A chilling rain begins to fall and obscures the tracks. The rain is now a factor in any tests made out of doors and anyone attempting to act out of doors must make an Ob 2 Health test or take the exhausted or sick condition (GM's choice). Note: The rain factor is already included in the Ob 2 Health test, so don't increase the obstacle to 3

Inspecting the Dolmen

If a character attempts to determine who made the dolmens or discern what they signify, call for an Ob 3 Lore Master test (enchanted places and magical phenomena). Success reveals that dolmens such as these are extremely old and typically signify a passage grave—a tomb for some ancient hero or chieftain—often sealed with potent wards to protect the treasures interred within.

Suggested Lore Master failure result:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Hungry and thirsty and the character recalls the lore

Reading the Runes

If a player wishes, they can examine the runes themselves using the Scholar skill (Ob 2, weird inscriptions). Success indicates that the character recognizes the runes as an ancient dead language—that can only be read by an elf or through magic.

The runes upon the standing stones are in a tongue so ancient that the Wisdom of the Sages spell (Ob 3 for a dead language) is required to read them. Elves may also attempt to remember the tongue with an Ob 4 Nature test. Success reveals that this is the resting place of Haathor-Vash, a chieftain, hero or priest—it's not clear—entombed alive with her consorts, slaves and bodyguards as part of a ritual to become a Lord. None know whether she succeeded or failed. The runes describe a potent curse that will fall upon any who plunder the crypt or disturb Haathor-Vash's meditations.

Suggested Scholar, Nature or Arcanist failure result:

- ⊕ *Twist:* A lightning bolt blazes from the heavens and strikes the rune stone, cracking it asunder and destroying its message.

Taking a Grave Rubbing

A savvy player may choose to take a rubbing of the runes and research them in the town phase after obtaining access to a library. Making a rubbing is a Good Idea and doesn't require a test. Deciphering the runes with access to a library is an Ob 1 Scholar test.

Suggested Scholar failure result:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Afraid and the character is able to decipher the runes.

Searching the Area

If an enterprising player wishes to search the area around the crypt, skip ahead to area **10, the Hidden Stair** and the "Examining the Exterior of the Crypt" heading.

2. A Tight Squeeze

A narrow passage descends into the earth, tight enough that you have to crawl on your belly to snake your way through. The air is dank and chill, redolent with the scent of decay. You can see scabrous, white lesions upon the yew roots that penetrate the ceiling above you.

The Blight

If someone investigates the white lesions on the roots of the yew tree, explain that it seems to be suffering from a blight. Determining the cause of the blight calls for an Ob 2 Lore Master test (curses and halfbreeds). It's a rot caused by the charnel magic that suffuses this place. Such energies are often encountered where the undead lurk.



Suggested Lore Master failure result:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Hungry and thirsty and give the players the information

Crawling Through the Passage

As long as the characters aren't under any time pressure, crawling through this passage into and out of the tomb is an arduous process but does not require a test. However, if the characters are being chased or otherwise have to escape the tomb in a hurry, call for a Dungeoneer test. It's an Ob 4 Dungeoneer test for a single character to make the passage in a hurry. It's an Ob 6 Dungeoneer test to get the entire party through in a hurry. Don't forget to apply a factor (+1 Ob) to anyone wearing a backpack. If a player is making a test for the entire party, only apply the factor once. Don't add +1 Ob for every character who's wearing a backpack.

Suggested Dungeoneer failure results:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Exhausted, afraid or injured are excellent results for failure in this test; give them the condition and allow them to escape
- ⊕ *Twist:* Losing gear (that backpack gets ripped right off your shoulders!) or being grabbed from behind and dragged back into the tomb

3. The Vault of Skulls

The walls of this long, narrow passage are honeycombed with small niches, each set with a skull, yellowed with age. It radiates menace and a low, nearly inaudible hum tugs at your senses, as if the thousands of skulls are whispering to each other. You see the opening of a passageway in the northern wall, followed by four shadowy alcoves in the southern wall, each an arch formed from human thigh bones with a skull as the keystone. Just at the edge of your light, beyond the alcoves, you can make out another passageway in the northern wall at the far end of the corridor.

A tomb guardian lies at rest on a bier in each of the alcoves. They animate as soon as the characters approach. They burst forth from their alcoves, form in rank and begin to march in formation toward the characters, pale necromantic fire burning in their eye sockets.

If the players don't react immediately, prompt them to choose a course of action, but don't let them spend too much time debating.

A cleric may attempt to invoke the Fury of the Lords of Life and Death prayer against the tomb guardians. It is an Ob 2 Ritualist test to affect a single skeleton with the prayer, +1 Ob for each additional tomb guardian. If the cleric seeks to affect all four skeletons with the prayer, it's an Ob 5 Ritualist test. Successfully meeting the obstacle of the prayer affects one

tomb guardian. Exceeding the obstacle affects a number of additional tomb guardians equal to the margin of success, but limited by the number of tomb guardians the cleric intended to affect. Affected tomb guardians must attempt to flee the cleric's wrath.

Suggested Ritualist failure result:

- ⊕ *Twist:* An eerie wind extinguishes candles and torches

Fighting the Tomb Guardians

If the players try to destroy the tomb guardians, it's a kill conflict. Use the stats in page 5. The tomb guardians will have a disposition of 8 (5 base, +3 for the three helpers).

If the players want to stand their ground and force the tomb guardians to retreat, it's a drive off conflict. The tomb guardians will have a disposition of 11.

Keep in mind that tomb guardians have Might 2. Since adventurers have Might 3, the PCs will have +1s to all tied and successful actions against tomb guardians in kill, capture or drive off conflicts.

Two of the tomb guardians wear silver torcs about their necks. If the players successfully destroy the tomb guardians, the torcs can be recovered. They are worth 2D each (neck 1 or pack 1). Their armor and weapons are useless, rusted junk.

Fleeing the Tomb Guardians

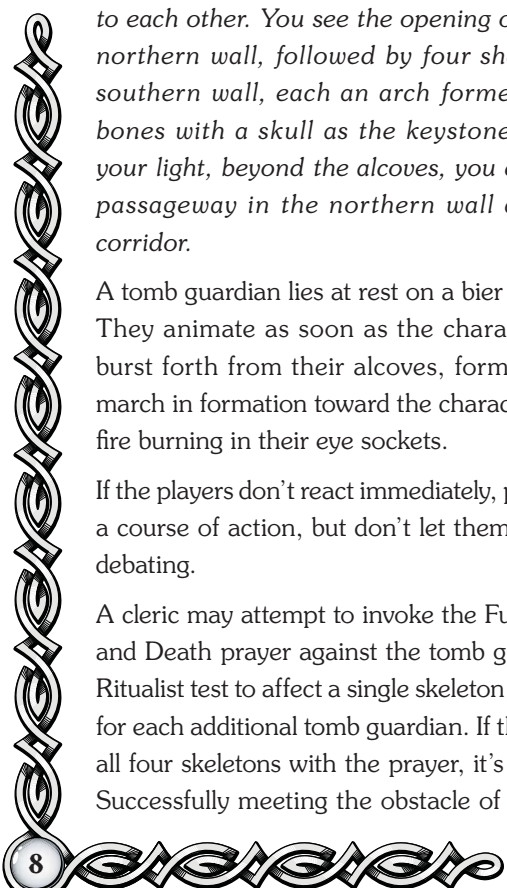
If the players decide to run from the tomb guardians, it's a flee conflict. The tomb guardians will have a disposition of 7. If the players win this conflict with a major compromise, I like to bring in the Tight Squeeze from area 2: The characters have momentarily broken away from the tomb guardians and must hurry through the passage if they want to complete their escape.

Run Skeleton, Run

If the players drive them off or otherwise force them to flee (with the Fury of the Lords of Life and Death prayer, for instance), the torcs go with the skeletons. Tomb guardians driven off in this manner will attempt to flee to the Secret Vault of Haathor-Vash in area 8. This will alert Haathor-Vash to the adventurers' approach.

Following the Tomb Guardians

Astute adventurers who follow fleeing tomb guardians will learn the location of Haathor-Vash's secret chamber. Note: While they aren't truly sapient beings, the tomb guardians know how to operate the secret door in area 6 without setting off the trap. Adventurers who watch them will also discover the secret.



Possession, Riding You Hard

Two turns after Haathor-Vash is alerted of the presence of intruders, she will attempt to use her possession ability to take control of a character that has stolen from her (anyone who is carrying the silver arm ring or a torc from a defeated tomb guardian). She can only possess one character at a time. Roll Target's Will vs. Haathor-Vash's Nature. Success indicates the character fights off Haathor-Vash's attempt at control and she may not attempt possession against the character again.

Suggested Will failure result:

- ⊕ *Twist:* The target loses free will. The GM directs the character's actions, though the player still rolls the dice if rolls are required. Exposure to sunlight will break Haathor-Vash's hold over the character

4. The Chamber of Ablutions

A wide, shallow stone font, about waist high, dominates this chamber. Water trickles into it from a spout shaped like a dragon, and spills over the edge onto a floor slick with slime. A dull black metallic ewer rests on the lip of the font. Statues, some of them whole, some of them crumbled and broken, stand in recessed niches along the walls. Another large recess in the western wall holds a large, flat-bottomed copper tub intricately etched in a strange and somewhat disturbing manner. A small niche at the southern end of the eastern wall holds what appears to be a pitted and blackened brazier, similarly etched.

Assessing the Chamber of Ablutions

Ascertaining the purpose of this room requires an Ob 3 Theologian test. This chamber was a place of purification, where those who would approach the Lords might take a ritual bath to lave away the pollution of mortal life. Postulants would use the ewer to fill the tub with purified water from the font before bathing with the aid of ritual attendants. They would then stand in the holy smoke emitted by the brazier while reciting purification prayers.

Suggested Theologian failure result:

- ⊕ *Twist:* A strange gust of wind extinguishes the lights and corpse candles flicker into existence in the room

The Purification Ritual

Reenacting the above purification ritual with the items here prior to a confrontation with Haathor-Vash would count as a weapon in a banish/abjure conflict. The purification would provide +2s to a successful Defend action once during the conflict. Reenacting the ritual requires an Ob 3 Ritualist test.

Suggested Ritualist failure result:

- ⊕ *Twist:* The character has singled himself or herself out for retribution by Haathor-Vash. Her symbol, a rearing horse breathing flame, appears in blue, heatless flame upon the character's forehead. It provides dim light for the character, but also grants Haathor-Vash +1s to Attack and Feint actions in kill, drive off and banish/abjure conflicts

Can I drink that water?

It is an Ob 1 Survivalist test to determine that the water in the font is potable. However, there are only four draughts worth of water in the basin. Once drunk or used to refill skins, the water in the font will replenish at a rate of one draught every five turns.

Suggested Survivalist failure result:

- ⊕ *Twist:* You may have assumed the slow trickle from the spout was due to mineral deposits clogging the pipes. Not so! A clear Creeping Ooze has been slowly oozing through the pipes and has hidden in the waters of the basin. The next person to attempt to get water from the basin will find themselves in a Trapped conflict with the ooze!

Examining the Ewer

Anyone who looks closely at the ewer will realize that it is highly tarnished silver (it's not enough to simply handle it; don't reveal the nature of the ewer unless the players specifically ask if they can tell what it's made of). The ewer is Pack 3 and is worth 3D of treasure.

A cleric who fills the ewer with water from the font may then turn the water into holy water with an Ob 2 Ritualist test. The water must be kept in the ewer (one effective use) to maintain its holy nature; pouring it into a waterskin or other container will nullify its properties.

Suggested Ritualist failure result:

- ⊕ *Twist:* The font is defiled and the water turns inky black before the characters' eyes. It is now poison

Examining the Statues

Determining the nature of the statues in the chamber requires an Ob 2 Theologian test. These are the Lords of Fate, the Lords of Life and Death, the Lords of Silence and the Two-Faced Lord—primal, unaffiliated powers. However, their appearance and symbolism are strange; these ancient people depicted the Lords very differently.

Suggested Theologian failure result:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Hungry and thirsty and the character discerns the nature of the statues



It's a Trap (for the undead)

This chamber is a shrine to the Immortal Lords of Fate, Life and Death, Silence and the Two-Faced Lord. A clever cleric player may lure undead creatures like the tomb guardians (or even Haathor-Vash!) into this chamber to call upon the Lords of Life and Death to combat the perversion of their order. Invoking the Fury of the Lords of Life and Death prayer before their shrine grants +2D to the Ritualist test if the cleric has recognized the statues.

5. The Chamber of Vigils

The walls in this room are wrapped in rotting blue silk draperies, some of which have fallen from their hooks and now lie piled upon the floor, revealing bare marble walls. What appears to be a large, circular copper-lined pit, perhaps a foot deep, takes up the center of this chamber like a massive bowl. Fine, powdery-gray dust—or maybe ash—half-fills it, and a thin coating of the stuff seems to lie upon everything else in here as well. Statues, some of them whole, some of them crumbled and broken, stand in recessed niches along the walls. Another large recess in the eastern wall contains a waist-high block of marble draped in more rotting silk, behind which are two statues with many faces locked in a titanic struggle. A small niche at the southern end of the western wall holds what appears to be a pitted and blackened censer.

Examining the Chamber of Vigils

Ascertaining the purpose of this room requires an Ob 4 Theologian test. A postulant intending to press a claim to become an Immortal Lord will spend days in meditation before an altar such as this, while attendants feed the fire pit in the center and burn incense in the censer.

Suggested Theologian failure result:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Hungry and thirsty and the character discerns the purpose of the chamber

Praying at the Altar

Spending a night in vigilant prayer before the altar of the Lords of Law and Chaos prior to a confrontation with Haathor-Vash counts as a weapon in a Banish/Abjure conflict. Doing so requires an Ob 3 Ritualist test. Successfully performing the ritual provides +2D to an Attack once during the conflict.

Suggested Ritualist failure result:

- ⊕ *Twist:* Your fumbling prayers anger the Lords and they curse you; the curse counts as a factor in all tests until you go to a town with a shrine, make an offering and pray

Examining the Statues

Determining the nature of the statues requires an Ob 2 Theologian test. The statues behind the altar are the Lords of Law and Chaos. The other niches show similar struggles: between the Lords of Valor and the Lords of Terror, the Lords of Plenty and the Lords of Want, the Lords of Battle and the Lord of Shields and the Lords of Creation and the Lords of Entropy. However, their appearance and symbolism are strange; these ancient people depicted the Lords very differently.

Suggested Theologian failure result:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Hungry and thirsty and the character discerns the nature of the statues

6. The Altar of Ascension

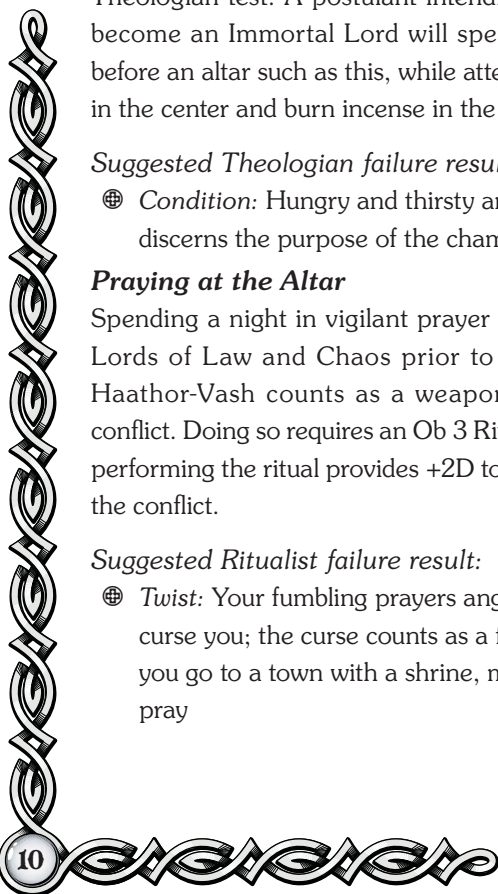
The walls and ceiling of this narrow, vaulted chamber are shaped entirely of bones. An aisle runs along the center of the room, flanked by two narrow sideboards, about waist high, which bear a variety of amphorae, kraters and goblets. On the far side of each sideboard, running the length of the walls, is a wide raised shelf, or possibly a couch, upon which many bones lie as if their owners had died while reclining there. A series of seven strange symbols are etched into the floor, running up to an elaborately carved marble sarcophagus that bears upon it the image of a stern and magisterial woman. A number of urns and jars sit on the floor around the sarcophagus.

Examining the Symbols

The symbols in the floor correspond to no known language. Interpreting them requires an Ob 4 Lore Master test (magical and arcane symbols). The symbols represent seven grades of illumination that are part of the path to becoming an Immortal Lord. A sage or powerful hero would pay a great deal for this knowledge—it's worth 6D of cash. They can be transcribed onto paper using the Scholar skill (Ob 1 for weird inscriptions). They are, however, only useful to 10th level characters who are supported by massive cults and who are on the path to immortality themselves.

Suggested Lore Master and Scholar failure results:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Sick (the knowledge unhinges the character's mind) but the character is able to decipher the seven grades of illumination
- ⊕ *Twist:* The symbols flow up from the floor like a living thing and seep under the reader's fingernails, entering the body. The runes can be seen rippling across the character's skin and eyes, but they don't stay still long enough to be read. Perhaps they would cease their movements if the character were killed and flayed. A sage or powerful hero would pay a great deal for the resulting skin...



Opening the Sarcophagus

This is a false tomb intended to confuse any who seek to loot Haathor-Vash’s treasures. The urns and jars are filled with sand. Attempting to open the sarcophagus triggers a hidden spear trap.

Hidden Spear Trap

Eight spears have been hidden in the ceiling around the sarcophagus. Detecting the trap requires an Ob 3 Scout test.

The spears are launched from small holes in the ceiling. Moving the lid of the sarcophagus triggers the trap. Disarming it requires an Ob 4 Dungeoneer test, which involves rotating the lid off but leaving one corner in place so the stone nodule there remains depressed. Should the pressure on the nodule be released, it rises about a half-inch from the surface of the edge of the sarcophagus. There’s a gentle sliding sound as the trap works are triggered, and then the spears fall down from above.

Clever players may instead seek to block or cover the holes, perhaps by tearing up a cloak and jamming strips into the holes. They’ll need a way to reach the holes (perhaps one character stands on another’s shoulders), but consider it a Good Idea if the description seems plausible. If you don’t think it’ll work, shrug your shoulders and squint, “It might work, but I don’t know....”

If the trap is triggered, anyone who was attempting to help lift the lid of the sarcophagus must make an Ob 5 Health test.

Suggested Health failure result:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Injured. You manage to jump clear of the spears but are injured in the process. Anyone who already has the injured condition lifts the lid off of the sarcophagus and is killed in the process

Secret Door

The entrance to Haathor-Vash’s actual burial chamber has been hidden behind a secret door. Discovering the secret door into area 7 requires an Ob 3 Scout test. It consists of a circular portal that sinks into the wall and rolls aside when a skull and certain thigh bone are depressed.

Suggested Scout failure result:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Angry and you spot the door

Sleeping Dust Panel Trap

The door has been trapped with a sleeping dust reservoir, which can be detected with an Ob 5 Scout test.

The skull and thigh bone must be depressed at the same time to safely open the door. Pressing only one or the other activates the trap. Disarming the trap requires an Ob 3 Dungeoneer test to remove a false panel and disconnect the trigger that opens the reservoir.

If someone opens the door incorrectly, it activates a bellows above the door that blows the dust into the hallway. Anyone in the hall must pass an Ob 4 Health test. Success indicates the character managed to avoid breathing the dust.

Suggested Health failure results (choose one):

- ⊕ *Condition:* Exhausted but the character manages to avoid a full dose of the gas
- ⊕ *Twist:* The character falls into a deep slumber that lasts a number of turns equal to the margin of failure; sleeping characters can be awakened earlier with a series of hard slaps, but anyone awakened this way gains the exhausted condition

7. The Vault of Bone Flowers

The walls of this long, narrow passage are decorated with elaborate bone flowers—each a skull with bones radiating out from it to form intricate and beautiful if macabre patterns. There is a funereal silence here. A set of oak iron-banded double doors open to the north. There are four shadowy alcoves in the southern wall, each an arch formed of skulls and thigh bones stacked one atop the other. Sitting in each alcove is an ancient skeletal warrior, finger bones clasped about the haft of an iron axe.

You’re Not Thinking of Leaving, Are You?

These four skeletons are also tomb guardians. They animate as soon as the characters move down the hallway toward the rockfall. Each of the skeletons wears chain armor and carries a battle axe. They burst forth from their alcoves, form in rank and begin to march in formation toward the characters, pale necromantic fire burning in their eye sockets.

If the players don’t react immediately, prompt them to choose a course of action, but don’t let them spend too much time debating.

Tomb Guardians

Might: 2	Nature (Undead): 3
Descriptors: Guarding, Watching, Pursuing	
Conflict Dispositions	Conflict Weapons
Kill: 5	Kill Weapons Attack: +1s, Axe Defend: -1D, Axe
Drive Off: 8	Drive Off Weapons Attack: +1s, Axe Defend: -1D, Axe
Flee: 4	Flee Weapons Feint: +1s, Heavy Tread
Armor: Chain armor	
Instinct: Never leave the tomb unguarded.	
Special: All are immune to magic that affects the senses or the mind. Can only be engaged with the listed conflicts. They are immune to or ignore all others.	



Fury of the Lords of Life and Death

A cleric may attempt to invoke the Fury of the Lords of Life and Death prayer against the tomb guardians. It is an Ob 2 Ritualist test to affect a single skeleton with the prayer, +1 Ob for each additional tomb guardian. If the cleric seeks to affect all four skeletons with the prayer, it's an Ob 5 Ritualist test. Successfully meeting the obstacle of the prayer affects one tomb guardian. Exceeding the obstacle affects a number of additional tomb guardians equal to the margin of success. Affected tomb guardians must attempt to flee the cleric's wrath.

Suggested Ritualist failure result:

- ⊕ *Twist:* An eerie wind extinguishes candles and torches.

Fighting the Tomb Guardians

If the players try to destroy the tomb guardians, it's a kill conflict. The tomb guardians will have a disposition of 8 (5 base, +3 for the three helpers).

If the players want to stand their ground and force the tomb guardians to retreat, it's a drive off conflict. The tomb guardians will have a disposition of 11.

Keep in mind that tomb guardians have Might 2. Since adventurers have Might 3, the PCs will have +1s to all tied and successful actions against tomb guardians in conflicts.

Two of the tomb guardians wear a jeweled torc about the neck. The torcs (neck 1 or pack 1) are worth 3D each. Their weapons and armor are useless, rusted junk.

Fleeing the Tomb Guardians

If the players decide to run from the tomb guardians, it's a flee conflict. The tomb guardians will have a disposition of 7.

Where Are You Going?

If the players drive them off or otherwise force them to flee (with the Fury of the Lords of Life and Death prayer, for instance), the torcs go with the skeletons. These creatures can't flee to their master's tomb, so they will flee to the rock pile and immediately (and incessantly) attempt to dig themselves out. They'll continue in this manner until personally rallied by Haathor-Vash or until they're disturbed at their labors.

8. The Secret Vault of Haathor-Vash

The great oak doors creak open. A large, diamond-shaped chamber stands before you. Urns, baskets, arms and shields lie scattered about on the floor or lean against the walls. The skeleton of a horse, propped up with a wooden frame, stands against one wall. A great throne sits at the center of the chamber on a raised dais. A skeleton, regal even in death, sits upon the throne and a young girl, seemingly flesh and blood, sits upon the skeleton's lap,

its arms cradled possessively around her. The girl wears a suit of mail several times too big for her and clutches a leaf-bladed sword in her hands. There is a gleaming silver arm ring on her right arm. Her eyes are lit with a strange, lambent flame. Biers lie to the east, west and north. Upon each lies a skeletal warrior clad in mail, each holding a sword to its breast.

Haathor-Vash is described in her own section at the end of this scenario. Read about her and her tactics to better understand how she can confront the adventurers.

Possessed of the Best of You

Here is Jora, possessed by Haathor-Vash herself (though note that Haathor-Vash may only possess one character at a time; if she has possessed one of the adventurers, Jora is free and terrified). If the characters have previously driven off (or successfully used Fury of the Lords of Life and Death upon) any tomb guardians, they are here waiting with the spirit of Haathor-Vash. Any tomb guardians that have fled the Fury of the Lords of Life and Death will only join in a conflict if they are attacked first. Otherwise they merely bear witness to the ensuing struggle. The three skeletons lying upon the biers here are the skeletal honor guards (note that they are Might 3). They will also join the fight.

Honor Guard

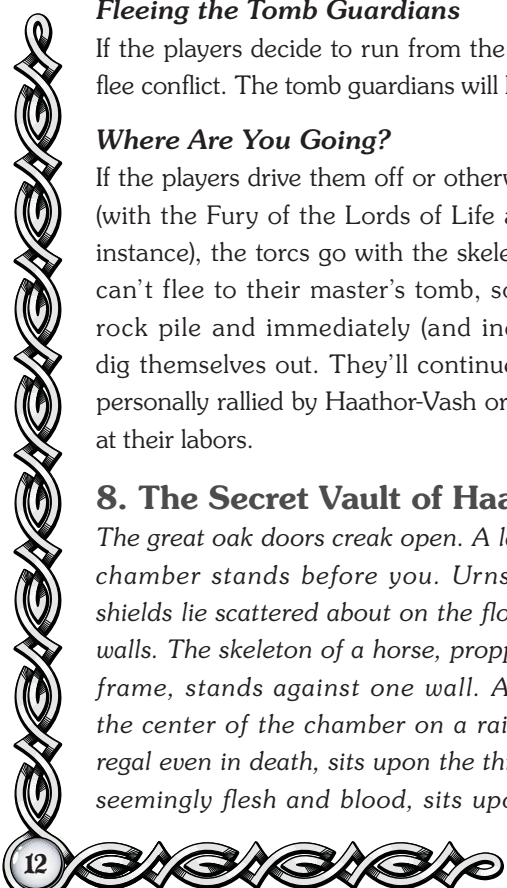
Might: 3	Nature (Undead): 3
Descriptors: Guarding, Watching, Pursuing	
Conflict Dispositions	Conflict Weapons
Kill: 5	Kill Weapons Attack: X, Sword Defend: X, Sword
Drive Off: 8	Drive Off Weapons Attack: X, Sword Defend: X, Sword
Flee: 4	Flee Weapons Feint: +1s, Heavy Tread
Armor: Chain armor	
Instinct: Never leave the tomb unguarded.	
Special: All are immune to magic that affects the senses or the mind. Can only be engaged with the listed conflicts. They are immune to or ignore all others.	

Looting Haathor-Vash's Crypt

Looting Haathor-Vash's vault turns up gold coins (2D, pack 1), silver coins (3D, pack 1 per 1D), a silver arm ring (2D, hands (worn) 1 or pack 1), a set of antiquated chain armor and an ornate but otherwise normal sword.

9. The Rockfall

The tunnel has collapsed here, filling the area with earth and rocks. A faint and eerie whistling sound seems to emanate from the wall of earth.



Strong Breeze

If anyone is carrying a candle, it goes out as the characters get near the collapsed section. Torches flicker wildly but do not go out immediately. Anyone who investigates the whistling realizes that it comes from a faint breeze making its way through the rocks!

Dig Me Out

Excavating a way through the earth and rock requires an Ob 3 Laborer test.

Suggested Laborer failure result:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Exhausted and the character excavates a passage.
- ⊕ *Twist:* Tomb guardians attack.
- ⊕ *Twist:* The tunnel collapses, blocking the exit more completely.

10. The Hidden Stair

A worn stone stair leads up into painfully bright sunlight atop a rocky scarp that overlooks the village of Skogenby! It's cunningly placed so you'd probably never find it unless you knew where to look.

Emerging Through the Rockfall

If the adventurers discover the Hidden Stair from within the tomb, they are now free of the dread crypt! Finding a way down the cliff and back to Skogenby requires an Ob 3 Pathfinder test (it's nearby, but an infrequently traveled path).

Suggested Pathfinder failure result:

- ⊕ *Condition:* Exhausted and the characters safely make their way down.

Examining the Exterior Area of the Dread Crypt

Finding this hidden entrance into the crypt from the outside is extremely hard. It was designed to be secret! Characters that hunt for this entrance must make an Ob 5 Scout test. Success indicates they find the entrance.

Suggested Scout failure result:

- ⊕ *Twist:* The adventurers run into 1d3+2 bandits who have ventured from their hideout near Skogenby to investigate the rumored treasures of the crypt. They're just as happy to rob the living as the dead.

Human Bandit

Raw Abilities	Rating	Town Abilities	Rating
Nature	4	Resources	1
Will	2	Circles	3
Health	5		

Skills: Scout 5, Fighter 4, Manipulator 3, Hunter 2

Wises: Forest-wise, Crossroads-wise

Traits: Bitter (1), Driven (1)

Gear: Sling, hand axe

Dwarven Bandit "Beronin" (Leader)

Raw Abilities	Rating	Town Abilities	Rating
Nature	4	Resources	2
Will	3	Circles	3
Health	5		

Skills: Scout 4, Fighter 5, Manipulator 3, Hunter 2

Wises: Shrewd Appraisal-wise, Forest-wise, Crossroads-wise

Traits: Born of Earth and Stone (1), Bitter (1), Driven (1)

Gear: Leather armor, helmet, sword, dagger

Haathor-Vash

Haathor-Vash is a disturbed spirit. Either she's an Immortal trapped in transition from one form to the next, she's the product of a failed quest for Immortality or she's the residue left behind after a powerful hero ascended to Immortality. The exact source of her power is up to you, the important aspect is that she's a trapped, powerful and angry entity.

As a spirit, she cannot materially affect the world around her. In order to have her will done she must have her servants do it or use her power to possess the body of another.

While the spirit is Might 5, in physical tasks it takes on the Might of those whom it possesses, but it infuses its victim with its own Nature.

The spirit of Haathor-Vash has possessed the body of Jora. She is Might 5, but because she inhabits the body of the young girl (Might 2), the players may still choose to engage



in a kill conflict. Victory means that they have successfully killed Jora, but not Haathor-Vash. However, it will impede Haathor-Vash's ability to act for a time.

Keep in mind that even though Haathor-Vash is Might 5, if she is fighting through Jora she's Might 2. If she's fighting through a possessed character, she's Might 3.

Might: 5 or special	Nature (Disturbed Spirit): 6
Descriptors: Possessing, Punishing Transgressors, Seeking Knowledge	
Conflict Dispositions	Conflict Weapons
Kill: 8	Kill Weapons Attack: +2D, <i>Ancient Fury</i> Maneuver: +1s, <i>More than Human</i>
Convince: 13	Convince Weapons Attack: +1D, +1s, <i>Unyielding</i> Defend: +1s, <i>Secrets of Death</i>
Flee: 4	Flee Weapons Feint: +1s, <i>Inhuman Cunning</i> Maneuver: +1D, <i>More than Human</i>
Banish: 10	Banish Weapons Attack: +1D, +1s, <i>Immortal Fury</i> Defend: +1s, <i>Ritually Prepared Bones</i>
Armor: Chain armor	
Instinct: Always take revenge on those who disturb my rest.	
Special: Haathor-Vash is immune to mind-affecting spells and though she can be defeated in a kill conflict, doing so only slays her host. The disturbed spirit may be destroyed by dragging her bones into sunlight.	
Possession: Haathor-Vash acts in the physical world through those she possesses. When doing so, use the Might of that creature. If the possessed dies, the spirit is unharmed and may seek another host in the next phase.	

Haathor-Vash's Possession

She may possess those who have stolen from her, but only one at a time. Roll Target's Will vs. Haathor-Vash's Nature. Success indicates the character fights off Haathor-Vash's attempt at control.

Suggested Will failure result:

- ⊕ *Twist:* The target loses free will. Exposure to sunlight will break Haathor-Vash's hold over the character.

Killing One of Your Own

It's possible that Haathor-Vash has possessed one of the player characters. If that is the case, it's possible the others must fight one of their own!

The possessed will fight with abandon and without regard for his or her own safety. If the GM is feeling particularly evil, he can allow the possessed to captain the fight on his side—choosing actions and rolling dice for Haathor-Vash. In this case, the possessed uses the spirit's Nature 6, but her Might is only 3.

If the characters choose to kill the possessed and win that fight, then there's not much that can be done. Abide by the Killing Is My Business rules and carry on.

If the players are a bit squeamish about murdering one of their friends, suggest to them that they can negotiate with the spirit or even attempt to banish her with a ritual conflict.

Haathor-Vash and Her Retinue

Haathor-Vash leads her honor guard in any kill, capture, drive off or flee conflicts. If it makes sense, you can also add some of her tomb guardians as well.

The spirit (personified through whomever she is possessing) is the boss monster. Use her conflict values for disposition. Add one for each of her helpers.

IF FIGHTING HAATHOR-VASH AND HER HONOR GUARD, THEY START WITH A DISPOSITION OF 13 FOR KILL, 16 FOR DRIVE OFF, AND NATURE +3D + BASE NATURE FOR CAPTURE.

She takes one action per round while she has two or more bodyguards standing. If her guards are knocked out of the fight, Haathor-Vash can take two or even all three actions per round. On her action, her guardians will help (if appropriate). And on their actions, Haathor-Vash and the other guardians will help the acting skeleton. This can result in a giant pile of dice!

Also note that on the spirit's action, she gains +2s to her actions in kill, capture and drive off conflicts against the characters unless they're protected by the Destiny of Heroes spell or something similar.

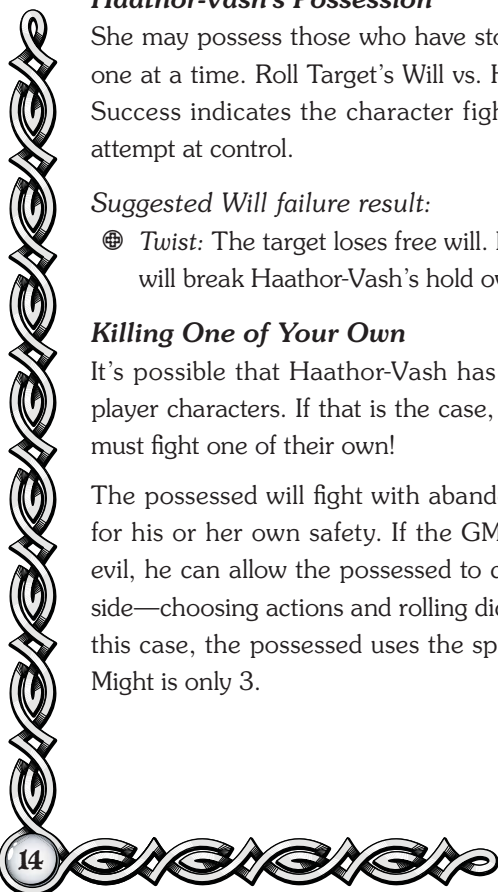
In a banish or abjure conflict, Haathor-Vash must act on her own. Her guardians are of no use to her in that kind of a fight.

Two different types of monsters can be a part of the same group. In this case, Haathor-Vash can lead a team of Skeletal Honor Guards and tomb guardians.

Outside of a conflict, use the Nature of the highest order monster (in this case, Haathor-Vash). If the other monsters can help, they may do so.

Hit Points

You can break the rule that says you must distribute hit points evenly among all of the creatures. With Haathor-Vash, you can assign her the bulk of the hit points and give the lesser creatures one or two points each. Furthermore, you can ignore the rule that states the acting character absorbs the hit on that action. In this case, the minions eat up the damage and the boss monster remains standing.



What Drives Haathor-Vash?

Haathor-Vash is a powerful enemy, but she'll only become a compelling villain if she wants something from the players. Described here are a number of suggestions. Use those you like and discard the rest:

First and foremost, she wants her treasures returned. This means the silver arm band that Marius grabbed, plus anything the characters have taken while in the dungeon. If the wizard has wound up with the sigils of illumination flowing across his skin, then she wants that too (i.e., either flaying his skin or just keeping the wizard). She would prefer to wreak vengeance upon those that defiled her tomb, but can be convinced to give in on that point with a conflict. If she gives up her vengeance, she will demand abject apologies.

She wants her tomb resealed and protected from other defilers. Perhaps the villagers must swear to keep anyone who would disturb her away, on pain of being cursed.

Perhaps she wants the village to hold a regular religious festival in her honor...effigies, processions, sacrifices, etc.

Where to Go from Here

After a brief interlude in town to rest and reequip, we recommend taking your now veteran adventurers for a tour Under the House of the Three Squires (in the *Torchbearer* core book). However, depending on how the players handled The Dread Crypt of Skogenby, there may be opportunities for further adventure down the road:

Slaying Jora

Did the players slay Jora but leave Haathor-Vash? More and more undead begin to stir in the region. In time, Haathor-Vash's physical strength grows and she takes the form of a full-fledged wight (TB p.151). She will form a band of tomb guardians and ghouls under her banner and begin to raid the land as in days of old. Perhaps she even seeks a ship to return to her homeland—but not before raiding the coast and blighting the land, of course!

If the players slew Jora, it will be plainly obvious to the villagers that she did not die in the same fashion as the others. She didn't die of fright like the others—she died of violence. The leaders of Skogenby will reluctantly treat the characters as saviors, but truly they wish for this episode to be over.

If Jora is dead and the characters demand compensation from the villagers for their efforts, the villagers will seek aid from their lord and protector, Lady Gry, a petty noble (an inveterate raider herself). Gry will in turn demand that the characters pay her reparations (4D cash) for the death of Jora, since she was her chattel!

Rather than risk a confrontation, it's better if the characters slip quietly out of the village and not return. If they do risk a confrontation, Gry gathers her warband of 12 sturdy warriors and attempts to capture the interlopers and extort them for all they're worth.

Freeing Jora

Did the players free Jora but leave Haathor-Vash? Haathor-Vash will eventually lure a new victim into her clutches—perhaps Marius. Jora will be first on the list to feel her wrath, but the adventurers who freed her will be next!

Jora's parents will be ecstatic at her safe return. They'll gift the group with fresh rations for all and a silver ring (hand/worn 1, 1D cash) of a serpent coiled on itself. It's an heirloom and was to be Jora's own wedding band when she came of age.

Appeasing the Spirit

Did they appease the spirit by returning her stolen grave goods? Sooner or later, some other grasping soul will rob the tomb. Perhaps Haathor-Vash calls upon the adventurers in their dreams to be her agent in the mortal world, hunting down her stolen treasures. She may become a potent ally in time.

The Secrets of the Immortals

Did the adventurers uncover some of the secrets to ascending to become an Immortal Lord? The secrets are useless to them, but many powerful men and women covet those secrets, and not all of them have the best of intentions...



