

# THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT

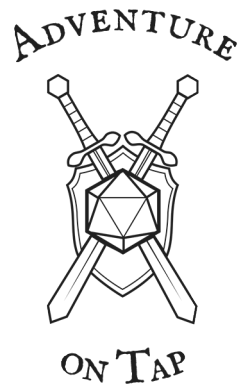
BY  
EMMET BYRNE



A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE FOR THE 5TH EDITION OF  
THE WORLD'S GREATEST ROLE-PLAYING GAME!

# THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT

An *Adventure on Tap* product



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**Special Thanks:** My wonderful wife Marie and my beautiful son Max,  
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## INTRODUCTION

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The *Adventure on Tap* series is designed to give you, the Dungeon Master, everything you need to run an adventure using the 5th Edition Dungeons & Dragons rules. It was created to enable busy DMs to run an adventure with minimal preparation and still have a great time playing.

The most important thing to remember when playing is to have fun. If you find something contained within the adventure that doesn't work for your group, or you need to approach events in a different way, then change it! This book is meant to aid DMs in running a great game so customise it in a way that best suits you and your players.

I have endeavoured to provide as much information as possible for each scenario and location that the characters might explore throughout the adventure. I have also provided further information on locations and NPCs the characters might seek out based on my own experience running the adventure (and knowing that no adventure survives contact with the players!).

## ACRONYMS

When referring to any of the three core books I have shortened them to the accepted acronym. These are

- **PHB:** Player's Handbook
- **DMG:** Dungeon Master's Guide
- **MM:** Monster Manual

## FEEDBACK

I strive for ease of use and clarity in the products I release and I am continually refining my adventure format. If you have suggestions and feedback on things you found helpful and especially on things that were unnecessary or confusing I'd love to hear from you. Thanks for downloading, and happy gaming. Cheers!

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FEBRUARY 2018

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### I'M A NOTE BOX!

I provide helpful hints and tips on running the adventure, gleaned from "in the trenches" experience over 20 years of Games Mastering!

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*I'm read aloud text! Read me out loud!*

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### I'M AN ENCOUNTER BOX! RAWR!

I provide the list of enemies in the encounter, where to find them, how much XP they're worth, and the difficulty of the encounter!

EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



DEADLY



**The Graveyard Shift** is an introductory adventure for 4-6 1st level characters, and assumes a wide range of skills and abilities. It is designed to be played in a single 3-5 hour session, excluding character creation.

The adventure centres on the city of *Stonewood* but can easily be transferred to any medium or large settlement as long as there is a graveyard nearby and access to a local forest - Neverdeath graveyard in the city of Neverwinter in the *Forgotten Realms* would provide an ideal setting for this adventure. The adventure was designed to have an equal balance of combat, exploration, puzzle, and role-playing encounters.

For ease of use the adventure has been broken up into three acts, which are described below. It is recommended that you read through the entire adventure at least once to familiarise yourself with its contents, but the act summaries should suffice if you are short on time. If you are looking for a little more information *Appendix A* contains notes on important NPCs, while *Appendix B* contains information on Stonewood, including rumours, local lore, and other locations the party might choose to visit.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

### THE HOOK

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When visiting the city of Stonewood the party are asked to find the brother of a local merchant, who recently disappeared during his shift as a gravedigger.

### WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

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The missing brother, Dayton, is a vampire who works as a gravedigger to conceal his true nature. He has been kidnapped by a necromancer named Margaux Duret who hopes to cure him of his affliction.

### IMPORTANT NPCs

- **Dayton Wyatt.** Male human vampire, gravedigger, currently missing
- **Adair Wyatt.** Male human, concerned brother and merchant
- **Margaux Duret.** Female elf necromancer, seeking a cure for vampirism
- **Maisie Rosca.** Female human, restless spirit slain by Dayton
- **Tereza Vesely.** Female half-elf vampire spawn, held captive by Margaux

Further information on the characters listed here is presented in *Appendix A*.

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## CHAPTER SUMMARY

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The following chapter summaries present an "ideal scenario" for how the adventure might play out.

### CHAPTER 1

The PCs receive the job from a local merchant named Adair whose brother Dayton is missing, and head to the site of the abduction - the city's necropolis. When they approach the half finished grave where Dayton disappeared they are attacked by a group of undead that seem to have already been wounded. After dispatching the undead the PCs search the area. Their investigation turns up some unusual soil that points to the forest at the center of town.

### CHAPTER 2

Arriving at the forest the party soon discover runes etched into a number of standing stones. When activated in the correct order the runes transport the party to a windowless stone room filled with cages and surgical equipment.

### CHAPTER 3

The PCs confront the mage Margaux Duret and discover her experimenting on Dayton. The party can either attack Margaux and free Dayton or speak with her and discover the truth - that Dayton is a vampire and is responsible for numerous deaths in the last few months. Margaux believes that no-one is ever truly lost and her work aims to cure vampirism. How the story ends is up to the players.

## GETTING THE PARTY INVOLVED

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The Graveyard Shift is meant as an introductory adventure and as such can serve to kick off a new campaign. The adventure is written under the assumption that the party has already agreed to the job from Adair in return for payment, but other potential hooks are presented below.

### HOOK 1: OLD FRIEND

One of the party members is an old drinking buddy of Dayton and heard he was missing. They were already concerned, having not seen him in a while, and now they've decided to try to track him down themselves.

### HOOK 2: A GRIEVING BROTHER

One of the party members is the brother of Maisie Rosca and is looking into her death. He is heading to the necropolis to pay his respects when he encounters the open grave.

### HOOK 3: SERVANT OF KELEMVOR

One of the characters is a servant of Kelemvor and has been sent from the temple in the city to investigate the recent reports of a necromancer operating in Stonewood. The unusual circumstances of Dayton's disappearance has lead them to the necropolis.

# CHAPTER 1: WAKE THE DEAD

*Act 1 sees the characters visiting the necropolis in Stonewood and the site of Dayton's disappearance.*

The people of Stonewood have a strange relationship with death. A number of their beliefs are listed below, which a character can recall with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History or Religion) check:

- It is considered obscene to witness the bodies of the dead as they are transported from the undertaker's to the necropolis. For this reason a bell is rung when a coffin is being moved through town to warn the townsfolk to avert their eyes or steer clear of the streets outside the necropolis.
- When the people of Stonewood mourn or visit the necropolis they wear masks to hide their faces, believing that Death lurks there and will follow them home if it knows their identity.
- The site of an open or unfinished grave is considered incredibly bad luck so very few people are keen to socialise with gravediggers or anyone else who works in the necropolis.
- Mourners visit only during the day, with the business of maintenance and the digging of graves left to the night time hours.
- For fear of being buried alive, people are buried with a bell tied to their wrists. It's hoped that if the bell is rung the gravedigger will hear and let them out

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## 1.A. NECROPOLIS GATES

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The characters will not be allowed to conduct their investigation during the day but are free to enter when the sun sets, and as such it is assumed that this part of the adventure happens at night. However if the characters do decide to try to gain access during the day, the only way inside is by climbing the wall (DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check) or by distracting the gate guard to sneak past. If they are spotted after sneaking in during the day (and have not adequately hidden their identities) the characters will be asked to leave, eventually being escorted out by members of the town guard.

As the party approaches the necropolis read the following text:

---

*As you crest the hill and make your way down the cobbled street leading to the necropolis you can see a stone wall some 10 feet high that encircles a large swatch of land, littered with gravestones and tombs. Your path leads to two*

*intricately worked metal gates adorned with a latticework of leaves which stand closed. A smaller gate is set into the right hand gate and hangs open. A man in leather armour stained a deep blue and wearing a plain white mask stands by the gates, a tall hanging lantern held in one hand.*

---

This man is **Gusten** (NG human male **guard**, *MM* p.347), the night watchman for the necropolis. Beneath the mask he is a middle aged man with scraggly stubble and bitter eyes. He has gotten word from Adair that the party would be coming to investigate the site where Dayton disappeared and will allow them to enter unmolested. Gusten doesn't know anything about Dayton's disappearance except that it happened two nights ago and that no-one has bothered to finish filling in the grave he was working on. If questioned further he is short with the characters (having gotten a lot of heat after the recent grave robbings) but can have his tongue loosened with coin to provide the characters with information about Stonewood's beliefs in regards to death as well as any of the **Lore & Rumours** from *Appendix B*.

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## 1.B OPEN GRAVE

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*A cool night wind pulls lightly at your clothes as the spider-web of pathways leads you through the maze of tombstones within the necropolis. After a few minutes you come upon the site of Dayton's disappearance: a half finished grave. A large pile of earth sits sulkily nearby, and the bottom half of a splintered and broken shovel lays discarded beside it. A number of other graves nearby also appear to have been left unfinished.*

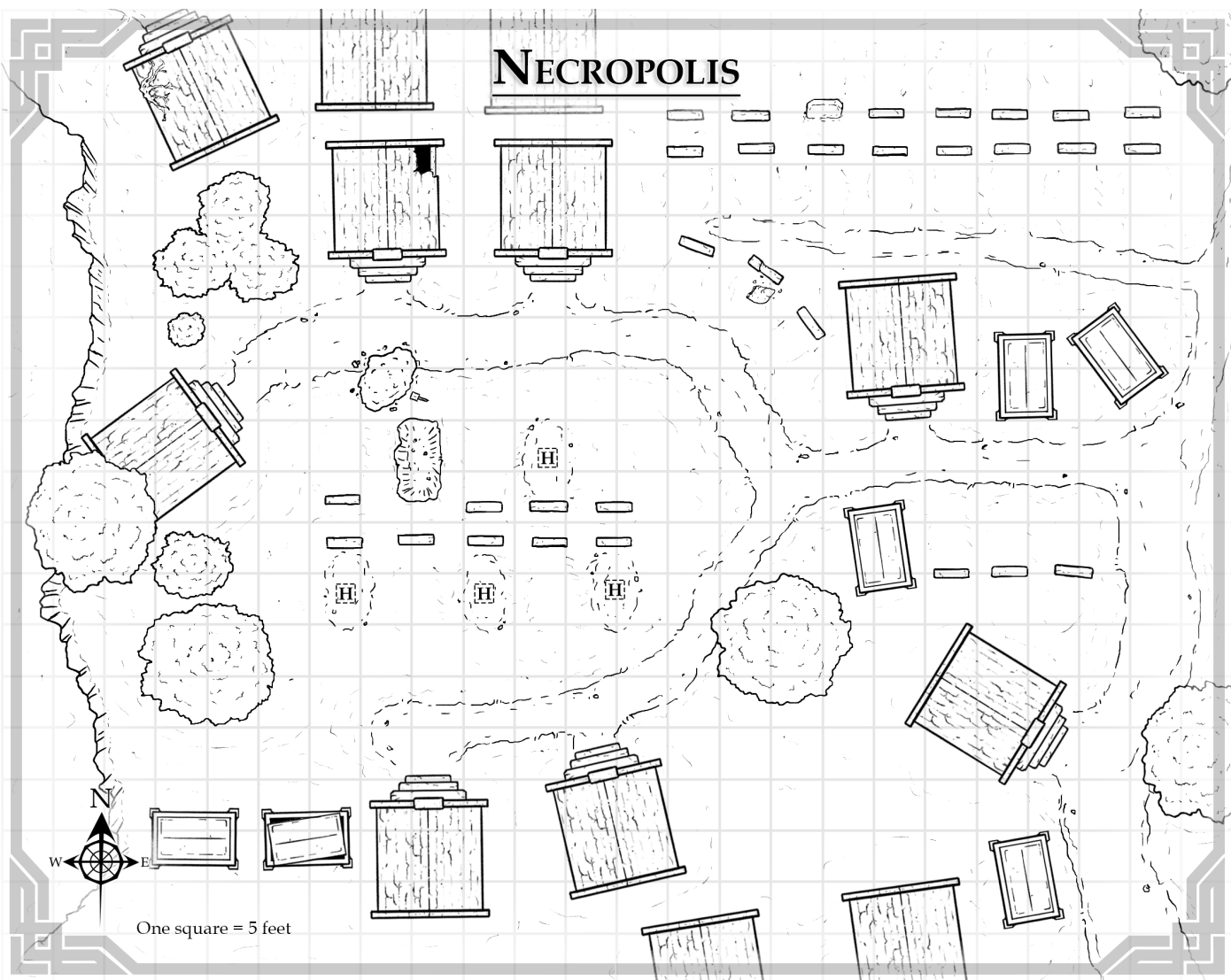
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Any character with a passive Perception of 12 or more hears faint groaning and the sounds of movement coming from within the open grave.

The open grave is where Dayton was working prior to his abduction by Margaux. When Margaux attacked she used her own magic as well as a number of *scrolls of animate dead* to awaken the dead in the graves around Dayton, including in the one he was working on.

If a character looks inside the open grave they can see a broken casket poking out from beneath a mound of dirt. Laying atop the casket with its legs splintered and useless is a wounded **zombie** (*MM* p.316) with the other end of the broken shovel protruding from its throat. The zombie has 5 hit points remaining and cannot climb out of the grave. It is worth only 10 XP if killed.

A character inspecting one of the other seemingly un-



finished graves can make a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation) check to realise that the grave isn't unfinished, but instead that something crawled out of the grave and disturbed the soil.

### WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

There are a number of clues in the area that can help the characters in discovering what happened to Dayton and where to go next.

**Expired Spell Scrolls.** A character who succeeds a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a number of frayed and burnt pieces of parchment nearby. The wind has scattered them about but a character with a keen mind can deduce that these belong together. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that this particular type of parchment is usually used in the scribing of magical scrolls but it is impossible to tell what spell was inscribed here. Casting a *detect magic* spell on the paper scraps causes them to give off a faint aura of necromancy.

**Red Earth.** A character inspecting the area using Survival or Nature discovers unusual red earth that doesn't belong

in the graveyard. This is very difficult to spot and as such requires success on a DC 17 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check. This check also tells the character that this type of soil is common in places where stonewood trees grow, such as the forest in the centre of town.

**What Maisie Saw.** If a character moves away from the rest of the party, perhaps to check nearby tombs, read the following text:

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*You feel a sudden chill run down your spine and get the unshakeable feeling that you are being watched. As you turn to look about you a ghostly figure sweeps across your eyeline. The spirit floats a few feet off the ground and her mournful eyes linger on you. She silently begins to drift closer. What do you do?*

---

This ghost is **Maisie Rosca** (see *Appendix A*) and she means the characters no harm. Speaking to her will be unsettling for the characters as she still bears the wounds of her death - a large chunk of her throat has been entirely ripped out. Though still somewhat confused by her current form, she



answers the characters questions in an echoey and hollow voice. Maisie saw some of what happened, and can tell the characters that an elven woman in pale blue robes raised the dead and attacked the gravedigger (she doesn't know Dayton's name). Maisie fled for fear of the woman controlling her and didn't see the rest of what happened. Maisie is hesitant to speak about Dayton directly, but if pushed tells the characters that she has seen him steal from those he is meant to be laying to rest and that she doesn't like him.

## UNDEAD LEFTOVERS

When you feel sufficient time has passed with the characters investigating the grave site, read the following text:

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*As you stand amongst the tombstones you hear the faint sound of jingling bells from nearby, followed by noises of shuffling and movement. You look about to see a number of shapes stumble out from behind nearby tombs, their steps unsteady. They look for all the world like people but their flesh is pale and hangs loosely from their bones. Their once fine burial garments are caked in dirt and grime and seem to have been eaten away at by insects. Each one of them has a small bell tied to their wrist. The creatures let out a hungry snarl and lurch towards you.*

---

These are 5 **zombies** (*MM p.316*) that Margaux abandoned in her haste to get Dayton back to her workshop. Her control over them ceased the night before and they had been wandering about nearby before the sound and smell of the characters drew them near. Each zombie has 1d6 less HP than listed in its stat block having been wounded in the fight with Dayton. A character with a passive Perception of 12 or higher can easily hear the creatures coming and has a round to prepare.

The tombstones and tombs provide half cover if a character hunkers behind them, while the large mausoleums provide three-quarters cover.

If the party haven't already met Maisie Rosca, she appears during the second round of combat and watches the battle from nearby. Any character with a passive Perception of 12 or higher spots the ghostly apparition.

## HAZARD: GRASPING HANDS

If a character steps onto one of the graves marked "H" on the map, there is a 50% chance that a skeletal hand bursts forth and tries to grab them. These hands belong to more of the undead Margaux raised but who weren't strong enough to claw themselves free of the earth.

Characters must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or become grappled as the hand clutches and grasps

at their legs. Once a hand is exposed characters have advantage on saving throws to escape being grabbed. On their turn a character can take an action to escape with a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check. Alternatively they can attack the hand (AC 8, HP 5). If the hand is reduced to 0 HP it retreats beneath the earth.

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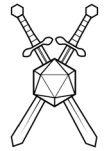
## ENCOUNTER: UNDEAD LEFTOVERS

5 x Zombies (*MM p.316*), 250 XP

**HAZARD:** Grasping Hands, 50 XP

**TOTAL: 300 XP**

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## TREASURE

If the characters search the bodies of the zombies they find only a single gold bracelet worth 25gp. The rest of the bodies are surprisingly devoid of adornment, despite some of them having their ears pierced or lines on their fingers where a ring would normally sit.

## WHAT NEXT?

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After investigating the grave site the characters may have discovered leads that take them directly to the Stone Forest or see them searching for a female elven mage. At the very least they will suspect that there is potentially a necromancer in Stonewood, given that they were attacked by a number of zombies.

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## TROUBLESHOOTING: MYSTERIES

As this adventure was written as an introduction for new players, the following section includes a number of skill checks to find clues when investigating the grave site. It is written and designed in this way in order to teach any new players how skills and skill checks work.

However, when running an investigative or mystery focused encounter or adventure it is usually not wise to keep necessary clues and plot points "locked" behind skill checks. This could cause the game to grind to a halt as the players become frustrated and don't know what to do next. With this in mind you may wish to entirely remove the skill checks to discover clues relating to the **Expired Spell Scrolls** and **Red Earth**, and simply allow the characters to find these clues and discern their importance.

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# CHAPTER 2: DEAD WOOD

*The characters continue their investigation and find their way to the unusual forest in the centre of town.*

Chapter 2 allows the characters more freedom to explore Stonewood but you should lead their investigation to either Runeheim Bazaar or the Stone Forest. If the characters take a different path consult *Appendix B* for where they could potentially go. Their search should always steer them towards the Stone Forest as they try to track down the elven mage.

## 2.A. RUNEHEIM BAZAAR

There aren't many places that deal in magical paraphernalia in Stonewood, so if the characters go investigating where a mage might purchase arcane scrolls or look for information about necromancy they are soon directed to Runeheim Bazaar. As the characters enter read the following text:

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*The swinging doors to Runeheim Bazaar open freely as you push on them and walk inside. Within, lit by coloured lanterns, you see shelves creaking and straining beneath the weight of various oddments, open chests with weapons and bits of bones and branches poking out, and racks hung with items of clothing in wildly different sizes. The place looks to be part mystical laboratory, part grocers, and part armoury; and the dwarf behind the counter with bulging pockets looks to be equally as mismatched. He lifts his head as you enter and gives you a welcoming grin.*

---

**Burden Runeheim** (N dwarf male **mage**, *MM* p.347, but with Strength 14) is the owner and proprietor of Runeheim Bazaar. His long black hair is pulled back beneath a colourful bandana, and his beard is styled and tamed by some sort of wax. He wears a sleeveless coat that exposes surprisingly muscular arms, and numerous bits of scrolls and trinkets protrude from a startling amount of pockets. He is surprisingly calm and thoughtful when he speaks and will freely offer the following information if questioned, as well as the information in the **Lore & Rumours** section in *Appendix B*:

- The distinctive red earth the party (may have) found is from the Stone Forest at the centre of town.
- An elven woman named Margaux has visited his shop a number of times over the last few months. She purchased a variety of scrolls, including two scrolls of *animate dead*, as well as silver dust, a dozen or more empty vials, and assorted other spell components. Burden helped her load the goods into a cart and Margaux

headed towards the centre of town. She was always polite and never attempted to haggle.

- Burden has heard that Adair Wyatt's business is struggling and he seems to have stopped using the usual suppliers the rest of the merchants in town use.
- Nidel Rosca is bereft at the loss of his daughter and is considering closing down his shop.

Burden sells adventuring gear (*PHB* p.150) at the cost listed there. There is a 25% chance that he has any weapon or armour the characters ask for ("Hmm I think I have one around here somewhere...").

If the characters return to Burden after encountering the magical puzzle in the Stone Forest he is able to translate the runes for them, but charges 2gp per rune translated.

## 2.B. THE STONE FOREST

The city of Stonewood is named for the forest of stonewood trees located in what is now a park at its centre. These unusual trees have pale grey bark that has the look and feel of stone but splinters like wood when cut into, and the soil the trees grow in is a deep red. Though the trees themselves are a bit odd, there is nothing magical about them. The forest is half a mile in diameter and is encircled by a well maintained 10 foot high wall with gates to the north, south, east, and west. Cobbled paths within the forest provide pleasant walks for the locals, and a few dirt paths made by years of use also branch off the main routes into the trees. Birds and squirrels can often be seen amongst the trees. The gates are sealed at sunset all year round.

Either the search for the elven mage or inspecting the red earth will lead the party to the Stone Forest. If they arrive after sunset there are two **guards** (*MM* p.347) at each gate that will not let them in under any circumstances, and simply tells them to return the next day. A successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check allows a character to scale the wall but there is a good chance they will be seen unless they take adequate precautions, as the streets around the park remain busy until late into the night.

When the characters enter the park read the following text:

---

*Tall pale trees that seem carved from stone surround you as you enter the park, their grasping branches stretching out towards the sky. Colourful cobblestone paths with stone benches every few dozen feet wind through the maze of trees. The faint twittering of birds can be heard all around and you even spy a squirrel scampering across the path in*

---



*front of you, its tiny form disappearing up into the branches of one of the trees.*

Margaux brought a small cart through the park a number of times with supplies, and it is also how she transported the concealed Dayton after subduing him (using *sleep* to deal with the guards at the gate). A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check allows the characters to find the trail where the cart went off the path and into the trees.

## THE STANDING STONES

As the characters follow the tracks read the following text:

*The trail crawls between the strange pale trees, wandering seemingly aimlessly and doubling back on itself as you follow it. It leads you deeper into the forest to a more secluded area and you spot a clearing up ahead. Standing in the clearing are a number of tall standing stones that seem to be encircling a small clear pool. From here it looks like there are some sort of markings on the stones.*

As the characters approach the circle of stones they can count six of them and see that each one has a different rune engraved upon it. These runes are etched into the front and back of the stones.

Margaux found this location upon her first visit to Stonewood. The old standing stones and the portal were inert but she managed to activate them and redirect the magical energies to a sister portal she then created in her laboratory.

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception or Survival)

check reveals Margaux's cart hidden nearby in the trees. Some magical sundries remain, such as spell components, empty vials, and blank parchment but little of value. The base of the cart is caked with grave dirt and a smattering of blood.

## THE STANDING STONE PUZZLE

There are six stones standing in a 20 foot diameter circle in the clearing, each bearing a different stylised rune: "light", "darkness", "fire", "death", "the hunt", and "nature/the fey". A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) or a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check can reveal what each of these runes represents, with any character who can read elven having advantage on these checks. If you wish you can request that the players roll separately for each rune. If players fail any of these checks feel free to give them misleading information, such as the "death" rune being confused with "sleep", or "fire" actually meaning "sun" or "rebirth". These runes are abstract patterns rather than direct representations and as such a character who has not succeeded on the above checks would not be able to guess what the runes stood for.

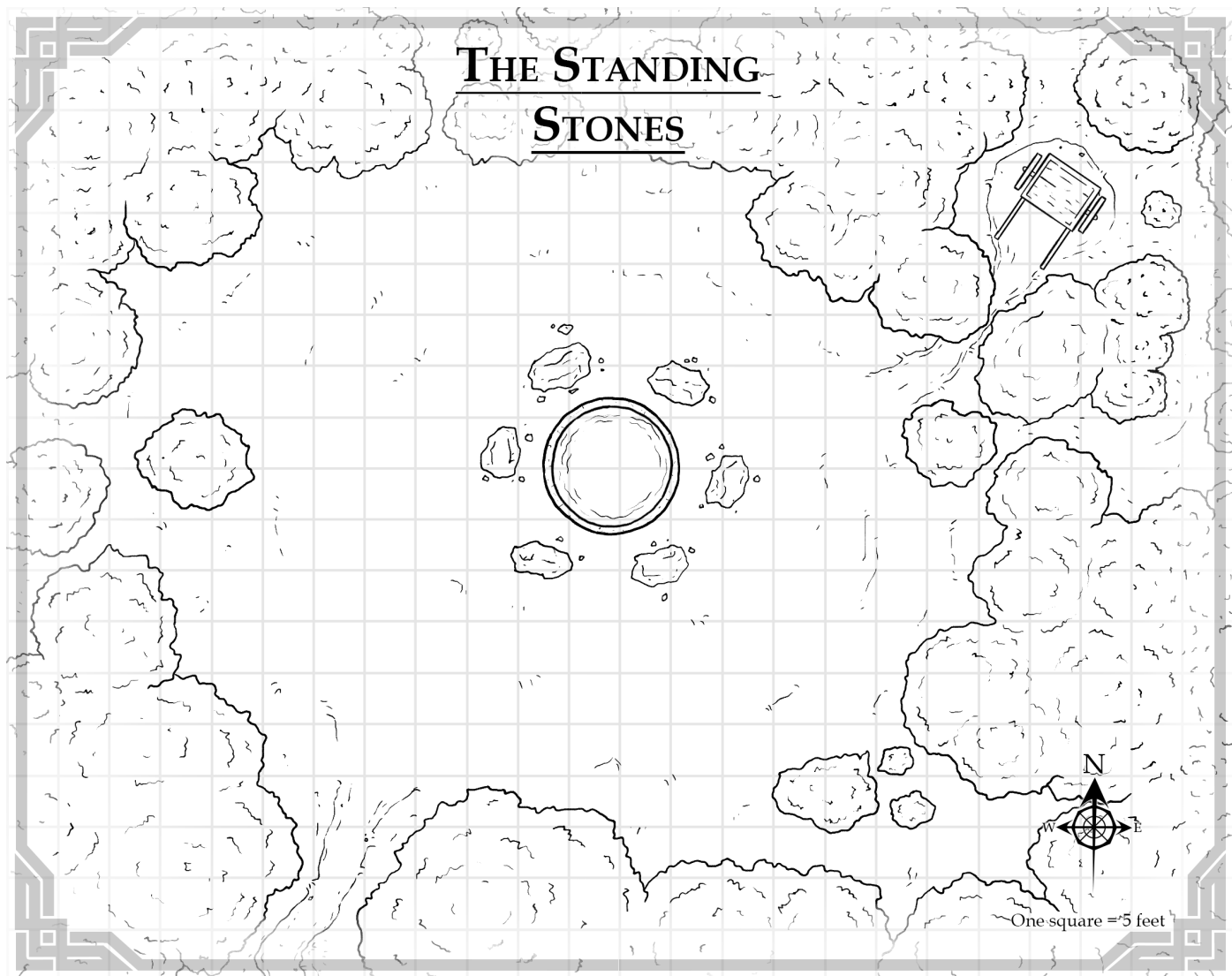
The runes in the stones are activated as a character walks between them and it is always the rune on their right hand side that flares to life. If no other runes are activated inside of 1 minute of a rune being triggered, the runes cease glowing and the portal resets.

If a character activates one of the runes in the wrong order it triggers a trap. All characters within 10 feet of the standing stones must make a saving throw to avoid taking damage. The first time this happens it is a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, with the attack dealing 5 (1d10) damage. The second time it is a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw which

### ELVEN POEM

### RELATED RUNE

Under a waxing moon on the blackest night,	Darkness
A shadow crept in and set our home alight.	Fire
They took our young to hang from their gallows,	Death
While some of us fled to hide in the shadows.	Darkness
We ran for the night and most of the day,	Light
How many we lost we dare not say.	Death
This suffering brought strength, to the blood of the elves,	Nature/The Fey
We ready our weapons, and we ready ourselves.	The Hunt
One day we will face these creatures who crept,	Darkness
And murdered our young right where they slept.	Death
A path we will find, to the place where they dwell,	The Hunt
To slaughter these beasts and return them to hell.	Death



deals 11 (2d10) damage. The third time this happens the party are transported to the cells within Margaux's labs (See **Act 3.A. Subject Containment**). The damage dealt is dependent on the rune which the character incorrectly activated (see **Trap Trigger Damage** table). Once the trap has been triggered, the runes reset to the state they were in before this happened, i.e. if the characters got step 5 in the sequence wrong, the portal returns to it's step 4 state.

### TRAP TRIGGER DAMAGE

RUNE	DAMAGE TYPE
Fire	Fire
Darkness	Cold
Death	Necrotic
Nature/The Fey	Poison
The Hunt	Piercing

When a character walks between any two of the standing stones for the first time read the following text:

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*As you pass between two of the tall stones you hear what sounds like the breaking of glass and feel a crackle of energy from your right, followed by a low hum. As you turn to look you can see the swirling rune on the standing stone beside you glowing with a faint pulsing energy.*

---

This is the first clear clue that the player's will receive about how to solve the puzzle.

The pool in the centre of the standing stones is less than a foot deep and appears to be man-made. Small ceramic tiles line its base and it is encircled by a border of pearlescent stone. This pool is a magical portal that will activate when a creature passes between the standing stones in the correct sequence (or simply have the characters touch the stones in the correct order), or if they have the correct arcane "key" (usually an item linked the portal, such as a ring, necklace, or even a literal key). Inspection of the pool or the stones

and a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals this information to a character.

Close inspection of the stone border or a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that there is faint writing carved into the surface of the stone. Any character who can read elven or makes a successful DC 13 Intelligence (History) check recognises the iconography and design of the runes to be of elven origin, though it is quite ancient.

If a character who can read elven approaches the pool read the following:

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*As you approach the pool you catch the light flickering and playing along the familiar elven lettering carved into the stone. The pearlescent white stone makes it somewhat difficult to focus but after a moment you are able to read the words: "Under a waxing moon on the blackest night...", but that is all that is inscribed here.*

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This text is from an old elven poem that tells of the destruction of an elven settlement by creatures from the plane of shadow. The full text along with the order in which the runes must be activated is shown in the **Elven Poem** table.

After reading or hearing the first line of the poem, a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check (with advantage for elven characters) allows a character to remember the rest of it. If characters fail by less than 5 you may give them part of the poem.

When the characters successfully solve the puzzle, read the following text:

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*The pool in the centre of the standing stones seems to ice over and crystallise as the ring of stones around you hum with arcane energy. Where once there was a clear pool there now stands a glowing silver disc, surrounded by shimmering runes. Looking into its hollow centre feels like you are looking through the very fabric of reality.*

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If and when the characters step through the portal, proceed to **Act 3**.

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## WHAT NEXT?

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Whether or not the party fails or succeeds at solving the puzzle they will be transported to Margaux's laboratory, it simply determines whether they will be free or captives when they arrive.

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## TROUBLESHOOTING: PUZZLES

Depending on your party and your players, this section may slow down the pace of the game so be sure to tweak it, or even remove it entirely, as needed. A few other options are presented below:

- If no one in the party can read elven, then simply have the written text be in common or another language that they do know.
  - If your party fails on checks to remember the poem, they can find an old book or faded piece of parchment in Margaux's cart. Perhaps it is simply a blank piece of paper until it is exposed to the moonlight or brought within a certain distance of the pool.
  - Alternatively, every correct activation reveals the next line of the poem etched into the standing stone that was just activated.
  - You do not need to adhere to the order in which the runes must be activated. If your players come up with good reasoning as to why a particular rune makes sense in relation to a line of the poem, then go with it. This will ensure that the pace keeps going and that your players feel empowered and smart.
  - If your players are at a stand still you can simply have the portal activate of its own accord and transport them to **Act 3.A. Subject Containment**.
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# CHAPTER 3: DEAD OR ALIVE

*The final act sees the characters in a strange lab as they try to get to the bottom of the mystery of Dayton's disappearance.*

Chapter 3 takes place in **Margaux's Sanctuary** where she conducts her work, and sees the characters find Dayton and deal with Margaux however they see fit. The building is two floors tall, with three rooms: two on the ground floor, and a single large room on the upper floor. Whether or not the characters succeeded at solving the portal puzzle in the Stone Forest they will find themselves in area **3.A. Subject Containment**.

## 3.A. SUBJECT CONTAINMENT

If the players successfully solved the puzzle to open the portal and step inside, read the following text:

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*The runes flare to life as a blinding flash of energy engulfs you. Your stomach flips and for a instant you feel entirely weightless until, moments later, you feel solid stone beneath your feet. Blinking a few times to clear your vision you look around to see you are in a stone room, ringed with 6 cylindrical cells as well as a number of storage crates. Above each cell is a large open brass pipe covered by a grate. The pipes converge in the centre of the ceiling and disappear into the roof above. All but one of the cells is empty.*

---

If the players failed to solve the puzzle to open the portal read the following text:

---

*The runes flare to life as a blinding flash of energy engulfs you, clawing at your skin. Your stomach flips nauseatingly and for a instant you feel entirely weightless before being jarringly wrenched and dropped onto cold, wet stone. Blinking a few times to clear your vision you look around to see you are in a cylindrical cell inside a stone room, ringed with 5 other cells as well as a number of storage crates. Above each cell is a large open brass pipe covered by a grate. The pipes converge in the centre of the ceiling and disappear into the roof above. Your companions and an unknown figure occupy the other cells.*

---

Some of the locks on the cell doors are rusted and weakened as Margaux hasn't had the time or need to replace them. There is a 50% chance that the cell a character is in has a weakened lock. A weakened lock requires a DC 10 Dexterity or Strength check to open. A regular lock requires a DC 14 Dexterity check or DC 18 Strength check to open.

A solid wooden door with metal banding is set into the

west wall. It is bolted from the other side and can be opened with a successful DC 12 Dexterity check.

A clear patch of stone on the ground is carved with runes arranged in a circle matching those of the standing stones in area **2.B**, their glow fading as the characters survey their surroundings. There is no apparent way to reactivate the portal (Margaux has the "key").

## TEREZA

The figure in the other cell is **Tereza Vesely** (see *Appendix A*). She is pretending to be asleep in order to gauge the characters intentions and in the hopes that they will unlock her cell. A successful Wisdom (Insight) check vs. Tereza's Charisma (Deception) allows a character to see through the ruse. Once "awake" Tereza tries to hide her true nature. Again, a successful Wisdom (Insight) check vs. Tereza's Charisma (Deception) alerts the character to something being not quite right here. Every round she is in within 5 feet of one of the characters, make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw for Tereza (with disadvantage if any of the characters have open wounds). If she fails she hurls herself at the bars and tries to attack and grab the nearest character.

If Tereza manages to control herself she tries to convince the party to let her out, claiming she knows a secret way into Margaux's lab. Only a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check can convince Tereza to part with the information before being released. If the characters do manage to get the information from Tereza she tells them that the brass pipes overhead lead to Margaux's lab on the floor above.

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## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: RESCUE

Tereza Visely (*Appendix A*), 200 XP

**TOTAL: 200 XP**

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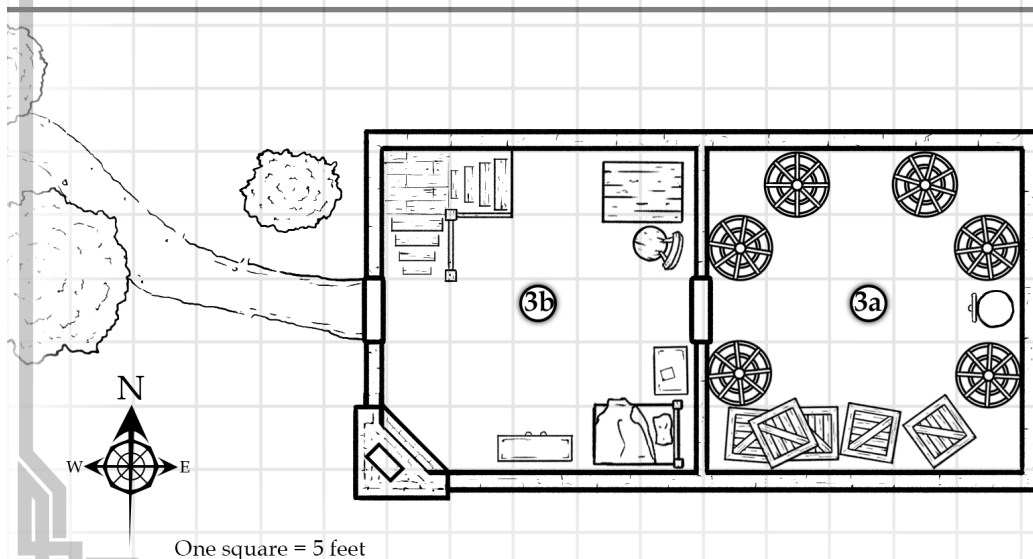
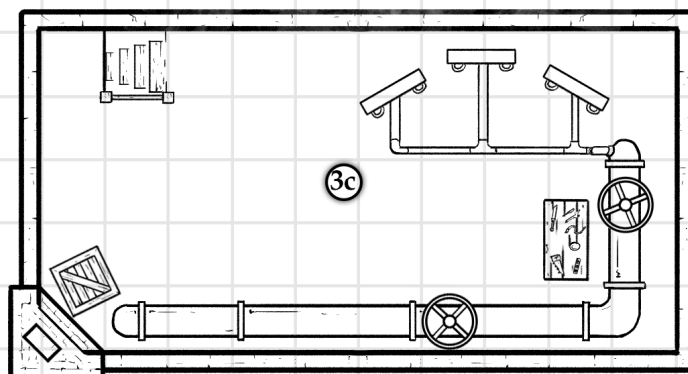


## THE PIPES

Tereza is telling the truth and the brass pipes do in fact lead to **3.C. Margaux's Laboratory**. Any of the grates can be removed with a successful DC 10 Dexterity or Strength check but will make noise if the characters do not take precautions. Make a Wisdom (Perception) check for Margaux at disadvantage if the grate is removed without the characters attempting to be quiet about it.

The pipes themselves are 3 feet in diameter, and the interior is slick with stagnant water and grime. Medium

## MARGAUX'S LAB



creatures can squeeze into the pipes but move at half their speed, small creatures move at their regular speed. Characters moving while in the pipes have disadvantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

It takes 3 rounds for a small creature or 6 rounds for a medium creature to traverse the pipes and make their way to Margaux's lab. Unfortunately Margaux likes to ensure that Tereza's "treatment" continues will she works on her other subjects. Each round there is a 10% chance that the valve will be opened and water will come crashing in on a character in the pipe. Any small creature is flushed out with the water and suffers 1d6 points of damage upon hitting the stone floor. Any medium creatures are stuck in the pipes and must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a success the character manages to take in a breath of air before being submerged. On a failure the character is considered to be suffocating (*PHB* p.183) and can only survive for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier. A

medium creature attempting to move back down the pipe along with the flow of water moves at their regular speed instead of half speed; it is not possible to move further up the pipe. Every round the water is running there is a 50% chance that it will be turned off.

### TREASURE

Searching through the crates uncovers numerous items of mismatched clothes, 3d6 gold pieces, a pearl (worth 100gp), a carved bone statuette (worth 25gp), and a *scroll of false life*.

### 3.B. LIVING AREA

This area is where Margaux sleeps and has her meals. Due to her near obsession with her work it is functional instead of homely. When the characters enter the room from area 3.A read the following text:

---

*This room has the same cold stone floors and walls as the room you were just in, though thankfully contains no cells. It is sparsely decorated with a simple wood framed bed, a dresser, and an old worn table with a single chair. On the far wall is an imposing looking metal door. In the corner of the room a metal spiral staircase climbs upwards to a wooden hatch. From beyond it you can hear muffled speaking interspersed with the sounds of screams.*

---

Characters moving about this room have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks due to the sound of the screams from above and the closed trapdoor. The trapdoor is not locked, but the hinges are old and worn (DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) to notice). Unless precautions are made to mask the sound (perhaps under the screams) or open the door stealthily there is a 50% chance that Margaux will hear the door open.

The metal door leads outside, but it is locked and Margaux has the key. A DC 20 Dexterity check can open the lock, or the door can be forced with a DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check. If the characters do get outside they find themselves in a forest, with nearby snow-peaked mountains. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that the characters are over 10 miles from Stonewood, near the Fyrstalliashk's Spine mountains.

### TREASURE

The dresser contains Margaux's clothes and undergarments, as well as a fine robe of purple silk (worth 25gp). Beneath the bed is a quarterstaff of rosewood carved to look like twisting vines and leaves (worth 10gp), a scholar's kit, and a flask of holy water.

## 3.C. MARGAUX'S LABORATORY

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This is the room where Margaux conducts her experiments and tries to cure her subjects of their affliction. In the room now are Margaux and Dayton (see *Appendix A*), along with 2 corpses. When the characters enter the room read the following text:

---

*The stench of blood and decay fills your nose as you push open the hatch. The room before you is roughly 25 feet by 50 feet and is filled with all manner of medical and alchemical equipment. Beakers bubble away and the brass pipes from the room below ring the outer walls and end hanging open above three upright metal slabs. Three figures are strapped to these slabs. The two on the outside are very clearly dead, their flesh burnt and falling away; the central figure writhes in pain as running water is intermittently dumped over him from the pipes above. Though his flesh is burnt and blistered you recognise him from the description you were given as Dayton.*

---

Margaux always has *mage armour* cast on herself when dealing with her specimens so has one less level 1 spell slot available. If she is prepared for the characters she has re-animated the two corpses on the slabs into **zombies** using a 4th level *scroll of animate dead*. This is just as a precaution and she is perfectly happy to converse with the characters and discuss her work as long as they are not hostile or aggressive towards her. Throughout the conversation she will intermittently flick a valve, causing water to pour over a screaming Dayton. If the characters attack Margaux she defends herself viciously. Only if things look hopeless does she beg the characters to stop. If she is losing severely and the opportunity presents itself she will flee to area **3.A** and activate the portal, which stays open for one round after being activated. If unable to get to the portal she flees out the door and into the wild.

Dayton pleads with the characters to free him from "*this crazy elf witch!*". He is restrained on the slab by a number of tight leather straps at the wrists and ankles. These are not locked but it takes an action to free two of Dayton's limbs. A character making a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices that, though Dayton is being burned by the water, the water and the room itself show no sign of steam and therefore the water must be cold. Any character who was unfortunate enough to be caught in one of the pipes while the flow was turned on knows this first hand. With this realisation the characters can make an Intelligence (Nature, Arcana or Religion) check to figure out what kinds of creatures are burned by running water. Depending on the roll you can decide how much and how accurate the information is that the character knows.

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### ENCOUNTER: THE NECROMANCER

Margaux Duret (*Appendix A*), 450 XP  
2 x Zombies (*MM p.316*), 100 XP

**TOTAL: 550 XP**

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### ENCOUNTER: THE VAMPIRE

Dayton Wyatt (*Appendix A*), 700 XP

**TOTAL: 700 XP**

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### THE PIPES

A number of valves nearby control the water flow to the pipes up here and in area **3.A** below. The water comes from a nearby river which Margaux has managed to harness for her purposes. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to quickly figure out which valve affects which cell on this floor, but they can't be sure of the flow to the cells in the room below. Characters can



activate one of the valves as a free action. A character can make a DC 12 Strength check to try to rupture the pipes. If they do, and if the flow of water is turned on, water begins to flood into the room. Margaux has set up grates and drains here so there is no risk of the room flooding, but it does make it difficult to navigate. Characters attempting to move at their full speed must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. To avoid this characters can spend one extra foot of movement per step taken to safely move around the room.

## TREASURE

Margaux carries a wand carved from the bone of a ghoul worth 10gp which can be used as an arcane focus, and her blue silk robes are worth 25gp. She also carries the key to the metal door in area **3.B** and wears an unassuming bracelet of woven vines that serves as the key to the portal in area **3.A**. The bracelet is considered to be magical in nature for the purpose of spells such as *detect magic* and gives off an aura of transmutation magic.

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## TROUBLESHOOTING: COMBAT

Depending on whether your players like to solve their problems with violence or with words, you can handle the conclusion to the adventure in a few different ways.

If the party attacks Margaux and she is prepared they must now face off against her and the two zombies she resurrected before the party entered (giving the party 550 XP for the encounter).

If Margaux is not prepared, she will use her spells or a *scroll of animate dead* to resurrect the zombies and then continue her attacks. In this scenario the party only gain 450 XP for the encounter.

If the party simply talk to Margaux and allow her to keep Dayton and continue her work, they can simply walk away without a confrontation, and may even earn an ally.

However, this may feel like an anti-climax to your players. In this scenario you can allow Dayton to break free of his bonds and attack the party as he tries to escape. Dayton is beyond a deadly encounter for a level 1 party but it is likely that Margaux will assist them if he does break free (though she will try to subdue rather than kill him). The party may also be able to use the pipes and running water to deal substantial damage to Dayton if they think quickly.

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## RESOLUTION

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How the adventure ends depends entirely on the player's decisions, what information they recover, and whether they let Dayton live, Margaux live, or some combination of both. Here are a few things that may happen:

- **Dayton dies, the characters know the truth.** The characters discover Dayton is a vampire and kill him before returning to Stonewood. If the characters are vocal about what happened Adair hears about it and attempts to flee town before the characters can confront him. If the characters simply tell Adair that Dayton is dead, he is devastated though somewhat relieved. He tells the characters he needs a few days to gather their reward, or asks for them to bring him proof of Dayton's death. In that time he closes his shop and tries to flee Stonewood.
- **Dayton dies, the characters never learn the truth.** Dayton is killed, whether by their hand or Margaux's, and the party return to Stonewood. They tell Adair that Dayton is dead, and he is devastated (though somewhat relieved in truth). He tells the characters he needs a few days to gather their reward, or asks for them to bring him proof of Dayton's death. In that time he closes his shop and tries to flee Stonewood.
- **Dayton lives, the characters know the truth.** The characters free Dayton, despite knowing he is a vampire. If allowed, Dayton returns to his routine before he was kidnapped, continuing to kill; otherwise he and Adair flee Stonewood, avoiding paying the characters if possible. If Dayton and Adair stay in Stonewood, Adair thanks the characters and claims he didn't know the truth. He tells the characters he needs a few days to gather their reward. In that time he has Dayton steal valuables for him in order to pay the characters.
- **Dayton lives, the characters never learn the truth.** The characters free Dayton, completely unaware that he is a vampire. Dayton returns to his routine before he was kidnapped, continuing to kill. Adair thanks the characters and tells them he needs a few days to gather their reward. In that time he has Dayton steal valuables for him in order to pay the characters.
- **Margaux dies.** If Margaux dies, then that is the end of her story. The characters are free to claim her home as their own.
- **Margaux lives, Dayton lives and is freed.** If Margaux lives and Dayton is freed, she attempts to recapture him within the week. She deactivates the portal in Stonewood and sets about finding a new place to conduct her experiments.
- **Margaux lives, Dayton lives and remains captured.** If the characters allow Margaux to detain Dayton and continue her research, she does just that. If things end civilly they may very well have a new ally on their side.

- **Margaux lives, Dayton dies.** If the characters kill Dayton but leave Margaux alive she sets about finding a new subject for her experiments. If things end civilly the party may very well have a new ally on their side. If they do not she deactivates the portal in Stonewood and sets about finding a new place to conduct her experiments.

## WHAT NEXT?

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This is the end of our story. When the characters complete the adventure they should reach level 2. Further adventures can stem from how the story ends. Perhaps the characters need to track down Adair and get their missing payment? If Dayton lives, perhaps Maisie's spirit tells them that she remembers who killed her and they must now hunt him down? Perhaps Margaux has a task for them and requires samples of ghoul flesh or a new vampire subject for her experiments? If Margaux fled, maybe the characters wish to track her down?

Use what knowledge the characters gained throughout the adventure and the things they seemed most excited about to decide what happens next.

# APPENDIX A: IMPORTANT NPCs

## ADAIR WYATT

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral*

Adair dresses neatly and keeps his clothes pressed, though they have clearly seen some wear. He has tightly cropped light brown hair and a neatly trimmed beard. A leather bound ledger hangs from his waist.

**Entrepreneur.** Unlike his older brother, Adair was never shy of hard work. He began an apprenticeship with a local tailor at a young age and though he never had a knack for sewing and stitching, he had a keen mind for business. Using the contacts he had built up over the years and with some wise investments, Adair opened his own shop 3 years ago - Adair's Wares. The shop did well initially but has struggled in recent months.

**Family Matters.** Adair did all he could to help his brother when he returned home pale and covered in blood that night - even after having to fight off a delirious Dayton and locking him in one of the storage rooms. After all that he tried, he knew there was no hope for Dayton. Though Dayton tells him that the blood of the dead quenches his hun-

ger, Adair knows the truth. Worse yet he has even talked his brother into stealing from the dead in order to bolster his failing business.

**Unravelling.** Adair is a man hanging by a thread. With his brother gone and his business failing it will take very little to push him over the edge. Secretly he hopes that his brother will kill the party if and when they find him, as the coin that Adair has promised will completely bankrupt him.

Adair has the statistics of a **noble** (*MM* p.348).

**BOND.** I will do anything for my brother.

**IDEAL.** Money is the measure of one's worth.

**FLAW.** You have to spend money to make money.

## DAYTON WYATT

*Medium undead (human vampire), neutral evil*

A man of average build, Dayton has pale skin and surprisingly soft features. He has greasy brown hair that is pushed behind his ears, and wears loose fitting overalls caked with dirt.

## DAYTON WYATT

*Medium undead (vampire), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armour)

**Hit Points** 45 (6d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +3

**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical weapons

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Regeneration.** The vampire regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sun light or running water. If the vampire takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vampire's next turn.

**Spider Climb.** The vampire can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Vampire Weaknesses.** The vampire has the following flaws:

**Forbiddance.** The vampire can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

**Harmed by Running Water.** The vampire takes 20 acid damage when it ends its turn in running water.

**Stake to the Heart.** The vampire is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into its heart while it is incapacitated in its resting place.

**Sunlight Hypersensitivity.** The vampire takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sun light. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The vampire makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire can grapple the target (escape DC 13).

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the vampire regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.



**A Waste of Life.** Dayton was never much for work. He liked to scrape by however he could, usually by helping his brother out in his shop or lending a hand around the city as cheap manual labour. What he earned he drank, and what he didn't drink he gambled. Happily drunk after one of his wilder escapades, he stumbled down the wrong alley and came face to face with death itself - a hungry vampire. Dayton lay dead for a full day before waking up in an open grave in the necropolis. He stumbled back to his brothers shop, confused and impossibly hungry.

**Undead Gravedigger.** Dayton was a louse, but he wasn't an evil man. He and his brother did what they could to fight the disease - getting blood from the butcher or catching stray dogs - but it didn't work. As a last ditch effort Adair got Dayton a job as the gravedigger in the local cemetery, hoping that the blood of the dead would sate his appetite. It didn't work, but Dayton lied to his brother and told him it did. As a gravedigger he could easily move about at night, and would often prey on the mourners that came to visit with their loved ones and were foolish enough to linger in the evenings. He even had the perfect place to stash the bodies - in the graves of the people he was paid to lay to rest.

**Ruled by Fear.** Dayton hates what he has become and what he has to do to survive, but he is terrified of dying and do whatever it takes to survive.

**BOND.** I owe my brother everything and won't hurt him.

**IDEAL.** Family comes first.

**FLAW.** The taste for blood constantly calls to me.

Dayton has the stats listed in his stat block.

## MARGAUX DURET

*Medium humanoid (elf), neutral good*

Margaux dresses in pale blue robes made of a light silk, adorned with subtle runic embroidery. She has rich blonde hair cropped short and swept back from her smooth features. A number of belts around her waist hold component pouches and various oddments, and a metal banded spellbook hangs from a looped chain at her waist.

**Child of Tragedy.** Margaux was born into a small nomadic elven clan. When she was just entering adulthood her clan inadvertently stumbled into a nest of vampire spawn and was slaughtered, though Margaux managed to escape.

Rather than feeling rage towards those that killed her family, Margaux instead felt a great sadness for the people who had been turned into these bloodthirsty beasts. She had already shown an aptitude for the arcane and she began to hone that ability, focusing on the study of necromancy to better understand the creatures that had taken her family

from her.

**Good Work on Bad People.** Margaux came to Stonewood in the last 6 months as she had heard whispers of strange deaths and disappearances. After some investigation she discovered that the local gravedigger, Dayton, was secretly a vampire. Margaux set up an ambush for Dayton and has taken him back to her lab to try to cure him. She doesn't wish to fight the party but will defend herself and her research if threatened.

**BOND.** I will stop what happened to my family from ever happening to another.

**IDEAL.** Knowledge is our greatest weapon, even if that knowledge is forbidden.

**FLAW.** The undead scourge can be cured, not just eradicated.

Margaux has the stats of a **mage** (*MM p.347*) with the following exceptions:

**HIT POINTS.** 27 (6d8)

**LANGUAGES.** Common, elvish, dwarvish, infernal

**CHALLENGE.** 2 (450 XP)

**SPILLS PREPARED.** Margaux is a 6th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared :

**Cantrips** (at will): *chill touch, firebolt, light, mage hand*

**1st level** (4 slots): *burning hands, expeditious retreat, ray of sickness, sleep*

**2nd level** (3 slots): *misty step, ray of enfeeblement, shatter*

**3rd level** (3 slots): *animate dead, dispell magic, vampiric touch*

## MAISIE ROSCA

*Medium undead (human ghost), neutral good*

Though a pretty girl in life, Maisie's ghostly apparition bears the wounds that were her death - that of a nearly completely torn out throat. She wears the fine wispy dress she was buried in and her hair drifts loosely in an unseen wind. Her head lolls slightly to the side as if unable to support itself.

**You Can't Buy Happiness.** Maisie is the daughter of Nidel Rosca, a popular jeweler in Stonewood. She worked in her father's shop for a number of years serving customers and learning about the family business. Serving the wealthy of Stonewood gave her an insight into the life of the upper class and it all seemed rather... dull.

**Curiosity Killed the...** Maisie was intrigued by the lower

class and what they were willing to do to survive. She began visiting the seedier parts of the city and immersing herself in the lifestyle. Just as she was starting to feel comfortable in this new world, she was grabbed and dragged into an alley and had her throat torn out. That was 3 months ago.

**Haunted.** Maisie's spirit now haunts the necropolis of Stonewood, drifting aimlessly between the headstones and tombs in search of someone to speak to. She pleads with anyone who will listen to catch her killer, but unfortunately has no idea what the person or thing that killed her looked like save for that they had cold and calloused hands.

**BOND.** I must find someone who will avenge my death

**IDEAL.** A life of seclusion is no life at all

**FLAW.** I see the best in all people

Maisie has the statistics of a **ghost** (*MM p.147*) with the exceptions listed below. She flees if attacked.

**ALIGNMENT.** Neutral Good

**HIT POINTS.** 25 (5d8)

**WITHERING TOUCH.** Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3)

## TEREZA VESELY

*Medium undead (half-elf vampire), neutral evil*

Tereza is little more than skin and bone, her starved flesh taut across her body. Her cheeks are sunken and her lank dark hair hangs thickly around her face. She wears a simple brown shift and her body looks as if it is healing from a severe burn.

**Street Rat.** Tereza remembers little of her life before she was turned into a vampire. She has vague memories of begging on the streets of some large, hot, city and of the presence of a heavily cloaked man, but there is little else.

**Witness.** Tereza was part of the vampire nest that slaughtered Margaux's family years ago. Years later Margaux tracked her down and incarcerated her in the hopes of freeing her of the vampiric taint, but so far has been unsuccessful. She has been held by Margaux for over a year, enduring "experiments" at Margaux's hands that amount to little more than torture.

**Starving.** Tereza has been starved of fresh blood, save for the rats she has caught, and is desperate to be free. She is near feral from her treatment at Margaux's hands and, if freed, will attack the nearest PC to sate her hunger before racing upstairs to confront Margaux.

Tereza has the same stats as Dayton, with the following ex-

ceptions:

**HIT POINTS.** 26 (4d8 + 8)

**SKILLS.** Stealth +5

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES.** necrotic (*Margaux's experiments have stripped Tereza of her resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage*)

**REGENERATION.** Tereza no longer has this feature

**MULTIATTACK.** Tereza no longer has this feature

**CHALLENGE.** 1 (200 XP)

**BOND.** I must get free and return to my master.

**IDEAL.** People are little more than cattle to me.

**FLAW.** I'll turn on anyone without warning.

# APPENDIX B: STONEWOOD

**POPULATION:** 19,000+

**GOVERNMENT:** Plutocracy, a ruling council of the wealthiest merchants and guild leaders in the city.

**DEFENCE:** Professional soldiers and town guard known as the "Gilded Knights" for the gold trim on their armour. Supported by the personal guard of the merchants ruling class in times of need.

**COMMERCE:** Stonewood is a bastion of commerce and you can find almost anything there. It is a hub of trade, with merchants from all around travelling there to secure a spot on the Ring of Gold.

**ORGANISATIONS:** Temples to almost every god can be found in Stonewood, particularly those that favour commerce. It is home to a multitude of guilds and craftsmen, as well as a number of powerful banks.

Stonewood is a city that hums with life and turns on the never ending wheel of commerce. It is a hive of activity and has become the preferred location for dignitaries, bankers, merchants, and religious representatives to hold important talks and conferences.

The city was once ruled by a monarch who was jokingly referred to as "The Limp King" for his pathetic business dealings and pandering to other nations. The Limp King fell mysteriously ill one day, before passing away in his sleep. The heads of the merchant guilds stepped in to make sure diplomatic relations were handled in the best interest of Stonewood and have ruled ever since. In the 200 years since they took control, Stonewood has become a glittering gem in the landscape of the world, and its wealth and cosmopolitan lifestyle have become the envy of many.

The city itself is roughly divided into two districts - Old Town and the Burrows. Old Town is full of gothic architecture and imposing stone edifices, and all the most powerful families have homes there. The Burrows have grown around the Stone Forest and the Ring of Gold and have spidered out from there. It offers simpler architecture and a more relaxed lifestyle and is favoured by the youth of the nobility. At the edge of the Burrows sits Stonewood's necropolis, and the establishments nearby often cater to the more unwholesome citizens of Stonewood.

## LORE & RUMOURS

- There have been a series of disappearances and deaths in the city in the last year. Of the bodies that have turned up some of the victims were found badly burned and tortured, while others had their throats torn out, leaving them with little or no blood.
- A number of graves have been dug up recently. Usu-

ally just the valuables are looted from the corpses, but other times the corpses themselves are also taken.

- A strange elven mage has been seen in the city recently, usually at night. She has been spotted a number of times wandering the Stone Forest in the centre of town.
- If you're looking for items at a bargain price Adair's Wares is the place to go. He sells all manner of clothing and jewelry in like-new condition.

## DEAD DRUNK TAVERN

Brazenly situated opposite the gates of the necropolis of Stonewood sits the Dead Drunk Tavern, a drunken husk of a tavern filled with the most unsavoury people that Stonewood has to offer. "The Drunk", as it is often shortened to, is owned and run by a big sour faced bastard named Kurzen (N goliath male **gladiator**, *MM p.346*) who long ago replaced his glassware with wooden cups - not for the safety of his proprietors but because he got sick of mopping up blood.

A halfling bard named Liminee Twindlewhip plays an out-of-tune harp on a makeshift stage while simultaneously dodging thrown wooden cups.

### OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: BAR BRAWL

2 x Bandits (*MM p.343*), 100 XP

2 x Thugs (*MM p.350*), 200 XP

**TOTAL: 300 XP**



## DEVELOPMENT

Should the party end up venturing here, either for a drink or for information, Kurzen is abrupt and tight lipped. His clientele appreciate the discretion they enjoy in The Drunk and Kurzen himself isn't big on authority figures. If the party ply him with coin and don't piss him off however, they can learn that a girl "too pretty for this shit hole" came by once or twice a few months back. Kurzen hasn't seen her since.

Liminee can also offer this information, and he might prove to be a safer option than approaching Kurzen.

## THE RING OF GOLD

The Ring of Gold is the name given to the cobbled road that surrounds the Stone Forest at the heart of Stonewood. It is named for the plethora of shops and vendors that line the streets, peddling their wares to passersby.



The less wealthy or traveling merchants set up pop-up shops and carts with their backs to the wall that encircles the forest, while the more successful merchants have dedicated stores facing inwards. The side streets spread out from the center like spokes on a wheel and are lined with coffee shops, wine bars, and restaurants tending to the more well-to-do of the city.

Almost anything can be found on The Ring of Gold, but the following shops (along with Runeheim Bazaar) are likely to be of most interest to the party.

### ADAIR'S WARES

Adair's Wares is a small shop located a few doors down from Runeheim Bazaar and is on the corner of one of the side streets of the Ring of Gold. The front window is quite dirty (Adair has actually oiled it inside to keep as much sun out as possible while still displaying his wares) but a few mannequins display quite fine, if somewhat worn, clothes.

The interior is lit by a number of oil lamps and everything here is "like new" - because Adair has taken to purchasing his goods from irreputable sources and having his brother steal from the dead. Fine clothes that are just out of fashion line the clothes racks, and only slightly scuffed jewelry sits in a glass display case that serves as the counter.

Adair does his best to avoid the party and offers very little information if they come to speak to him. If the party sneaks in they find Adair's bedroom at the back of the shop. A rug concealing a locked trapdoor is in the centre of the room, and a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to discern that the floor sounds different when they walk on it. Any character lifting the rug can see the trapdoor, which requires a DC 12 Dexterity check to unlock. Beneath the trapdoor is Adair's storeroom, but hidden behind a number of stacked boxes is a pile of grave dirt that serves as Dayton's lair.

### ROSCA LAPIDARY

The Rosca family has lived in Stonewood for three generations and are one of the most respected and well known families in the city. Their hand crafted jewelry is a symbol of station in Stonewood, and is often commissioned by aristocrats from foreign cities and kingdoms. The family crest is a magpie perched atop a flawless diamond.

Nidel Rosca is the current head of the family and master jeweler; his son Nico will take over the business when Nidel passes away, but is currently away in another city on business for the family; Nidel's daughter Maisie was helping him to run the shop until she passed away recently.

The shop is currently closed, and has a swath of large black silk draped across its doors. The shops windows and doors are fortified with a number of arcane spells including *alarm*

and *arcane lock*, and the interior has a *glyph of warding* (*imprisonment*) spell cast on the floor.

## TEMPLE OF THE HANGED MAN

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The people of Stonewood venerate a variety of deities, particularly those associated with commerce and wealth. Their worship of The Hanged Man, the god of death, is much like the rest of their feelings and customs towards death: hidden and fearful with a touch of purposeful ignorance.

Servants and priests of The Hanged Man in Stonewood wear masks akin to those worn by visitors to the necropolis. It is their job to prepare the bodies of the deceased for transport from the undertaker's to their final resting place. The head of the temple in Stonewood is named Pater (LN human male **priest**, *MM p. 348*).

### THE HANGED MAN

The being known as The Hanged Man is the guardian of the passage from life to death and helps escort souls to their rightful place in the afterlife. Of all gods, The Hanged Man has perhaps the most varied set of followers. From clerics to assassins, great lords to lowly peasants, all must pass through his domain and all must pay him service. The Hanged Man despises the undead and teaches his most devout to seek out and destroy them wherever they lurk.

### DEVELOPMENT

All of Stonewood's dead are handled by the servants of The Hanged Man at some stage and as such either Pater or one of the other priests can recount the details of any of the murders of the last few months. It is up to you how accurate their memory is and how much has been eroded by time or through the act of handling so many bodies.

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