

THE DM TOOL CHEST

# THE HAUNTING OF WISTERIA MANOR

## STRINGS OF POWER PART II

A HAUNTED MANOR HOLDS THE SECRET TO AN ELDRITCH CULT



# THE HAUNTING OF WISTERIA MANOR

**T**he *Haunting of Wisteria Manor* is a Fifth Edition adventure for **three to five characters of 3rd to 4th level**, optimized for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 4**. Within the haunting halls of

Wisteria Manor lies a twisted tale of nobility, dark ambition, and forbidden power. Characters unravel the secrets of a once-respected family's descent into madness, battling restless spirits, unmasking a sinister cult, and uncovering dark secrets.

This adventure takes place in the Freelands campaign setting and is easily adapted into any setting with a haunted manor and a city with competing factions.

## ADVENTURE RULES

The 5th Edition core rulebooks are recommended to run this adventure. A free copy of the 5th Edition System Reference Document (SRD) and basic rule set can be found online and can be used in place of the core books.

*A boxed description like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. These suggested prompts may be used or disregarded at the GM's discretion.*

In this adventure, references point to information presented outside the module. Magic items, spells, and equipment are *italicized*, and their descriptions are located in either the core rulebooks or the 5th Edition SRD.

NPC and creature names are **bolded** to indicate the stat block referenced for combat purposes. These statistics are located in the core 5th edition monster guidebook, the 5th Edition SRD, or presented in an attached appendix.

## STRINGS OF POWER

*Strings of Power* is a three-part adventure series that plunges players deep into the intricate criminal underbelly of Haven, the city of crossroads. Throughout the series, the party uncovers complex schemes, navigates dangerous alliances, and confronts the city's darkest secrets as they find themselves inexorably drawn into a clandestine shadow war for control of the city.

In this second adventure, the characters explore the haunted Wisteria Manor in search of answers to its connection to the Shadow Hand, the cult that pulled the strings of the mage Varik in *The Talon's Mark*. Instead, they uncover a plot by the Veiled Order, a group of disgruntled nobles attempting to contact eldritch beings in exchange for power. After exposing their hidden temple

and forcing the nobles into seclusion, the Shadow Hand necromancers pounce on the opportunity to begin smuggling undead into the city in the series finale.

Each adventure is designed as a stand-alone module that can be played independently of the full series. Parties can choose to tackle a single adventure for a shorter campaign or embark on the full series for a grand, city-spanning epic. Each installment builds upon the last, yet it also offers a unique and complete story arc. This design provides you the opportunity to tailor the adventure series to your campaign needs.

## BACKGROUND

In the annals of Haven's noble history, the Wisteria family once stood as a beacon of respect and influence. Lord Archibald Wisteria was a man consumed by ambition, wielding his influence like a sword, while Lady Rosalind, his wife, governed their household with a steely and calculating eye. The Wisteria family's secret trade in ancient relics supported their opulent lifestyle until the end of the Great War, when their underhanded dealings dried up as quickly as the ink on the newly signed treaty twenty years ago.

Outwardly, the family worshiped Sylvanis, goddess of life, but secretly they sought the forbidden power of eldritch forces, hoping to regain their wealth and status. They helped form a dark and ambitious cult called the Veiled Order along with other disgruntled nobles and transformed the chambers beneath their manor, once used for hiding contraband, into a temple for dark rites.

Their daughter, Lilyann, a young and innocent musician, knew nothing of her family's treacherous schemes. Shielded by her parents' dark ambitions, she became a victim of circumstance, caught in a web of deceit that would lead to her tragic end.

It was a servant named Oliver who decided to end their wicked reign. Driven by his own twisted sense of justice, he poisoned the family, only to succumb to the very same poison he had used before he could escape his hiding place in the manor.

Now, the manor is owned by Lord Elaric Thornbridge, a prominent member of the Veiled Order. The cult uses the spirits trapped within the manor grounds to promulgate its haunted reputation and keep the curious at bay. All the while, the Veiled Order continues to plot and scheme in the shadowed chambers beneath the estate, hoping to regain their power through sacrifices.

Whispers and rumors circulate through the taverns of Haven, painting a vivid picture of Wisteria Manor's haunted halls. They speak of hidden treasures tucked away in secret chambers, forbidden knowledge scrawled in ancient tomes, and spectral apparitions that wander the rooms, trapped in a never-ending dance of despair.

## ABOUT HAVEN

Nestled on the Breakwater Coast near Mt. Honris, Haven is a bustling, vibrant metropolis and the capital of the Freelands. It's a city of contrast, where ancient traditions meet novel ideas, and the sparkle of progress illuminates the shadows of the old ways. Districts with different characters, like the Glittering Quarter, the Waterfront, and the Sages Quarter, each hold their own distinct charm and mysteries. From the sunlit docks humming with traders from distant lands to the hushed whispers in the shadow-filled corners of the Undercrypt, Haven pulses with life, intrigue, and the promise of adventure.

For its citizens, Haven is a city of opportunity. Dreamers, adventurers, scholars, and beggars alike can find a place for themselves amidst its winding streets and sprawling marketplaces. Yet, beneath the city's bustling exterior, secret societies and hidden agendas weave a complex web, waiting to ensnare the unwary. But for those brave enough to navigate its complexities, Haven offers a chance at fame, fortune, and perhaps a place in history.

While this module includes all the information needed to successfully run the adventure, for a more detailed look into Haven, its landmarks, key NPCs, and secrets, refer to the *Haven: City of Crossroads* sourcebook. The sourcebook is a comprehensive guide that provides a more in-depth look at the city's history, politics, and the dynamics among its different factions.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins upon arrival at the haunted Wisteria Manor, where the characters navigate through haunted rooms and traps, unraveling the family's secret involvement with eldritch forces and their tragic history. As the party delves deeper, they face both vengeful and lost spirits as they piece together the clues and past of the once-noble family. In the decayed halls and chambers, they must solve intricate puzzles and challenges, culminating in a battle against cultists in a hidden temple. Depending on their choices, they can uncover treasures, defeat the Veiled Order's plans, and perhaps even free the souls trapped within the manor.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are a few ways to get your characters hooked on this adventure:

### THE HISTORIAN'S TALE

In the bustling Grand Exchange of Haven, a renowned historian named Professor Thelara passionately recounts a local legend involving Wisteria Manor. She claims to have found information pointing to the existence of the "Crown of Elders" and its ties to the black market. This ancient artifact, according to lore, once belonged to a line of forgotten kings. It was lost to time and eventually sold through back channels and wound up in the hands of the Wisteria family, where all the information stops. Perhaps the ancient crown is hidden within its haunted chambers.

### A LUCRATIVE TASK

The esteemed Lord Arlan Vossimer, a collector known for his fascination with enchanted relics, extends an invitation to the characters. With an air of secrecy, he shares his desire to acquire a set of ancient tomes known as the "Scrolls of Verenthia" that he believes lie within Wisteria Manor's haunted chambers. Offering a handsome reward of 500 gold pieces, a rare magical ring, or vital information on a powerful enemy, Lord Vossimer hopes to entice the party to face the specters and retrieve the tomes.

### STRINGS OF POWER

If you are following the Strings of Power adventure path, the party recently faced off against the Talons gang after investigating the murders of bards in the Glittering Quarter. This adventure begins with a sealed envelope from Chen "Nightshade" Liwei, a private investigator who was also looking into the Talons. Inside, Nightshade's handwritten note reveals disturbing connections between Wisteria Manor and the Shadow Hand, a secret organization believed to manipulate political powers within Haven.

*Dear Friends,*

*In my investigation of the Talons, I've stumbled upon cryptic references to Wisteria Manor. The manor's haunted reputation may be a mask for something more sinister. Your recent triumph over the Talons leads me to believe this clue might prove useful in our shared cause. Time is of the essence; the manor holds secrets that may be tied to the very heart of the Shadow Hand's schemes.*

*Yours in pursuit,  
Chen "Nightshade" Liwei*

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Once the party has had the opportunity to prepare for their exploration of the haunted manor, read aloud the following when they arrive at the gates to kick off the adventure:

*The entrance to Wisteria Manor is guarded by a tall, wrought-iron gate, weathered and gnarled with age. Ivy and moss creep up the bars, entwining themselves with ornate designs, a touch of grandeur lost in decay. The gate creaks as it swings open, revealing a gravel path leading to a one-story building, elegant yet worn.*

*Once-white walls are tinged with the stains of time, and the roof's shingles are scarred by countless storms. Windows with intricate wooden frames are clouded with thick layers of dust. Some have been broken, providing small glimpses of the darkened chambers within.*

*To the left, an overgrown garden struggles to bloom. The remnants of statues and fountains peek through tangled weeds, obscured and half-forgotten. On the right, apple trees stand sentinel over rotten apples, their leaves rustling in the wind.*

## WISTERIA MANOR

Nestled within the overgrown wilds of Haven's Heartlands, Wisteria Manor stands as a decaying symbol of a once-proud lineage. The sprawling estate, confined to a single story, is a fading masterpiece of Gothic architecture. It's marked by tall, arched windows, ornate stonework, and wrought iron gates that groan with the weight of time.

The grounds surrounding the manor are filled with the remnants of lavish gardens, now choked by vines and overshadowed by gnarled apple trees. Statues, once lovingly sculpted, lie eroded and forgotten among the brush. A heavy air of neglect blankets the estate, and a disquieting silence pervades the atmosphere, broken only by the rustling of dead leaves.

Within the manor, elegant halls and richly furnished rooms bear the scars of age and abandonment. Paint peels from the walls, and once vibrant tapestries hang, they fade and become threadbare. Fireplaces sit cold and unused, their hearts filled with ash. Floors creak with each step, and doors hang ajar or sealed, hiding secrets of a forgotten past.

But the manor is far from lifeless. Whispers of its haunted legacy circulate among the local populace, along with tales of ghostly figures, eerie sounds, and strange occurrences that defy explanation. The tormented spirits of the Wisteria family wander the dimly lit corridors, each one a tragic testament to the family's dark and twisted history.



## STATIC HAUNTING

As the characters explore Wisteria Manor, roll a d10 on the Haunting Effects table every 30 minutes of in-game time. Implement the corresponding effect, applying any necessary checks or saves. These haunting manifestations are meant to build tension and atmosphere. Unless otherwise stated, the effects last until the next haunting effect occurs, the character completes a short or long rest, or they use a *remove curse* spell to end the effects early.

### HAUNTING EFFECTS

#### d10 Effect

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | A mirror in the room shows a ghostly reflection of a random character, then shatters. The targeted character must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or suffer disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws for the next 10 minutes. |
| 2  | Portraits on the walls suddenly shift to depict gruesome, twisted versions of their subjects, their eyes following the characters. After a moment, they revert to their original appearance.                                     |
| 3  | The scent of decaying flowers permeates the room. Each character must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or suffer nausea and have disadvantages on Constitution checks.   |
| 4  | The room's temperature drops suddenly, frosting over surfaces. Each character must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or have their movement speed halved.   |
| 5  | The room's temperature suddenly rises, accompanied by the distant sound of a child's laughter, and objects in the room feel hot to the touch for a brief period.   |
| 6  | Mournful, distant sobbing is heard from an unknown location. Those who listen closely and succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check hear whispers in a language they don't understand.  |
| 7  | A distant door slams shut loudly, followed by the sound of footsteps running away.   |
| 8  | Furniture animates and moves on its own for one round. Characters must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity-saving throw or be knocked prone by a flying object, taking 1d4 bludgeoning damage.  |
| 9  | Characters hear their names whispered softly in the wind.  |
| 10 | The walls start to bleed, and the floor becomes sticky with spectral blood. Each character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, or their speed is halved.   |

## SHIFTING HAUNTING

Several rooms within Wisteria Manor are subject to change, influenced by spectral forces or hidden enchantments. These shifts may manifest as varying hauntings, illusory or physical alterations, or time-specific phenomena. In the descriptions of affected rooms, specific details of the changes will be listed. Carefully note the circumstances of the characters' entry into these rooms, as these may trigger different manifestations. Factors to consider may include the characters' actions or the unfolding of particular events within the manor. These shifts are designed to heighten intrigue, challenge the characters' perceptions, and immerse them further into the mysterious legacy of Wisteria Manor.

## GENERAL FEATURES

These general features are prominent throughout Wisteria Manor, unless otherwise noted in the area descriptions.

**Ceilings, Floors, and Walls.** Ceilings are 12 feet high.

Floors are difficult terrain in certain decaying areas.

Secret passages behind walls may be found with a DC 16 investigation check.

**Doors.** The doors within the manor are heavy, wooden, and often locked or stuck. They have an AC of 10, 8 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Locked doors can be unlocked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or forced open with a successful DC 15 Strength check.

**Lights.** Rooms are dark, and descriptions assume the characters have a light source.

**Climate.** A constant chill pervades the house and imposes disadvantages on checks and savings throws against cold effects.

## KEYED LOCATIONS

The following descriptions correspond to the keyed locations on the provided map of Wisteria Manor.

### 1. ENTRANCE HALL

The Entrance Hall is a vast space with a towering 30-foot-high ceiling and a marble-tiled floor covered in deep scratches and a layer of dirt. A grand chandelier, imbued with faint spectral energy, illuminates the room, casting eerie shadows that dance across faded tapestries. A character proficient in religion or who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) check recognizes symbols of Sylvanis tastefully displayed in the ragged artwork hanging on the walls.

**Hauntings.** Each time the party enters the entrance hall, roll a 1d4 and consult the table below to determine what haunting effect takes place:

#### d4 Haunting

- 1 The spectral glow of the chandelier dims, and a cold chill fills the room. Shadows flicker across the walls, forming twisted shapes and figures.
- 2 A ghostly figure of the former butler appears, murmuring dark secrets. Each character must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be afflicted with temporary madness, hearing whispers for the next hour.
- 3 The symbols of Sylvanis shift and contort, becoming more pronounced and appear to melt into eldritch sigils. A feeling of dread permeates the room, and characters feel watched even though no one is there.
- 4 The worn tapestries ripple as though touched by an unseen force, and ethereal footsteps echo through the hall. An unsettling silence follows, and characters experience a sensation of time standing still for a moment.

**Religious Symbols.** Upon close inspection of the tapestries, a character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check notices that the scenes depicting Sylvanis are subtly altered. The leaves on the symbolic trees are shown as withered, and the usually vibrant life-giving symbols are intermingled with hidden sigils, hinting at a corruption of the depicted virtues.

### IA. CLOAK ROOM

The door to this room is locked (see General Features), and once a character attempts to open the door, Lila Featherfoot (see below) starts to shout to let her out. Once a character touches the door, read aloud the following:

*The door is firmly shut. But as you reach out to touch the handle, a muffled shout comes from inside, followed by a cheerful voice tinged with panic: "Oh dear! It seems I've gotten myself into quite the pickle. Would you mind letting me out?"*

This small chamber is filled with moth-eaten coats and musty hats. The room seems to exude a cold stillness, and the aroma of decay lingers in the air. A character searching through the musty room who succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers a distinguished-looking top hat hiding a secret pocket. Inside, there's an emblem of the Veiled Order—an open hand with a lidless eye in the palm. If the characters do not know the symbol, Lila offers them the information.

**Lila the Bard** Lila Featherfoot, a lively halfling bard (see Appendix), is known for her twinkling green eyes, curly auburn hair, and warm, infectious smile. Often seen wearing vibrant clothing and a jaunty feathered cap, she carries a lute and exudes an energetic charm that draws people in. Underneath her chipper and spirited exterior, Lila harbors a keen intelligence and a passion for adventure. Unknown to most, she is also a member of the Gilded Jesters, a group of performers who pose as assassins for hire.

Following information leading her to Wisteria Manor, Lila accidentally locked herself in this cloak closet while planning to join the characters' search of the manor.

She says she's on a mission to uncover hidden gold within the manor, but secretly is following the party to uncover the mystery behind the murdered bards (see "Strings of Power" section, page 1). While she may play up her persona as a simple entertainer, her motivations run deeper, and her love for performance and music is genuine.

Lila shares the following information willingly:

- She knows of the family's deaths by poison.
- Rumors abound about hidden treasures and artifacts hidden within the manor.
- She came to the manor because she's had bad luck getting performances after the string of bard murders in the Glittering Quarter, and she always wanted to try her hand at adventuring.
- She offers to take a lesser share of any treasures found if the party agrees to let her tag along and learn from them.

### LILA FEATHERFOOT



## 2. MAIN HALLWAY

The Main Hallway is dimly lit and filled with an air of mournful reminiscence. The walls are festooned with tarnished mirrors and detailed family portraits, including paintings of the Wisteria family's ancestors, prominent feasts, and a striking depiction of Wisteria Manor in its glory days. Two portraits, in particular, draw the eye: one of a stern patriarch holding a mysterious amulet, and the other of a beautiful yet forlorn young woman standing near an unmarked grave. The wooden floor groans beneath each step, and the peeling wallpaper sporadically flutters in an unfeeling wind.

**Random Hauntings.** Roll a 1d4 each time the party enters to determine a haunting effect.

### d4 Haunting

- 1 One of the cracked mirrors shows the reflection of the chapel filled with gold and treasures before fading away.
- 2 The sound of the young woman's sobbing echoes through the halls without an obvious source. Each character must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be affected by the confusion spell for 1 minute.
- 3 Unseen voices whisper the names of characters, recounting their deepest fears. Characters in the hallway must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute.
- 4 The eyes of the portraits begin to bleed, and the faces contort into screams. Characters in the hallway must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become paralyzed with fear for 1 minute.

**Painting of Lord Archibald.** This oil painting depicts the patriarch of the Wisteria family, seated in a lavish chair and wearing a golden amulet with a large amethyst. He is sitting in a detailed study filled with books, scrolls, and arcane instruments. Characters who have been in the study (area 12) recognize the background, noticing an inaccuracy in the painting's depiction—a door is in the painting where a fireplace sits now. A character inspecting the painting also sees the patriarch's eyes momentarily shift to look directly at them, a twisted smile forming on his lips before snapping back in a blink.

**Painting of Grave.** This painting depicts a young woman beside an open grave. If a character examines it, a spectral scream erupts, and a ghostly figure lunges forward. The character must succeed on a DC 15 intelligence-saving throw or take 1d6 psychic damage. Regardless of the save, the character suffers disadvantage on saving throws against being frightened for the next hour, haunted by the image of the grave. This has no effect on creatures immune to being frightened.

## 3. CHAPEL

This dimly lit chapel dedicated to the goddess Sylvanis is filled with both dust and signs of maintenance. Stone pews face a large altar, adorned with the eight-rayed sun symbol of Sylvanis. Ivy motifs trace along the stonework, giving the chapel an air of sacred tranquility. An archway on one side leads to a small, solemn prayer room, furnished with kneelers and candles. The entire room appears to be as decayed and untouched as the rest of the manor, but a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notices faint footprints in the dust and other subtle signs of activity, indicating that this chapel has been frequented recently.

**False Altar.** If a character attempts to pray at the altar, they must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be cursed with disadvantage on Wisdom checks and saving throws for the next 24 hours. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals the altar's true purpose: a clever ruse constructed by the cultists to deceive intruders.

**Random Hauntings.** Roll a 1d4 each time the party enters to determine a haunting effect.

### d4 Haunting

- 1 Ghostly whispers fill the chapel, speaking of lies and deceit. Characters suffer disadvantage on Insight checks within the chapel for the next hour.
- 2 The symbols of Sylvanis weep blood. Characters must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until they leave the chapel.
- 3 A haunting melody resonates through the chapel. Characters must make a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be compelled to sing along, revealing their deepest fears to the party.
- 4 A cold wind sweeps through the chapel, extinguishing candles. Characters must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer a level of exhaustion.

### 3A. PRAYER ROOM

This room contains worn wooden kneelers and shelves filled with crumbling prayer books, some of which are open to hymns honoring Sylvanis. The walls display the eight-rayed sun of Sylvanis and other religious sigils. Inspecting the iconography with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Religion) check notices there are changes made to the symbols, altering them slightly.

**Secret Door.** Etched into the walls is a phrase in common: "The heart of darkness is revealed in the light." A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check knows that this phrase is a twisted version of Sylvanis's teachings, which state, "In the heart of light, darkness finds no refuge." This serves as a clue that hints at the necessity of embracing a dark flame—the lantern found in the Dark Chapel (area 18). Once the light of the lantern enters this room, the back wall fades away as if it were an illusion, revealing the hidden stairway leading to the temple (area 19) below.



## 4 KITCHEN

This once-bustling kitchen now lays desolate, covered in dust and cobwebs. A large preparation table dominates the room, holding various cooking utensils. At one end of the table sits an open cookbook displaying the recipe for the family's last meal. An underlined ingredient in the recipe has been marked with a question mark, indicating an anomaly. The scent of decay permeates the air, and the room is deathly silent. The sudden clang of a pot echoes through the room, followed by the voice of a **ghost chef** (see Appendix) that growls, "Who dares disturb my culinary domain?" The spirit of the family's once-loyal chef has been twisted into an undead creature. The chef uses his Summon Staff ability and defends the kitchen from the characters.

**Cookbook.** The recipe in the open cookbook calls for a sprig of "Rosemary's Blessing," an uncommon herb known for its vibrant flavor and medicinal properties. The text in the cookbook specifically underlines this ingredient, marked with a question mark.

OLIVER



### 4A. STORAGE

A small, cramped room filled with wooden shelves, the storage room exudes a musty aroma of dried herbs and spices. Dust-coated jars and containers line the shelves, many bearing handwritten labels that fade with age. A cobweb-covered rack displays various hanging utensils, and an old, cracked mortar and pestle rests on a weathered table.

**Swapped Ingredients.** The party can easily find the jar labeled "Rosemary's Blessing," instead filled with "Mournful Nightshade," a poisonous plant that closely resembles the herb. The leaves are only subtly different, with a faint bluish tint. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies the plant as a toxic substitute known to cause paralysis and death when ingested. The switch of the herbs hints at the ultimate fate of the Wisteria family's murder.

## 5. LINEN CLOSET

The door to this room is locked (see General Features), and an air of melancholy permeates the space. Inside, neat shelves are filled with linens, towels, and various cleaning supplies; their colors fade with age. In the corner sits the transparent figure of a sad **ghost**, eyes downcast and hands wringing an ethereal cloth. This is Oliver, a former servant of the family, and he appears as a young, disheveled servant, his translucent face etched with worry and regret, and his worn, simple clothing bearing witness to a life of humble servitude. His skeletal remains lie hidden beneath a pile of old linens. The ghost's mournful presence seems benign, but his eyes flicker with eternal pain.

Oliver's ghost sits quietly, refusing to acknowledge the characters unless engaged with kindness. A successful DC 16 charisma (persuasion) check or some clever role-playing may convince him to talk.

Oliver shares the following information if persuaded, although he doesn't know the truth behind the family's dark secrets:

- "I switched 'em herbs at the family's last supper. I did. The magic they were using was dark and twisted, like something out of the pits of hell."
- "I'm rightly sorry for what I did, but it had to be stopped. They were dealing in evil, sir, pure evil, and I couldn't stand by, not knowing what it was."
- "There's secrets, dark ones, hidden all 'round this place. If you look close, you'll find 'em—things that ain't meant to be seen."
- "There's a way, a hidden one, through the library. I can't rightly say where it leads, but it's there, hidden among the books and shelves."

If the characters touch Oliver's skeleton, the ghost sees this act as a violation and attacks. Among Oliver's remains is a small, handwritten journal detailing his thoughts and fears regarding the family's activities and the key to the linen closet door.

## 6. SERVANT'S RESTROOM

In this tight, dimly lit chamber, an old toilet and wash-basin stand, their porcelain surfaces cracked and stained with age. The air is thick with an unidentifiable musty scent.

## 7. BUTLER'S QUARTERS

This room, though decayed and dusty, maintains an air of disciplined order. A simple, perfectly made bed lies against one wall, accompanied by a small wooden desk filled with outdated financial records and ledgers. The furniture creaks as though still in use, and occasionally, the spectral sound of pen scratching paper can be heard.

A character who searches the desk and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers a small button that reveals a hidden drawer. Inside is a tightly sealed envelope containing detailed notes about irregularities with the flow of water in the conservatory's (area 9) well. The butler's notes also express concerns that Lord and Lady Wisteria have been inviting unusual guests who hide behind hooded cloaks into their study at night, spending hours behind locked doors with strange noises coming from within.

## 8. SERVANT'S QUARTERS

Containing a simple bed, a worn chest, and a cracked mirror, this room bears signs of long neglect. Amidst the decayed linens and clothing, a tarnished silver hairbrush worth 5 gp can be found wrapped in an old cloth. A character searching through the room who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers love letters tucked away under a mattress. One letter is sealed and unopened, containing the following text:

"A -

*With every beat of my heart, I long for the day we can be together without these walls and secrets between us. Our love, like the most precious gem, is hidden away, waiting to be discovered. I've left you a token, a symbol of my affection, that only you and I will know of. Please, my love, consider it a small proof of my endless devotion. Since I know you love riddles, you must unravel this one to find it: In the room of music and elegant chance, look to the place where we shared our first dance.*

*Yours eternally, L."*

This letter was from Lilyann to a servant she fell in love with named Alex and points to the hidden compartment in the Drawing Room's (area 10) hearth.

## 9. CONSERVATORY

This room is overgrown with twisted and wild vegetation that has reclaimed the space. Rusted gardening utensils lay scattered, forgotten among the unchecked growth. The northern wall, made of shattered and broken glass, offers a glimpse of the back patio, while the ceiling is a network of cracked glass panes that allow dappled sunlight to filter through. The center of the room is well guarded by two **crimson lashers** (see Appendix) that wait in ambush for the first creature to come within 5 feet of them.

### WELL PUZZLE

The well is filled with shallow, murky water and hides a hidden passage beneath its surface. Encrusted on its moss-covered side is a tarnished brass puzzle designed to form the shape of an open eye. The puzzle consists of six intricate pieces that can be shifted around to fit within a circular frame, yet a key piece is conspicuously missing: the obsidian stone that forms the pupil of the eye. Upon close inspection, characters may recognize the missing piece as identical to the obsidian stone found in the Dark Chapel (area 18). Once the missing piece is fitted into place, the water in the well begins to drain slowly, revealing a hidden trap door at the bottom, leading to the hidden temple (area 19) below via a ladder.

LILYANN WISTERIA



## 10. DRAWING ROOM

This room contains an old floor harp next to a card table and an ornate hearth with a hidden compartment (see below). Dust and decay hint at the room's long disuse. The harp strings pluck out a disjointed tune as if touched by invisible fingers.

### THE GHOST OF LILYANN

A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check while playing the harp corrects the disjointed tune and summons Lilyann Wisteria's ghost. Lilyann's ghostly figure is that of a young woman in her late teens, adorned in a once-elegant but now ethereal gown. Her pale blue eyes, framed by delicate curls of auburn hair, convey a sense of timeless melancholy and longing, while her movements exude grace and poise, hinting at a refined upbringing tempered by a playful yet sorrowful demeanor. Read aloud the following if this happens:

*As the last discordant note of the harp's melody rings in the air, the sobbing ceases, and a ghostly figure manifests. The translucent visage of a young woman in an elegant gown dances gracefully to the lingering music. Her face is etched with a melancholic longing, and her eyes lock onto yours, filled with a silent plea.*

Lilyann's ghost engages the characters, asking for help to find her lost cat, Mr. Tiddlywinks, who can be found in area 15. If the characters return the spirit of her cat, Mr. Tiddlywinks (found in area 15), Lilyann shares the following information, dances joyfully with her cat, and then fades away, whispering her thanks.

- "Ever see a reflection that isn't quite right? The mirrors in Mother and Father's room sometimes do."
- "Father always spent late nights in his study, but I was never allowed to play there."
- "The last thing I remember is eating a lovely new dish from our chef. Everything is hazy after that."
- "Have you seen Alex? The boy with a leg brace who works in the gardens. Will you send him my way, please?"

### THE HEART'S SECRET

A character searching the hearth who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a hidden compartment hiding a small locket containing Lilyann's portrait. The back of the locket is inscribed with "Forever Yours, L." If the locket is removed before Lilyann heads to the hereafter, the ghost lets out a psychic shriek. Each character in the room must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute.

## 11. DINING HALL

The dining hall is filled with decayed and dusty furniture. A long oak table, once the centerpiece of family gatherings, now bears the patina of age and neglect. Surrounding the table are high-backed chairs, their cushions eaten away by time.

On the north wall, a large family portrait of the Wisteria family looms, its colors discolored by age and neglect. The scene depicts the three members: the stern patriarch with a thin, tight-lipped smile; the elegant matriarch, adorned in a lavish gown, her eyes hinting at concealed wisdom; and their young daughter, captured in a moment of playful innocence. The background showcases the lush garden and well in the conservatory. Strangely and disturbingly, the eyes of each family member are burned out as if scorched by a precise fire, leaving dark hollows that did not mar the rest of the canvas. A character inspecting the portrait notices the well, which showcases a gleaming brass eye with an obsidian stone in the center.

Three **ghouls** dressed in the tattered remnants of colorful bardic costumes wander through the room. If Lila is present, she recognizes one ghoul's brooch, identifying it as her friend Bradley Hurst, who disappeared weeks ago, leading to an emotional revelation. The ghouls howl and instantly surge towards the party.

**Sigils of Containment** Concealed among the intricate woodwork of the walls are arcane sigils that encircle the entire room. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes them as a barrier spell to contain undead. The sigils appear fresh and recently carved.

### TREASURE

A character searching the room who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a cracked mahogany sideboard holding a collection of tarnished silver plates and platters worth 75 gp.

## 12. STUDY

The door to this room is locked (see General Features), and the key can be found in the master bedroom (area 17). The musty scent of aged paper and mold fills the air. The walls are covered with rows of dusty bookshelves, tightly packed with ancient texts on religion and philosophy. In the center of the room, a large wooden desk sits beneath a faded landscape painting, its surface strewn with long-unused writing materials. To one side, a cold hearth is filled with ashes and unburned logs, and a worn moose skin carpet, its fur caked with grime, stretches across the floor.

**Pit Trap.** The carpet in the center of the room hides a cleverly hidden trap door set with a spring. A character who steps on the carpet must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity-saving throw or fall into the 20-foot-deep pit. A skeleton of a young man with a rusted leg brace sits at the bottom of the pit, holding a feline skeleton in its arms. A rotted leather collar holds a brass tag etched with the name "Mr. Tiddlywinks."

**Desk.** A casual search of the desk uncovers a *scroll of animate dead* and a *scroll of speak with dead*.

**Secret Door.** A button is hidden beneath the desk that, when pressed, unlocks the secret door in the back of the hearth leading to the Dark Chapel (area 18).

**Hidden Safe.** A character searching the bookshelves who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a specific book entitled "Musings on the Astral Plane" that can be pulled to reveal a safe hidden behind a section of fake books. The safe requires a DC 20 Dexterity check using Thieves' Tools to open. Inside are pouches containing 500 gp, 300 sp, and various small gems worth 200 gp. Additionally, there are sales documents that prove the Wisteria family's involvement in black market antiquities dealing with a priest named Garthos of the Lustrous Chancel of Sylvanis in Haven's Holy District. If the characters came to the manor at the behest of Professor Thelara or Lord Arlan Vossimer (see "Adventure Hooks" section, page 3), the documents prove the sale of the items they seek to the priest.

## 13. RESTROOM

This room once exhibited an air of elegance but now lies marred by the passage of time. The white tiles are cracked and stained, the gilded mirror is dulled, and the washbasin is encrusted with layers of grime.

**Random Haunting.** As the characters venture inside, they may encounter one of the following haunting effects, determined by rolling a 1d4:

### d4 Haunting

- 1 The washbasin suddenly fills with a viscous black substance resembling blood, only to drain away when approached.
- 2 Faint sounds of heart-wrenching sobbing emanate from within the room, though no source can be found.
- 3 The reflection in the mirror shows a gaunt, ghostly figure standing behind the observer, but when turned around, nothing is there.
- 4 A chill wind sweeps through the room, causing the lights to flicker, and whispering voices can be heard, recounting snippets of a dark, tragic past.

## 14. THE BLUE ROOM

This room was a guest bedroom adorned with blue wallpaper. Every piece of furniture has been torn apart, shattered, and scattered, leaving the place unrecognizable. An inspection of the damage reveals that the jagged and irregular gouges across wood and fabric were made by the claws of a large creature, hinting at a dark and terrifying presence once contained here.



## 15. THE RED ROOM

The red wallpaper of this room has faded over time, contrasting sharply with the dusty mahogany furnishings. Resting atop a worn chaise lounge, the ghostly figure of a cat, Mr. Tiddlywinks, appears translucent and ethereal. Its eyes, full of knowing wisdom, follow the party. If approached gently and spoken to in soothing tones, or if a character succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, Mr. Tiddlywinks will purr contentedly and agree to follow the party. Otherwise, he hisses and vanishes through the walls. He may later appear in other rooms (at the GM's discretion). If Mr. Tiddlywinks is brought to the Drawing Room (area 10), he can be reunited with the spirit of Lilyann.

## 16. LILYANN'S BEDROOM

Lilyann's bedroom is a snapshot of youthful innocence twisted into something far darker. A well-framed portrait of a young girl, Lilyann, and her cat, Mr. Tiddlywinks, adorns one wall, while music sheets, a child's violin, and other musical paraphernalia are scattered throughout the room. The room's once vibrant colors have dulled with time, adding a touch of melancholy to the atmosphere. A search under the bed (DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check) reveals unsettling eldritch glyphs, discernible by anyone who understands Deep Speech. These symbols form a ritual to infuse the mind of a host with an eldritch being from beyond the veil, a chilling insight into the hidden aspects of the Wisteria family.

### 16A. CLOSET

The closet is filled with dust-covered dresses and faded toys—a forgotten trove of childhood memories. Amidst the detritus, a hidden compartment in the wall can be found with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Inside is a bundle of letters expressing feelings between two young lovers, signed A and L: Alex, a young gardener whose remains lie at the bottom of a pit in the study (area 12), and Lilyann, whose spirit resides in the drawing room (area 10).

## 17. MASTER BEDROOM

The master bedroom's once elegant appearance is now marred by the elements, with the 20-foot-tall ceilings and furnishings all showing signs of decay. A broken skylight has allowed rain and wind to destroy much of the room, leaving behind a damp, musty smell and a feeling of abandonment. The furniture, once grand, is now tarnished and worn, and the tattered remnants of drapes hang limply from the windows.

The spirit of Lord Archibald Wisteria haunts this room as a **tormented soul** (see Appendix). His translucent form is shrouded in a cold ethereal mist, his eyes hollow voids, and his elegant clothing reduced to tattered rags, flitting erratically with his every movement. Chains of otherworldly energy circle around him, and his voice echoes with a mournful cry that chills the soul.

**Secret Door.** Inside a large wardrobe on the eastern wall is a secret door that leads to the Dark Chapel (area 18). A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers a clothing hook that causes the back to swing open when pulled.

### TREASURE

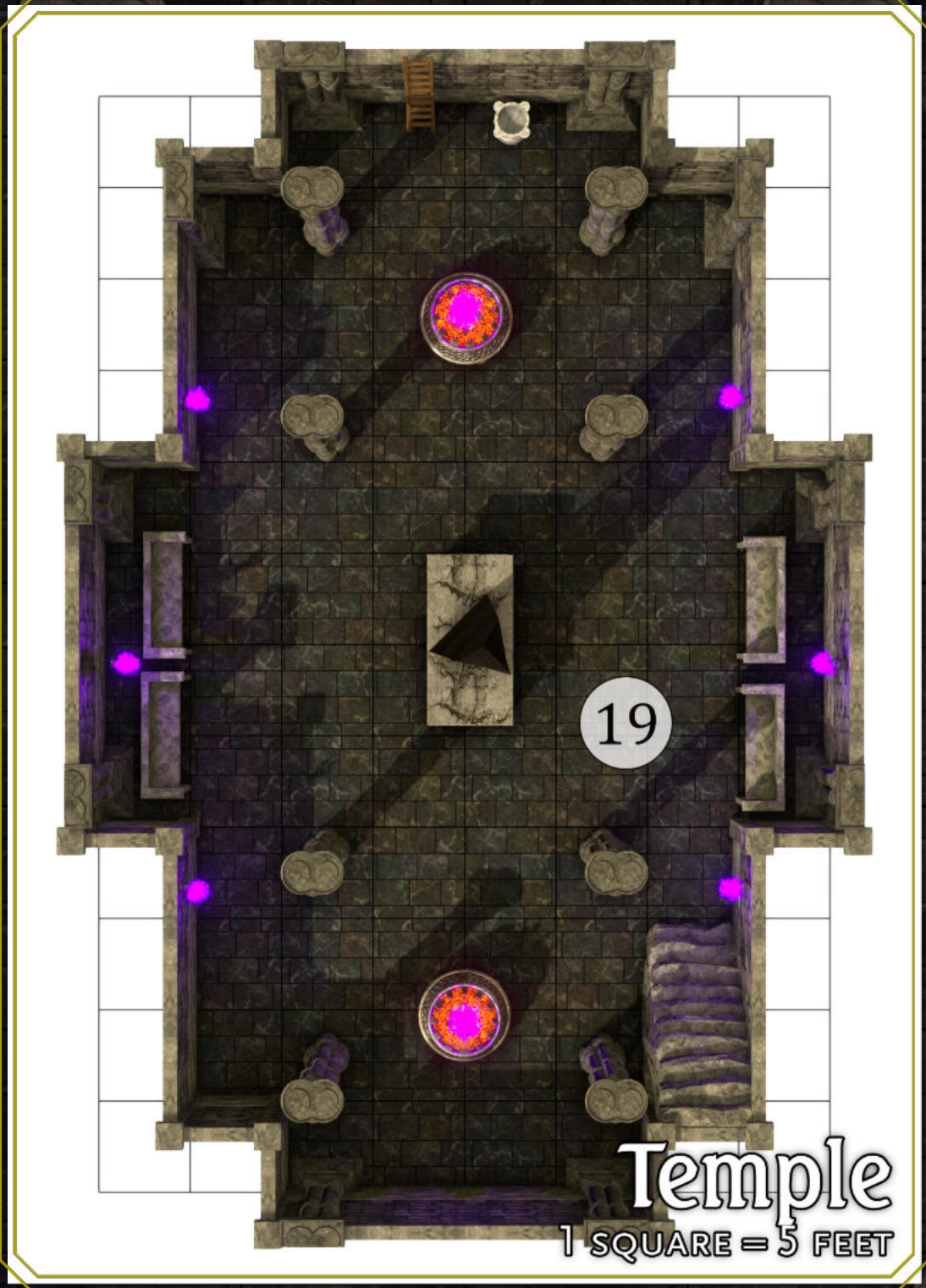
A thorough search beneath the bed with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers a loose floorboard and a hidden compartment. Inside is a small wooden box containing a pair of ceremonial cloaks, each bearing the distinctive symbol of the Veiled Order—an open hand with a lidless eye on the palm—and a set of two ritual daggers. The daggers have curved blades and intricately designed hilts, resembling entwined serpents. They bear dark stains on the blades, giving them a pitted, tarnished appearance.

## 18. DARK CHAPEL

This foreboding chapel is suffused with an aura of malevolence. The walls are stained with dried blood, creating a grotesque pattern that appears to move if stared at too long. In the center of the room is a stone altar etched with eldritch runes that glow with a purple light. On top of the altar, a lantern flickers with a mysterious purple flame, casting eerie shadows. Etched into the lantern are runes that translate in Deep Speech to "the light reveals the heart of darkness." This lantern holds the power to dismiss the illusion in Area 3a, revealing the stairs leading to the temple below (Area 19). Positioned next to the lantern is a human skull that is biting down on an obsidian stone etched to resemble an eye; it is the key to the puzzle at the well in the conservatory (Area 9).

**Hazard: Eldritch Gaze.** Upon picking up anything from the altar, the character hears a chilling, powerful eldritch voice in their mind that whispers, "Ahh, I see you now..." The character must make a DC 17 intelligence-saving throw. On a failure, the character takes 4d6 psychic damage and suffers a short-term madness effect (see core rulebooks). On a success, the target takes half damage, and the madness effect is negated.





19

# Temple

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

## 19. TEMPLE

The Dark Temple is an underground sanctum hidden beneath the Wisteria estate. Massive stone columns support the chamber, dimly lit by eerie purple torches. Intricate, twisted symbols etched into the floor surround a large, blood-stained altar. Twisted artifacts and ancient relics sit ominously, and the air is thick with an otherworldly chill. Shadows dance along the walls, and the scent of rot and decay fills the room.

Two Veiled Order **cultists** in black robes stiffen in surprise before quickly reaching for their daggers. Their faces are hidden behind smooth wooden masks with obsidian eyes. Standing over the altar is the twisted spirit of Lady Rosalind (**cursed matriarch**; see Appendix), her face contorted with malevolence, her eyes hollow, and her heart filled with a dark fire. The cultists fight to the death, but if captured, their ramblings reveal the cult's purpose: to summon an eldritch being called Ther'axois. The identities of the cultists—especially the leaders—are shrouded in secrecy, even from each other. However, an interrogation of the pair reveals they are both servants who happen to work for the owner of the manor, Lord Elaric Thornbridge. If questioned about the murdered bards, they express surprise and admit the corpses they used to raise the ghouls in the Dining Hall (Area 11) were provided to them by a third party—smugglers from the Shadow Hand.

## TREASURE

Searching the room after the battle, the adventurers find a collection of forbidden tomes detailing dark rituals, worth 250 gp to the right buyer, alongside gemstones and coins totaling 100 gp. An ornate ritual dagger with a hilt shaped like a serpent's tail rests on the altar, a historical artifact worth 150 gp.

## CONCLUSION

The tale of Wisteria Manor reaches its dark and thrilling climax. Lord Elaric Thornbridge's secret ties to the Veiled Order are exposed, possibly leading to his downfall. The manor's haunted reputation may endure, but the true horror of the place has been laid bare. The treasures and forbidden knowledge tucked away in the secret chambers are revealed, and the spectral apparitions are freed from their never-ending dance of despair.

## STRINGS OF POWER RESOLUTION

The details revealed by the cultists confirm the Veiled Order was not party to the murdered bards and were, in fact, set up by the mysterious Shadow Hand. With the exposure of their hideout, the Veiled Order members scurry into hiding, many of them leaving the city as quickly as possible. Due to many of the leaders being prominent figures within the city, this vacuum is exactly what the Shadow Hand wanted to create. With the Gilded Jesters forces depleted and the Veiled Order out of the way, the Shadow Hand plans to use the underground networks to smuggle an army of undead led by the necromancers of the Black Skull Brotherhood into the city and assault it from within.

## THE DM TOOL CHEST

## CREDITS

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## LICENSING

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The DM Tool Chest, Author TJ Phoenix

LADY ROSALIND, CURSED MATRIARCH



# APPENDIX

## BARD

A bard is a spellcaster and performer who draws on a magical connection to art and music. Wielding a diverse array of spells, a bard can charm, heal, and inspire allies or befuddle and bewitch foes. Often armed with a musical instrument, which may double as an arcane focus, bards travel the lands singing epic tales, unearthing lost secrets, and making friends—or enemies—wherever they go. Whether swaying a crowd with a stirring ballad, calming a raging beast with a soothing melody, or using their abilities in a myriad of creative ways, a bard's magical arts are as versatile as they are captivating.

### BARD

Medium Humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 13 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

**Skills** Deception +5, Performance +5, Sleight of Hand +4

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common plus any two languages

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Spellcasting.** The Haven Bard is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The Haven Bard knows the following bard spells:

Cantrips (at will): *minor illusion, vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, disguise self, expeditious retreat, sleep*

2nd level (2 slots): *invisibility, suggestion*

**Street Savvy.** The bard has advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) and Wisdom (Insight) checks made to gather or understand information in urban environments.

### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Distracting Performance (Recharge 5-6).** The bard gives a captivating performance, distracting all hostile creatures within 30 feet that can see and hear it. Each creature must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or have disadvantage on Perception checks and attack rolls until the start of the Haven Bard's next turn. This action doesn't affect creatures immune to being charmed.

### BONUS ACTIONS

**Bardic Inspiration (3/Day).** The Haven Bard can choose one creature other than itself within 60 feet who can hear it. That creature gains a d6 Bardic Inspiration die. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes.

## CRIMSON LASHER

Crimson lashers are sinister, carnivorous plant creatures that thirst for the blood of living beings. With their deceptive appearances, they easily blend into regular foliage, becoming hidden dangers in dense undergrowth or overgrown jungles. Their tendrils, covered in barbed suckers, can lash out to drain the blood from unsuspecting prey, strengthening the lashers in the process. Often found in dark, humid environments, Crimson Lashers lie in wait for those who wander too close, making them fearsome predators.

### CRIMSON LASHER

Medium Plant, unaligned

**Armor Class** 5

**Hit Points** 18 (4d8)

**Speed** 5 ft.

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

**Condition Immunities** blinded, deafened, frightened

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

**Languages**—

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +2

**False Appearance.** While the lasher remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a regular plant.

**Thirst for Blood.** The lasher gains 5 temporary hit points when it reduces a creature's hit points with its Blood Drain attack.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The lasher makes 1d4 Blood Drain attacks.

**Blood Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 - 1) piercing damage, and the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.



## GHOST CHEF

Ghost chefs are tormented spirits of once-renowned cooks and culinary masters, confined to their kitchens even in death. They appear in old restaurants, castles, and manors where they were once employed, endlessly recreating the dishes they were famous for, or perhaps failed to perfect in life. The aroma of their ghostly feasts can be sensed, but the food itself is but a spectral illusion, dissolving into mist when touched. Ghost Chefs are often driven by unfulfilled desires, such as a dish never mastered or a recipe stolen by a rival. While many are harmless, solely focused on their eternal culinary pursuits, some may become malevolent if their kitchens are disturbed or their recipes threatened. Interaction with them can provide clues to hidden treasures, secret recipes, or the untangling of a tragic tale that ended in their spectral existence.

### GHOST CHEF

Medium Undead, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 12  
**Hit Points** 33 (6d8 + 6)  
**Speed** 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks  
**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison  
**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11  
**Languages** understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak  
**Challenge** 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Incorporeal Movement.** The chef can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

**Culinary Precision.** The chef's expert knowledge of cutting and slicing grants him a bonus to critical hit range. His attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19-20.

#### ACTIONS

**Life Drain.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 1) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest.

**Culinary Wrath (Recharge 5-6).** The chef hurls ghostly cooking utensils at up to three targets he can see within 30 feet. Targets must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 6 (1d6+2) force damage.

**Summon Staff (1/Day).** The chef summons two specters of kitchen staff that obey his commands with a "Yes, chef!" The staff remain for 1 minute or until the chef is destroyed.

## TORMENTED SOUL

Tormented souls are the lingering remnants of individuals who met tragic or malevolent ends. Unable to find peace in the afterlife, they remain bound to the physical realm, filled with rage, sorrow, and confusion. Often trapped near the location of their death, they haunt these areas with a relentless malevolence, attacking any who intrude upon their torment. Their ghostly forms move effortlessly through solid matter, and their chilling touch can wither the very soul of the living. A haunting cry that echoes their eternal pain can paralyze the bravest of hearts. Those who wish to put these souls to rest must first uncover the truth behind their torment and perform the necessary rites, or else risk the vengeful spirit's reformation to continue its haunting indefinitely.

### TORMENTED SOUL

Medium Undead, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 12  
**Hit Points** 37 (5d8 + 15)  
**Speed** 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +5  
**Damage Resistances** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered  
**Damage Immunities** cold, poison  
**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14  
**Languages:** understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak  
**Challenge** 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Incorporeal Movement.** The tormented soul can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Soul Bound.** If the tormented soul is destroyed, its essence lingers in the area. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes that the soul can be put to rest or summoned again with the proper ritual or conditions. If not properly dealt with, the tormented soul will reform in 1d4 days at the place of its destruction.

#### ACTIONS

**Soul Rend.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of its next turn.

**Haunting Cry (Recharge 5-6).** The tormented soul releases a terrifying wail. Each creature within 20 feet of it must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be paralyzed with fear for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the tormented soul's Haunting Cry for the next 24 hours.

# APPENDIX

## CURSED MATRIARCH

A cursed matriarch is a tormented figure, her soul twisted into a form of eternal sorrow and malice, bound to the world by dark and mysterious forces. Once a noble and wise leader, her life's tragic turn of events led her to a forbidden pact that transformed her into an entity trapped between life and death. Her spectral presence sends chills through the very air, and her eyes harbor a terrifying power that can send even the bravest adventurers fleeing in terror. Those who dare to study her report an overwhelming aura of despair, grief, and anger, mixed with a yearning for something forever lost. Her haunting wails have become the stuff of local legends, and the ground where she walks is said to wither and die, reflecting her inner torment. Many have sought to put her to rest, but her curse seems unbreakable, making her a perpetual embodiment of sorrow and a relentless pursuer of those who trespass upon her domain. Her existence serves as a grim reminder of the dark paths that ambition, desperation, and despair can lead to.

## CURSED MATRIARCH

Medium Undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 14  
**Hit Points** 60 (8d8 + 24)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Wis +4, Cha +4  
**Skills** Perception +4, Insight +4  
**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks  
**Damage Immunities** poison  
**Condition Immunities** poisoned  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14  
**Languages** the languages she spoke in life  
**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Incorporeal Movement.** The matriarch can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. She takes 5 (1d10) force damage if she ends her turn inside an object.

**Eldritch Gaze.** When a creature starts its turn within 10 feet of the matriarch and can see her eyes, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of its turn.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The matriarch makes two melee attacks with her spectral claws.

**Spectral Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage and 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

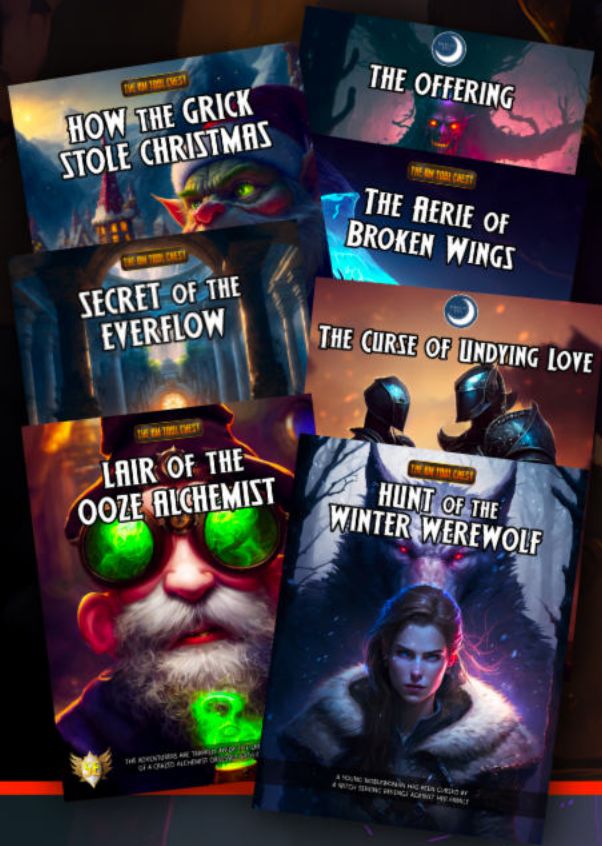
**Eldritch Blast.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d8) necrotic damage.

**Haunting Lament (Recharge 5-6).** The matriarch releases a mournful cry. Each creature within 30 feet of her that can hear her lament must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage and become stunned until the end of its next turn.

### REACTIONS

**Spectral Escape (3/Day).** When the matriarch takes damage, she can become incorporeal until the start of her next turn, gaining resistance to all damage except force.

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