

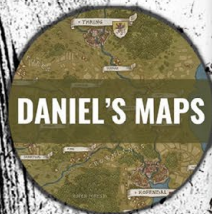
A DREAM OF ALCHEMY



By Elven Tower and Daniel's Maps

Designed for use with

ShadowDark RPG



LEVEL-0 GAUNTLET

A SHADOWDARK FUNNEL ADVENTURE ABOUT THWARTING AN EVIL ALCHEMIST'S PLANS

ADVENTURE PRIMER

All have betrayed me because they do not understand that all advancement comes at a cost. It shall all be worthwhile in the end. If only all would comply...

Rowan, the Alchemist



Countless generations of mages and researchers have tried to traverse the labyrinthine paths of the ancient art of alchemy. Some reactions and concoctions are known but after a certain point, alchemy becomes one of the most intricate subjects to study; few competent alchemists have walked among men. Transmuting common metals into gold is the foolish dream of most apprentices. While the real masters understand that such a goal is petty and uninspired. Their ultimate achievement is always the creation of *void crystals*, a theoretical material capable of cutting through matter, transmuting materials and souls, and even manipulating people's thoughts as if they were just another ingredient in an alchemy machine.

THE DREAM OF ALCHEMY

AN ALCHEMIST AND mage, Rowan, recently acquired a tome titled *On the Nature of the World*, by an elvish researcher who conducted his experiments thousands of years ago. Rowan now strives to work on the tome's subjects to perfect the creation of the *void crystal*. Rowan lived in the City of Sabras where he is a renowned apothecary and a healer. However, he took advantage of people's trust and conducted alchemical experiments on those who came seeking help or medicine. Rowan believes that the ends justify the means and that when he perfects his *void crystal*, he shall easily revert any harm caused to the townsfolk. In his spare time, Rowan prepared a salve that can heal the peasantry. He shall release it when he finally succeeds. To protect his research, Rowan promised life-lengthening potions to the people in power in the city. They secretly cover for him.

IT IS PERSONAL

In the following chapter, some people in the City of Sabras are given special motivations to be a part of the impromptu expeditionary force. During character generation, the players are free to consider these NPCs as prospects for their gauntlet party. To choose them, proceed with character creation as usual but keep the ancestries, gender, names, and motivations described below. Characters not chosen are willing to accompany the party on their expedition to Redstone Island too.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Level 0 Gauntlet

THE FOLLOWING ARE generic adventure hooks that any character can use to be involved with this adventure. Individual hooks are provided for the special characters described in the city's description (see *It is Personal*).

PETTY REVENGE

The alchemist abandoned the City of Sabras weeks ago, leaving behind a crowd of dissatisfied clients, friends, and creditors. The characters seek justice but the bailiff and the watch refuse to pursue or prosecute Rowan. Most people give up but a small group of individuals have been deeply affected by the alchemist's selfish actions. This group of peasants is ready to track the scholar down and enact justice with their own hands.

DEBT COLLECTORS

Rowan borrowed 260 gp from Lord Thintsdale, a local banker, to fund his alchemy laboratory on Redstone Island. Rowan promised to pay back as he would be able to make gold out of thin air later on. However, the banker has grown tired of waiting and the authorities refuse to collect the debt. He offers a hefty reward and easy credits to whoever collects the debt. Some peasants rise to the challenge, aspiring for wealth and a brighter future.

RUMORS

d6	Details
1	Rumor has it that Rowan is not only an apothecary but also a powerful mage. Some people barged into his shop when he practiced arcane spells and incantations.
2	People claim the apothecary owes over 350 gp to several creditors. However, the bailiff has declared that none of it can be collected as long as Rowan is away from the city.
3	A family of five all contracted a debilitating condition after consuming Rowan's remedies. They can barely walk and other healers claim to be unable to help.
4	Since Rowan started giving people strange remedies, the population of homeless decreased considerably. Most of them perished from exposure or skin ailments.
5	Andria, the court mage, believes that Rowan is after a legendary and theoretical substance, the <i>void crystal</i> .
6	People believe that acquiring Rowan's recipe book would change everything as his secrets would be widely known.

THE CITY OF SABRAS

Don't you get it? We simply cannot prosecute Rowan while he is so far away. Please understand and desist from this foolish errand. Do not pester me...

Bailiff Darius

The jewel in the desert, the basket of the region, the oasis of Redstone Desert. The City of Sabras is a sprawling settlement built on the shorelines of the Sabras River delta. It is a commerce hub that all ground and maritime routes visit on their comings and goings around the arid region. The walled city has been successfully defended from sea raiders for decades. It stands as a place where people can aspire to build something lasting and meaningful. Numerous people from smaller desert settlements move to the City of Sabras to seek better opportunities.

INGRAINED CORRUPTION

THE CITY OF Sabras is ruled by Duke Garlington, a corrupt noble sworn to the Redstone Crown. However, the capital is so far away to the south that the duke has complete autonomy to manage this region as he sees fit, with little to no interference from royal agents.

Rowan and the duke are the main culprits for the events that occurred. The alchemist had an audience with the duke and explained to him his goal of perfecting the *void crystal*. Rowan claimed that human trials were necessary and that the consequences on the population could not be prevented. But he promised Duke Garlington that it would all pay off in the end. Rowan convinced the duke that after crafting the *void crystal*, he would be able to transmute gold and extend his life and those of his family or allies indefinitely, making him the eternal ruler of the City of Sabras. The duke, inebriated by greed, accepted the consequences of Rowan's experiments and instructed all city officials to prevent the prosecution of Rowan, despite the townsfolk's malaise. Alas, the people's discomfort has risen to intolerable levels.

City Features

► **Events.** Check for a **Random Event** once per day and when visiting a new city area (3-in-6 chance).

► **Climate.** The City of Sabras is a green jewel in the desert. Sabras River becomes a delta when reaching the ocean. The region is fresh and humid thanks to this.

► **Religion.** Most townsfolk revere the Four Lords. Temples and chapels dedicated to these deities are located in each district. People are devout, god-fearing believers.

RANDOM EVENTS

d6	Details
1	A heated throng of peasants march in the streets toward the bailiff's office (Reaction check). They demand the pursuit of Rowan. At the head of the march, there are four people with at least one shriveled, unusable limb.
2	A blind vagrant begs for food. If approached, he claims he was the blacksmith until he visited Rowan last month for an eye infection. The alchemist's remedy blinded him.
3	A sewer outlet explodes suddenly, injuring a passing person. The exhaust smells of sulfur and the water is impregnated with oily substances. People blame Rowan.
4	In a square, the duke's spokesman declares that while Rowan is on Redstone Island, nothing can be done about him. The people are disgusted with the hypocrisy as the City of Sabras has a strong maritime presence.
5	Fishermen claim to have seen strange, enlarged sea-life in the recent weeks since Rowan left for Redstone Island. Alas, some people became sick after eating them.
6	The bailiff and watchmen arrested a group of mariners who decided to sail to Redstone Island to bring Rowan to justice. It is clear that the authorities cover for him.

1. SABRAS CASTLE

20-foot-tall, granite walls surround the fortified edifice. The flags of Sabras and the crown fly on the highest towers; a source of pride to the townsfolk.

The characters are unlikely to secure an audience with the duke (1-in-6 chances per week) as they are not influential or important in the City of Sabras. In case they do, the duke disregards any accusations of corruption, if mentioned. If required, the duke orders the arrest of any quarrelsome individuals until Rowan succeeds.

► **The Bailiff.** Darius tells the characters to get lost if they request him to act against Rowan. The bailiff shamelessly declares nothing shall be done. He does not fear the opinion of the peasantry as the duke has promised he too shall be rewarded for his loyalty.

► **PC - Lady Annia.** One of the duchess' ladies-in-waiting has heard enough in the castle to know that the nobles conspire with Rowan. She resents the alchemist since her sister contracted a terrible lung disease that threatens to take her life any day now. Lady Annia is ready to seek justice by herself if there is any hope of saving her sister. She steals a dagger from the duke's room.

THE CITY OF SABRAS



2. CASTLE SQUARE

The richest and most exclusive establishments in the City of Sabras are located here. One of them is Rowan's apothecary shop, which was sacked by the populace a week ago. Lord Thintsdale's bank is here too (see **Adventure Hooks**), he is close to bankruptcy after Rowan borrowed so much money for the Redstone Island project.

► **Apothecary shop.** Little of value can be salvaged from the ransacked store. 1 hour of searching yields 5 sp, an oil flask, and used a medicine case.

3. RI'ER MOUTH TAVERN

The tavern is a popular stop for visitors and merchants. It is owned by a dwarf named Akiri. The place is famous for its out-of-the-ordinary ale; the recipe is thought to be a dwarvish secret that Akiri's family guards closely.

► **PC - Akiri.** Weeks ago, Akiri visited Rowan to purchase some mineral salts that are one of the ingredients for his homemade ale. Alas, that batch of ale had good taste but it caused a severe allergy on all who tried it. Akiri's reputation took a hit. Half the clientele blame the alchemists while others blame Akiri's brewing skills.

4. TEMPLE OF COMBRIS

The largest temple of the Four Lords. This particular temple is named after a warrior martyr, Saint Combris. He gave his life to uphold the ideals of his faith. The temple is a welcoming place to all people and ancestries.

► **PC - Peter.** He is an acolyte assigned to the temple's medic ward. Peter has spent weeks caring for those affected by Rowan's nefarious treatments. After witnessing so much suffering, Peter has decided to act and join whoever is willing to bring the alchemist to justice.

5. NORDOK WAREHOUSE

The elf-owned warehouse is one of the most important hubs for travel and commerce. Now, agents of the castle inspect all departures and merchandise to make sure Rowan, the alchemist, is left alone to work.

► **PC - Farland.** The docks' worker witnessed the arrest of mariner friends that tried to depart for Redstone Island to arrest Rowan. He knows that the authorities have the piers on lock-down to protect the alchemist. Farland knows the docks well and can easily prepare and steal a vessel to bring a group of people to Redstone Island.

6. SHIPWRIGHT

Most vessels in the City of Sabras are designed if not built by Salas, the best engineer in town. He is a gifted craftsman who has designed better and better ships in the past two decades. Salas was arrested a week ago after lending a fast vessel to a group of vengeful mariners who sought to reach Redstone Island. Bailiff Darius was particularly cruel during the raid and arrest.

► **PC - Carl.** The apprentice shipwright and Salas's Son. Carl is furious with Bailiff Darius and his shameless protection of Rowan's crimes. Carl has heard terrible things about the treatment of inmates and fears for his father's life and well-being. He seeks revenge on Rowan and the bailiff. If it were left to Carl, both of them would die in the city gallows as soon as possible. A fitting punishment for their involvement in so much suffering and cruelty.

7. EASTEND GROCERIES

The compound features two granaries and a warehouse for edibles and food products for the region. Most farms ship their produce here where it is bought and then redistributed across the City of Sabras. All distribution shipments have stopped for a week now. The establishment buys a pesticide gas to deal with vermin from Rowan's apothecary once per month. The last batch caused the food to become poisonous. All who eat it become catatonic and unresponsive. A scholar tries to cleanse the food without success. The threat of famine is serious.

► **PC - Arthima.** She is a warehouse worker. Arthima brought home some food as soon as it was sprayed with Rowan's pesticide. It caused her two little siblings to become sick with the contaminated food. After other healers in town failed to cure the lads, she is quick to join any expeditionary force to Redstone Island to help them recover. She is ready to risk it all for her siblings.

8. SAILOR'S SUPPLIES & MORE

Owned by an entrepreneurial halfling known as Lucky Jack, Sailor's Supplies & More is a purveyor of all manner of items needed at sea: long-lasting ration bars, scurvy tablets, wooden barrels and crates, rope, and iron implements for vessels. Business has been slow for the past few weeks as all outgoing vessels have to spend a considerable amount of time passing the bailiff's inspections. The current state of affairs impacts the city's economy but the nobles appear to not care about this, even though their incomes are also affected by this.

► **PC - Armin.** A worker in the supplies shop, Armin wishes to open his own supply establishment but requires a considerable amount of money to fund it. The recent plotting of assailing the alchemist's base in Redstone Island is a perfect opportunity to earn this money.

DEVELOPMENT

THE PATCHWORK GROUP of characters is ready to part for Redstone Island. Their mission: arrest Rowan, ransack his laboratory to find cures for the sick, and maybe even make some money in the process. Farland (area 5) has a vessel ready and knows the piers well enough to find a moment to sail without risk of being interrupted.

The maritime expedition sets out before dawn without the knowledge of Bailiff Darius. It takes the party four hours to traverse the sea and reach Redstone Island. A small, abandoned pier with a single boat awaits them. The only trail leads to an ancient dwarvish hall that Rowan, the alchemist, has repurposed as his laboratory.

The corrupt bailiff becomes infuriated after learning of the party's departure. He sends an interception party later the next day but the characters have the upper hand.



REDSTONE ISLAND LABORATORY

I am so glad you're here! My kind have not the power to stop the alchemist. But I'll help how I can! The naive man deals with a force that is best left alone.

Allarinni, the Fairy



Redstone Island was once the home of a small dwarvish population. Little is known of their culture as they abandoned the island through their underground tunnels centuries ago. A large rock gate, eroded and damaged by exposure, is the only evidence of the dwarvish presence on the surface.

After the dwarves abandoned the area, the island became the home of seafaring fairies. The minute fey creatures spoke once with Rowan after they detected the toxic fumes coming from the laboratory. They ordered him to stop his experiments. The alchemist dismissed them and told them not to pester him any further. The fairies threatened to attack but the mage shot a few arcane bolts at them before taking refuge in the laboratory.

After their unsavory encounter, Rowan crafted an arcane contraption that functions as a *grounding enchantment* (see **Area Features**). With it, most fairies are afraid to confront Rowan because the apparatus severely impairs their movement and abilities. They are afraid.

► **The Boat.** If the characters inspect Rowan's boat for 1 hour, they find 5 sp, 58 cp, three torches, an oil lamp, a backpack, six candles, and a set of leather armor. In addition, if the characters sabotage or disable the boat, they prevent Rowan from escaping, as he is bound to do if the battle is lost. To prevent him from using the party's boat, the characters must hide their vessel or disable it temporarily with tools or knots (DC 11 DEX check).

► **The Trail.** The seldom-traveled path leads from the pier at the beach, through a forested region, and to the dwarvish gate. The region is undeveloped and overgrown. Only wildlife and the fey live here (DC 11 INT). It takes the party 1 hour to reach the end (area 1).

Area Features

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every two crawling round and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).

► **Alert Sensors.** Rowan set up hidden runes near the gate. They are almost-invisible runes on the soil (DC 11 WIS check). If a character steps on them, Rowan is alerted of their approach. Otherwise, they are undetected.

► **Grounding Enchantment.** In the laboratory, and within 40 feet of the gate, creatures cannot fly. All flying movement ceases. Creatures fall and must walk.

RANDOM EVENTS

d4 Details

- 1 A bright green light followed by a cloud of eye-watering gas erupts from the large gate. Grass and plants shrivel when in contact with the noxious cloud. It clears soon.
- 2 A **boar** approaches the area in a fit of rage. It can be calmed down if given at least 10 pounds of food.
- 3 An awakened **dire rat** approaches the party cautiously (**Reaction** check). It is inclined to blame the humanoid for the strange gas exhaust but may be swayed to help.
- 4 The arcane contamination causes two **rot flowers** to burst from the ground within reach of the party (DC 12 DEX check to jump away). The flowers' gas toxin may be harvested with bottles for future use (DC 13 INT check).

1. THE TRAIL'S END

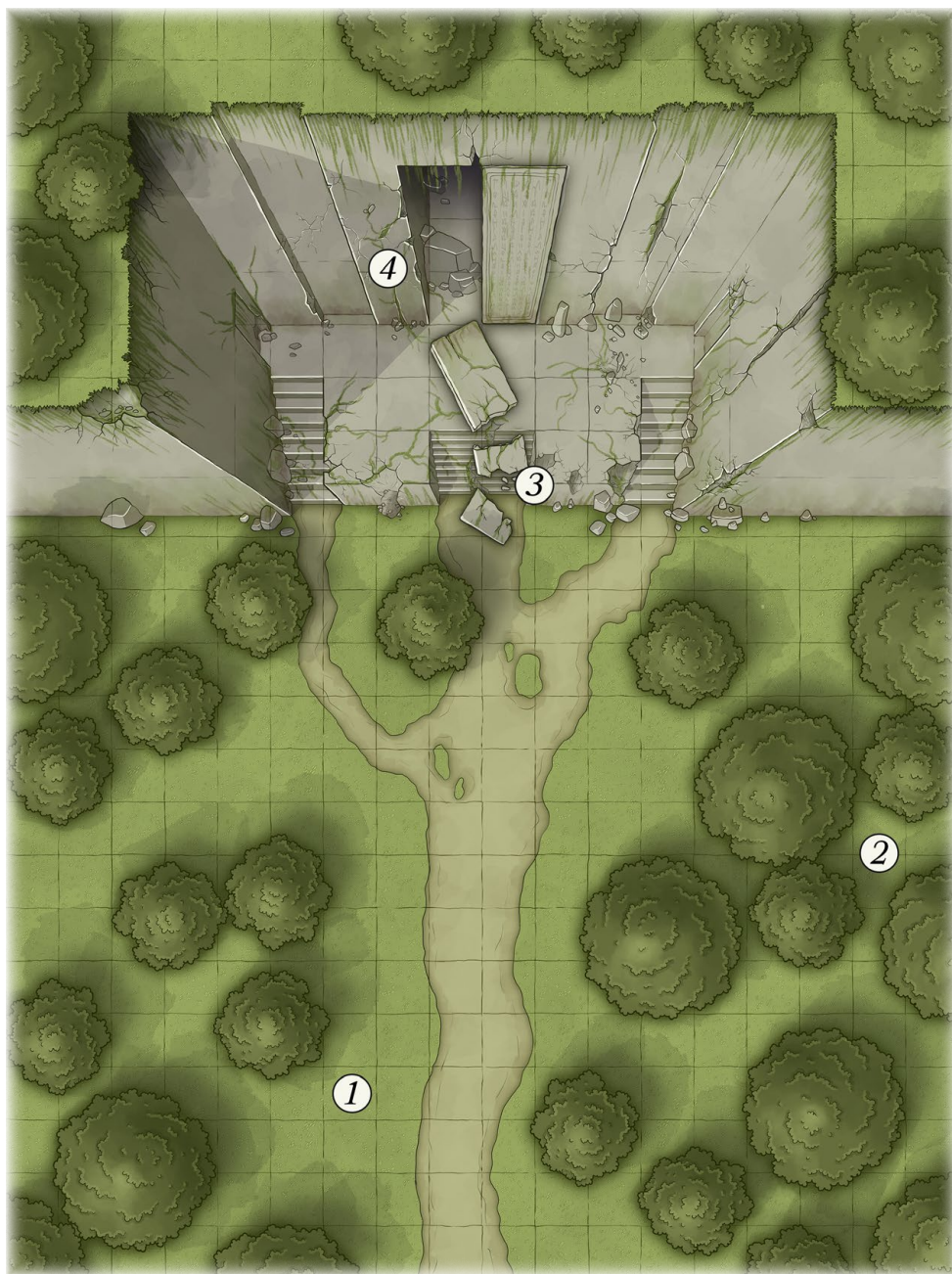
The trail ends by a crumbling, eroded, granite construction of impressive geometry. The 20-foot-tall gate at its center stands open, one of the stone doors lies in pieces in front of the colossal construction.

The stone doors and the base of the construction are etched with faded-out runes. They cannot be read from here as the erosion has rendered them almost illegible. Approaching is necessary to learn more about them.

2. UNEXPECTED ALLIES

A party of eight 1-foot-tall humanoid creatures approach the party of peasants. The **fairies** cannot fly this close to the gate. The needle-wielding fey are inclined to be friendly. Unless the characters are openly aggressive, the fey welcome their arrival as they need help. Their leader introduces herself as Allarinni. If the characters are eager to converse, the fairy tells the characters about the conflict they have with Rowan. The wood fairies are not surprised to learn that people in the City of Sabras also have their quarrels with the troublesome mage.

The fairies explain they cannot fly in the compound's vicinity and thus have not dared venture into the laboratory. However, Allarinni steps up to the challenge and offers to accompany the party on foot. She is eager to find a way to disable the *grounding enchantment* so that other fairies can more easily aid the party. Other than that, they have no information about the laboratory or the dwarvish compound; old superstitions prevented them from exploring the dwarvish tunnels in the past.



3. THE GREAT STEPS

Each of the eroded stone steps is decorated with intricate runes in Dwarvish. They are washed out; a careful study is required to make sense of them.

A character that knows Dwarvish reads in them a recount of the dwarves' arrival looking for mithral veins under Redstone Island. They stayed for a time until the mines ran dry. They left after that, disliking the island.

Some of the steps are marked with alert sensor runes (see **Area Features**). The characters who stumble up the steps without caution have disadvantage in seeing them.

If Allarinni is present, she remarks that no fairy dared approach the gate as she does now. While her words sound brave and proud, she is unmistakably afraid.

4. THE GATE

Beyond the doors, a 10-foot-wide hallway leads into the dark depths of Redstone Island. The stench of Rowan's alchemical efforts is strongest in the entrance hall.

► **The Door.** The door collapsed decades ago. Careful inspection of the stone hinges reveals that water erosion rendered them unusable (DC 12 INT check).

► **The Illusion.** If the characters activated any of the alert sensor runes, an ephemeral projection of Rowan appears before the entrance when they approach. The characters know him by sight in case they were affected by his criminal activities. The illusory Rowan tells them to be gone as there is no hope for them to stand against him. Rowan does not wish to cause more harm than is necessary for the scientific breakthrough he seeks. At least, that is what the illusion claims.

► **The Guardians.** If the characters press further, an alcove opens to free two **zombies**. The abominable undead attack all living creatures and fight until slain. The encounter occurs even if the alert sensors were not triggered. In that case, Rowan remains unaware of the characters' approach.

► **Treasure.** Each zombie carries a rusty sheathed shortsword.

THE DWARVISH HALLS

IN THE DARK dwarvish tunnels, the characters encounter an underground compound equivalent to a large castle next to a network of countless mining tunnels. When the dwarves left, they took with them everything of value, in addition, the place has been explored many times since. Nothing else can be found here except for the wall runes that tell more of the dwarvish tribe that came.

► **Finding the Lab.** The characters must traverse the endless tunnels to find Rowan's laboratory. The characters either follow the stench of his experiments or find faint footprints on the dusty halls (DC 10 WIS). Or they can systematically sweep and map the compound until they find the wing he remodeled as his foul lair. This leads the characters to the laboratory doors in area 1.

THE ALCHEMY LAB

ROWAN, THE MAGE, is tinkering in the workshop (area 3) if he is not aware of the characters' approach. Otherwise, he moves to area 10 to protect the delicate devices that he believes are capable of crafting the *void crystal*.

Rowan is the only other person in the laboratory. Only undead and automatons make him company here. The former apothecary finds the character's intrusion tasteless and bothersome as he is busy at work. Rowan's arcane forges in area 10 are meant to produce *void crystal* soon but some refinement in the machines is still necessary. Rowan believes he might reach his goal in a few weeks at the latest. Still, he has no way to know for sure.

Dungeon Features

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every two crawling round and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Areas 2, 7, and 10 have active arcane devices that radiate bright light as a byproduct of their varied functions. Other areas feature unlit torch sconces.

► **Aura of Silence.** The devices in area 10 are so loud that Rowan created a magical aura of silence that also reaches area 9. No sound from those areas can be heard outside. The other way around works in the same way.

► **Grounding Enchantment.** In the laboratory and halls, creatures cannot levitate, float, or fly. All aerial movement ceases. Creatures fall and must walk. Disabling the floating machine in area 7 stops this effect.

RANDOM EVENTS

d6	Details
1	A fine thread lies ahead (DC 11 WIS). Tripping it causes a spear to burst from the wall, impaling whoever stands on the spot. It deals 1d6 damage (DC 12 DEX for half).
2	The arcane devices in areas 2, 7, and 10 malfunction for a moment and stop producing light for 1 minute.
3	Bailiff Darius's interception party arrives at the laboratory. Four thugs and a scribe (peasant) order the characters to drop their weapons to be arrested. These goons refuse to enter the silent rooms out of fear.
4	Two automated floor hatches open. A skeleton climbs from each of them. The undead guardians attack!
5	A fairy named Lardinni ventures into the lab on foot and catches with the party. It fights alongside Allarinni.
6	A person notices a hidden panel on the wall. A clockwork apparatus with many levers lies behind. Operating the levers causes the machine to pour liquid into a glass vial. The effects of drinking this concoction are randomized (1d6). Blue (1), the drinker is healed of all damage. Green (2), the drinker takes 1d4 damage. Yellow (3), the drinker has advantage on all checks for 1 hour. Pink (4), the drinker grows 1d6 inches taller. Red (5), the drinker becomes blind but gains an echolocation ability for 1d6 days. Black (6), the drinker gains the use of a random Wizard spell; they can use this spell for 1d4 days.

1. ENTRANCE HALLWAY

The exquisitely-carved stone hallway leads to a pair of doors engraved with the sigil of a dwarvish clan.

This was once the home of wealthy dwarves.

Rowan recently repurposed one of the best-preserved areas as his laboratory and temporary home.

► **Poisoned Needle.** The door knob features a clockwork trap that pushes a hollow needle when the knob is turned. If operated with care, the character can hear the machinery slowly moving to trigger the trap (DC 12 DEX to disarm). If triggered, it deals 1d6 damage.

2. HALL OF WARDS

A clockwork device moves and produces light. It floats 5 feet from the ground. A marvelous trinket.

This device maintains the alert sensors on the dwarvish gate. Disabling it causes the runes to disappear. Touching the trinket with bare hands or metal objects causes an electric arc to jump and deal 1d4 damage (DC 12 CON). Insulated materials like wood, fabric, or leather can be used to touch it. This causes it to malfunction: it vibrates, turns off, and falls to the ground.

3. WORKSHOP

Read the following if Rowan is unaware of the party, otherwise, the mage waits for the party in area 10:

A robed man holds fine bronze instruments and tinkers with a strange clockwork device. It is Rowan, the culprit of all sorrow and pain in the City of Sabras.

Rowan is surprised to see visitors but does not hide his anger at being invaded. Thus, he commands the peasants to leave at once lest they wish to see his magic. If the characters insist, the battle with Rowan starts here. If dropped to half his hit points, Rowan attempts to flee to area 10 to take his arcane devices and escape.

► **Treasure.** The room contains a pouch with 36 sp, a dagger, a hammer, ten sheets of paper, and an ink vial.

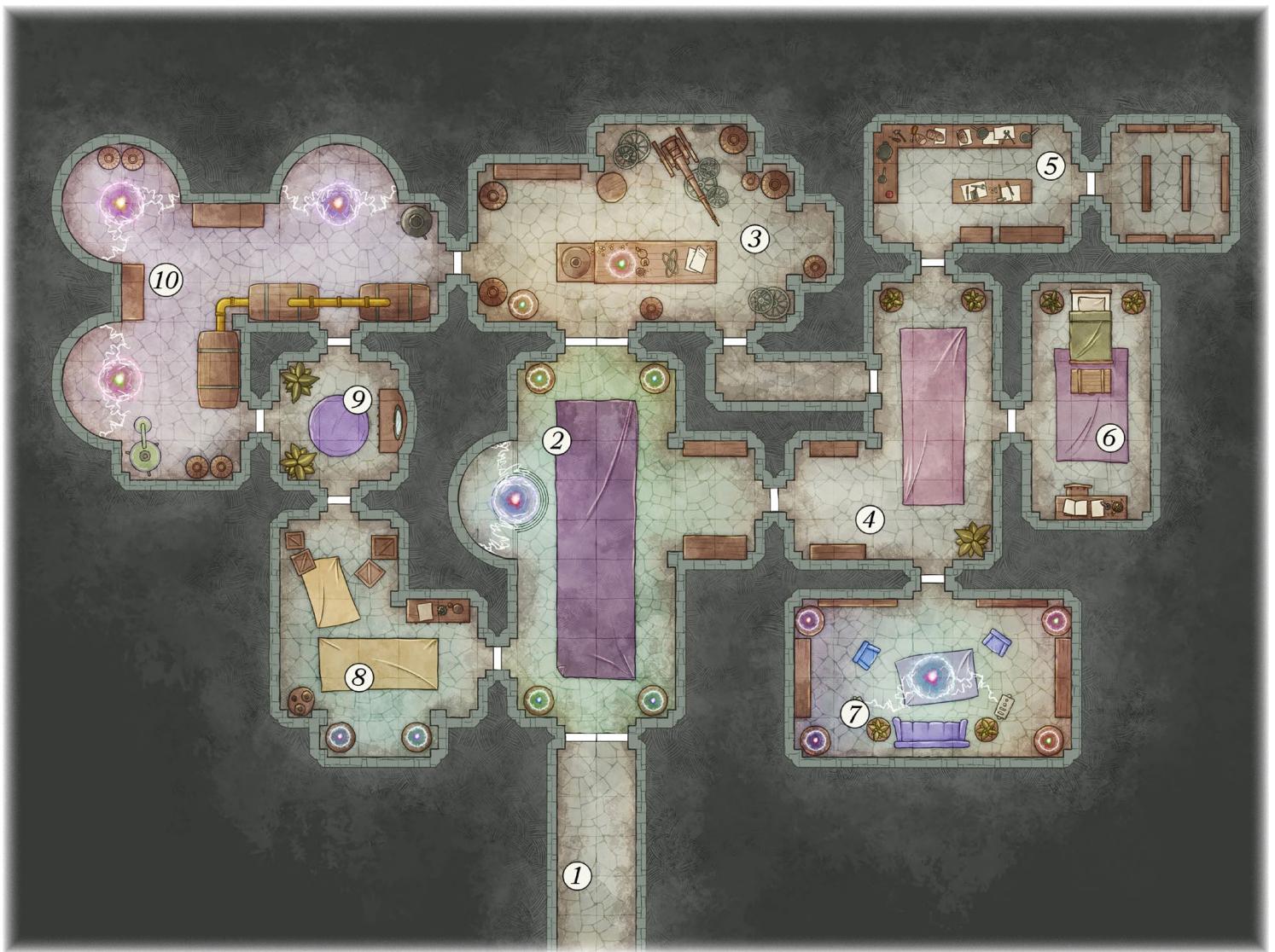
4. AUTOMATON GUARDIAN

This room features an automaton guardian (**animated armor**). It is embedded on the east wall and appears to be part of the room's decoration (DC 11 WIS to notice). When a person comes within 5 feet of it, it detaches from the stone wall and attacks intruders until slain.

5. KITCHEN AND LARDER

The room contains numerous cooking implements and ingredients. The tools and food move on their own slowly as a masterful dinner prepares itself. The meal is ready 1 crawling round after the characters come here.

► **Treasure.** The larder contains five bottles of fine wine that can be sold for 10 gp each to noblemen.



6. ROWAN'S QUARTERS

The mage's room contains a bed flanked by two potted plants, a chest, and a desk. It is tidy and well-organized.

► **The Chest.** It contains 308 gp, 1,486 sp, a *potion of healing*, a silver ring (5 gp), and Rowan's spellbook.

► **The Desk.** Intricate arcane blueprints of the mage's clockwork devices are found here. The most complex one describes the apparatuses in area 10. The characters cannot understand these arcane recipes. The tome *On the Nature of the World* is open on a page that describes the *void crystal*. It claims the artifact can perform alchemical miracles and manipulate people's thoughts.

7. THE GROUNDING DEVICE

The den is overtaken by a complex arcane machine similar to the one found in area 2. As long as this device works, no creature can fly within the compound. It can be disabled in the same manner as the one in area 2. After this is done, Allarinni, the fairy, takes flight and continues aiding the party airborne. Two fairies come to help the party in 1 **crawling round**. The rest are still too scared to come, even without the enchantment.

8. STORAGE CHAMBER

The chamber contains an array of unmarked wooden crates, barrels, clay vases, and a set of shelves. The room is a storage space for surplus ingredients and alchemy materials and tools. The room is in disarray.

► **Treasure.** If the characters spend 1 **crawling round** inspecting the area, they find ten glass vials, a set of tools, a crawling kit, a *healing potion*, and a flask of oil.

9. SILENT ANTECHAMBER

This chamber is in complete silence (see **Dungeon Features**). Rowan carries a bracelet that makes him immune to this silencing effect when activated.

► **The Mirror.** A 3-foot-tall silver mirror hangs on the east wall. It is magical. When a person stands before, the mirror functions as normal for a moment before twisting the reflection. The divination mirror predicts the person's future within 1 year. Some characters may see trained heroes or mages in their reflection as future adventurers. Others shall see only death and rot. The GM should use creative descriptions based on recent deeds to make these predictions. Some may still be wrong...

ROWAN, THE MAGE

Robed with iridescent attire and wearing a silver circlet, the man's unwavering determination shines in his eyes.

AC 11, HP 18, ATK 1 spell +3, MV near, S -1, D +1, C +0, I +2, W +0, Ch +0, AL C, LV 3

Arcane Armor (INT Spell). Self. DC 12. AC 15 for 2d4 rounds.

Blast (INT Spell). DC 12. Far, one target. 1d8 damage.

Cancel (INT Spell). DC 13. End one spell affecting a target within near.

Snare (INT Spell). DC 13. Focus. One humanoid target within near paralyzed for duration.

10. THE VOID CRYSTAL FORGE

Three floating, clockwork devices shoot ebbs of ephemeral energy tendrils in between them. The arcane trinkets work in surprisingly utter silence.

If the characters trigger the alarm sensors, Rowan waits for them here. The mage is ready, he carries a bracelet that nulls the aura of silence for only him. He can hear the characters approach while the party would still be unaware of his ambush. Rowan fights fiercely but ultimately attempts to escape if reduced to one-fourth of his hit points. He uses a special wrench to grab the floating clockwork devices and makes a run for his boat.

If the characters come here undetected, the silent room is empty and they can tinker with the forge.

► **The Forge.** Three peculiar, floating, clockwork devices work together to craft the elusive *void crystal*. They are more advanced than the ones found in areas 2 and 7. Each features a multitude of levers, buttons, and orifices. Rowan works with them daily to perfect their crafting capabilities, so far without clear success. They can be disabled in the same manner as those in area 2 but as they are more unstable, they break when making contact with the ground. If that happens, there is a 1-in-6 chance that they explode. Creatures within 5 feet take 2d6 damage (DC 11 DEX). Disabling any of the artifacts causes the other two to become dormant, they stay afloat but stop shining. A character may steal these devices for further study. Alas, they shall not comprehend their functioning for years unless they dedicate their life to studying the knowledge in *On the Nature of the World*.

► **The Vats.** Three varnished wooden bats by the walls contain a concoction capable of healing the nefarious effects of Rowan's crimes in the City of Sabras. The vats are labeled as '*Rowan's Cure-It-All Salve*'. The vats are mounted on wooden bases with wheels. They can be easily pushed through the dungeon, the dwarvish halls, the forest, and into the characters' boat.

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

THE CHARACTERS REACH the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their deeds.

ROWAN IS DEAD

The characters outwit Rowan in combat. If the characters return to the city with the apothecary's body and the medicine, the populace is grateful and happy to be saved. The corrupt authorities attempt to arrest the characters for murder but the crowd defends them. Under the threat of civil unrest and after exposing themselves even further as corrupt officials, the bailiff orders his men to retreat to Sabras Castle to guard the duke.

It takes a few weeks for the order to be restored, in the meanwhile, Duke Garlington demotes Darius and orders a covert inquiry into the characters' identities. The duke may take revenge on them later, or take advantage of their resourcefulness for future goals of his.

ROWAN IS ARRESTED

If the characters bring the former apothecary alive, the populace is happy to be saved and demands the man be beheaded in the Castle Square. Bailiff Darius and his men try to 'rescue' the mage from the crowd but are pushed back forcefully. Civil unrest wins and the populace finally rebels against the authorities. The bailiff is too slow to react and is slaughtered in the city streets.

The mage is beheaded at dawn one day later. The ceremony is held by Duke Garlington and a newly-appointed bailiff; one more attuned to the people's needs. The duke later declares that like other civilians affected, he too was a victim. The duke claims to have been mentally influenced through the use of potions, hence his recent disinterest in the sorrows of the City of Sabras.

ROWAN ESCAPES

The mage manages to reach his boat and leaves. The characters are still welcome in the city if they bring the cure for their ailments. The bailiff does not order their arrest as he is unsure about the mage's well-being.

The mage, inebriated with rage, shall plan his revenge against the puny peasants. He is especially enraged if the characters stole his magical trinkets. However, he decides to lay low and consider his options.

THE GREEDY BANKER

Lord Thintsdale pays a visit to the characters a day after their arrival. He expects to be paid the 260 gp that Rowan owed. If the characters pay up, the banker lets them keep 50 gp. Soon, an adventurers' guild offers to train the characters in martial and arcane arts. They may soon be heroes. If the characters hide or refuse to pay, the banker hires a skilled group of mercenaries to collect the debt. Alas, that is an adventure for another day...