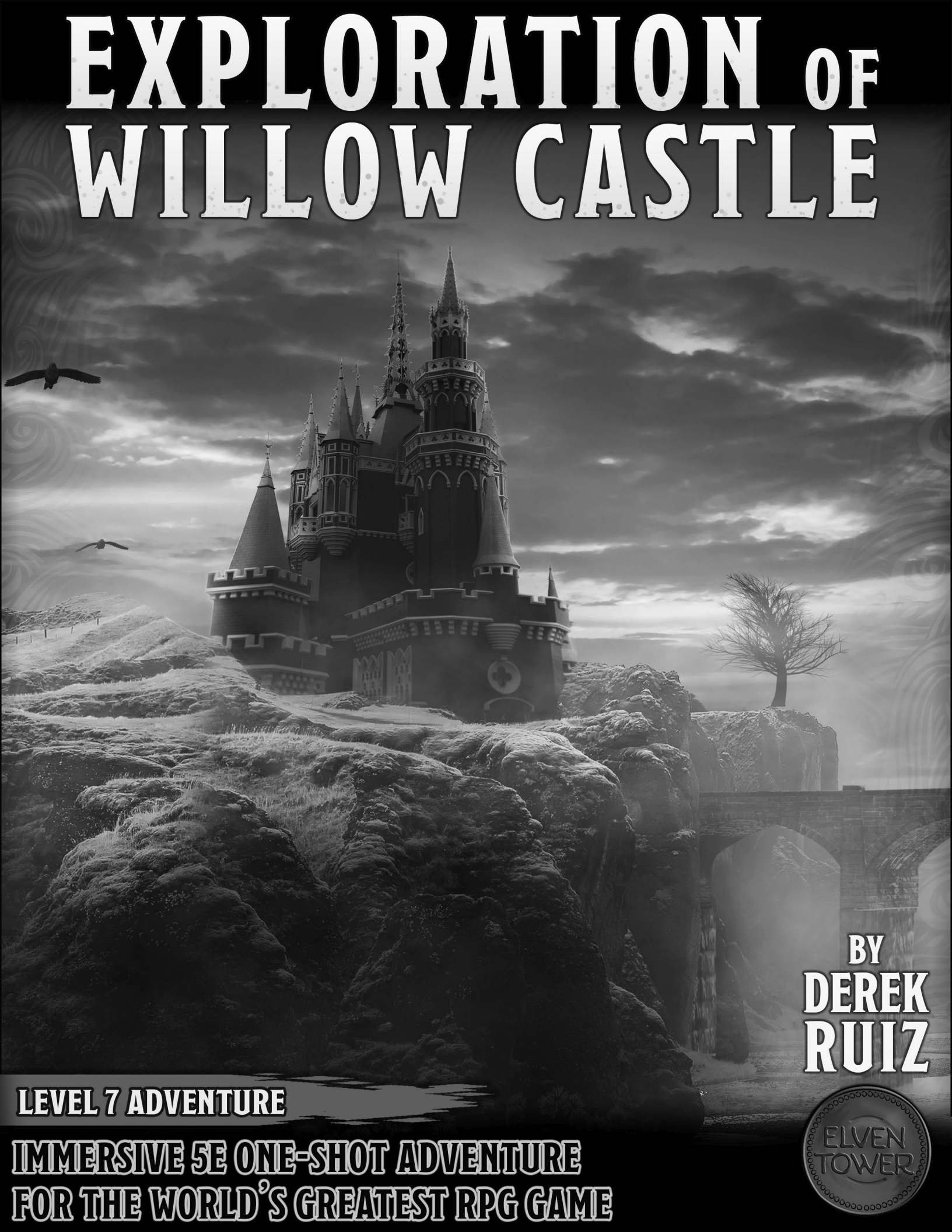
EXPLORATION OF WILLOW CASTLE



BY DEREK RUIZ

LEVEL 7 ADVENTURE

IMMERSIVE 5E ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE FOR THE WORLD'S GREATEST RPG GAME

ELVEN TOWER

Credits

Author. Derek Ruiz

Editor. Arthur Rouise

Cartography. Elven Tower Cartography

Art. Elven Tower Cartography, CC-0 stock art, Shutterstock assets, Artbreeder assets, and Public Domain images that require no attribution

Cover. herryfaizal / shutterstock.com

Special Thanks. All of our fantastic supporters on patreon who keep on helping us create fantastic locations and adventures.
Without your support, this product would not be possible.

Notice of Open Game Content

This product includes Open Game Content as defined in the Open Game License below. It may only be used under and in the terms of the Open Game License Version 1.0a

Designation of Product Identity

All artwork, logos, and presentation are product identity. The following terms, including but not limited to "Elven Tower", "Dungeon Vault Magazine", are product identity.

Identification of Open Game Content

No content in this product is Open Game Content unless it is required to be.

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a)"Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b)"Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d)"Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are

used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You"

Not for resale. Permission granted to print or photocopy this document for personal use only. System Reference Document 5.1 1

or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non- exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, LLC.

System Reference Document 5.1 Copyright 2016, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Mike Mearls, Jeremy Crawford, Chris Perkins, Rodney Thompson, Peter Lee, James Wyatt, Robert J. Schwalb, Bruce R. Cordell, Chris Sims, and Steve Townshend, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Elven Tower Adventures and Art, Exploration of Willow Castle, © 2021, Author Derek Ruiz. Cartography art and written content originally published at www.patreon.com/elventower

END OF LICENSE

Table of Contents

Credits 2

Table of Contents 3

Introduction. 4

Adventure Primer 5

Dragonhorn Road Inn 7

Willow Castle 11

Willow Family Crypt 16

Statblocks 21

Thank You 22

Introduction

Before You Begin Playing

READ THE ADVENTURE once or twice. Take notes of anything you would like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the game. Such notes include, but are not limited to, ways to role-play an NPC, combat tactics for a creature, or the locations of important things. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and maps.

- Have all the material and accessories you will use to aid you in running this adventure. Such as flashcards, a GM screen, minis, dice, and battle-maps.
- It is useful to have the player characters' names, race, class, armor class, and hit points in a separate and easy-to-see piece of paper or screen. It may also be important to note other things like backgrounds and personality traits.

Playing the Dungeon Master

You have the most important task. The GM is the table's narrator and organizer for a good game. You must take care of the narrative and adjudicate the party's actions. You transform these words into a living thing.

Here are a few guidelines to help you make this happen:

You have the Power. You make the decisions about the adventure progress and how the group interacts with NPCs, creatures, and the setting's elements. You are encouraged to improvise and change things. Each group is different and they will all have different needs and things they enjoy and things they don't like.

Give Them a Good Challenge. You are the judge of your group's experience. Give them a well-balanced challenge to keep them engaged. A good challenge does not necessarily mean combat. Try to feel out what your group is more interested in and try to give them what they crave. A role-playing situation like a tough negotiation, an interrogation, or calling a favor may be as intense as a full-blown battle.

Do not Stall. If the game starts to slow down because the players are unsure of what to do, feel free to provide hints, clues, or a helping NPC to nudge your group in the right direction. Players can get frustrated if they are unable to react to the adventure due to the lack of necessary information. Hints and clues may present themselves as "ideas" or "thoughts" the characters have. An alternative method is to introduce an NPC who will provide a veiled suggestion to the characters directly and serve as the "GM's voice".

Creating an Adventuring Party

This adventure does not rule out any combination of races, classes, or other features. There are no alignment requirements for this adventure but it is suggested that at least half the party is of good alignment. Otherwise, the incentives for finishing the adventure are curiosity and/or the promise of gold. Good or neutral alignment are recommended for new players.

If you play with a new batch of PCs, ask the players why their character are together and acting as a team. Each player may choose one or two options from the following list to justify why they are together. This will help the game go smoother from the beginning and it will give them a few cues on how to interact with each other.

- Two characters are childhood friends. They come from the same city or town
- One character saved another PC's life a year ago
- One character owes money to another
- Two or more characters are currently employed as mercenaries by the same guild
- Two characters of the same race are relatives (siblings, cousins, etc.)

This list is not exhaustive. Players are free to invent reasons why they already know each other.

As the GM, you are free to disregard this if your players are experienced enough. These instructions are designed to kick-start the game from the top and help new players get a hold of the group faster. A group of experienced players might get together and come up with reasons to work together on the fly with little to no difficulty.

About Linearity and Player Agency

This adventure includes several approaches that the characters may take and several variants in the conclusions of each chapter. These options are not exhaustive but there is a limited amount of information or options a module can include. This adventure, as written, is somewhat linear but the intention is not to constrain players' creativity and options. We have included what we believe are the most likely courses of action in the adventure.

About Notation

Some events or things described in this document express their odds of happening in this format: "1-in-6", "2-in-6" and so on. This means that the GM rolls a d6. Rolling the first number or less means success.

There is a 2-in-6 chance of finding the hidden door.

This means that a player or the GM rolls a 1d6, on a result of 2 or lower, the hidden door is found.

Adventure Primer

The Willows? No one's heard a thing from them in days. It's fine, I've never trusted them.

Lazaro Flint, Innkeeper

Where to Add This Adventure

Exploration of Willow Castle is a tier-2 adventure optimized for level 7 characters. The adventure centers around the exploration of a small castle. The Willow family is gone and strange sounds and smells come from the castle's lavish halls. Something is amiss.

Forgotten Realms. A day or two from any large settlement like Waterdeep, Baldur's Gate, or Neverwinter.

Eberron. In the Breland, a day or two to the east or north of Wroat, following any of the main roads.

Estimated Duration: 6 - 8 hours.

Adventure Background

THIS STORY IS about the demise of a rich family, the Willows. A wealthy name in the region and the owners of a castle, even. No one can say the Willows don't deserve what they possess. For years, they've worked hard and earned their position in the land. However, people ignore a deal struck with a demon decades ago. A deal made under the impression that things were fine, until now.

It all started when Augustus Willow, explorer and researcher, found a magical urn in one of his epic expeditions. He is one of the reasons the Willows acquired so much wealth; several of his findings resulted in large hefty rewards. That gold was well invested; properties bought, new businesses grew. But there was a trinket that Augustus never sold, a malachite urn with melted emeralds all over it. The urn was found in a long-forgotten crypt. Augustus spent ten years looking for it after learning of its existence. He never regretted it.

The Deal

AUGUSTUS WILLOW FELT an incomprehensible attraction to the urn. He would stare at it for hours and whisper to it. A month after finding it, he announced his retirement from expeditions, journeys, and adventures. His close ones started to worry. When they confronted him about this unusual behavior, he would quickly change the subject and say everything was fine.

The Willows didn't know what to say about Augustus's tantrums with the urn. But in the end, he didn't hurt anyone so they let it go, even if the hour-long staring and the whispers never stopped. Augustus seemed happy, satisfied, and healthier than ever. "Why fix what's not broken?" is what everyone in the family said to themselves. After all, he had done a lot for his family so they let him be happy and content himself with the urn.

The Willows never learned the truth about the urn. The green emerald vase was in fact a prison. The magical enclosure of a powerful demon. The evil entity inside the urn could only communicate to its owner, Augustus. The demon made easy work of Augustus mind and fooled him. It promised a life of excesses and bad habits without any of their consequences, in exchange for the souls of ten adults by the same family name, and his own, years after his death. The demon would be free from the prison after this. Augustus's selfishness led him to accept, bringing a horrible fate upon his family. The demon held his part of the bargain. Augustus Willow died of old age. He smoked all he wanted and never coughed. He ate all he wanted and never gained weight. He ingested all kinds of drugs and never complained. Augustus, the shallow, selfish bastard got what he wanted.

The Willows's Present

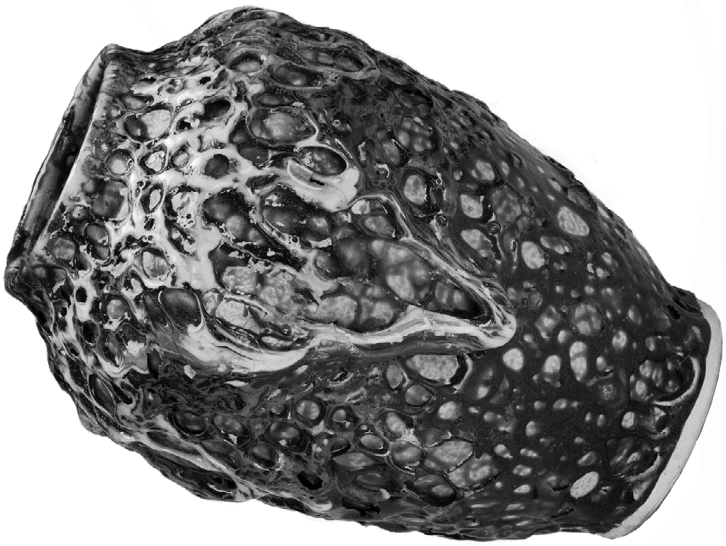
WHEN AUGUSTUS PASSED away, he was interred in the family crypts under the castle. He asked to be buried with his cherished vase and his family had no complaint about it. The emerald urn rests by Augustus's body.

The time came for Augustus Willow to pay his debt five decades after his death. The demon never cared to explain to the human fool how his part of the deal had to be paid. Augustus, blinded by his selfishness, never cared to ask. He was too busy enjoying life.

The moment that the demon waited for finally arrived. The day Reinalda Willow turned eighteen, the dark magic of the demonic deal kicked in. Ten adults, men and women of the Willow family, were struck with a magical enchantment spoken in an ancient abyssal tongue. The demon ordered the members of the Willow family to murder the servants, descend to the crypts, and jump off a 40-feet-high shaft. The majority died on impact. A few others woke from their stupor from the blow, only to agonize horribly for hours, staring at their wounds, their exposed bones, and their dead relatives.

The demon, satisfied and proud, devoured the souls of the ten Willows. No spell or magic can bring them back to life. When the demon stood before Augustus soul and spirit before consuming him as well. The demon said: "*Oh my... look at this mess. This is all your doing, do you realize? They hate you. How about witnessing the consequences of your actions for eternity? That's right! I won't eat your soul. Innocents taste better. You're rotten to the core now. You shall spend the rest of your time in presence of the empty vessels of your loved descendants!*"

Augusts wants vengeance. He blames the demon and not himself for everything. His rage and malignant energy raised the deceased Willows and many more in the castle as undead. Now the crypts and the castle crawl with undead. Augustus is the kind man he once was.



Adventure Overview

This section provides an overview of the chapters and how the adventure is most likely to play out:

1. Dragonhorn Road Inn. The characters meet Lazaro Flint and Amanda Rose, the two NPCs at the inn. They hear rumors about the area and learn about the Willows. The characters leave toward Willow Castle, motivated by one of the three Adventure Hooks (see below).

2. Willow Castle. The characters explore the castle. They can find documents or diaries that can teach them what happened in truth. They could also find information about Augustus, who he was, and the magical urn.

3. Willow Castle Crypts. The characters explore the three levels of the crypts. They learn of the reality of the situation if they hadn't yet. Regardless of the Adventure Hook they chose, they must confront Augustus, his army of undead, and find a way to defeat them.

Adventure Hooks

Exploration of Willow Castle may begin with any of the following adventure hooks:

Please, Help the Willows

The characters arrive in the Dragonhorn Road Inn after traveling for a while or to lay low after a hard mission. Lazaro and Amanda are talkative and do not take long to mention the Willows's absence, their castle, and two or three of the rumors about their current situation. The innkeeper, Lazaro, tells the characters the Willows are rich, and they shall know how to reward their allies.

Where is Reinalda!?

Reinalda Willow is Augustus's granddaughter. She is betrothed to Maxwell Featherborn, the son of Maximilian Featherborn. But no one has heard of the young woman or any of her family members for days. The Featherborns sent a messenger to the castle but he never came back. Then they sent a five-men searching party from which only one man made it back alive, scared to death. Maxwell Featherborn and his father offer 2,500 gp to anyone who can take care of the monsters, and save the Willows. Rescuing Reinalda is the priority, though.

The Emerald Prison

A scholar has been looking for an old artifact for years. In her recent researches, she learned the location of such object. She offers 2,000 gp to a group of mercenaries who can retrieve it. The scholar doesn't care if they must steal the object, pay less than what he offers for it, or even knock someone unconscious for it. The scholar knows nothing about what happened to the Willows.

Dragonhorn Road Inn

Word is there was a man in the Willow family who lived a hundred years, damn!

Amanda Rose

Reaching the Inn

THE CHARACTERS FIND the Dragonhorn Road Inn on their way to Willow Castle if they already know about it. If not, they reach the inn after finishing another quest (see **Adventure Hooks**). The Dragonhorn Road Inn is located on the outskirts of a large town or city. It is a popular venue for travelers, merchants, and mercenaries.

The main road deviates a little to guide visitors and travelers to the inn. A single wooden gate near the main entrance of the inn crosses the 130-feet-long oval palisade. The stables are about fifteen feet behind the inn and can keep up to eight mounts.

Costs and Accommodation

A KINDLY OLD man named Peter Garret is the doorman. He opens the gate for guests during the day. It remains closed by night. Visitors must wait for someone to come out and welcome them at night hours.

The inn is run by Lazaro Flint, a dwarf that looks like a man in his forties. Amanda Rose is one of the two waitresses. There are two errand boys, one cook, and a man in charge of the stables. Lazaro stands behind the bar serving drinks. The inn has a total of five rooms but only one of them has two beds. The inn charges 5 sp per room, per day. Right now, only one of the rooms of the inn is occupied. A merchant who everybody calls "Cricket" sleeps there. He's a halfling. He remains at the inn for another week and can sell simple stuff to current guests.

Depending on how long the characters stay at the inn, they may learn a thing or two about what's going on. Roll 1d6 on each table per day spent at the inn.

Rumors and Events

Rumors About the Willows and the Castle

1	Lazaro says no one's seen the Willows for a couple of days. He doesn't hide his dislike for that family though
2	The characters overhear two people talking at a table. They say the Willows went mad and attack visitors
3	An errand boy from the inn says he's friends with Johann Willow, a boy his age that lives in the castle
4	The Willows acquired most of their wealth due to the sale of many wondrous artifacts and items in the past. They say a single person was responsible for it
5	Amanda says she once visited Willow Castle to work as a waiter in an event. She remembers that a door past the dining room leads to the underground crypts
6	Someone says that one of the Willow women is betrothed to a Featherborn young lad. Another wealthy family from the region. They must know something

Random Events

1	Lazaro smashes his fist at the bar and yells "*No more Willow talk! It's becoming a bad omen. Either go to the castle and do something about it or shut your traps!*"
2	A Featherborn messenger enters the tavern looking for mercenaries for hiring (see **Adventure Hooks**)
3	Amanda approaches the characters and whispers: "*Please help the Willows! They're good people!*"
4	A newcomer enters the inn and claims he heard screams and weird noises coming from the castle
5	A drunkard approaches the characters and passes out
6	A bard sings about a Willow explorer. The man remained strong as an oak until the day he died

Lazaro Flint, Innkeeper

Dwarf (age 243)

Lazaro Flint has owned the Dragonhorn Road Inn for many decades now. He's known and popular in the region. For a dwarf, he does not wear his beard or hair in fancy braids. But his character, attitude, and loud voice have the word "dwarf" written all over them. Lazaro was alive when Augustus Willows announced his retirement and spent the rest of his days drinking and smoking. "*No way a human could do that without paying some consequences. He was as tough as an oak, even at the age of a hundred. Good health my arse, that man hid something*". He says this when asked about the Willows.

Manner. Lazaro does not hesitate to order everyone to shut their traps if the Willows are mentioned too much.

Ambition. Lazaro thinks it is time for an expansion. He wishes to build more rooms for rent; he has space.

Amanda Rose

Half-elf (age 54)

Amanda is one of the two waitresses in the inn. She has worked at Dragonhorn Road Inn for two years now. Most locals and regular clients know her. She has black wavy hair and big eyes and lips. Amanda is talkative and enjoys gossiping. She approaches all people with a wide smile and breaks the ice with a funny remark before offering drinks. After the first round, she usually asks what business brings visitors here. Depending on the answer, she tends to develop the conversation toward the local problems. She mentions the Willows the moment the second round of drinks is served.

Manner. Amanda opens her eyes widely, lifts her eyebrows, and tilts her head when she finishes gossiping.

Ambition. Amanda believes her time as a waitress has come to an end. She dreams of owning a tavern.

General Features

Palisade. The Dragonhorn Road Inn is surrounded by a 20-feet-tall palisade. It is about 130 feet long. The west gate is the only way to enter the premises.

Gate. Peter not only opens the gate for guests. He also guides them to the main entrance and takes their horses or mounts to the stables. At night, any of the waitresses or Lazaro step out to let visitors in.

Light. There are oil lamps on the walls of the common areas of the inn and in Lazaro Flint's bedroom.

Smells and Sounds. The scent of dry meat, ale, and spices combine to give the Dragonhorn Road Inn a homely atmosphere. There are usually people talking in the main hall. Three nights a week, a bard comes and plays classic melodies of the region to ease the mood.

Stables. Horses are taken to the stable when guests arrive. A huge man named Branly tends to them. He is good at what he does and kind to animals (see area A10).

Information. All additional lore and information the characters gather here depend on how much time they decide to spend at the inn (see **Rumors and Events**).

A1. The Palisade

The inn's wooden palisade looks firm and strong. Lazaro ordered its construction six months ago after some brigands attacked. The city guard always responds but they are far. The wall is not great but it helps.

Looking for Work?. The characters' presence does not go unnoticed when they arrive. Their equipment and traveling gear shows they are prepared to deal with dangerous situations. Peter, the doorman, guides the characters inside and yells "*Maybe they can help!*" before rushing back to his post. If the characters' curiosity is aroused, Lazaro, Amanda, and the rest of the guests participate when sharing with them the rumors and gossip regarding the Willows and their castle.

A2. Courtyard

There are cedar and oak trees in the courtyard. The double door, 30-feet from the palisade, is the inn's main entrance and it takes directly to the Dragonhorn Main Hall (area A3). The outhouse (area A5) and the stables (area A10) can also be reached from the courtyard.

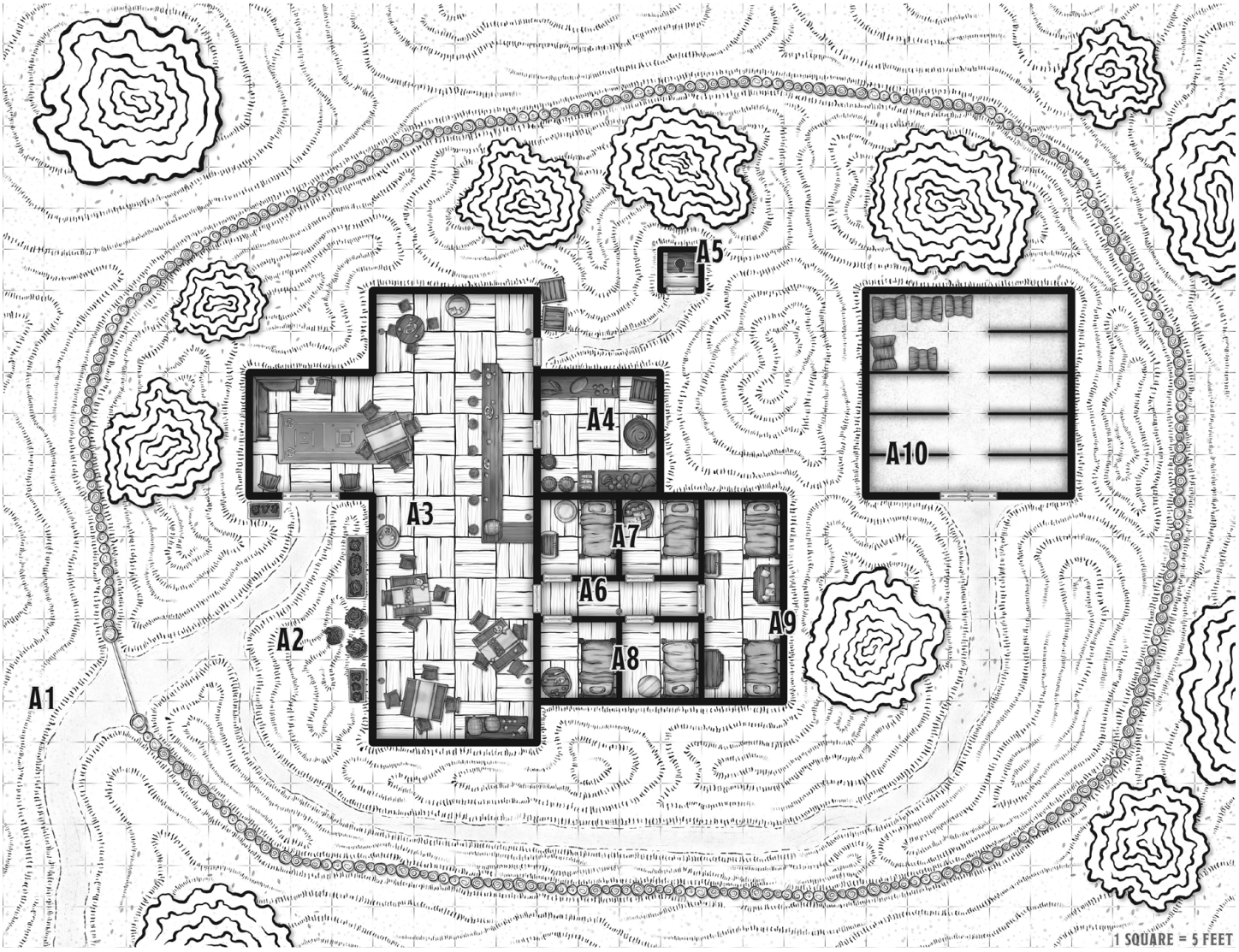
A3. Dragonhorn Main Hall

The main hall has a small waiting area, four wooden tables, and a smaller table for card games. Up to seven people can sit at the bar. Lazaro is most of the time serving drinks and yelling orders from behind the bar. The three doors at the back take to the outhouse (area A5), the kitchen (area A4), and the inner hall (area A6).

The inn staff is: Lazaro Flint at the bar, the waitresses Amanda Rose and Lilia Fallow, the errand boys Dilan and Pavlov, and sometimes the cook, a man named Gregory, steps out of the kitchen to serve meals or help Lazaro at the bar. The characters can spend time with any of them to gather information about the Willows.

A4. Kitchen

The kitchen is packed with dried meat, spices, and loaves of bread. There are some wooden crates with grains and a couple of barrels. Gregory, the cook, has worked here for three years. His food is not great but it does the job. People know him and enjoy talking to him too. He usually stays a couple of hours to drink after his shift.



A5. Outhouse

The Dragonhorn Road Inn has a single outhouse. It is messy and dirty. People have told Lazaro to build another one or do something to improve it but it is what it is.

Treasure. A dirty, filthy golden locket (150 gp) on the ground of the outhouse. The characters might find it if they search in the filth (DC 16 Investigation).

A6. Inner Hall

The door at the end of the hall leads to Lazaro's Bedroom. The rest are single bedrooms oak doors. Lazaro has all the keys. He gives them out to current guests and retrieves them when they leave.

Dragonhorn Road Inn Decoration. The hall has several framed pictures hanging on both walls. All of them depict dwarven runes, cities, or dwarven forges. This is all Lazaro's doing. Deep inside, he misses his culture.

A7. North Rooms

These rooms are available. One of them has a wooden chest and the other a side table. The characters may occupy these rooms (see **Costs and Accommodations**).

Treasure. A former guest forgot to pick up a couple of silver earrings (75 gp), and a purse with 23 gp that he stored under the mattress (DC 17 Investigation).

A8. South Rooms

The west bedroom is occupied by Cricket, a halfling merchant. The characters can buy simple stuff from him.

Treasure. If the characters go through Cricket's stuff, they must open his bedroom door (DC 14 Thieves' Tools). The merchant has a leather purse with 98 gp, a large ruby (350 gp), and other valuable silver trinkets (48 gp).

A9. Lazaro's Bedroom

Lazaro sleeps here alone. He's had some girlfriends in the past but he is single now. His bedroom has two beds, two bookshelves, and one wooden chest. Lazaro keeps his door shut at all times.

The shelves contain several papers, logs, and other important documents about the inn. Lazaro seldom spends time here. He'd rather do his paperwork at the bar chatting with someone and put it all away later.

Treasure. If the characters enter Lazaro's room without his permission, they must first bypass the lock of the bedroom door and the chest (DC 17 Thieves' Tools). Lazaro has 732 gp in assorted coins and gems stored here. This is the inn's treasury. In case the characters are caught stealing anyone in the inn, the city guard arrives in thirty minutes with arrest warrants.

A10. Stables

A huge man named Branly handles the horses at the stables. He's the perfect man for the job; horses listen to him and behave calmly when he is present. Some say he is a sort of druid. But he's just good with the beasts.

Lazaro's horse, Peanut, is here or eating in the courtyard (area A2), always supervised by Branly. Cricket, the halfling staying at the inn, stored his cart and horse here. Branly is happy to welcome more horses and tend to them while they are here. It has become customary to tip Branly kindly; all he does comes from his heart, he knows no evil. Lazaro reminds all guests to tip him.

Treasure. If the characters search the stables, they must find a way to fool Branly and distract him, lest he tells Lazaro immediately. Anything that Cricket sells to the characters can be stolen from his cart if the characters come here unnoticed. Besides, the characters find a wooden shrine to horses made of hay and other farm implements (DC 13 Investigation). It is Branly's.

Setting Out to the Castle

The more time the characters spend here, the more rumors and events they can learn or see happen. If they spend enough time with the NPCs and the other guests, Amanda wishes them luck, Dilan mentions his friendship with Johann Willow and asks for their help, and the characters might stay enough time for the Featherborn messenger to show up (see **Rumors and Events**).

Willow Castle

Hard work is valued above all else in this household. Enjoy the fruits of your labor.

Willow Castle Hall Inscription

Exploring the Castle

Traversing the castle and the crypts below is not assumed to happen in any particular order. The demon in the urn is gone but the arcane byproduct of the magic it used to collect the souls has caused multiple undead to rise in physical and incorporeal forms.

When moving within the four levels of the castle, there is a 1-in-6 chance of triggering a random event from the table below (2-in-6 when making too much noise). Each encounter can only occur once. Choose the next higher or lower result if a number is repeated.

1	A corrupted reflection of Damon Willow's spirit (**wraith**) rises and attacks the living with uncanny fury
2	One servant named Raulo emerges from a nearby room applying pressure to a recent wound. He tries to escape from two undead servants (**ghasts**)
3	Seven undead **shadows** merge with sconces, windows, and light sources and produce an area of deep darkness for 2d10 minutes before attacking
4	A pair of **ghouls** dressed in tattered servants' attires exit a nearby room following the characters' scent
5	Three servant women (**commoners**) refuse to open a nearby door claiming the characters must be undead pretending to be living people
6	A **gargoyle** guardian near the ceiling of the main hall recognizes the characters as uninvited guests and asks them to leave before attacking them
7	A faint apparition of a dead servant lady asks for help; she lets them know that two young Willow siblings are trapped in the crypts hiding in the elevator shaft
8	A heart-wrenching scream of pain comes from a nearby unexplored room. Within, four **shadows** have consumed the life of Reinalda's visiting cousin, Annira

Features of Willow Castle

The following features correspond to the four levels of the lavish Willow Castle; areas B1 through B22.

Light. Most areas in the castle feature magical sconces with *continual flame* spells. Removing the sconces from the walls causes them to go out in 1d6 minutes.

Doors. Most doors in the castle are made of varnished oak wood and feature standard locks (DC 14 Thieves' Tools). The two sets of doors in area B2 are reinforced with steel bands and wooden planks.

Smells and Sounds. A strong stench of rot and decay is present in most areas due to the bodies of slain servants and the mass grave in the second level of the crypts. The grunts and wails of recently created roaming undead can be heard in the distance.

Taste. In the castle, there is a strange metallic taste sensation that grows acutely when approaching the descending staircase to the crypts.

Magical Aura. Characters sensitive to magic detect an arcane current that comes from beneath the castle. It is the strongest in area B9, the crypts' access.

B1. Stone Bridge

> A 40-foot-long stone bridge leads to a three-story stone castle with a single tower. The reinforced main doors are half-open in the wind.

The stone bridge lacks maintenance but it is safe to cross. The six granite pillars that hold the bridge are decorated with engraved images of willow trees. The coat-of-arms on the castle doors features the same willows.

B2. Entrance Hall

> The half-open reinforced doors lead to a small entrance hall and a second set of closed doors. Narrow slits on the walls look into the guards' rooms.

The west set of reinforced doors are shut. There is no keyhole or lock. They can only be destroyed with magic or tools such as pickaxes and shovels. This work takes an hour if three or more characters participate.

Murder Holes. The guards in areas B3 were killed a day ago and returned as eight **zombies**. Mindlessly, they returned to their posts and guard the castle from any visitors. They attack with spears from the murder holes. Characters attacking with swords or other weapons not suited for use through the slits have disadvantage.

B3. Guard Rooms and Murder Holes

This entry describes the two rooms north and south of area B2. Each room features a weapons rack with run-of-the-mill shortswords and spears, a wooden chest with spare tools and leather armors, and a chair or two. There are four **zombies** in each room. They attack any visitors in area B2 with their spears.

B4. Main Hall

> The largest chamber in the Willow Castle contains a 15-foot-tall statue of a man wearing fine clothes, jewelry, and holding a rather crude urn. There's a dining table in disarray by the west end of the room.

The main hall's painted ceiling is 20-foot tall. The paintings on the ceiling depict intricate landscapes of the surrounding regions in watercolor. The paintings look washed out and too green, but expertly made.

The statue portrays Augustus Willow in its prime. The nature of the family's quick ascension to wealth and influence is attributed to Augustus. He became the leader and patriarch and everyone obeyed his commands without question since all he did turned out well thanks to the demon's influence. The main hall contains a long wooden bench by the north wall and two spiral, stone staircases that lead to the second floor (area B10).

The Spiral Staircases. The staircases are a work of art. The central soapstone pillar is sculpted to appear like the bark of a tree. The railing and its posts have the texture of a willow tree's watery leaves.

The Secret Compartment. There is a secret compartment on the statue's base. A well-hidden button near the left foot opens the stone drawer (DC 16 Investigation). The drawer contains a sack of 200 pp, 250 gp, three daggers, and a *bag of holding* with supplies for 15 days.

B5. Dining Hall

> A varied assortment of half-rotten food and spoiled drinks are set on a large 12-seat dining table. Three figures seat on the east side of the table.

The dining hall also contains a bookcase, two wardrobes, and a side table with more spoiled goods. The bookcase contains a modest collection of classical literature from local authors. However, it has little resale value. The three creatures sitting at the table attended a dinner party with the Willows a few days ago when the tragedy happened. They were killed by the Willows during a deranged rampage before committing suicide in the crypts. They have been reanimated as **ghasts** that attack when anyone comes within 10 feet of the dining table.

Spoiled Food. A character can smell, taste, or analyze the rotting food on the table to determine that it has been in the open for at least three days (DC 14 Survival).

B6. Hunters' Den

> Four cozy seats and wooden bookcases surround a large hearth by the north wall. There are six stag head mounted trophies over the fireplace.

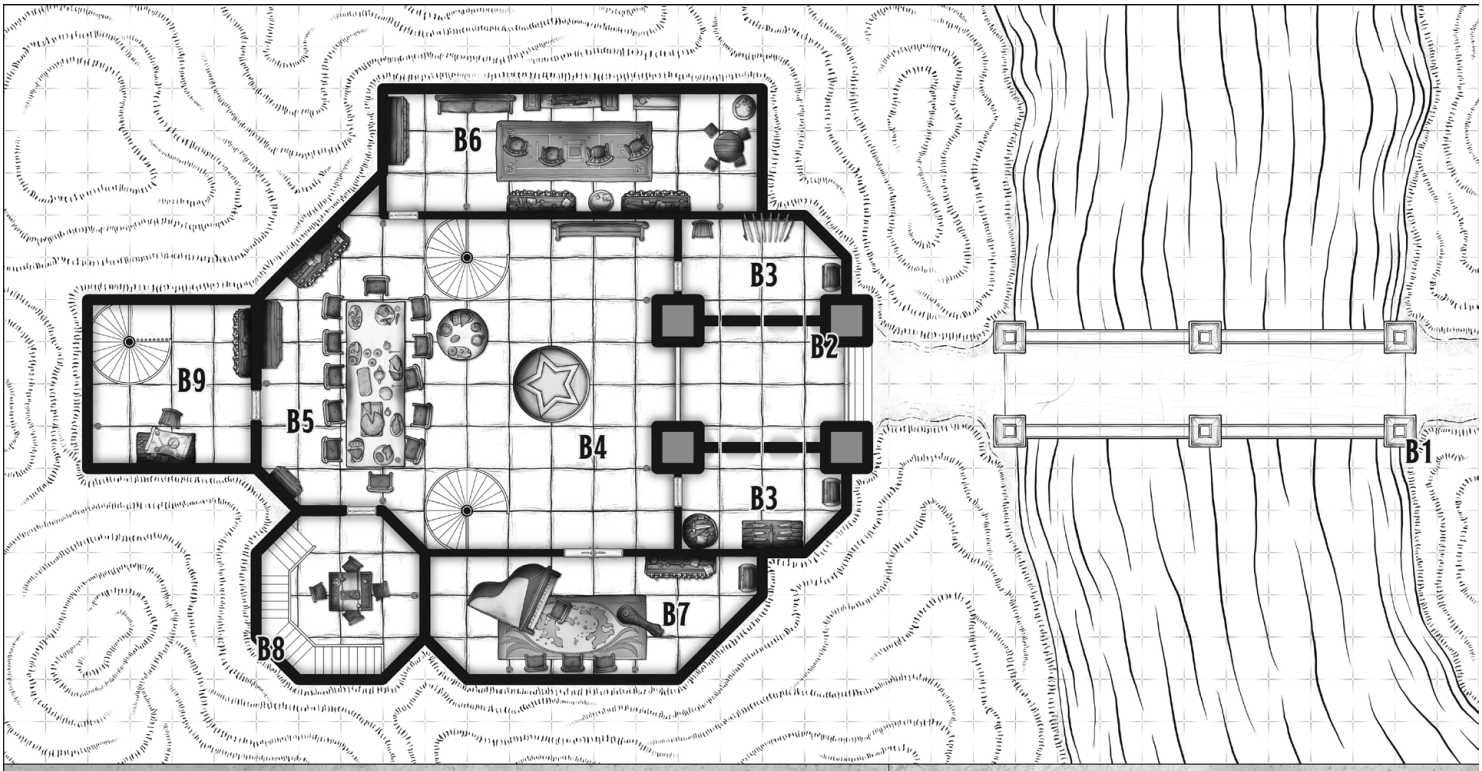
There are two portraits on the south wall. The first one of Augustus Willow with his green urn. The second one of Damon Willow and his wife, Allara Willow. There's a 3-in-6 chance that characters investigating the bookcases find a commissioned biography of Augustus Willow. The little book contains information about his life, his rapid ascent to wealth, and his fascination with a green urn he found in one of his travels.

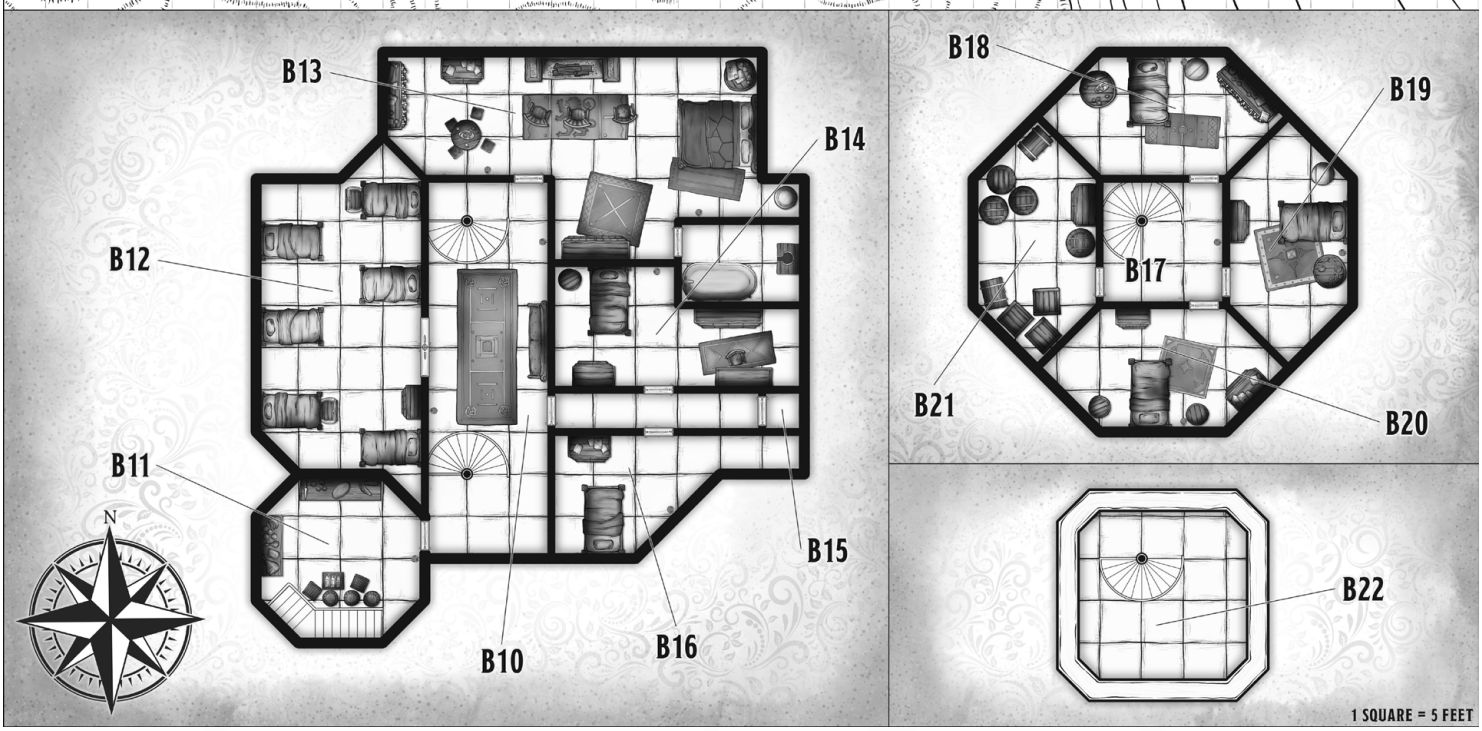
B7. Art Room

The chamber contains a well-tuned piano, a standing harp, a bookcase, and a wooden chest. There are three audience seats by the south wall. The bookcase contains a collection of music sheets for all kinds of music styles. The collection alone is worth 1,000 gp. Touching any key of the piano causes the distressed apparition of the dead music teacher (**ghost**) to emerge from the piano and attack, along with three **shadows** servants.

B8. Guards' Tower

This chamber is the base of a squat two-story tower that was used by guards and servants. The room contains a wooden table and a set of stone stairs that circle around the tower wall. There are some plates and ale tankards on the table; all food and drinks are spoiled or stale. It appears as if they left in a hurry. There are bloodstains on the floor as if someone had been dragged upstairs. The blood is has been dry for a few days.





B9. Study

> The stench of death and decay is strongest in this chamber. It comes from the descending spiral staircase. Iron bars block access to the underground.

The room contains a desk and a bookcase. The documents herein are travel logs, purchase lists, and other kinds of accounting documents for the family. The iron bar door to the crypts is closed. It can be open with fine tools (DC 16 Thieves' Tools), by sheer force (DC 20 Athletics), or by cutting the metal or the stone with tools.

B10. Second Story Landing

> The stairs lead to a long chamber with an intricate, embroidered, red and gold carpet and a red-velvet coach. Lavish silk tapestries decorate the walls.

The second-story hall is a hub that connects to many areas in Willow Castle. The north spiral staircase ascends further to area B17. The east door has been shut by two surviving servants with a chair. It can be pushed aside (DC 14 Athletics) or the survivors in area B14 can be convinced to remove it if they knock(DC 15 Persuasion).

B11. Kitchen

The chamber has a strong stench of spoiled food and rot. Multiple vegetables and large meats rot away on wooden tables. Edible goods of longer shelf-life are packed on wooden crates and barrels next to the stairs to area B8.

The dead body of a male servant is in the early stages of decomposition in the middle of the room. It features claw wounds in its thorax. The poor man was killed by the ghasts in area B5 two days ago.

Spoiled Food. A character can smell, taste, or analyze the rotting food on the table to determine that it has been in the open for at least three days (DC 14 Survival).

B12. Servants' Room

> In contrast with the rest of the castle, this chamber is crude, undecorated, and dark. There are seven double bunk beds in the room, most of them empty.

The Willows came here before their untimely demise in the crypts and murdered four servants in their beds. Their four spirits, in anguish, pain, and hate, returned from the veil in the form of violent **wraiths**. These undead haunt the room and cannot leave it. They reform in 48 hours unless the **mass grave golem** is destroyed.

Treasure. 2 gp, 19 sp, 45 cp, and a silver fork (3 gp).

B13. Master Bedroom

> The Willow Master Bedroom contains a large double bed with expensive red linens. An oil painting of a crude green urn hangs over the hearth; its golden frame is decorated with willow trees and spears.

The former room of Augustus Willow belongs to the family's patriarch. Until three days ago, Damon and Allara Willow slept here. The wardrobe by the south wall contains expensive dresses and coats that Mrs. Willow showed off in social events and gatherings. The bookcase contains Damon's favorite poetry books and a small collection of nature sketches by a local bard named Taberu. A servant lady named Vinnara hides under the master bed, afraid of the undead and apparitions in the castle. She rushes to the characters and asks for help to leave the castle. If brought outside, she runs back to the Dragonhorn Road Inn before fleeing back to her family in the nearest town. Vinnara can tell the characters about the demented rage of the Willows and their obscure march to the crypts under the castle.

Treasure. A hidden compartment under the bed's frame contains a leather pouch with seven emeralds (60 gp each), and one diamond (300 gp). It also contains a large brass key, it opens the iron bar door to the crypts.

B14. Second Bedroom.

This bedroom belonged to Damon's brother Patrick, his wife Diana, and Johann Willow, their 10-year-old son. The two adults are dead in area C5, Johann is still alive with his cousin Carla, hiding in area C4.

Two servant survivors wait for help. They shut themselves in this area of the castle by placing a chair against the door to area B10. Their names are Fiona and Carl (**commoners**). They wield shortswords they took from dead guards. They can be convinced to remove the barricade to area B10 but won't help the characters explore the castle further. They do not go to the crypts under any circumstance. Fiona and Carl reveal that the Willow family went insane three days ago during a small party to celebrate Reinalda's 18th birthday.

B15. Coat Closet

A small 5 by 5 feet coat closet. It contains fifteen fur coats, just as many boots, and some slippers.

B16. Third Bedroom

This bedroom belonged to Yanna Willow. She was Augustus's daughter and Damon's aunt. The old woman was 60 and is now dead in area C5. She was a respected lady; her role in the family was similar to that of a grandmother. Aunt Yanna's wardrobe contains an assortment of fine clothing for a large woman. It also contains a collection of 22 diaries of her authorship.

The diaries go back decades to the time when Augustus Willow still lived. A character learns one of the following pieces of information for each hour spent reading through the old diaries of Augustus Willow:

- Augustus acquired his precious green urn from a journey to a faraway land
- The Willows were hardworking and middle-class but they became increasingly wealthy during Augustus lifetime after he returned with the urn
- Augustus would not let anyone else handle the urn
- Yanna wrote she saw her father whisper to the urn as if sharing secrets with a close friend
- In his will, Augustus requested the urn be interred with him and forbade its bequeathing to others

B17. Third Story Landing

The north spiral stairs from area B10 reach this landing and continue to ascend further to the tower top (area B22). The ceiling in the third story is 10 feet tall and undecorated. The east and south walls are decorated with embroidered tapestries of knights running to battle against giants. The scene can be recognized as the War of Thorns, which occurred 80 years ago (DC 14 History).

B18. Fourth Bedroom.

This room belonged to the sisters Reinalda and Jillana Willow. Both of them are dead in area C5. The room contains a double bunk bed, a side table, and a bookcase. The bookcase contains a collection of heraldry and history books the two sisters studied for their education.

Jillana's Diary. Found on the table, it reveals Jillana was 20 years old and her parents had already arranged her marriage to a rich noble from the nearby town. The wedding was to occur in three months, after the summer.

Reinalda's Diary. Hidden under the pillow. Its last entries reveal that Reinalda suffered from nightmares and strange dreams of her family dying in tragic accidents. The dreams started when she turned seventeen. She also describes her displease at her arranged marriage to Maxwell Featherson (see **Adventure Hooks**).

Treasure. A metal box on the bookcase contains the sisters' shared jewelry. There are necklaces, earrings, and several bracelets with a collective value of 300 gp.

B19. Fifth Bedroom

This room belonged to Garlo Willow, Damon's eldest son and elder brother to Reinalda and Jillana. He is dead in area C5. Garlo was a proud healthy man who was raised to become the next Willow patriarch after his father eventually retired. He was a great swordsman, a piano player, and a well-educated man.

Treasure. There are 35 gp and two gold medals with the Willow coat-of-arms (100 gp each) on the side table.

B20. Sixth Bedroom

This bedroom belonged to Damon's sister, Bestra, her husband, Albert Gaines, and their 9-year-old daughter Carla Gaines. The two adults are dead in area C5, Carla is still alive with her cousin Johann, in area C4.

There are three desiccated bodies of servants on the floor. They came here to hide from the undead and barricaded themselves here. The incorporeal undead could not be stopped by simple means and killed them. Their corrupted **shadows** now feel the same thirst for death.

B21. Storage Room

> A dark, damp room that contains multiple wooden crates, barrels, chests, and an unused wardrobe.

There is nothing of value in this room. The servants moved empty crates and broken pieces of furniture here. The chest by the north wall contains rusty tools and gardening implements that have no resell value. Two **specters** await in the shadows for the best opportunity to attack the unwary and spread their pain for the living.

B22. Tower Top

The tower top is 50 feet above ground level. The view of the region's landscapes from the tower is impressive. Some of the sights here were captured in the intricate oil paintings on the ceiling of area B4.

The Missing Willows

FROM THE TALES of the few servant survivors in Willow Castle, it is clear that the Willows went down to the crypts and locked the iron bar door in area B9.

From the information available, it is still not known why they murdered the servants, what business awaits them downstairs in the family crypts, or why they did all this during Reinalda's 18th birthday. The only common denominator is Augustus Willow and the strange urn.

The characters can bypass the iron bar door to the crypts by lock-picking its lock, breaking its frame, or finding the brass key in the master bedroom. If the characters rescued the servants Vinnara, Carl, or Fiona, any of them can tell them that while the Willows acted as if under trance, they carried two younglings with them down to the crypts. The two children are Johann Willow and Carla Gaines, grandchildren of Augustus. The children cried and appeared to be unaffected by the madness that assailed their family members. The servants do not dare go down to the crypts under any circumstance. If able, they run back to the Dragonhorn Road Inn to tell their story and return to their families in the nearest town.

Willow Family Crypt

Here Lies Augustus Willow, may you enjoy your vices for eternity and bask in happiness.

Augustus Willow's Epitaph

Features of the Family Crypt

The following features apply to the three levels of the Willow Family Crypts; areas C1 through C10.

Light. Magical sconces on the walls shine magically due to *continual flame* spells on them. The sconces lose their magic after 1d6 minutes if removed from the walls.

Secret Doors. Two secret passages lead to the upper two elevator shaft rooms. The secret doors are made from a different lighter material. After a hidden button is pressed (DC 16 Investigation), it can be pulled inward to reveal the narrow secret passage.

Shafts and Elevator. Each level of the crypts is separated by 40 feet. Jumping/falling to the next level deals 4d6 bludgeoning damage. The only way to safely move through the levels is by using the elevator but it is currently turned off in area C13. Falling down the elevator shaft from area C4 deals 8d6 bludgeoning damage.

Tainted Water. There are three basins in the crypts. The water in them has been infused with Augustus's dark aura and hateful spirit. The water is ice cold to the touch. If a person drinks from a basin, they take 10d6 necrotic damage (DC 18 Constitution save). An undead can bathe in the tainted water to regain 2d6 HP per round.

Necromancy Aura. While Augustus's spirit exists in its current form of rage and hate, it is the source of a 300-foot-diameter aura of necromantic energy. Within this area, the bodily remains of dead humanoids rise as undead abominations after 1d4 days. These undead are under Augustus Willow's control and obey his commands without question. This is the source of the numerous undead in the crypts and the castle above.

C1. Underground Landing

> The stench of death becomes unbearable in the underground landing. A simple room with a single wooden desk covered in documents and papers.

The spiral stairs lead down to a 20 by 20 feet room. A single set of double oak doors on the east wall lead to the crypts proper. The doors are reinforced with studded steel bands and a sturdy lock (unlocked). The Willow family sigil is engraved on the doors. Several bloodstains on the door, lock, and handles indicate that several people handled the doors with blood on their hands.

The desk by the south wall was used as a temporary location for documents and documents that would be later moved to the family archive in area C8, or the embalming room in area C11. As such, the documents on the desk are disorganized and lack coherence. A character can spend half an hour parsing through the papers to make sense of them and learn the following:

- The last person to be interred in the crypts was Damon's father, Johann Willow. Who passed away three years ago. His remains are in area C6.
- Augustus Willow's remains are held at the bottom of the crypt, in a place of honor in area C10.
- Family members of less importance would be half cremated and some of their bones and ashes are placed on stone plinths in areas C2 and C9.

Treasure. The desk's drawer contains a complex embalming manual (120 gp), a leather pouch with 200 gp, and a thumb-sized diamond (300 gp).

C2. Upper Crypt

> The chamber is as large as the castle, with a 30-foot-tall domed ceiling sustained by four pillars carved out of the very underground stone. Human bones and ashes rest on short stone plinths.

The opening in the middle leads down 40-feet to area C5 (see **Features of the Family Crypt**). Ten members of the Willow family jumped to their deaths three days ago and can be seen from this area.

To the south, a pounding sound can be heard from area C3. It is caused by three skeletons trying to break into the elevator shaft where the two Willow children hide.

When the characters first arrive at this area, the bones and ashes on the stone plinths pulse and vibrate as if reacting to a soundless heartbeat. The bodily remains return from the afterlife and reform as twelve **skeletons** and three **specters**. While Augustus's spirit exists, these undead monsters reform after 12 hours.

C3. Altar to the Ancients

> The soapstone statues of two robed priests flank a stone basin filled to the brim with crystal clear water. There's an intricate but faded mosaic of a sprawling willow tree on the north wall.

This room was added as a decorative chamber to the crypts by Augustus Willow while he still lived. The basin is was filled with holy water but Augustus's spirit has tainted it. It is now a potent necrotic poison few individuals could withstand (see **Features of the Family Crypt**).

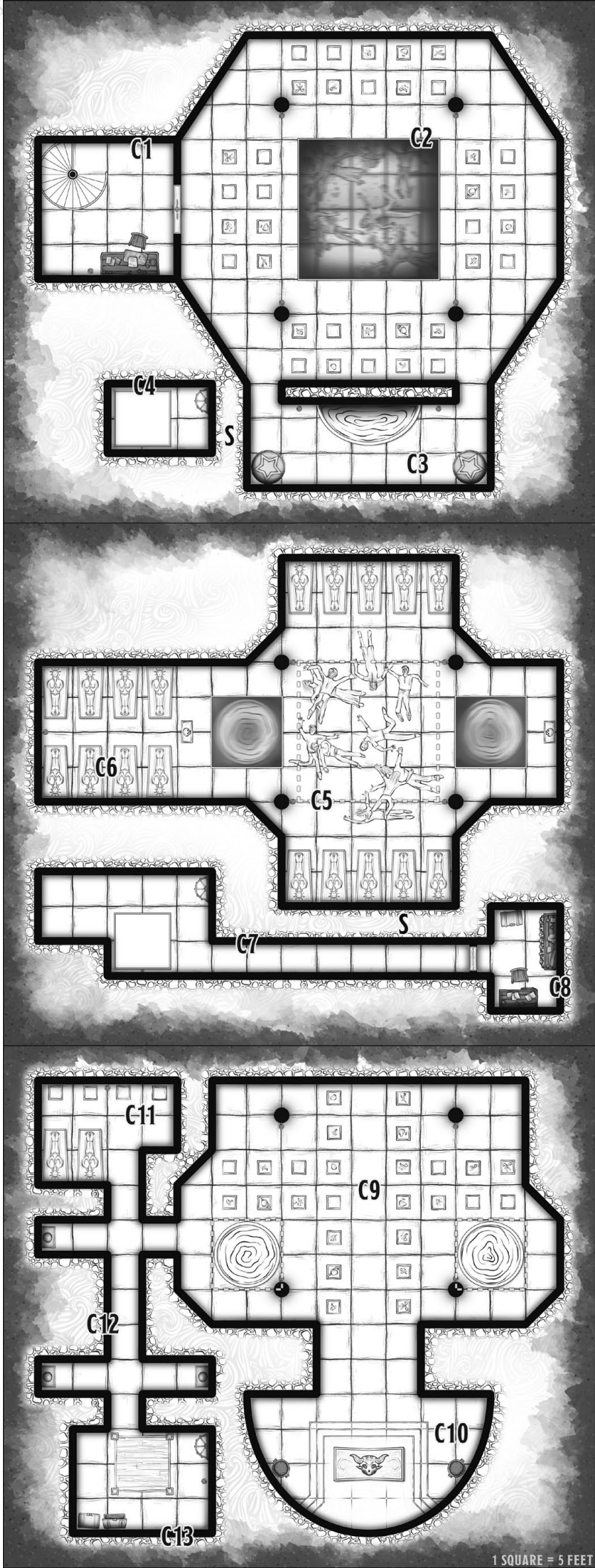
Three **skeletons** pound on the west wall right where the secret door is. After they have been destroyed, a faint child voice calls for help. This is Johann in area C4.

C4. Upper elevator Room

> A small room with a gaping hole by the west side and a complex clockwork mechanism opposite to it. Two filthy, young children hug by the corner.

Johann Willow and Carla Gaines hid here after their enchanted parents sang in tongues before jumping through the hole in area C2. Both children are weak and dehydrated. Carla is in shock after hours of the undead pounding on the wall. A *calm emotions* spell breaks her out of it.

After getting water to drink, Johann explains that they tried to return to the castle two days ago but the iron bar door in area B9 was locked and his uncle Damon took the only key when he jumped down with it to area C5. Johann explains that the clockwork device brings an elevator but it appears to be stuck in the lowest level.



C5. Mass Grave of the Willows

> Ten people lie dead on the cold stone floor. They are disfigured from the fall; disjointed members, exposed fractures, pools of dried blood. The worst of all is the stench of putrefaction and decay.

These people have been dead for three days. They are Damon, Allara, Patrick, Diana, Aunt Yanna, Jillana, Reinalda, and Garlo Willow. The others are Bestra and Albert Gaines. A doctor can inspect the bodies and determine that seven of them died on impact while three others survived the fall and died hours later from their wounds (DC 15 Medicine). A character can retrieve the key of the crypts from Damon's body (DC 13 Investigation).

Five minutes after the characters arrive at the scene, the undead bodies of the Willows start to move and float. Some of the adjacent stone coffin lids move aside and let out strings of bones and bodily remains of older bodies. All bodies converge on a single location and fuse to create the aberrant **mass grave golem**. The remains from some coffins coalesce into six **zombies**. The undead fight until slain. They don't follow to other crypt levels.

C6. Tombs of the Elders

> Two rows of four engraved stone coffins hug the walls of this chamber. The names of the dead Willows are carved on the coffins' bases.

Important members of the Willow family are contained in these stone coffins for eternity. It is a known taboo not to rob a family tomb but the characters may still attempt to inspect the contains of the coffins at their peril.

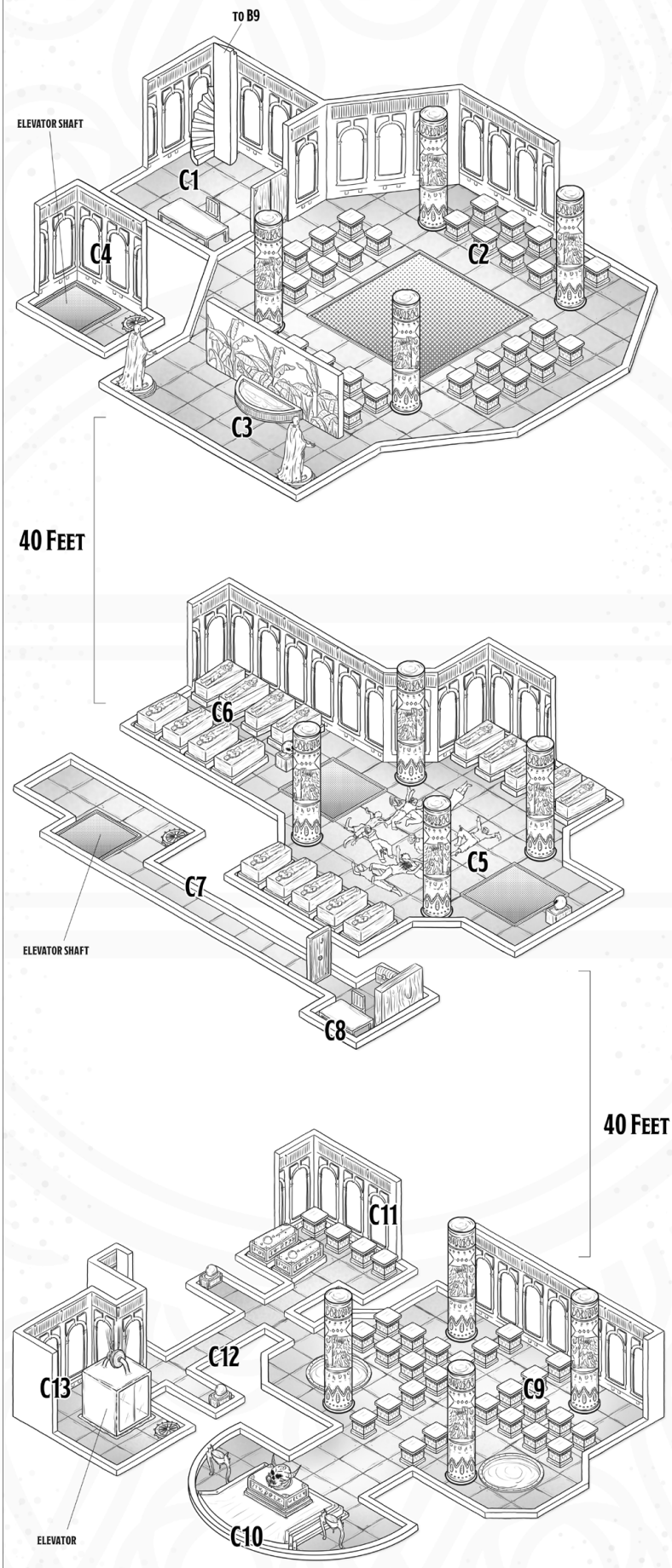
The west wall features a fresco painting of Augustus Willow jumping out of danger, evading a large clawed monster. He holds in his hands a green urn and has an expression of happiness and bravery.

Treasure. Each coffin has a 2-in-6 chance of containing 3d10 pp, 2d100 gp, and an heirloom (200 gp). Opening all coffins causes the **mass grave golem** to reform with half HP and attack the characters.

C7. Middle Elevator Room

> A 5-foot-wide hallway leads to a chamber with an elevator shaft and a complex clockwork mechanism.

The shaft goes down 40 feet to the inactive elevator in area C13. A person knowledgeable in clockwork devices might be able to bypass the machinery to activate the elevator from this location (DC 20 Thieves' Tools). Failure cripples the device; it must be repaired from area C13. Success means the elevator is operational again.



Johann Willow

Human (age 10)

Johann (**commoner**) is a young boy with a slim body and a little short for his age. He is the son of Patrick and Diana Willow. Nephew of Damon Willow and grandson of Augustus Willow. Johann started fencing lessons a year ago and his teachers promise he shall be a capable swordsman in a few years. The night of Reinalda's birthday party, Johann was in the dining room with his parents when everything went wrong. His parents murdered the servants and pulled him by the arm down to the crypts before jumping; he saw it all. He reunited with his cousin Carla moments later and found a place to hide.

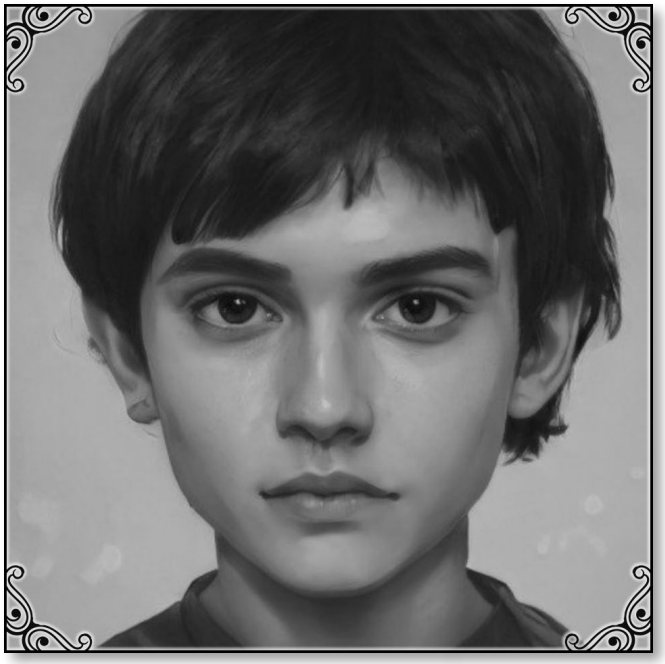
Manner. Johann has low self-esteem and often covers his mouth, looks away, and speaks in low volume.

Ambition. Yohann wanted to be an explorer and researcher like his grandfather Augustus Willow. A dream that has just been shattered by recent events.

C8. Family Archive

> A small dark room with a desk and a well-organized bookcase with thousands of documents and scrolls.

After documents, diaries, journals, research papers, and all kinds of written content are filtered and categorized, they are brought here for archiving. The bookcase and desk contain all kinds of records and documents made by or about past members of the Willow family. At least a quarter of the documents were written by Augustus Willow himself during his travels and adventures.



Carla Gaines

Human (age 9)

Carla (**commoner**) is a young girl with a plump body and taller for her age. She is the daughter of Bestra (Willow) and Albert Gaines. Niece of Damon Willow and granddaughter of Augustus Willow. Carla is expected to learn heraldry, history, and abilities such as cooking and embroidering but her mother and caretakers are close to quitting because Carla is unruly and mischievous. The night of Reinalda's party, Carla was in the kitchen hearing gossip from the servant ladies when her parents came in and murdered the cooks. She was pulled to the crypts but only saw her parents jump. They were the last.

Manner. Carla speaks a lot and cannot keep her mouth shut with any secret or gossip that she learns.

Ambition. Despite her present distress, Carla wants to learn what happened to her family and who is responsible for the recent tragedy at Willow Castle.

While the documentation is in order, the sheer volume of papers and information makes learning something from it a time-consuming activity. A character learns one of the following pieces of information for each hour spent parsing through the papers:

- Augustus's autopsy revealed his lungs, liver, and stomach were in such a bad state he should have died years sooner. Somehow his health was good.
- There's a detailed schematic of the elevator's mechanism. It gives advantage on fixing or operating it.
- Augustus Willow's malachite urn is 1-foot tall.

C9. Lower Crypts

> Bones and ashes of long-dead folks lie on twenty-six short, stone plinths. Two stone basins are filled to the brim with crystal clear motionless water.

This is the lowest level of the family crypt. The remains of long-dead members of the family vibrate and pulse in a way similar to how it happens in area C2. These remains coalesce and form four **skeletons** and two **wights**.

While the lesser undead take form, the spiteful **Spirit of Augustus Willow** manifests in front of its burial place in area C10. It comes and greets the characters with insults and belittling speech. Augustus's current form is powered by hate and pain. It cannot be reasoned or negotiated with. Undead are immune to turning within 50 feet of the Spirit of Augustus Willow.

When the Spirit of Augustus Willow drops to 0 HP, its hateful form is destroyed and all that remains is the guilt-stricken ghost of Augustus (see **Conclusion**).

The Basins. Jumping from area C5 into the basins here deals 3d6 bludgeoning damage. There's a 3-in-6 chance that the person falling on the bin ingests some of the poisonous water (see **Features of the Family Crypt**).

C10. Tomb of the Eldest Patriarch

> Two brass braziers flank a large stone sarcophagus on a stone dais. A crudely sculpted demon head on the lid looks south, toward the circular wall.

There used to be a sculpted replica of the Emerald Prison, Augustus's urn, on the sarcophagus lid. The hateful spirit re-carved the stone from the afterlife and made it in the shape of the trickster demon that ruined the Willow family. A cleric or mage may recognize the demon's face as that of a trickster entity named Farguld (DC 20 Religion or Arcana). The epitaph reads:

> Here Lies Augustus Willow, may you enjoy your vices for eternity and bask in happiness.

Removing the lid reveals the contents of the enclosure. The whithered bones and ashes of Augustus Willow, the green, malachite urn, and some other valuables.

Treasure. 200 pp, 320 gp, 1,200 sp, a *+2 shortsword*, a ceremonial *+1 dagger*, and the urn, the *Emerald Prison*.

C11. Embalming Room

The room contains four stone plinths and two empty stone coffins. Racks on the walls feature embalming tools and ceramic flasks with substances to prepare and cremate bodies. They have not been used for years.

C12. Hall of Remembrance

> Purple-glowing crystal balls on stone pedestals shine at the end of three short hallways.

Each of the crystal balls has been infused with the memories of deeds of past Willow relatives. A spellcaster can operate a ball to watch their memories. An insightful person notices that these are just recorded re-enactments of stories told by others, and exaggerated in the images. There is little to learn from the crystal balls because all information therein has been exaggerated and tampered with. Removing the crystal balls causes them to lose their magic after one month.

C13. Lower Elevator Room

The elevator is stationed here. It works but the clockwork device that moves it is turned off. A person knowledgeable in clockwork devices might be able to activate it (DC 14 Thieves' Tools). Roll with disadvantage if the mechanism was operated unsuccessfully in area C7.

Conclusion

DEFEATING THE SPIRIT of Augustus Willow causes the real soul and sentiments of the ancient family patriarch to arise. The guilt-stricken ghost of Augustus is in a state of unavoidable anguish and pain from witnessing the consequences of his actions. Augustus's ghost is forever doomed to remain in the mortal world in his current state. The only manner to bring peace to the Willow family is to track Farguld, the demonic entity, and destroy it to release the souls of the diseased Willows. This adventure may bring the characters to the far ends of the world, or the uncharted depths of hell itself.

The Orphan Children

If Johann Willow and Carla Gaines survive the adventure, they are taken in by Amanda Rose in the Dragonhorn Road Inn. Their stay is temporary as other Willow relatives in nearby cities are informed of the tragedy and come to get them. They pay a reward of 4,000 gp.

The Featherborns and Reinalda

When the Featherborns learn that Maxwell's betrothed, Reinalda, perished in the crypts, they agree to pay half the promised reward. The characters may opt to travel to the Featherborn estate to negotiate further.

The Emerald Prison

The malachite green urn is empty and useless now that the demon Farguld has escaped. It is a worthless trinket. However, it can be repaired by an archmage. Or sold to another interested party (see **Adventure Hooks**).

Statblocks

Mass Grave Golem

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 9
HP 98 (12d8 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	9 (-1)	19 (+4)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Immunities lightning, poison; bludgeoning, Piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages None
Challenge 6 (2300 XP)

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the golem to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution save with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the golem drops to 1 hit point instead.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit a Medium or smaller target, the target is grappled (escape DC 15), and the golem uses its Engulf on it.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Engulf. The golem engulfs a Medium or smaller creature grappled by it. The engulfed target is blinded, restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the mound's turns or take (2d8 + 4) piercing and bludgeoning damage. If the golem moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The golem can have only one creature engulfed at a time.

Spirit of Augustus Willow

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13
HP 63 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages The ones it knew in life
Challenge 6 (1,800 XP)

Amorphous. The spirit of Augustus can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Incorporeal Movement. The spirit 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.

Actions

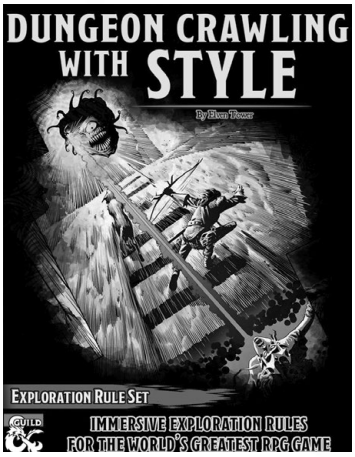
Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

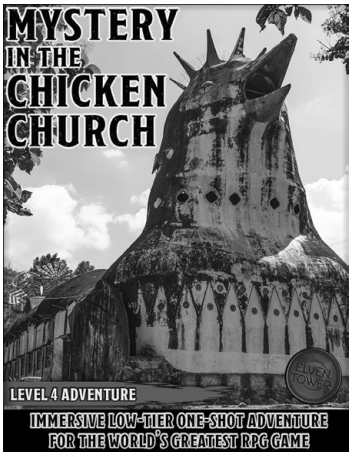
Strength Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target's strength score is reduced by 1d6 The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse in two hours.

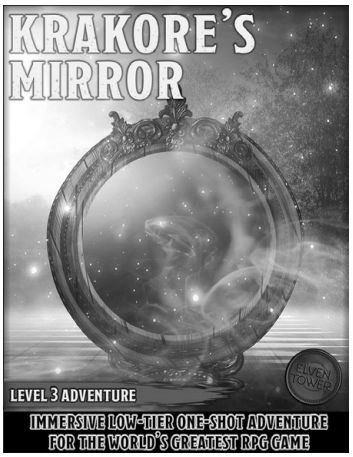
Thank You

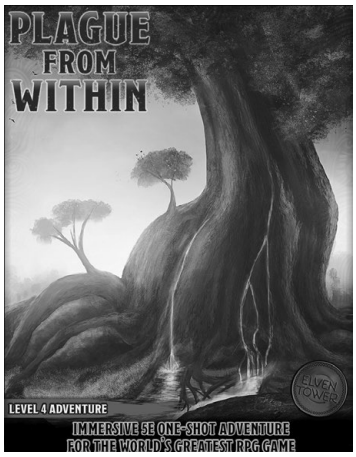
Your support is enormously appreciated. I am grateful to you. It is because of the support from my subscribers that I can continue creating cartography and written content for RPG games.

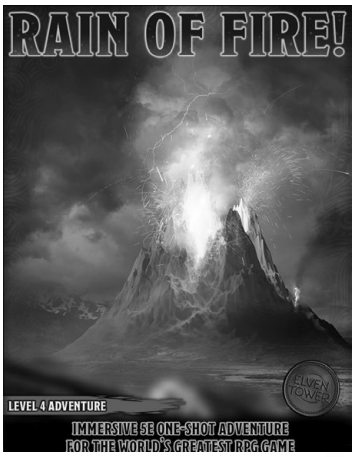
Here are some popular products we have published:

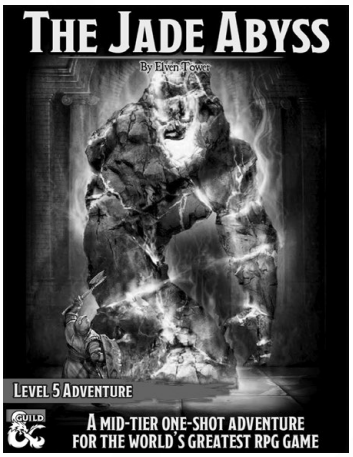


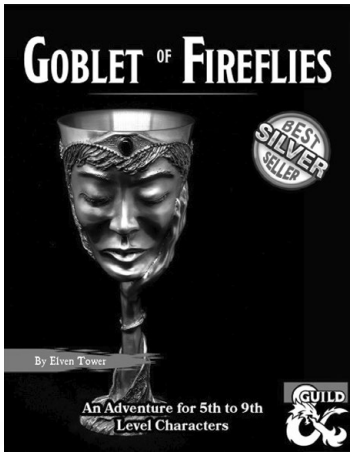












Click Here To Join Our Mailing List

Get the latest updates about TTRPG maps, adventures, and special discounts for our products.