
GUILD
DOWN THE GARDEN PATH
TRIALS OF WONDER
Purge the hidden terrors of the Garden of Knowledge found within Kyptgarden Forest in the world's greatest roleplaying game

DOWN THE GARDEN PATH

TRIALS OF WONDER



Introduction

Deep within the Kryptgarden Forest the ancient Garden of Knowledge (Shesh Ath Menatu) lies dormant, abandoned many years ago to a creeping poison within. You are about to walk through its hallowed gates and unlock the secrets behind the Garden's corruption and discover what happens when those memories are besieged by a dark hunger.

Down the Garden Path is an adventure for character levels 5 and up. The adventure is designed as a standalone game but can be incorporated into most woodland-based adventure settings and can start out from Waterdeep: Dragonheist or the Yawning Portal Inn.

Down the Garden Path took 10 months to write and another 6 to piece together and play as I attempted to navigate an incredibly difficult time in my life. The story represents quite the adventure of me trying to unlock the solution for the toxicity that had come forward in my everyday reality and I figured tackling this challenge would best be suited through D&D by way of making my own (and first) adventure. I have tried to make this fun, creepy, a mind game and even added a new element of puzzle work to it to make it unique and up the toughness for those players who are up for the challenge and for Dungeon Masters ready to push the game beyond the dice! I am really looking forward to seeing how adventurers tackle this madness and ignite the pillars within this ruin!

Matt Everson, September 2020



References for the stat block at page number 43, I was inspired by this: https://www.gmbinder.com/share/-L7WtgGX2N9hBqsn1-7V

Credits

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Special Thanks: I would like to show my total revenance to my wife and adventure partner, Inga Breede, for motivating me to push my creative storytelling beyond D&D evening sessions.

Created with Homebrewery.



On the Cover

Diego Gisbert Loren illustrates Cleric of Gond, Grey Ryanne , being attacked by an adult Oblex in the ruins of Shesh Ath Menatu. The long hidden Garden of Knowledge has many hidden horrors within its walls, found deep within Kryptgarden Forest.

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A Letter to the Dungeon Master from the Honorable Scholar Rohricht W. Deepbranch of Candlekeep, attaché for the High House of Wonders in Baldur's Gate, overseer and purveyor of Gondian research and innovation.

My apologies for the weight bestowed upon you.

I write to you, weaver of fate, to heed my warnings about looking too deep into knowledge laid dormant and left forgotten aeons. And for good reason, as the revelations my team and I have uncovered during our research could bring about cataclysmic circumstances.

If you are reading this I, Professor Rohricht W. Deepbranch, and my team are racing against unknown forces to stop the assembly and activation of ancient relics we have identified across Faerûn. The research of timeworn texts on ancient geographies and historical ritual has unearthed arcana - stark mysteries of a most frightening future.

The Gondian research hypothesized that ancient religious practice paired with the use of magic and machina-based relics may have played a role in ritualistic worship towards the pursuit of knowledge. I shudder to think that our time delving through old tomes and maps could have shed light on the location of ancient conduits used to draw energy from realms unknown.

Yet, there are those in Candlekeep who worship dangerous entities in secret. Those who seek to commune with knowledge horrific. Those who have found out about our work and are hunting members of our academic team and myself as we move to collect these relics - saving Faerûn from an ill-omened reveal and a fate so terrifying I dare not write.

My research team has been asked to leave Candlekeep at once as a newer team of unknown, ne'er-do-wells replace us looking to continue the study and put it into action.

I cannot deny my part in opening this wound.

We are now considered researchers emeritus to the library, but we are quietly moving to action. I will do my best to stop those who seek to corrupt with our study and leave buried those elder things which should never have been disturbed.

I have the greatest hope our emeritus clerics of Gond will locate and destroy these devices. If not, all may be lost.

Sincerest apologies with haste,

Cleric of Gond
Rohricht W. Deepbranch

Adventure Summary

Birds sing as the sun rises over the green hills of a small woodland, a light wind carries the scent of fresh beginnings in the summer air. A band of adventurers start out on the forest trail from their overnight in Red Larch, well-stocked and prepared for the journey ahead to their new destination in the southern edge of the Sword Mountains. The group treks deep into the undergrowth, certain an old logging trail will shave half a day off their travels, unaware of the change in the foliage around them, the sweet smell of floral distracts as the thick vegetation becomes a more guided path. The time for exits is over, as dense greenery blocks any escape for the adventurers, making their only way forward down the garden path...



Adventure Background

Abandoned to the wilds and left unchecked for millennia, Shesh Ath Menatu was once a sacred place of communal intellect, life-giving energy, elevated learning, and natural beauty.

The Garden was known for its cognitive ability to call those who came near, appealing to their inner sensibilities and elevating their minds to achieve the impossible. For years, many came and for years Faerûn was better for it, with those who learned from Shesh Ath Menatu serving as enlightened guides to the people of the surrounding lands.

The true gift of Shesh Ath Menatu lay within the ancient mechanisms that have sustained the Garden since before recorded history. These pillars of knowledge, called the Nar Ath Menatu, are a mystical combination of magic and machine of a civilization that was deeply connected to the elements over an aeon ago. These instruments were created to help balance the natural energies within the Kryptgarden Forest, focusing the essence of life, touch, and earth through these conduits. And in these conduits, the shared experiences and memories of all living things that have passed through the area are preserved, a massive natural repository of knowledge giving the Garden life and breath. This true gift to the future of Faerûn is Shesh Ath Menatu and the three Nar Ath Menatu, a place of eternal light with the pillars of knowledge to guide the way for all.



The first mechanism represents creation: **Ivae Nar**, Pillar of Life in Elvish translated to common. The first milestone in the Garden acknowledges the learnings that are experienced through the gift of life, by tending to the Garden itself and growing with it.

The second mechanism represents calibration, **Haran Nar**, Pillar of Touch in Elvish translated to common. The middle milestone in the Garden acknowledges the learnings that are experienced through exploration in the natural world.

The third mechanism represents land, **Erek Nar**, Pillar of Earth in Elvish translated to common. The final milestone in the Garden acknowledges the learnings that are experienced by returning to earth.



These ancient Pillars were the roots from which the Shesh Ath Menatu grew and flourished, teaching those who entered its nurturing essence, and sharing in the histories and memories of those who lived and taught within it.

That was until the Great Tear, when ancient knowledge was beset upon by a primordial hunger.

A deafening rupture across the surface of Kryptgarden Forest fractured the grounds of the ancient Garden of Knowledge. An earthquake of such rending force it left a permanent hole in the garden, a cavity so deep that it became a monument to the power of the elements and the importance of paying careful attention to boundaries of the known and the unknown.

The advent of the Great Tear brought tension to the Garden, fiery debates about the origins of the event, what its purpose was, and what should be done about the tear, a growing concern as whispered voices and glowing lights of yellow, red and blue were observed.

About the Clerics of Gond

The Clerics of Gond can be seen across the Sword Coast, plying their ability in unique machinery learning and developing new technology, and documenting their findings to share amongst the Gondar community for the betterment of all. A group of these Clerics has focused solely on the study of ancient relics, lost to the everyday world.

The Clerics of Gond at Candlekeep have discovered something frightening within the past that may have severe repercussions in the present if not sought out with urgency. Under a hood and hammer, Rohricht has sent Grey Ryanne, an incredibly sharp Cleric with deep experience in ancient relic technology to investigate the first location that the research team has identified. Hidden within Kryptgarden Forest lies a place of learning, lost to time for reasons unknown, with a mysterious tie to an elder past by way of a strange piece of technology - one that this group of Clerics must obtain to save the Garden and possibly the fate of Faerûn itself.



About the Druids of the Dusk Circle

The only beings with true understanding are the Druids of the Dusk Circle. This group of naturists has lived in isolation within the Tsordvuud, amongst its denizens, for hundreds of years. The Dusk Circle lives in a symbiotic balance with the forest, helping tend to its natural processes of life and keeping it healthy for those who live within it. The druids are fully aware of the Garden of Knowledge and live in its presence, taking care to nurture this ancient entity of aeons passed, until the time when new seekers of truth and light need a place to commune, to learn and to live from its ancient memories. The Members of the Dusk Circle are aware of a deceptive foe, an enemy

that has taken from their ranks without being seen and haunted them with copies of the dead, and brought about a rising threat within their sacred ancient forest.



About the Oblex and their Colonies

The Great Tear was a deep earthquake that stretched from the surface of Faerûn to the depths of the Underdark creating only one opening on the surface located to the west side of the the interior Garden. For the beings of Faerûn, this fissure between worlds is nearly impossible to navigate as there is very little space for movement of any kind including descension. Only an amorphous being could move through the cracks.

The malleable bulk of an Oblex is one such entity.

Shesh Ath Menatu has slowly been taken over by an Elder Oblex. The elder has made the Garden of Knowledge home, consuming those who live within it and feasting on the memories held within this ancient place and those who dare to visit.

Still, the colony grows. The Elder Oblex has spawned new ones within the walls of the Garden of Knowledge, drawing their prey in by impersonating those it has consumed, engaging with the adventurers in ways that might be useful to them and luring others to their end.

More information about Oblexes can be found in Mordenkainens Tome of Foes.

About The Key

The ancient origins of the Key and how it came to the Garden are not fully documented, even in the texts found within the libraries of the ruins. The Key itself is quite large in size, barely fitting most leather satchels, and is unique as the runes that cover its surface are not of any known language across Faerûn. The special research group of Gondar Clerics led by Rohricht have been able to identify these runes as Elder in nature, from realms beyond the stars, and linked to other relics bearing similar markings across all of Toril. The Key is the critical piece in activating the three pillars within the Garden, understanding the correct sequence of its unknown runes will turn on each of them and restore the life essence back to this ruin. Beware of their purpose though, as these relics are not made from the mortal realm (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11D33e1oof0&list).

About the Unknown Masked Acolyte

The Garden has many incredible and terrifying experiences lying in wait for those who come to its aid, but no secret is as horrifying as that of the body of the unknown acolyte. The twisted body of an unidentified mage is found within the Garden, mangled by the tearing forces of vines, dark coloured and rippled skin, the remnant of an unspeakable event leaving only its green hooded cape, a leather satchel with a note warning of eerie prophecy and wearing a white mask of unknown origin. Little evidence is left to fully understand the intention of this forgotten soul or how it came to be in the Garden, navigating many terrible obstacles only to succumb to the wild within this ancient ruin. The rot of time has eaten away many answers to questions that would shine light on this enigma but none more so than the date of the letter, much closer to the present than might seem possible.



Adventure Overview

The adventure is broken up into four parts.

Part 1 — Ivae Nar

The Adventurers unknowingly wander into Garden of Knowledge through an overgrown forest trail, encountering a frightened group of goblins, a series of tree blights within its sacred hall, a cleric of Gond who is trapped, and the Key to turn on **Ivae Nar**, the Pillar of Life. The characters cross swords with a hobgoblin and his search party once thought to be dead, coming to a terrifying revelation.

Part 2 — Entering the Garden

The Adventurers expand their search through the Garden of Knowledge for the remaining two sacred Pillars coming in contact with the wilds of the Garden, and are surprised to find two Druids of the Dusk Circle unaware of the cursed overgrowth that holds them.

Part 3 — Haran Nar

The characters will need to think fast, use their might and magic as they race to activate **Haran Nar** while battling through the madness that is slowly revealing itself around them. Oblivious to the adventurers, they are walking deeper into an intricate trap of sinewy slime meant to bring them closer and devour their fragile minds.

Part 4 — Erek Nar

The Adventurers' sanity at stake and the fate of Shesh Ath Menatu in the balance, each character comes to realize they must cleanse the Garden of the oblex infection in order to stave off ancient corruption. The characters cautiously hunt the source of the colony, the Elder Oblex, to purge the Garden of this aberration and restore light to the last pillar, **Erek Nar**.



Adventure Hooks

Down the Garden Path is an add-on adventure for any characters that are currently based in Waterdeep and have completed Waterdeep: *Dragon Heist* or *Tales from the Yawning Portal*. The trials that the adventurers face assumes that they are ready to explore the wooded lands to the northeast of Waterdeep, having them arrive on the doorstep of Shesh Ath Menatu walking along an old logging trail from Red Larch into the Kryptgarden Forest.

Chatter at the Yawning Portal Inn

An uneasy silence in the woodlands

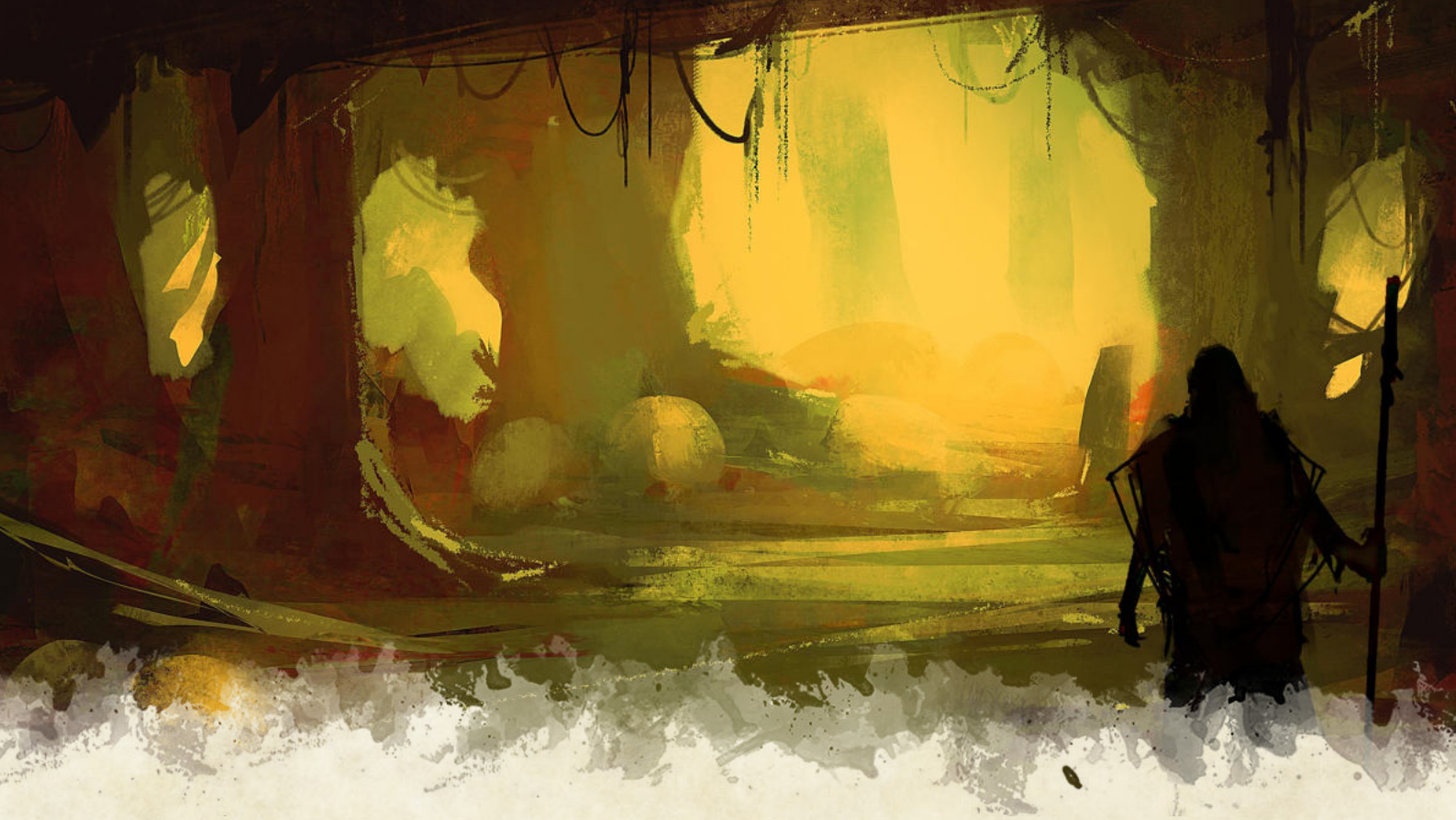
Over the past few years, the Druids of the Dusk Circle have faded from tavern talk. Dangerous conditions within the woodlands have all but halted logging in Kryptgarden Forest, straining relations between the citizens of Red Larch and the Druids. Veteran adventurers of the North Sword Coast who frequent the Yawning Portal Inn talk of a troubling silence from the Druids, caretakers of Kryptgarden Forest. They whisper of an arresting dread in the ancient woodland, that strangling feeling reported by travellers from Phandalin to Triboar, letting none linger long for fear of the terrors that hide within.

A missing cleric for the Day of Wonders

Tucked in a corner booth of the Yawning Portal Inn are two Clerics of Gond planning the next Day of Wonders festival, showcasing to the city the imaginative inventions of the Gondar. The characters will learn that this year is meant to celebrate advancements in automaton creation, new machines bound with magic to the amazement of all Waterdavians. The adventurers learn that while this is an exciting time, the festival is missing a critical piece to the planning, that being special research cleric Grey Ryanne, who was on assignment from the Gondar temple in Baldur's Gate to Candlekeep working on a hushed project involving nodes of energy, ancient machinations, and maps.

The members of the Waterdeep temple have heard whispers that their Candlekeep research team has disappeared, racing against an unknown clock to prevent disaster and corruption across Faerûn. All of this is hearsay of course but Grey Ryanne was supposed to meet the planning committee here last week following her overnight trip to Red Larch on a last minute fact-finding mission to the Kryptgarden Forest. No reports have come in from Red Larch other than her arrival in town and her departure into the woods and nobody has seen her since she left.

These events amongst the Gondar have left the Order whispering of a potential threat within their ranks. More poignantly, who is going to help plan the festival now?



Part 1: Ivae Nar, Pillar of Light

The adventure begins when the players unknowingly enter the Garden of Knowledge (Shesh Ath Menatu) along an overgrown logging trail through Kryptgarden Forest. The Garden has quietly called them to its aid as something deep inside it has drained this once sacred place of its essence infecting its vast stores of knowledge and contorting the nature around it. Exploring the front hall of this forsaken place, the characters become quickly aware of a Cleric of Gond who is being held captive by several well-hidden Blights, saving her for a terrible fate. As the pack of unholy wood is cut down, Grey Ryanne, the Gondar Cleric, informs the adventurers of her mission to restore the life essence to Shesh Ath Menatu and safeguard the Key to the Nar from darker hands. The only thing standing in the way of turning on the Pillar of Light is figuring out how to use the first key and battle a surprisingly aggressive, and alive, Hobgoblin search party, long thought to have gone missing. These three events, walking into the garden, saving the cleric, and battling the search party are no mere coincidence, rather a hint at the truth beyond these infected walls.

Public Noticeboard at the Highsun Tavern

First note: In the Helm at Highsun tavern, the characters are privy to a note hanging in an envelope with the symbol of Gond stamped on the front. The letter is written by Grey Ryanne and she insists that this letter be delivered to the head of her research team, Rohricht Deepbranch, should she not return from her mission to locate the Garden of Knowledge. The letter simply states: Rohricht, I have found it, yet I have failed in securing this hallowed ground. Please send help, my life may depend on it and so will the fate of Faerûn.

Second note: A curious "Missing Persons" note has been put up at the Highsun tavern. The request asks for any and all help locating a hobgoblin search party that was hunting Blight in the Kryptgarden Forest and has not returned in over two months. There is a 250 gp reward for any proof of what has happened to the team and proof of their whereabouts. Let the Tavern owner know and you will be put in touch with those looking for them.

Exploring Shesh Ath Menatu

The Garden of Knowledge lives deep within the Kryptgarden Forest, not far from the southern reach of the Sword Mountains and northeast of the town of Red Larch. The woodlands that make up Shesh Ath Menatu are so densely overgrown that the air barely moves, the sun struggles to breach the canopy and the forest seemingly speaks to itself through deep wooden groans.

A Sense of the Tsordvuud – A Hidden Message

A secret message in the language of the Druids has been left deep along the old logging trail into Kryptgarden Forest. If there is a Druid in the group they automatically spot the message that has been left by their kinsman. If any other members of the group speak Druid they will be able to see the secret message left within the woods.

The woodlands are in danger. The Garden is sick and it calls to all who can help. Be on your best guard, all for one but trust no one.

All other members of the party can spot the presence of the secret message with a successful DC15 Wisdom (Perception) check but can't decipher it without magic.

Heed the call of Shesh Ath Menatu

A forest lives and breathes with all the life that is a part of it, and so communicates to all matter of beings that make it. The Garden was known for calling to those who came close to its doors, welcoming those that it deemed worthy-minded and virtuous enough to enter its camouflaged gates. The invitation is subtle, meant to invoke a sense of hope, comfort and safety to its potential guests, always appealing to their senses, as they walk down the garden path and towards its sacred inner sanctum. The call of Shesh Ath Menatu always references a sensory experience to any and all who are within reach of the gates. Feel free to creatively come up with your own calls of the garden. Or use the table below.

The Garden of Knowledge Calling to Your Senses

d8	Sensory Experience
1	The light scent of spring fills the air and with it the soothing aroma of lilac, reminding you of your childhood adventures in the woods.
2	You get goosebumps on your arms as you feel the comforting heat of the sun on your face and walk through the woods, a heightened confidence in yourself and your abilities.
3	The sound of multiple songbirds singing in unison throughout the forest lifts your spirits and lightens your step for the adventure to come.
4	Your eyes light up as the forest around you is vibrant with colour that seems to beckon you onward.
5	Pausing for a break on your hike, you grab some blueberries from a bush at the side of the path. A sense of reinvigoration washes over you. You feel ready for everything.
6	The wind gently brushes against your cheek leaving you self-assured.
7	You watch as colourful hummingbirds flit back and forth across the path as the sun filters through their technicolour wings seemingly calling you forward through the forest. You feel compelled to follow.
8	Wildflowers appear surrounding the path ahead and fill you with a sense of awe and wonder that pulls you forward down this deep forest trail.

Down the Garden Path we go…

As the adventurers unknowingly walk into Shesh Ath Menatu, read the following:

The dense logging trail opens up to a natural rise bordered by thick, dew-covered bush, shielded by the canopy of two ancient trees towering above. The path begins slowly descending into a beautiful clearing stepped with an intricately cut stone floor of unknown artistry that looks elvish in its marriage of elegant design and the natural environment surrounding it. Tall arches rise above this clearing covered in old vines with massive leaves that show the tightly woven vegetated fabric of natural flora that has been here for what must be several hundred years. As you look around the clearing from the stone-cut floor you notice carved statues that resemble all manner of beings across Faerûn. They're covered in assorted greenery. You notice the figures hold books in one hand while the other hand motions towards a grand doorway, whose gates are open with an entryway that appears to have not been traipsed in a very long time. Looking back up the rise you notice that the trail opening has closed, covered with intertwined muscular vines, knotted tree root and rolling moss. The only way to go is forward through the stone-cut archway.

With a successful DC10 Intelligence (Investigation) check, characters exploring the front atrium and grand doorway of the ruins also spot the following:

- A raised inscription sits on the top of the Grand Archway in ancient elvish and simply says "Shesh Ath Menatu" which translated into common means "Garden of Knowledge".
- Strange prints mark the dusted floor from the foyer and track to beyond the grand archway into the garden. There appear to be four sets of them leading into Ivae Nar, the ruins for the Pillar of Light.
- Of all the hints that show how ancient this place is, perhaps the most unusual is the series of clear water channels, no longer running but immaculately clean and smooth.



Shesh Ath Menatu Key Rune Player Difficulty Level

Level 1 Difficulty - Key Runes are exactly as listed in the combination below and Grey is familiar with their sequence to activate the Pillar (located on page 17).

Level 2 Difficulty - The Runes are spread out across this ruin for the players to find. Regardless of where they find them, the combination is listed on page 17.

Ivae Nar Key Combination - Check here for puzzle section

Ivae Nar Random Encounters

The ruins of the Pillar of Light have many hidden creatures that have made the dark recesses of its halls there home. Roll a D20 every 15mins (outside of an encounter below) an encounter occurs on a roll of 16-20. Determine the encounter by rolling a D4 with the reference table below:

Ivae Nar Encounters

Encounter	Location	Rounds
Swarm of Rats	Great Hall	3
Swarm of Insects	Great Hall	3
Swarm of Bats	Pillar Room	3

Overnight within the Garden

A possibility not to be considered at any cost as the Garden holds many dark & terrifying secrets within its cursed walls, but a risk brave adventurers may be willing to make.

Evening Visitation & Sulfurous Impersonation

The Oblexes will make copies of the former students of the Garden of Knowledge in order to wreak havoc on the players across the Garden, especially when they are vulnerable during a period of rest. Actively use the short and long rest rules for the Adventurers playing through downtime within the Garden and reference the encounter below.

Suggested use of characters for the Dungeon Master as they would relate to the Garden of Knowledge are the following (stick to the rules of the number of copies allowed in Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes):



- Dwarven Cleric
- Orc
- Elf
- Tabaxi
- Druid
- Any of the Players who were held by the Oblex more than once.
- Grey Ryanne

Into the Ruin

1. A Veiled Threat

The building is the Hall of Embrace, the welcoming atrium for all those who came to Shesh Ath Menatu. Vaulted ceilings and rays of sunlight peeking through thick vines show ornately detailed walls with scripture written on them, lessons to learn on the path to enlightenment.

> The silence of the main foyer begs the question – what has happened in this sacred entranceway? The surrounding area has weaponry scattered across the floor and up the stairs through the ancient, vaulted archway. It's an odd setting as there are no bodies of the fallen, no trace of skeletons or bones laying claim over these arms.

Ordinance from cultures spread across Faerûn seems to have found their unusual resting places well into the first building where small columns of light show a Hobgoblin party of five that is quietly rummaging through the blades on the ground. The party is unaware of the adventurers but seems quite nervous as four of them attempt to stock up on what armament they can use while the fifth Hobgoblin scout, blade drawn, looks nervously down the ill-lit hall, away from your party. The Hobgoblins may attack if they see or hear you, triggering a fight in the front vestibule of the hall.

Based on how the adventuring party decides to engage with the warrior group there are three potential experiences, each resulting in a fight.

1) Offer Help: Clearly in distress, the Hobgoblin party keeps looking into the next Hall with uneasy breath and darting eyes. The adventurers call out to them in peace and notice their leader is critically wounded. The team offers help and the hunting party shares its lessons learned. Two of the Hobgoblins, the scout and one warrior are taken out with a flurry of unseen maneuvers from the darkness in the next room. The scout is dragged into the ruin screaming for his life and the warrior is pitted with arrows, mouth agape in shock.

2) Sneak up closer: Seemingly, a quiet approach towards the hobgoblins goes well. That is until one person in the adventuring party steps on an old dagger making a loud scraping sound. All goblins turn, wild-eyed, blades drawn. The adventurers can offer to help or if they attack the leader yells at your group: "BE GONE TRICKSTERS. YOUR DOUBLES DON'T FOOL US!"

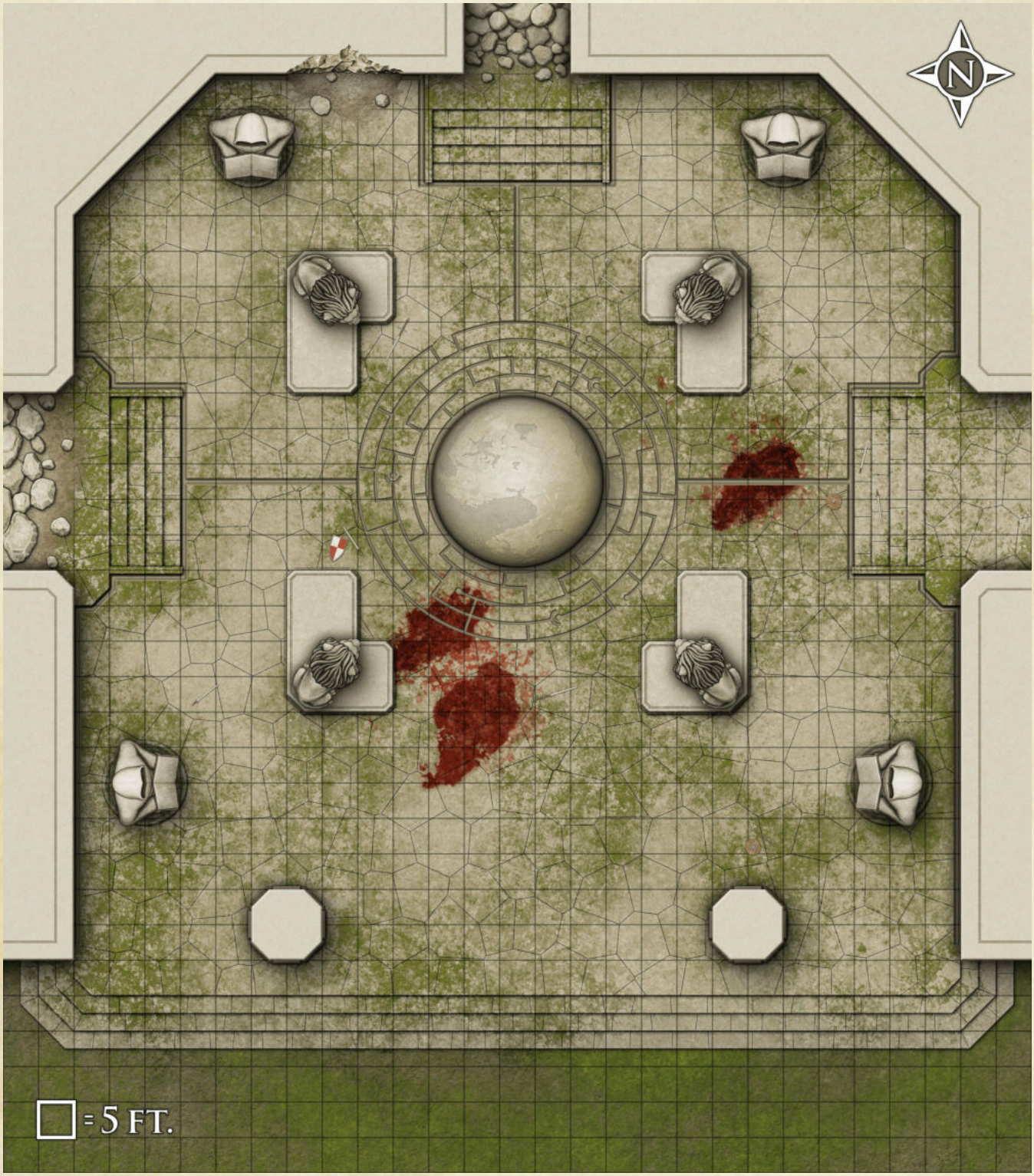
3) You Attack. The hobgoblins turn, wild-eyed, blades drawn. The leader, already critically wounded, yells at your group: "CUT DOWN THE COPIES! THEY MOVE IN THE CHANNELS!"

Lessons Learned

If the Team Helped the Hunters: The Hobgoblin party is uncharacteristically grateful for the help and quite unsettled as two of their brethren were taken out during your aid. They let you know that they were hunting in Kryptgarden Forest when they came upon the Garden ruin only to be trapped and hunted in turn. They warn that this place is cursed and that there is something that moves in the channels, it is lightning fast, glistens and sticky like oil. The disturbing truth is copies of people seem to appear...after they have died.

If the Fight is Joined: After defeating the hobgoblin party the adventurers are able to squeeze one as to why they are here. As it takes its last breath, it grabs hold of one adventurer, as if in need to be saved, saying: "Your friend is trapped. Down the hall, down in the shadow where the blight walks... beware the copies."

Treasure: There are four fire grenades on the Hobgoblin bodies (or four offered if the team assisted), scrap cloth and two health potions.



Map: The Atrium - Hall of Embrace

2. Sour Ground

Looking into the ruin archway off to the right of the atrium, further down the Hall of Embrace lies a series of fresh boot tracks indicating a chase and quick overpowering as a small heap of torn bodies is seen amongst old scraps of fallen wood.

> The opening in the Great Hall shows evidence that it was once a place of communal gathering. Ancient chairs and tables have kneeled and bent with age and closely resemble some of the older twisted plants that seem to have lost their greenery. Dust spots dance between the thin rays of sunlight filtering from the twisted fingers of root, vinery, and needles covering the room.

As the Adventurers investigate further, they will notice the ceiling of the Great Hall is vaulted with support beams that have collapsed under the wear of time. The spaces where the beams connected with the wall have left small ledges that are clear and open, good places for elevated views of the hall.

Exploring the front of the Great Hall further indicates the lack of visitors as dust goes undisturbed and rot has taken its toll across the surrounding area. Deep cut aqueducts run along the floor, narrow and slightly inset into the wall. Peculiarly, all of them are as clean as polished marble, as though they still bear use yet no trace of water can be found.

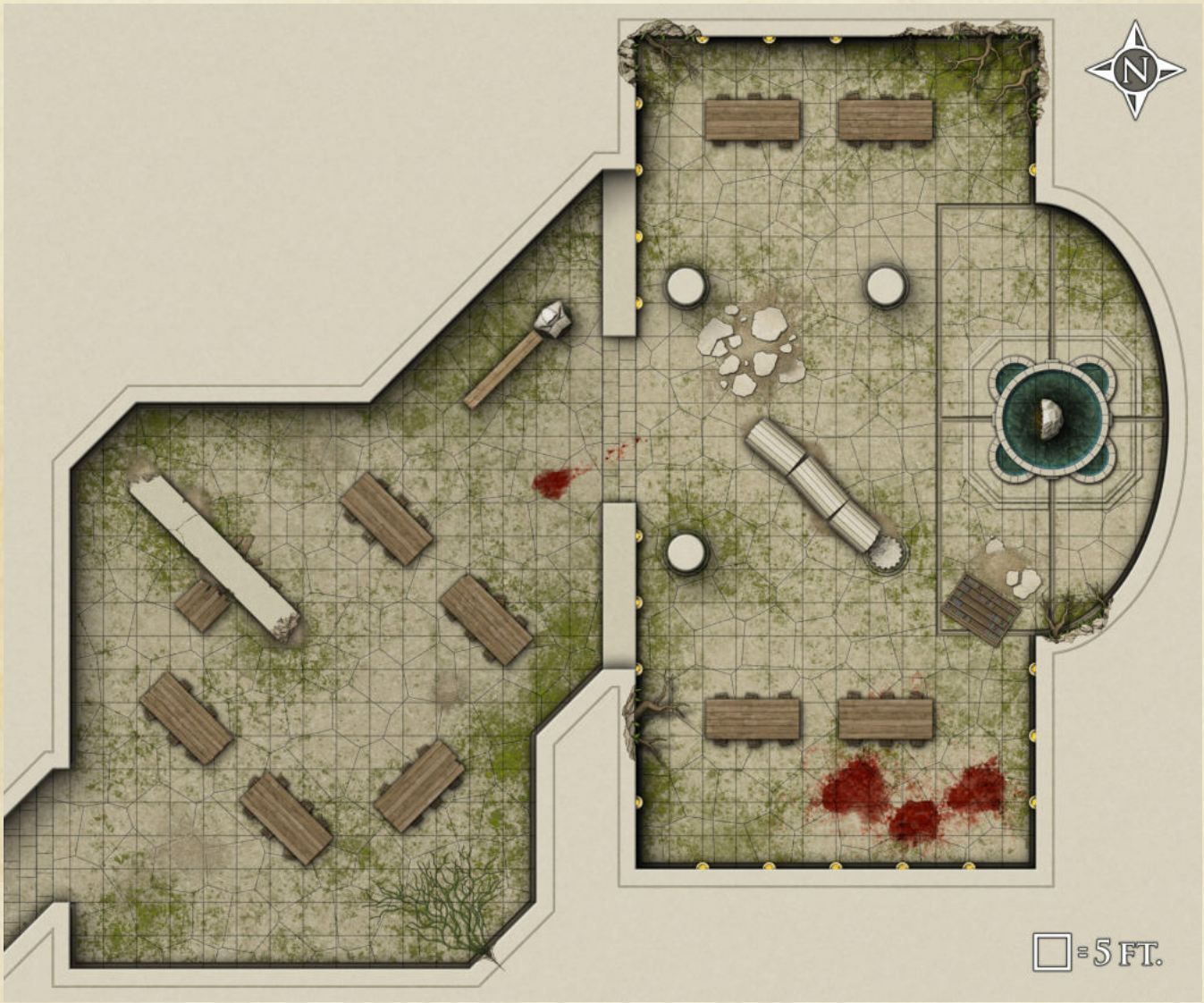
> A quiet sense of dread builds as the two Hobgoblin bodies are slowly being pulled through the old furniture and scattered debris of the hall making quiet dragging sounds as they move towards their final destination. The plant vines move silently across the floor probing for what else they might find to bring back to their roots to digest.

Roll initiative and the lowest roll is ensnared in a vine that pulls them closer to the darker end of the hall. Several dark shadows reveal themselves in the corner hiding amongst the debris. You have disturbed a nest of **four** Vine Blights who in broken common warn: "You will help feed us. So lean are the feeds now."

Your party checks the floor around them, being acutely aware of the difficulty in seeing vines move in the dimly-lit hall.

The Disadvantage of Twilight

> Each Vine Blight gets advantage on the attack after every two players take their turn.



Map: Hall of Light

Treasure: You see fresh human boot prints around a satchel that has water, 100 gp, torn pages from an unknown book, and a foldable, tarnished gold mechanism. The front of the satchel bears a Gondar insignia and the pages contain notes in common. There's an addendum scribbled in bold penmanship "Codex – Pillar of Light."

3. A Nest of Dead Wood

The communal hall opens to a larger study area. The roof above has buckled under exposure to the elements and

disrepair, the forest creeping through. There is dense foliage across the walls as if the trees themselves are attempting to reclaim this particular room. Bright green ferns and moss grow over older, twisted wood rot consuming the pieces hiding in the darkened shadows. In the corners of the room, there are long recessed water channels that appear polished and recently used. Along these channels crossing the floor, there are distinct markings where something was dragged. In the eerie silence of the study, the only sounds the adventurers hear is their breath. Then, faintly, the sound of a woman crying.

> In the quiet, there is a quickened scampering of movement amongst the undergrowth. Blights both small and large take up positions around the hall to get a greater view of the beings that have entered the hall of the Master. One group seems to have moved to the side where a young woman is held prisoner, in a twisted snarl of a thorn bush.

The surrounding study hall is dimly-lit but gives enough visibility to show the outlines of **four** Needle and **four** Twig Blights that are slowly making their way forward. The irony of this aggression does not go unnoticed within the Hall of Light, a place meant to open the mind and encourage peace. As the blight moves in to capture the adventurers, the prisoner in the thatched thorn bush calls out – "Please help! I am a Gondian Cleric from Candlekeep – The Garden must be saved!"

The Blights surround the party (if you did not encounter the Vine Blights in the previous room feel free to involve them in the fight as a second wave). As the adventurers end the encounter the thatched thorn bush weakens and releases its grip on the prisoner within.

4. A Grey Area

The Prisoner rises to her knees. She shows signs of a hard lost fight, bruises and torn clothes, open wounds and a broken left wrist. She speaks to the group.

> Thank you all for your brave intervention. My name is Grey Ryanne. I am a Cleric of Gond here at Shesh Ath Menatu on a clandestine mission to keep ancient relics of incredible power from getting into dark hands. I, like my fellow Clerics of Candlekeep, have been tasked with finding these places, long since forgotten, and securing them. The Garden of Knowledge, this place, is one of these ancient relics that acts as a conduit of energy between realms. It's a place I need to protect. Before my imprisonment, I had a satchel with notes and the key to activate the Pillars within the Garden, have you seen it?

As if by command the key lights up with whoever has it in their possession.

As the golden foldable key is pulled from Grey Ryanne's satchel, its engravings begin to glow with an increasingly intensifying light. A section of the study hall glows with the same glyphs that are present on the key and a brightly-lit squared recess in the middle, waiting to be activated. This is Ivae Nar the first beacon, the Pillar of Light.

Lessons Learned: The adventurers may pass around the key amongst the group to study its glyphs and the nature of its mechanics.

Puzzle Challenge: Review Grey's notes with the puzzle combination description from her research in the Appendix under, Ivae Nar.

The new discovery of Grey, the Clerics of Gond and word of their urgent mission gives a sense of purpose that is elevated as soft ghostly whispers echo across the hall as the runes light up throughout. The voices seem to come from all corners of the hall, calling out in different languages but all saying the same thing.

> *The Key has returned. They have come to burn us out. Soon we will feed.*

5. A Breath of Fresh Air

As the glyphs alight, the artwork within the hall glows in gold and white. Markings reveal themselves, painted in intricate strokes. They light up as parts of the walls surrounding Ivae Nar seem to awaken and exhale a light breeze into the hall. The light wind flits through flowers that bud and bloom on the green vines along the rafters touching arcane Elvish wind chimes that lightly ping soft-tuned melodies throughout the hall. One falls to the ground. It's feather-light in weight and has a flat bottom to it as if to stand.

Perception check (DC10): Players can roll for a perception check to see if there are more of these wind chimes around that hall that might be loose in their fittings. There are a total of six that can be seen and acquired through various attempts of might, magic and luck. What else could they be used for? Warning bells perhaps?

Small bioluminescent wall sconces start to light and hope lifts the group, a sense that life thrives in the garden after all, as a presence tries to reclaim its former house. The noticeable change from the dust-covered detritus and dimly-lit corners that gave way to deadly attacks gives the adventurers pause as they take a moment to ask Grey about the Garden.

Grey reveals additional information about the Garden:

- The Garden of Knowledge is called Shesh Ath Menatu and has been "hidden" from outsiders for a very long time.
- The Garden is "sick" and has been poisoned by an unknown source – shutting down its "Pillars" which protect it while consuming all beings within its walls.
- There are three pillars and they need to be activated. The three Pillars are located across the ruins of the Garden and are called:

1) Ivae Nar - The Pillar of Light
2) Haran Nar - The Pillar of Touch
3) Erek Nar - The Pillar of Earth

- The Combination page is the result of several research projects done by her and her team in Candlekeep. They have strong reason to believe that there is a menacing force quietly trying to secure arcane sites, technology, and relics to harness power from other realms.
- With a careful, unsteady and quiet voice, Grey tells the adventurers that she believes the unknown dread is one spawning from the stars. A force driven by the elder evils.

Puzzle Challenge: Reviewing the torn Combination page from Grey Ryanne. The team gets one attempt at solving the puzzle.

6. What once was lost...

The sound of a container falling to the floor snaps the party to attention as a Hobgoblin Captain comes out from behind a heap of ceiling and bookcase, his sword drawn. The Captain looks confused and frightened at the sight of the adventurers, unsure of the situation. Relying on gut instinct, he calls out to the adventurers in common.

> "What business have you here in the Garden, travellers? Hunting Kryptgarden clean of Hobgoblins no doubt? This is not your place."

Two more Hobgoblin warriors step out from behind a fallen column and move fast to strike. Both warriors take advantage of a surprise attack, launching a volley of arrows from their longbows and moving back towards the cover of the columns. As the players regroup and roll for initiative the Hobgoblin Captain drops to one knee and loosens his own arrows, moving for cover behind the rubble. The hunters are playing coy.



Adult Oblex Fight Round One

- Grey is not fit to fight and needs to be protected by the adventurers.
- The Hobgoblins are actively trying to pull the adventurers closer to the Pillar of Light which has a deep inset pool surrounding it with a dark viscous liquid. The thick sticky substance seems to trickle out the base of the pool slowly and has slipped its way into the aqueduct channels across the floor, filling the passage in the same direction of the two Hobgoblin parties.
- The Hobgoblins retain all of the fighting characteristics of their profile BUT have the stats of the Adult Oblex in the pool at the base of the Pillar.
- After 2 rounds of fighting or before a Hobgoblin dies: **Perception check (DC10).** A team member will notice one of the channels running to a warrior is filled with a viscous substance that tracks back through the recessed duct towards the Pillar of light. If the sinewy link is cut between the Oblex and the Warrior, the Warrior melts.
- Oblex Reveal: Monster Stat Sheet available in the appendix
- If the adventurers start to get too close to the Pillar pool it will trigger a multi-attack including Pseudopod attacks that eat memories.
- The Oblex may withdraw its simulacrum to defend itself causing another warrior to melt in front of the team.
- Other than the channels on the floor there are no escape routes for the Adult Oblex to run. In its arrogance it has stayed cornered by the Pillar, possibly sealing its own fate.

As the adventurers prepare for battle, the only thing more unsettling than the surprise attack is the rising pungency in the air, like sulphur or rotten eggs.

If your Adventurers do not survive the attack, the Adult Oblex slowly spills out of the pool at the base of the Pillar of Light and rolls over each member, digesting their memories and their person. As Grey looks on in horror, the Oblex starts to attempt to make new "copies" of the players. The glyphs on the Pillar of Light dim slowly and extinguish.

7. An Unseen Revelation

As the smell of sulphur lingers in the air, the corner of the study hall fills with light as the Pillar's glyphs begin to pulse. The ancient key begins to resonate in hand and the glyphs flicker, begging to be used, calling to open their pillar. What is even more astonishing is the discovery of an adult Oblex in the Garden of Knowledge. How did it get here?

Perception check (DC10).
Should the adventurers feel uneasy about Grey, they can roll for perception check to see if she has any slime attached to her feet or if she appears to be linked to any ooze in the channels in the area.

Exploring in and around the pillar reveals the emaciated bodies of the real Hobgoblin party. The team can grab the emblem or blade off of the Captain to claim a reward at the tavern in Red Larch.

Puzzle to Activate Ivae Nar

When the right combination of glyphs is selected in the correct sequence on the key, light emanates from the top of the ancient column

As the band of adventurers recuperate from the battle, Grey, The Gondar Cleric, steps forward and explains that each Pillar in the garden, a total of three, has to be reactivated to restore its healing and knowledge-nurturing properties. The plastic body of the dead Oblex has oozed out onto the floor and healing water comes out from the base of the pillar, steaming as it touches the Oblex remnant, seemingly burning it where it lies.

Brilliant designs of golden light illuminate, running the length of the study through the Great Hall and beyond across the ancient Garden to the main gate. They continue past a collapsed archway that cannot be accessed. The only details that can be seen are a small section of open wall going into the Garden, just large enough for adventurers to travel through. A cracked edge of the archway entrance bears an engraving: Haran Nar, translated in common as, The Pillar of Touch.

Ivae Nar Key Combination

The solution is written out for the Dungeon Master to follow through in a step by step walkthrough that is easy to follow and typed out to help practice before the game. These steps are designed to help make the experience of using 'The Key' seamless for the players. Practice makes perfect and be sure to watch our "How To" video here (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11D33e1oof0&list=P).

Step 1) Start with the Symbol A in front of you and make sure that B is on the backside. You are not allowed to flip to B.

Step 2) *The First Rune* in the combination. From A, split "The Key" in half vertically, folding A sides backward, revealing F. F will be upside down.

Step 3) *The Second Rune* in the Combination. From the upside down F, fold F back horizontally to get E.

Step 4) *The Third Rune* in the combination. From E, split " The Key" in half vertically, folding E sides backward, revealing B. B will be upside down.

The next ruin will start from B as this has ended. Please take "The Key" from the players to ensure continuity in the puzzle sequence. Feel free to give an extra copy of "The Key" for the players to play with.

To make sure "The Key" experience is a challenge we suggest that the Dungeon Master has several copies on hand just in case the players unfold the puzzle all together or get lost in the folds. Keep one master key on hand and several for the players to try out during game play.

Please allow the Players to reference Grey Ryanne's notes, located in her satchel found in the first ruin.

If all three runes are completed they will ignite the Pillar and trigger a cleansing of the ruin from the oblex presence leaving the Adventurers playing with advantage.

Puzzle Codex – Letters to Images & Combinations for Reference



A symbol



B symbol



C symbol



D symbol



E symbol



F symbol



Part 2: Entering the Garden

Approaching the collapsed archway to Haran Nar, characters notice a break in the ancient marbled wall off to the right of the main foyer. Through the opening, a path divides a swath of high grass leading to the ruins of other buildings and a widely yawning natural cavity covered in unmanaged wild flora. As they are drawn closer into an intricate trap set by the starved appetites of an Oblex colony, the adventurers will be confronted by challenges of mind, might, and magic.

1. In The Lion's Mouth - Magic Fire Trap

While the entrance hall is lit with the emanating golden hue of the Pillar of Light, the hole in the damaged wall has enough space for the adventurers to easily pass through. Beyond the opening tall grass sways with a gentle breeze as air from the main hall blows inward towards the glade, inviting the adventurers forward.

Perception Check (DC15): Players can roll a perception check at the passage to see if they can notice one of the following:

- Any Druid character will read a warning message left by the Druids of the Dark Circle that says: "The door is closed, the Garden's ire sealed within. Those who pass shall be bathed in fire.." - warning of a fire trap placed on the opening.
- Any Elf characters will sense a trap placed on the entrance.
- Any of the characters who do see the trap can attempt to trigger it.

As the adventurers approach the broken hole in the wall to the left of the collapsed Garden entrance, a low growling sound rises above them. The eyes and mouths of the Lion statues begin to light with flame growing in heat and are trained at the passage for all who step within five feet of it.

The trap is activated if the players are within **five feet** or less of the broken wall passage attempting to go through it to enter the Garden. The trap requires a DC 15 to recognize burn marks and scoring around the breach in the wall. The adventurers may use a spell or other effect that will reveal the existence of magic around the hole in the wall and emanating from the Lion statues. The adventurers must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw taking 22 (4d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Trap Save and Attack Bonus: Dangerous, 12–15, +6 to +8

Damage Severity by Level

Level	Dangerous
1st to 4th	2d10
5th to 10th	4d10

https://roll20.net/compendium/dnd5e/Traps#content



If all checks fail or no one can read the hidden druid message, have the Adventuring group roll for initiative to see the order of who goes through the door with wall entrance first.

2. A Field to Till

Having passed the druid's fiery seal, the Garden reveals itself beyond the doorway with sweeping knee-high grass. Dense collections of bramble bush are scattered across the inner atrium, while cattail plants dot the open field, swaying in a light breeze. There is a small overgrown footpath that winds through the grass across old broken marbled stone, forking east and west of the inner Garden.

> As you pass through the Druid's fire seal you see the full expanse of the garden. You have walked into an ancient secret bathed in rolling greenery with a thick canopy hanging overhead. The soothing breath of a summer breeze welcoming you. The inner lake seems shallow, the water no longer falls from the waterfall at its western edge and the eastern reach has turned into a lifeless marsh, it's only source of renewal the disparate raindrops capable of slipping past the dense canopy above. As you walk down the marble path in front of you, it splits into two, one leading west and one leading east.

The Enlightened Statues

Every Pillar within the Garden has a stream of water which flows from the Pillar itself across the aqueduct channels in its building and outward through ornate statues to the lake of Shesh Ath Menatu. Every statue is an access point to the lake and gives access to the aqueduct channels of their corresponding building where their Pillar is located. Should a Pillar be purged of its Oblex owner, the water comes fourth cleansing the aqueduct channels and pouring back into the lake, restoring the Garden's health and sanctity.

1) Should 2 Pillars be purged the Will'o'wisps of the lake disappear.
2) Should 3 Pillars be purged all Will'o'wisps of the entire Garden disappear.

Druid Fire Traps

There are three druid fire traps that have been set around each of the statues. The Fire traps are stopgap measures to contain the Oblexes in their respective buildings, restricting their movements within the aqueduct channels specifically related to their section of the map. This will allow each Oblex movement within their ruin and outside aqueduct channels, while preventing access to the lake. This is a delicate balance however with the following implications:

1) If a Pillar is purged of its Oblex host, cleansing water will run through all the pillar's channels and into the lake.
2) If a Fire Trap is taken out by the Adventurers, this will allow an existing Oblex to move into a previously cleared set of channels by way of the aqueducts, using the waters of the lake running into a pillar to take over that sacred space once again.
3) Each statue Fire Trap should be treated as the 'In the Lion's Mouth' trap described at the entrance to the Garden.

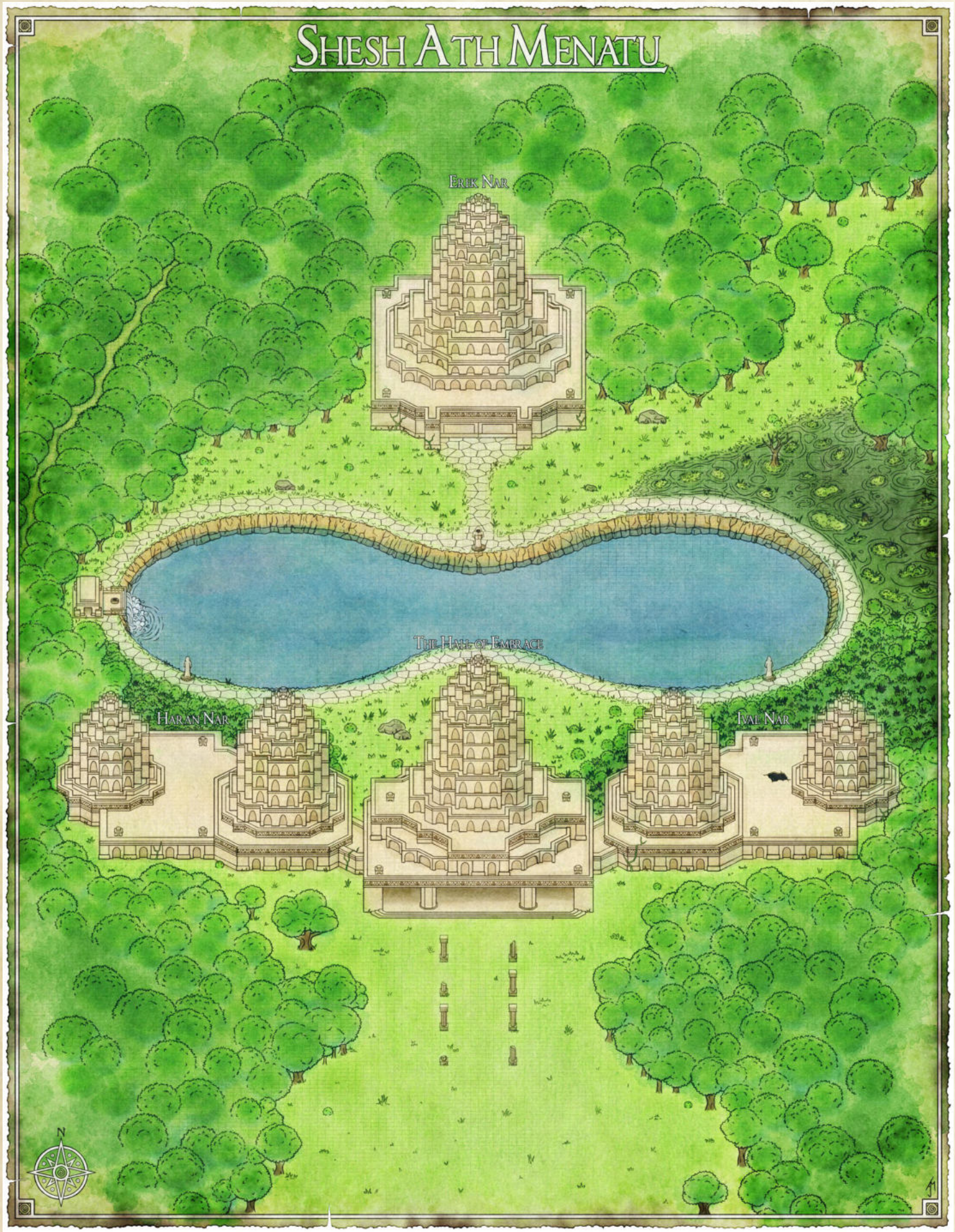
Beware the Willow

The interior garden has long, sweeping grass which bends in the breeze. Cattails dance at the water's edge and ancient willow trees with barren branches bear the weight of the darkness that has consumed this place. Throughout the Garden there are dim lights that blink, briefly disappearing from view and reappearing in other places across the surrounding landscape. These lights float and bounce with little weight, glowing pulses that seem to pull the curious closer to them. Little do the adventurers know, evil dances with deceptive innocence. The adventurers may come under unknown attacks if they are not careful.

1) Wisps of the Marsh - Located between the Giant Frog's shelter and the door to the Pillar of Earth at the eastern edge of the map.
2) Wisps of the Glade - Located between the bodies of the Druids and the Headwater dais structure at the western edge of the map.
3) Wisps of the Lake - Located on the water in the middle of the lake in small groups.

At the Crossroads – *Moving East Along the Path*

- A Giant Frog has made the lower wetland its home and lies camouflaged between collapsed pillars guarding its eggs (See *Amongst The Reeds*)
- The Doors to the Pillar of Earth (See *In Lock Step*)
- Bodies of the Druids (See *Stain of Guilt*)
- The Tear (See *Torn Asunder*) should the adventurers continue this way along the path reference A Tainted Source and the sequential points of interest from "Moving West along the Path"



Ancient Map of Shesh Ath Menatu, The Garden of Knowledge, found within Grey's satchel.

At The Crossroads – *Moving West Along the Path:* Walk up the gentle rise of the Garden's western hills

- Simulacrum Druids Hunting (See *Those Who Are Connected*)
- Shambling Mound (See *A Rotting Nerve*) with body of mysterious Cleric wrapped in a green cloak (plus notes)
- A Tainted Source (see *Headwater to the Waterfall*)
- The Tear (See *Torn Asunder*) should the adventurers continue this way along the path, reference Bodies of the Druids and the sequential points of interest from "Moving East along the Path"

Grey Matters

The Adventurers will have time to talk with Grey Ryanne as they walk through the Garden asking her more about who she is and why the Clerics of Gond are seeking out these sacred places.

1) Grey is a Cleric of Gond, a tinkerer, whose goal is to help the people of Faerûn by using innovation, technology, and engineering to improve the world around them.

2) Grey was based out of Candlekeep, researching (alongside Head Professor Rohricht Deepbranch) the location of ancient relics, both magic and machine in origin, spread across Faerûn.

3) Grey was working with two other Clerics on the research and all three of them had been sent on clandestine orders to locate and secure these relics and locations to prevent a lurking evil, an unidentified presence.

If any character rolls a successful persuasion check Grey will reveal the following.

> Those of us who were doing research in Candlekeep believe that there is something far darker, far more sinister, far more... elder involved in all of this. Whoever or whatever it is, is manipulating puzzle pieces in the shadows, working both through evil allies and in secret to tear apart the world we have.

A Saviour Bound

This adventure component can be accessed during the "A Rotting Nerve" encounter on the West path and after the "In Lock Step" encounter on the East Path.

At the western edge of the Garden there is a glimmer of hope. Amongst the ancient trees of the Garden a female Dryad has taken refuge despite the darkness that has befallen this place. It is her home and she is bound to protect this sacred wood, and being the last of her kind in the Garden she will only help those who are here to heal the Garden.

> The Dryad has watched the adventurers with close attention throughout their incursion into the open environment of the Garden. Hidden high in the large supportive branches of the sacred woodland, she patiently studies, wondering and hoping if they will be the ones to finally purge this place of its poison. The Dryad must act this time and is willing to help them if they are close enough to the tree line

The Dryad can assist in combat for all encounters within the treeline or the western edge of the Garden.



At the Crossroads – *Moving East Along the Path*

3. Amongst The Reeds

The far eastern edge of the lake is covered in dense vegetation, lily pads and cattails bobbing in the light breeze that travels from the ruins to the east beyond the marsh.

The walking trail is overgrown in parts, nature doing its part to roll back any evidence of the horror that creeps in the ancient surroundings. There are signs of hasty action along the trail – a dropped stein, torn leather wrappings and a small bent dagger found on the ground, lost in the panic of ambush...

> A small stone outcrop with inset seating is barely visible in the long grass just off of the trail. Walking cautiously through it, you come upon a small meeting table with a circular ring of seats stained in dark brown spatter, the remnants of torn clothing and, more sinisterly, a single body, face looking skyward, mouth open in pain and body a dry, cadaverous sight. The throat of this victim seems to have been strangled with immense force, the esophagus flattened with such severe trauma the head is barely balanced.

> The victim is tiefling in nature, it's history indecipherable in its present state. The seating area holds no other evidence of the past asides from pain.

As the adventurers leave the scene within the long grass, they walk around the bend of the east side of the lake. The low groan of large bubbles fills the swamp around them. Pockets of air rise up and pop with an unplaceable croak. Something isn't right.

> As you walk through the marsh, you capture a glimpse of what appear to be large glass orbs in the shallow water. The orbs glint in the light and as you look closer, there's a dancing flicker within them.

Should the adventurers choose to reach into the water and touch one of the glass orbs, read the following.

> As you reach in and examine the orb you find it sticky to the touch. There is a new movement within the thick marsh. A ripple races across the water as two large eyes, camouflaged like muddy outcrops, blink. Six giant amphibians raise themselves out of the swamp. You have touched their eggs.

The Adventurers have disturbed a small army of 6 **Giant Frogs** and they mean to defend themselves. The beasts have advantage. Please reference the D&D Beyond link for the stat block. (https://www.dndbeyond.com/monsters/giant-frog)



4. In Lock Step

The lower wetlands recede as the land rises slightly towards thicker vegetation demarcated by stone ledges and basins that appear to be an overgrown vegetable garden. Many different types of legumes are visible, albeit in poor health, and mice scamper through the grass, hurriedly evading the Adventurers footsteps. An unsettling truth is present within the growth as several vines reach towards the sun, climbing not through traditional lattice work but the outstretched arms, legs, necks and spines of fallen visitors from long ago. A quick glance throughout the overgrowth reveals at least six bodies intertwined within the growing garden, terrible fates to be sure and a resting place best left alone by the Adventurers.

Past the vegetable garden lies the third largest building, a ruin with a distinctly different appearance than the others. Over the massive stone doors reads "Pillar of Earth" in elvish. It is the tallest of all of the ruins within the Garden. The outer walls cone upward with intricate artisanal decoration from an unknown culture and are punctuated by a series of overlooks coming off the sides. An outstretched cistern sits at the top of the structure. Large vines penetrate the foundations in places and have grown to fill the space within the walls completely. The Garden appears to be reclaiming that which is rightfully its own.

> The air itself seems to shudder as the massive doors to the Pillar of Earth groan open, slowly granting access to the temple inside. A silence follows the sound of the gates grinding to a halt. But it doesn't last long. A rapid succession of druid fire traps crackle, and the Adventurers glimpse the sinewed recoil of a human hand changing into an Oblex appendage, amorphous face screeching in pain from the fire.

The players witness the Lion's Mouth trap send a volley of intense flames towards the front doors and channel of the ruin, followed by the piercing shrill of pain from the Oblex retreating inside. Upon closer approach, the adventurers may try to open the door but it is immovable, locked by unknown means. After any magic attempts, the sacred door blasts back with a Lightning trap from the handles striking all within **five feet** or less.

The trap requires a DC 15 to recognize burn marks and scoring around the breach in the wall. The adventurers must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw taking 22 (4d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Trap Save and Attack Bonus: Dangerous, 12–15, +6 to +8

Damage Severity by Level

Level	Dangerous
1st to 4th	2d10
5th to 10th	4d10

https://roll20.net/compendium/dnd5e/Traps#content

One thing is clear, the doors to the Pillar of Earth will not open until the Adventurers are determined worthy of the final task. There is more to be done within this place, wrongs to be righted and terrors to burn.

5. Stain of Guilt

Tracking west along the northern edge of the lake past the Pillar of Earth ruins, the long grasses are quiet except for the faint sound of wind chimes dancing. The brush along the path increases in density until it begins to reach out over the path, so outstretched that the adventurers must walk sideways, shoulders leading the way forward.

The vegetation becomes increasingly more difficult to pass as the pathway tightens on both sides with dense brush. The faintest ping of a wind chime is heard just off the path closest to the lakeshore. The evidence of some sort of conflict is marked by flattened brush, snapped twigs and long bloodied drag marks with arrows embedded in the ground. The silhouettes of two Druid bodies, long dead, lie in the foliage, hands outstretched grasping for the treeline, emaciated forms drained of their life essence.

Perception check (DC10):
A) One Druid hand has an Elven wind chime like those found on the wall in the ruins of the Grand Hall near the Pillar of Light. The hand has placed the wind chime in the aqueduct channel beside them, as clean as marble, a gentle signal singing as the breeze rolls over their bloodstained bodies.

B) The bodies of the Druids have trace elements of an oily substance on their clothes and skin slippery to the touch.

C) Searching the bodies gives the adventurers three unused torches, four healing potions and an ancient Map of the Garden.

After the Adventurers have checked the bodies and the surrounding area by the lakeside they may continue westward along the path, rising up into the forest area of the garden and beginning to circle around the west bank towards the headwater, a dried up waterfall, and small structure with a raised dais inside.

At The Crossroads – *Moving West Along the Path*

6. Those Who are Connected

The southern edge of the lake has a gentle rise with long grass that rhythmically bows and rises to the light breeze pushing west. The sweeping effect of the wind across the land shows three hidden figures within its hold, all facing away from you and slowly moving towards the thicker vegetation on the slopes of the south western rise and closer to the Pillar of Touch ruin. As the Adventurers approach, they see that these are three druids who appear to be quietly hunting, closing in on an unseen foe hidden in the surrounding environment.

1) The Druids are always several steps ahead of the players across the land, ready to strike whatever they are hunting.
2) The Druids will turn to acknowledge an adventurer if called out to or if actions are taken to engage by simply rolling out of the way then turning back and raising a finger to their mouths looking at the adventure – as if to silence their presence while they focus on a bigger game.
3) If the Adventurers follow the Druids to the edge of the vegetation line please continue with “A Rotting Nerve”.
4) If the Druids are attacked with fire they turn, stand to face the Adventurers, point with their arms fully extended and scream with their mouths and eyes wide open. The Oblex simulacrum melt into their channels and retreat instantly through the aqueducts into the ruins of the Pillar of Touch.

7. A Rotting Nerve

The western approach has increasingly difficult terrain as the vegetation thickens and vines, brambles, and bushes intertwine. The surrounding area has a series of large stone posts plotted across the land revealed to be decrepit pieces of an old suspension bridge. Rope and planks hang from the posts.

A breeze sweeps through the long grass and upwards to the trees beyond the rise, shuffling the thickly covered leaves on a large mound nearby. The Druids look to you, one pointing in focused silence at a patch in the thick overgrowth where a human – blue and white in colour – is held up by the vegetation, entwined. The figure’s stillness betrays the obvious, they are dead, crushed by some strangling force. In its hand you can make out a satchel, even in death the fingers still clutch whatever is inside it.The druids move forward slowly towards the vegetation, beckoning the group to follow.

1) If the Adventurers follow the Druids into the thick vegetation towards the body, there is a loud whistle followed by a javelin being thrown into the patch of earth. An enormous Shambling Mound twists into shape from the garden, ready to feed.
2) If the Adventurers do not follow the Druids and choose to walk around following the western path, their disturbing footfall awakens the hungry Shambling Mound.

Shambling Mound Fight

The earth lifts into a massive beast with long and muscular appendages. The Shambling Mound turns to face its prey with a wide open maw that reeks of rot, roaring at the Adventurers as it starts to close in.

The Adventurers can obtain two critical events during the battle:
1) The Shambling Mound can knock over the ancient suspension bridge pillars which fall against the Pillar of Touch ruins, smashing part of the wall and granting them access inside.
2) The body of the mysterious Cleric, wrapped in a green hooded cape and wearing a white mask, falls out of the beast giving the Adventurers access to the satchel’s contents.



3 Marpenoth

Most Honorable Follower,

The time has come for you to dawn your green cloak and make your way to Red Larch. The Garden of Knowledge has been found by Rohricht Deepbranch and his research team of Gondar clerics, an anchor point for those beyond us, a guiding light for their return.

Be brave in your task. Steel your resolve and remember to remain a master of the shadow, cover your face where you need and keep your amulet close for the power it provides you.

The greater good is your sole purpose and to this purpose you will give your soul.

You are truly a blessed child. Kissed by a power beyond the far realm and called to open the veil between worlds so that all may share in the elevation of the truest self. A truth so eternal that ancient scripture has foretold of the coming rapture – so pure and so cleansing in its purpose.

Go forth and set Faerûn alight with the truth of the coming reckoning. Bring life anew to the sacred garden deep in the Tsordvuud by lighting its Pillars and open the first door of three to bring the Elders and join them as a child of the stars.

Always remember, for all who are lost, we alone will open the door of eternal light.

Elders be the stars
Zath'tun Veral

Ends of the Earth

The Shambling Mound bears the last of the attack, falling backwards into the old suspension bridge pillars and letting out one last roar, a thundering death rattle. The stone bridge columns cannot take the weight of the massive creature and come down with immense force on the side wall of the Pillar of Touch. The impact of the supports breaks open the wall, allowing entrance into the sacred hall and the opportunity to find out what happened to those Druids.

After the Shambling Mound fight, the players can choose to do the following:
A) Enter the Pillar of Touch
B) Continue to explore the Garden westward, read through "A Tainted Source."

8. A Tainted Source

Along the higher western edge of the lake is a raised dais overlooking the Garden with a massive basin at the top of its steps. Sometime ago this structure was a place of worship at the headwaters of the lake where a waterfall used to flow, dedicated to the life-giving spirit of the Garden. As the Adventurers approach the structure they notice the immaculate aqueduct channels surrounding it. A faint smell of sulfur hangs in the air.

Perception check (DC10):
1) One of the group members will notice that there are slight differences in the channels around them. As if some are cleaner than others.
2) One of the group members will point out the small bones around the dais steps and the surrounding structure.
3) One of the group members will see a crack in the earth leading to the channels that go into the headwater structure and that there is an opening to the lake at the back.
4) One of the group will make note that the above access points should be blocked off.

As soon as any of the players reach the top step of the dais and approach the basin they are attacked by an Oblex Spawn with disadvantage. The Oblex Spawn can choose to escape through either the crack towards the Great Tear or the opening to the lake at the back of the structure. The players can choose to chase the Spawn back to the Tear before it takes shelter in the depths of the earth or stop its egress into the Garden lake where it will move unchecked and be a constant threat. The Adventurers can decide to pursue if they so choose. Reference Oblex Spawn stat block.

Scurrying Spawn

Reaching the top step of the stone dias is too comfortable an action as the young Oblex Spawn lashes out at all who are that close to it. Sticky dagger-like appendages attacking the adventures with lighting speed. The juvenile terror is fighting for its life as it is ill-prepared to battle experienced warriors who have made it this deep into the Garden. Through the fury of exchange the Adventurers notice that there are only two ways out of this for the Oblex Spawn. The channels towards the Garden Lake or the cracks in the earth towards the Great Tear.

Should the Oblex Spawn escape successfully read aloud the following options:

1) Garden Lake Escape: Staving off death, the Oblex Spawn finds traction in the channels and slips through the basin atop the dias. The young one speedily drains through the channel at the Headwater, spilling into the Garden lake, only slightly visible as an oil slick within the water itself. It is now free to move within the Garden grounds and attack when least expected.

2) Great Tear Escape: Staving off death, the Oblex Spawn finds a moment of opportunity, a break in the line of the Adventurers, to make for a safer place to hide and recuperate. Splashing out of the basin atop the dais the young one speedily drains out across the floor and makes for the cracks in the ground that lead to the Great Tear in the forest section of the Garden, seeking refuge deep within the earth where it can heal and feed to fight another day.

9. Torn Asunder

Running from the ancient woods past the Headwater at the far western edge of the Garden is the "Great Tear," the scar of the Garden, the result of a great calamity underground which tore the very fabric of the land around it. The fracturing of these sacred surroundings lead to one long vein reaching to the very edge of the Headwater dais, an opportune passage for the sinister horror that has arisen from within.

The environment around the fracture appears to be darker in appearance, a permanent scar left from the trauma of earth-rending force. The trees and vinery along the crack twist and knot in a seemingly unwelcoming way, as if to impede and ensnare the landscape making passage difficult.

There is minimal evidence of the presence of others in the area except for worn down boot prints, dried in caked mud, indicating some sort of encounter. A fight? Mass exodus? A hunt? The snarled and wooded area is dark and incredibly difficult to navigate and even to the most unaware of adventurers has an inexplicable sense of foreboding. The large crevasse in the ground runs incredibly deep with points where you can barely see the walls continue downward. Dark vines climb into the scar, resembling fingers holding the tear open in a most macabre way.

Awakened Plants

Should the band of Adventurers approach the 'Great Tear' to investigate they will awaken a swarm of Needle and Vine Blights surrounding the group and attacking with advantage. Attack with four **blights** to every one player.

Following the battle the players may attempt to cave in or seal the 'Great Tear' with soil, surrounding woodland, or magic to ensure the poison rot within stays in the bowels of the earth and that nothing else can escape the Garden by crawling back into the depths.

The Adventurers may choose to continue along the north western edge of the path skirting the dense vegetation of the northern lakeshore. Continue from the section *The Stain of Guilt* under the game narrative of ***At The Crossroads – Moving East Along the Path.***



Part 3: Haran Nar, Pillar of Touch

Cat & Mouse

The fall of the ancient suspension bridge column has opened a large hole in the wall of the Ath Menatu Haran ruin, large enough for any adventuring group to climb through. The surrounding vegetation seems to relax and withdraw from the damaged section of the wall, the Garden easing its grip in the hope that these brave Adventurers will continue the purge. Strange events like beings melting into viscous oozes, perfect copies of former selves, magic fire protection wards, and an unexpected find –a mysterious cleric trapped within a shambling mound – leave more questions than answers to what has happened in this ancient place. Aware of their unsettling environment, each step seems underpinned by some unseen set of sinister intentions, a predator within the Garden playing with its prey.

Haran Nar "The Key" Rune Player Difficulty Level

Level 1 Difficulty - All of "The Key" Runes are exactly as listed in the combination below and Grey is familiar with their sequence to activate the Pillar. Grey's notes for each Pillar are found within each Ruin section of the game for the Players to reference and are found in her satchel carrying "The Key".

Level 2 Difficulty - The Runes are spread out across this ruin for the players to find. The Dungeon Master has full control on where to place the mysterious runes across the map making for an intense experience of assembling the correct runes and using them in the correct order. Regardless of where they find them, the combination is listed below (same as level 1).

Haran Nar Key Combination

The solution is written out for the Dungeon Master to follow through in a step by step walkthrough that is easy to follow and typed out to help practice before the game. These steps are designed to help make the experience of using 'The Key' seamless for the players. Practice makes perfect and be sure to watch out "How To" video here and reference the Appendix "Grey's Satchel" for more details.

Step 1) Start with the Symbol B in front of you and make sure that E is on the backside and upside down. You are not allowed to flip to E.

Step 2) *The First Rune* in the combination. From upside down B, fold "The Key" in half horizontally, folding B sides backwards, revealing A. A will be right side up.

Step 3) *The Second Rune* in the combination. From the A symbol, fold A back horizontally to get D.

Step 4) *The Third Rune* in the combination. From D, split "The Key" in half vertically, folding D sides backward, revealing C. C will be right side up.

The next ruin will start from C as this has ended. Please take "The Key" from the players to ensure continuity in the puzzle sequence. Feel free to give an extra copy of "The Key" for the players to play with.

To make sure "The Key" experience is a challenge we suggest that the Dungeon Master has several copies on hand just in case the players unfold the puzzle all together or get lost in the folds. Keep one master key on hand and

several for the players to try out during game play.

Please allow the Players to reference Grey Ryanne's notes, located in her satchel found in the first ruin.

If all three runes are completed they will ignite the Pillar and trigger a cleansing of the ruin from the oblex presence leaving the Adventurers playing with advantage.

Haran Nar Random Encounters

The Pillar of Touch ruins has many hidden creatures that have made the dark recesses of its halls home. Roll a D20 every 20 mins (outside of an encounter below) an encounter occurs on a roll of 16-20. Determine the encounter by rolling a D4 with the reference table below:

Haran Nar Encounters

Encounter	Location	Rounds
Swarm of Rats Great	Hall	3
Swarm of Centipedes	Great Hall	3
Swarm of Bats	Pillar Room	3

1. A Breakthrough

The Adventurers clamber up the fallen column to look inside the large hole which now opens to the ruin within. The small sources of light entering into the halls of Haran Nar reveal a beautiful history, different than that of the Pillar of Light ruin off the main atrium. While the halls of the Pillar of Light seem to be a place of communal discussion to expand collective knowledge through shared experience, the halls of Haran Nar appear to be inward focused, a place of meditation and martial art practice bringing one closer to the self. Scattered meditation mats, incantation lanterns, gold-topped altars and incense burners lay in the wake of time. A light breeze blows throughout the Great Hall, bringing with it the gentle chime of elvish bells, a welcoming exhale from the Garden, sending the heroes forward. Below the opening of the crumbled wall which has given access to the Adventurers is a precarious collection of stone debris.

Dexterity Check (DC15): the fallen column and wall rock is unstable.

1) Climb down the fallen rock and land on the floor quietly without injury

2) Slip down the fallen rock and land on the floor with a thud making a lot of noise and twisting an ankle (determine injury roll)

3) Fail at climbing down and fall in a clatter of weapons and assorted gear. (determine injury roll)

> The air within the ruin is stale with a musty hint of old cloth and dust. The scent becomes stronger as a light breeze stirs the old tapestry cloth doorways. Despite the light through the break in the wall, the ruins of Haran Nar appear to be much darker than expected but upon closer inspection faint glints of gold can be seen across the floor of the Great Hall, dancing with the flicker of torches. In the darkness, the coins capture the attention of the Adventurers, blinking in and out of certainty, playing tricks on those who tread across the open floor.



Curiously the gold pieces seem to increase in numbers at the far end of the hall, close to the collapsed archway leading back to the Foyer of the Garden where they collect in great numbers. Approaching the corner where the gold lies, there are heaps of coins, candlesticks, chalices, and elvish wind chimes further splayed across three tables and two chests where the majority of the loot sits eagerly waiting to be taken.

> Grey says: "Does anyone else find it strange that someone has chosen a temple of knowledge amongst an ancient ruin plagued by oblexes as the perfect place to hide their gold? Druids are not normally known for hoarding treasure...of course, they are not normally known for melting into the ground either."

Perception Check (DC10):
Success on the roll: Sifting through the gold items you uncover the body of an unlucky hobgoblin with the same markings as the group you encountered in the atrium.

The surprise of finding a body buried amongst the gold leaves distracts the players from the chest and table which have now revealed teeth, the edges of their unforeseen lips lightly drooling as they lean towards the party, purple tongue slowly rolling out towards the feet of the two closest players.

Dexterity Check (DC15):

1) If you miss the dexterity roll, the Chest Mimic grabs you by the foot with long fingers and pulls you quickly towards its mouth with advantage on the attack. Your body is partially inside its smiling jaws.

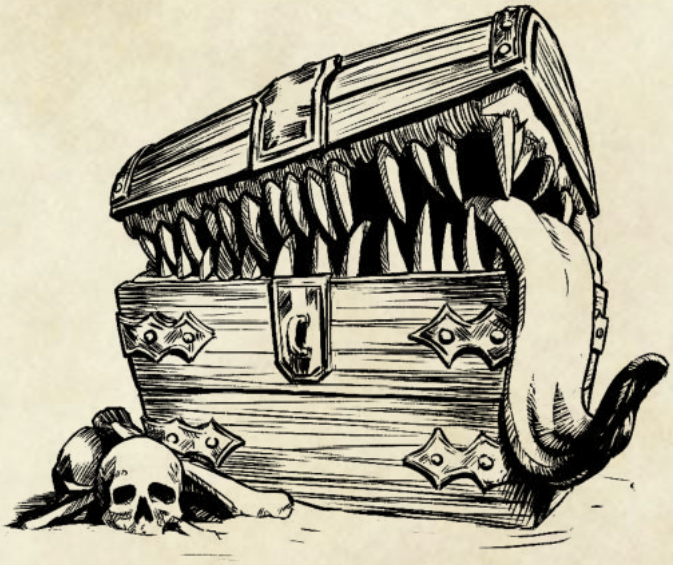
2) If you roll successfully the Table Mimic lashes out at you with its tongue but misses, knocking the player second closest to it over in the process.

The element of surprise has caught all players off guard. They must prepare to fight a hungry and ferocious pair of mimics disguised as furnishing amongst the gold.

Double **Mimic** Fight: Chest & Table Monster

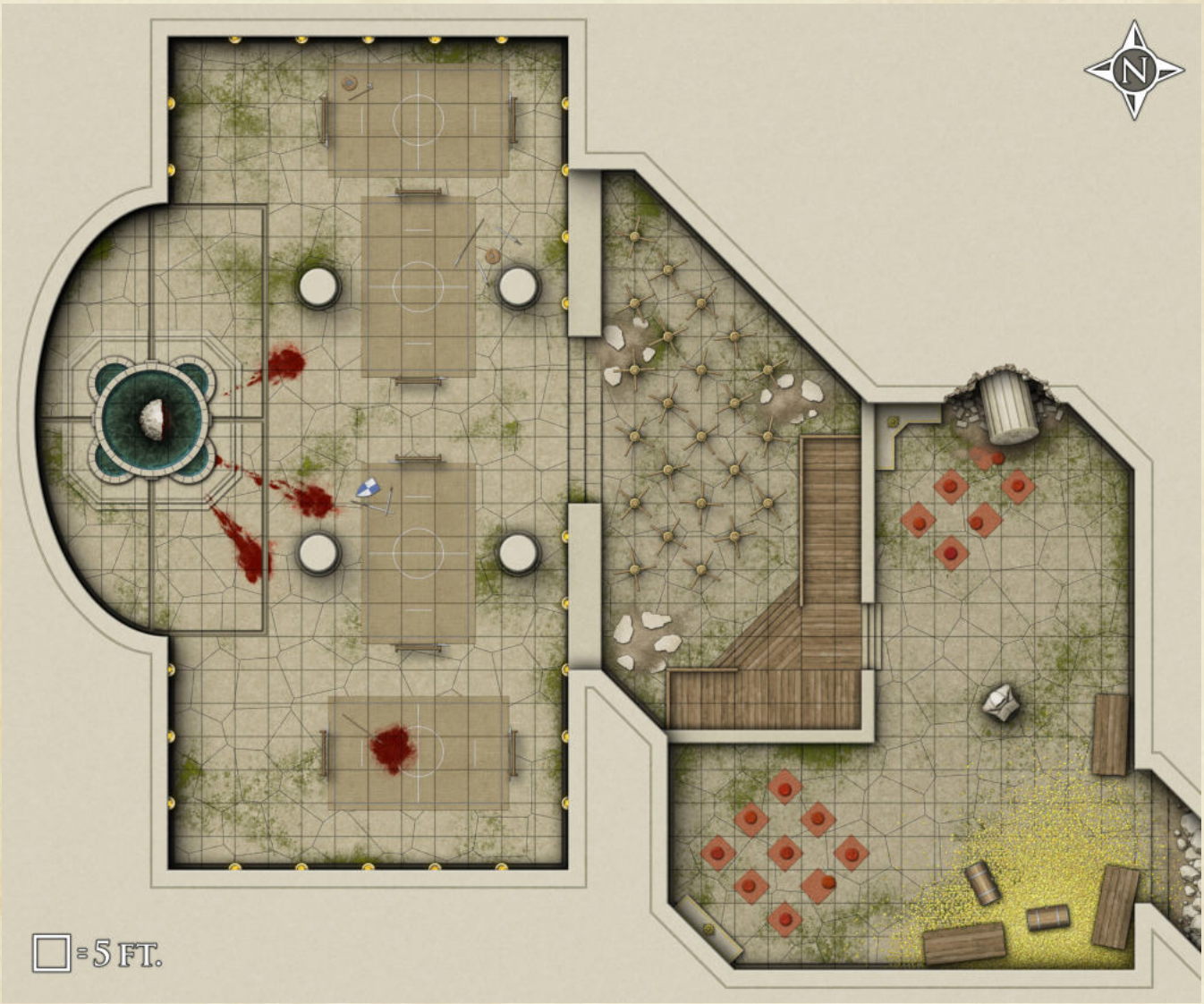
The Adventurers gain 50gp each and may choose to grab a gold cup or elvish chimes.

> The Adventurers stand, struggling to catch their breath surrounded by the scattered debris of mimic carcasses and forgotten treasure, bewildered by the perpetual onslaught of this frightening unknown, a lingering darkness amongst the Garden both hidden and now, it seems, in plain sight. An unspoken dread rises.



2. Sticks and Stones

Ahead, a set of stairs is framed with the dull colour of green, white and gold drapes gently rolling in the breeze. Narrow stone steps rise up to meet the drapes revealing an elevated observation platform that overlooks an inset floor space. In the centre of the floor, multi-limbed figures stand



Map: Haran Nar, Pillar of Touch

within arms-length of each other, at silent attention within the shadow. One of the figures in the back quickly rotates with a loud mechanical click echoing throughout the training room.

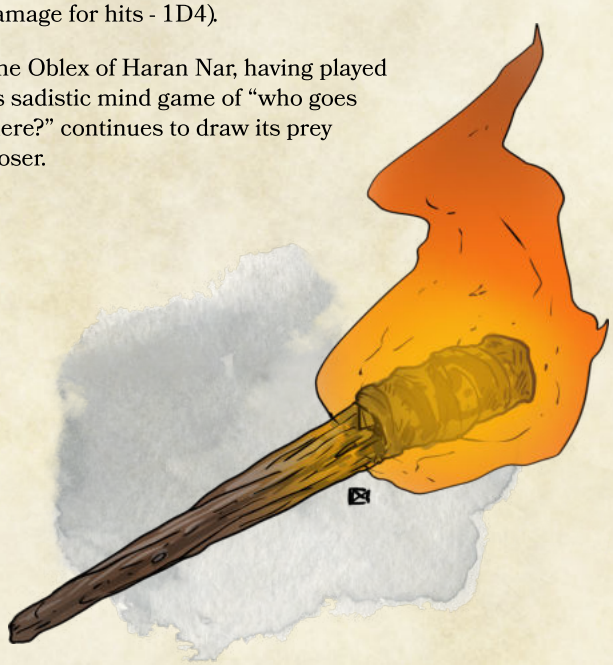
> The front of the observation platform reveals several wooden training dummies, each gilded in gold filigree and marked with a different rune, standing unused yet well-worn from practice. There are noticeable cracks in the floor where a heavy stone has shattered the beautifully crafted marble masonwork, scattering large wedges of granite around the training apparatus, a suggestion of the weakening ceiling straining under the weight of time and whatever else has come to inhabit this sacred place.

As the Adventurers walk onto the training floor have them roll for dexterity (evasive maneuvers) as the Oblex wants to test their reflexes. Two actions start to happen as the players walk through the area.

Right Round - The training dummies start to spin on their own, smacking around the players. They have an advantage, roll for **dexterity** (DC10) and roll for **damage** (2D4).

Falling Down - A loud cracking echo is heard throughout the hall reverberating across the dark recesses of the ruin. Large pieces of ceiling stone, mysteriously loosened, start to crash in and around the training dummies. Roll for dexterity and roll for damage. (insert damage for hits - 1D4).

The Oblex of Haran Nar, having played its sadistic mind game of "who goes there?" continues to draw its prey closer.



3. Under the Influence

Leaving the training room with its fixed floor assailants and weakened ceilings, the only way forward is up the stairs to the Great Hall. The massive entrance reveals the open floor beyond, the home of Haran Nar. In its expanse are four sparring areas, once used to help train students in the way of harmony, a martial discipline where focus and balance are used to redirect energy as a means of defense, ending violence as peacefully as possible. The large room opens up in front of the Adventurers giving a history lesson of what was once practiced here, a study of art and physical motion to harness the power of one's inner self through touch.

Assorted training weapons lie scattered across the floor, victims of time, others still in their holding racks returned after the final training session before the crawling ilk of the Oblex had slowly taken its quiet grip on the Garden and all within it.

> The dimly-lit sparring floor holds clues to the ancient martial arts discipline that once took place here in this room. Sacred teachings in painted lessons can be faintly seen on the walls, depicting an art long since lost to the rest of Faerûn. Beings of every race are depicted throughout the murals across the ceilings, engaged in various forms of training, but most notably they move in harmonious balance with the energy flowing through them. The beauty of the lessons are lost on the Adventurers as an outline of a body comes into focus near the corner of the training floor. The figure is in a low defensive crouch, hand down, knees and feet at perfect angles and flat to the floor in balance. The harmony would be beautiful, were the figure not impaled by six broken training staff.

Perception Check (DC10):

1) The closer the Adventurers look at the body, the face appears to be fully relaxed even in death.

2) On the sleeve of the tunic, in common, is a name: Jacques Boivin. An older French human name of distinction found in the farmlands and of considerable stature over 100 years ago.

3) You find a small note in the closed hand held tightly as if to secure its contents. The note simply reads "Impervious to cold. Burn the Elder. Weaken its whole and destroy the sum of its parts for I am too late."

While exploring the training room, the Adventurers have let their guard down, ignoring the subtle changes in the floor beneath them, a shift from smooth marble to a thinly-spread vicious jam-like-substance that has quietly slicked across the floor and now sits in thick pools around the group's feet.



Rules of Engagement: After several encounters with the Adult Oblex, this is the Adventurer's first hint at its sinister intentions, an unwelcome revelation that this darkly intelligent changeling is more than just a predatory gelatinous blob. In this warning fight, the Adult Oblex has advantage on the roll and begins with the following actions through its Pseudopod attack:

- Hold: Advantage on the roll against all party members. If successful on Hold, continue with the second action below.
- Consume Memory: For all party members, the Oblex's sinewy grip allows it to steal the memory of how they arrived, capture information about their companion Grey Ryanne and The Key of the Garden. Perhaps more sinisterly, it acquires the ability to copy each player it manages to touch.
- If Hold and Consume Memory fail against all players, the players will fight the pseudopod attacks for TWO rounds across the training hall before the next section begins.
- If Hold and Consume Memory wins against all players, the players have to fight exact copies of themselves for TWO rounds across the training hall before the next section, Parlay, begins.



4. Parlay

The sound of battle quietly ebbs while the Oblex's influence comes to a temporary end, leaving an uneasy silence within the ruin. The training hall seems peaceful, almost entirely undisturbed by the surprise ambush that just transpired, were it not for the bloodstained drag marks through the darkness towards the back of the ruin where the Pillar of Touch would be found. For all of the implied meaning of inner peace, Haran Nar offers little serenity to the Adventurers as they look around, still bewildered by their first encounter with the Adult Oblex's intelligence.

Perception Check (DC10):

- There are two ornate golden lanterns on the floor close to the Adventurers. They have oil and wicks that can be used to light the way.
- The aqueduct channels closest to you are clean. A player with dark vision swears they saw movement in it retreating from the heroes. Was that ooze?

As the band of Adventurers decides to make a move, Grey Ryanne pulls The Key to the Garden out of her satchel. She says to the group:

> "Our research team uncovered this relic, The Key. It calls to the Garden and the Garden responds. Be wary friends, as we have no idea what The Key will reveal to us in these ruins. But I've come to believe that whatever is here does not want to be found."

The young Cleric of Gond holds The Key in both her hands and in a whispered voice repeats "Haran Nar" three times, momentarily igniting the glyphs across both halls. The Pillar of Touch's silhouette is briefly seen in the background. More disturbingly are the shadowy outlines of several figures in the foreground, staring expressionless and hollow-eyed, fingers raised in unison pointing at The Key in Grey's hands. The figures are exact copies of all of the Adventurers. Before the Adventurers can act, they hear several different voices speak.

> **The Copies Speak - Read aloud in a whispered voice:**
> You who have come into our sacred home. You who have killed our kin. You who have activated the first Pillar. You who have upset the balance of the Garden. We know why you have come. We know your purpose. We know the coming of the Gondar and the Nomads.
>
> **All of the figures disperse into the dark channels along the floor but the voices continue after a pause, seeming to come from all directions.**
>
> We will give you one opportunity, one choice, one action. You will follow or you will be no more. We will consume everything you are. The Oblex states its terms:
>
> - One opportunity. The Cleric must hand over The Key. Do so, and you may join us.
> - One choice. Pledge your essence to our colony so we may grow stronger. Do so, and you may join us.
> - One action. Lay down your arms. All of you. Do so, and you may join us.
>
> Agree and live eternally, there is no denying this gift.

1) If the Adventurers agree to the terms, Grey runs screaming towards the collapsed hole in the wall yelling "No! What have you done? This is bigger than us, this is the fate of Faerûn! " The adventure ends as the group is consumed by the Adult Oblex.

2) If the Adventurers disagree with the terms of the Adult Oblex, they prepare to fight.

The voice deepens, the room's temperature seems to drop a few degrees. A single body rises out of the floor, half-formed, hand outstretched, beckoning the Adventurers forward with twitch-like movements. It smiles a jagged teeth, moon-shaped grin.

"So be it."

5. Persons of Substance

The Adventurers' shallow breaths and bewildered stares are met with the vacant faces of their doppelgangers across the expanse of the training chamber. The irony of the previous attacks aimed at testing the party's mental strength and constitution is not lost on the group and their presence in this place of spiritual well being, meditation and harmony.

> The sickening sound of wood and steel scraping on the ground spills from the Great Hall where the Pillar of Touch and the Oblex host awaits. The group of plastic assailants walks toward the Adventurers with blank confidence. Their intent is obvious. This place is no longer reserved for peace and harmony.

Simultaneous Simulacrum Attack

The oblex warriors split off and go in three directions moving with ease through three-dimensional space across the hall – incalculable and unhindered by gravity and physics, yet another hint at the boundless horror of this malevolent entity.

Sulfurous Impersonation Options for Haran Nar

The copies of the Garden of Knowledge's former students include all kinds of humanoid denizens of Faerûn. Suggested use of characters for the dungeon master as they would relate to the Garden of Knowledge are the following:

- Dwarven Cleric
- Orc
- Elf
- Tabaxi

Multi-attack Options for Haran Nar

There are many uses for the Oblex pseudopod attack, particularly with a multi-attack on any one opponent. Use the multi-attack mechanism throughout the ruins to strike terror and disorient the players. Suggested attack descriptions for the dungeon master include:

- Pseudopod strangle wrap around the neck, chest, or face. (Used within wall and ceiling settings)
- Pseudopod ensnare around legs, waist or hands. (Used within the floor settings)
- Pseudopod weaponry (During impersonation humanoid appendages turn into bladed weapons of selected impersonations above)
- Pseudopod impale (During impersonation or regular pseudopod attack – spiked appendage thrusts forward to impale the intended target)

Activating the Pillar

During the fight, players can attempt to activate the Pillar of Touch. The Pillar can be turned on by whoever holds the key. They are allowed only ONE attempt per roll and per player. A turn is used to pass the key to another player.

If your Adventurers do not survive the attack, the Adult Oblex slowly spills out of the pool at the base of the Pillar of Touch and rolls over each member, digesting their memories and their essence. As Grey looks on in horror, the Oblex starts to attempt to make new "copies" of the players. The glyphs on the Pillar of Touch slowly dim, before extinguishing completely.



Doesn't Hold a Candle

> The Adult Oblex and its incarnations writhe in defeat, spastically changing forms through various beings of the past it has consumed. Some reach out in terror during their dying moments while others reach out in a combination of agony and anger towards the Adventurers, a last grasp of hands shifting into swords, then into spears, then into razor-like appendages before the finally weakened pseudopods shimmer and collapse to the floor. The entity lets out one last piercing whistle before its plastic body loses all shape and sense of movement – a sticky remnant of an impostor that has no true form to call its own.



> "We have seen two Adult Oblexes within the Garden ruins. Oblexes spawn newer ones once they cannot handle the consumption of memories anymore. These two must have been a part of an older, more ancient entity – perhaps the first to arrive here and begin this slow colonization. There is no telling who we might meet or, more importantly, who we can trust."

Perception Check (DC10):

Should the players doubt Grey's conviction have them roll to see if Grey has sinew stretched slime attached to her heels.

1) Ask Grey to willingly take off her boots. She does so without reluctance and has no sinew attached to her heel. Grey is still human and not a copy.

2) Ask Grey to step into the water channels to cleanse her feet and determine if she is a copy. She does so and has no reaction or sinew attached to her heel. Grey is still human and not a copy.

The Adventurers make their way towards the hole in the wall from which they entered and leave Haran Nar, climbing back into the Garden.

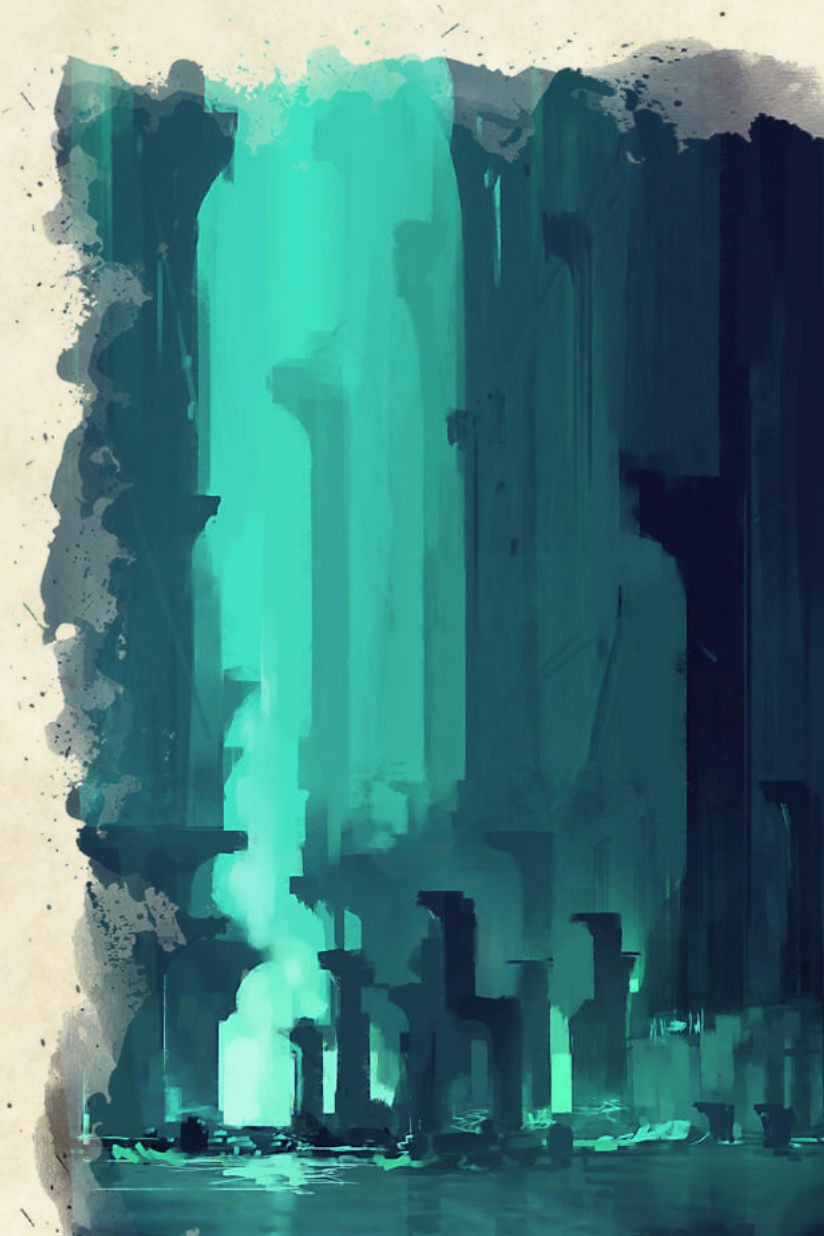
6. Open Sesame

Light fills the ruins as the Pillar of Touch ignites, its channels running freely, carrying the ancient essence of the Garden throughout. The gelatinous remnants of the Oblex and its copies spill onto the floor shapeless, inanimate, devoid of the horrific purpose they sought to execute mere moments before. Vegetation within the hall seems to lighten and become vibrant, slowly exhaling the infection that had taken up within it, and breathing in new life, restoring a health lost to its unrelenting visitor turned virus.

As the cleansing of the hall continues in front of the surviving Adventurers, there is a deep and ominous double click sound – "chuh-chock" – heard through the collapsed wall which the group had used to enter the ruin. The thunderous sound scares birds out of trees and is followed by a long pause which is broken by an ear-splitting squeal emanating from the doors of the last ruin.

The last Oblex is attempting to expand, triggering the druid fire trap in the process.

The Adventurers collect themselves and prepare to exit Haran Nar. Grey turns to the group with a warning.





Part 4: Erek Nar, Pillar of Earth

To Gild The Lily

As the water and light run from both pillars, the large stone doors unlock allowing passage to the last ruin and the Garden's last hope.

Two of the three Pillars have been turned on, the older Oblexes amidst them eradicated. The Garden seems to breathe with great ease as the grip of this Oblex infection loosens, this ancient place beginning to heal, flowers blooming and songbirds lifting their voice amongst the trees. Erek Nar is the last of the ruins still suffering from the ancient infestation holed up deep within its walls, an elder tenant, fully aware it is under siege and willing to do anything to survive. The Oblex is hungry, having not eaten in some time, and will fight fiercely to quell its appetite.

Erek Nar "The Key" Rune Player Difficulty Level

Level 1 Difficulty - All of "The Key" Runes are exactly as listed in the combination below and Grey is familiar with their sequence to activate the Pillar. Grey's notes for each Pillar are found with the Appendix section of the game for the Players to reference and are found in her satchel carrying "The Key".

Level 2 Difficulty - The Runes are spread out across this ruin for the players to find. The Dungeon Master has full control on where to place the mysterious runes across the map making for an intense experience of assembling the correct runes and using them in the correct order. Regardless of where they find them, the combination is the same.

Erek Nar Key Combination

The solution is written out for the Dungeon Master to follow through in a step by step walkthrough that is easy to follow and typed out to help practice before the game. These steps are designed to help make the experience of using 'The Key' seamless for the players. Practice makes perfect and be sure to watch our "How To" video here.

Step 1) Start with the Symbol C in front of you and make sure that D is on the backside and upside down. You are not allowed to flip to D.

Step 2) *The First Rune* in the combination. From C, split "The Key" in half horizontally, folding C sides backward, revealing B.

Step 3) *The Second Rune* in the combination. From B, fold B back vertically to get A.

Step 4) *The Third Rune* in the combination. From A, split "The Key" in half horizontally, folding A sides backward, revealing D.

The next ruin will start from B as this has ended. Please take "The Key" from the players to ensure continuity in the puzzle sequence. Feel free to give an extra copy of "The Key" for the players to play with.

To make sure "The Key" experience is a challenge we suggest that the Dungeon Master has several copies on hand just in case the players unfold the puzzle all together or get lost in the folds. Keep one master key on hand and several for the players to try out during game play.

If all three runes are completed they will ignite the Pillar and trigger a cleansing of the ruin from the oblex presence leaving the Adventurers playing with advantage.



1. Behind Closed Doors

The massive granite seal turns counterclockwise with a deep rumble and locks into a recessed dial with a click. The doors of Erek Nar slowly begin to open.

> The monolithic slabs open with a slow seamless glide, revealing an entirely new building, unlike the previous ruins. At its centre, a deep open floor cascades downwards, tier-upon-tier. The Garden grows within its walls, a part of the very structure of the ruin itself. The dank smell of old wood, decomposing earthy growth and the faint hint of rotting flesh leaves nothing to the Adventurers' imaginations. They can feel the sinister presence, one that is both intelligent and selective in its execution. This is the overgrown ruin of the Pillar of Earth, the home of the Elder Oblex.

The entrance walls and foyer to the ruin are marked with aggressive actions across the area hinting at the intentional desecration. Skeletal remains lie underneath smashed statues, furniture is flipped over creating a makeshift barricade by the landing steps, and three sacred bowls, blackened with mold and dirt due to neglect, are toppled and rest on the floor. The fourth still stands – defiant in its purpose, a beacon. The last of the blessed water pedestals.

Perception Check (DC10):
The players can roll to check the water of the pedestal, still glistening, crystal clear. If they're successful the water heals each player by 50 points or they can store the healing water in a container for later.

Beyond the entrance, the landing welcomes the players with a terrifyingly unfamiliar architecture, foreign from other ancient buildings across the Garden. The faintly-lit steps down into Erek Nar flicker towards a hideous yawning maw of sharp glistening red-coloured stalactites and stalagmites, giving the appearance of teeth. A hint of condensation drips from the ceiling to the floor, leaving an eerie sense of salivating, a longing hunger that one's sanity cannot quite properly handle.

Grey addresses the Adventurers:

> "Erek Nar is now open. We have unlocked the last door to the last pillar and provided an exit for the Oblex within. We are the last bastion between restoring the Garden and purging the Oblex infection. Be wary all. This is an Elder. The original. The one source to all of this, capable of things both cunning and terrifying. May the Wonderbringer steel our wills and forge our path. Hammer and light."

Forewarned, the adventurers make their way into the belly of the beast. As they cautiously cross the red-tinged threshold, teeth from the floor to the ceiling close to meet each other, salivating in anticipation for the meal to come and blocking the Adventurer's chance of exit.

2. Tread Lightly

The stairs lead to a smaller vestibule with mosaic tiles on the walls that depict the sacred inner sanctum of Erek Nar beyond. The Garden in the images is full of abundance, both in flora and fauna, with intricate artwork showing a people unified by their common goal to worship and protect the ancient pillars. These historical accounts are a stark contrast to the room ahead now littered with lifeless bodies.

> The mosaic lining the walls at the entrance to the Pillar of Earth tells of the Garden's true purpose. It was once a giving place, one that offered light and life to the altruistic it opened its doors to. But it's purpose is now as contorted as the bodies strewn about the floor, emaciated and mummified, still reeling in terror from those final moments. There is a portico overlooking the deep chamber, where the final Pillar lies dormant amidst artifacts of its former inhabitants.

Perception Check (DC10):
Adventurers who roll a successful perception check notice that there is a stone copy of the Pillar of Earth inside a blessing bowl. They will also notice that through the shadow on both sides of the larger ruin hall are dark recesses, massive doorways with stairs that lead downwards.

If a player touches the bowl, there is a blue glow from the doorway behind them. The ghost of a woman appears. She holds a lantern and a necklace, her head floats above her neck, a reminder of the fate she suffered.

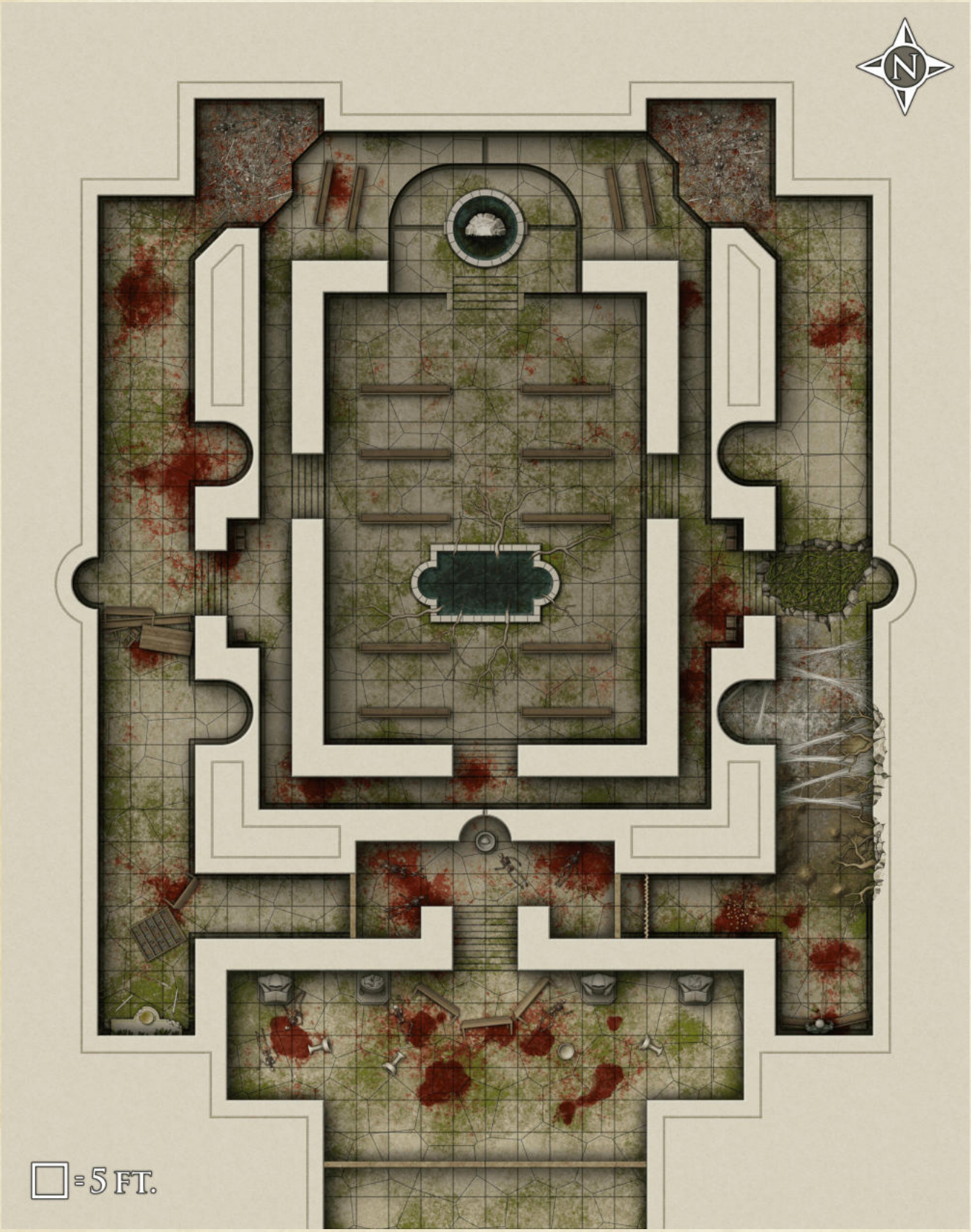
She warns the group with a slow and raspy breath.



"You who have come must take heed. Tread lightly within the sacred Erek Nar. The Elder moves in silence, teasing its false truth through those of us who fell, victims of its cunning. Ignite the stone and extinguish the host. The Garden calls to be healed, a rebirth bathed in fire. Beware of who you see for they are no longer here..." as her voice fades out, the blue hue of her presence disappears.

Should the Adventurers attack the ghost, it only lasts one round before she fades away.

As the Adventurers decide how to enter the ruin, the two doorways to the right and left of the blessing bowl open slightly as if touched by an unseen hand.



Map: Erek Nar, Pillar of Earth

3. Within Reach

The Ghost has warned the Adventurers of how influential the Elder Oblex is within the ruins of the Pillar of Earth, moving silently, lying in wait for its prey.

The Elder Oblex suggested encounters outlined in the table below are meant to happen if any player is exposed in the following sections of the ruin (Map Level One and Level Two) for longer than 10 minutes and within 10 feet of a channel. The encounter is to the advantage of the Oblex and lasts only three rounds.

Within Reach Elder Oblex Encounters

Location	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Hallway	Sulfurous Impersonation	Multi-attack	Eat Memories
Portico	Multi-attack	Eat Memories	Multi-attack
Balcony	Multi-attack	Eat Memories	Multi-attack
Stairwell	Sulphurous Impersonation	Multi-attack	Multi-attack

Sulphurous Impersonation Options for Erek Nar

The copies of the Garden of Knowledge's former students include all kinds of humanoid denizens of Faerûn. Suggested use of characters for the Dungeon Master as they would relate to the Garden of Knowledge are the following:

- Dwarven Cleric
- Orc
- Elf
- Tabaxi



Multi-attack Options for Erek Nar

There are many uses for the Oblex pseudopod attack, particularly with a multi-attack on any one opponent. Use the multi-attack mechanism throughout the ruins to strike terror and disorient the players. Suggested attack descriptions for the Dungeon Master include:

- Pseudopod strangle wrap around neck, chest, or face. (Used within the portico and balcony settings)
- Pseudopod ensnare around legs, waist or hands. (Used within the hallway and stairwell settings)
- Pseudopod weaponry (During impersonation humanoid appendages turn into bladed weapons of selected impersonations above)
- Pseudopod impale (During impersonation or regular pseudopod attack – spiked appendage thrusts forward to impale the intended target)

Eat Memories Options for Erek Nar

Feeding on memories in one of the single most terrifying capabilities of an Oblex. The player may experience the consequences of succumbing to this attack with the suggested repercussions:

- Player forgets how they arrived in the Erek Nar, only remembering the events leading up to the massive entrance doors before going in.
- Player forgets who Grey Ryanne is and becomes upset with the team for trusting "the stranger"
- Player forgets how to attack and misses the next action turn – stunned in the fear of knowing they should be doing something but cannot figure out what.
- Player forgets who half the Adventurers are and launches a two-round attack at two of the players.

The Adventurers can proactively avoid the encounters above if they do a perception check before the 10-minute time requirement. Advantage goes to any player with dark vision or the players using the Elvish Bells within the channels as warning tools. If the players successfully role perception (DC15), they see the sticky ooze of the Oblex moving through the channels on the floor and along the walls. The Adventurers can attack with advantage within their vicinity. The encounters above will stop if the final Elder Oblex fight begins as the Oblex focuses on the Adventurers who have arrived at the third and final floor of the ruin.

4. The Left Hand of Justice

As the Adventurers approach the door to the left of the blessing bowl, the Key to the Garden begins to glow intensely, creating enough light to illuminate their forsaken surroundings.

> Above the entryway to the left, there is a carving in the door frame, covered in dust and cobwebs, stained with the remnants of blood spatter now brown in colour. Fear rises within as the truth of what the white stone pebbles scattered across the floor are teeth – removed through some horrible tearing force, a horror that now lies in wait. The ancient symbol is a sword raised by a hand with beams of light emanating from it, faintly lit with a pulsating gold colour. It's the same colour from the activated Pillar of Light ruins. Scripture is written around the symbol in virtually every language of Faerûn, simply reading: Justice for All.

The door opens partially revealing a short hallway, with a toppled desk and bookcase, damaged by cleave marks, arrows sticking out of them, and scorching scars from

powerful spells. The hallway joins a longer corridor which runs the full length of the ruin.

The hallway is not a welcoming place. The short end of it has a shrine with toppled candles, an empty blessing bowl, and heavy vines growing through the ceiling, holding the small sanctuary together. Amongst the vines are the scattered artifacts of tattered clothing and discarded armor, stained with agony and removed from its owners as an afterthought.

Perception Check (DC10):
For all of the refuse strewn about the floor, the players who roll successfully on the perception check will notice that most of the porticos are spotless and where they are not, there are the telltale trails of drip marks going up the portico walls and down into the deep shadow of the larger ruin hall.

The middle of the long passageway is barred before the steps leading down to the second sublevel seating pews and deeper into the main hall of teaching. Smashed, indiscernible furniture has been stacked from floor to ceiling with great effort to create a defensible position. The barricade would appear clumsy if not for the bodies fastened to the structure, wrapped in sinewed ties, horrific history on display as a practical and terrifying tool used to help hold it together. The barricade makes passage difficult but not impossible.

Through the shadows, straining to see, the Adventurers encounter the chilling reality of the all consuming infection in the form of a pile of bodies numbering well over a hundred.

Left Hand Hallway Random Encounters

The ruins of the Pillar of Earth have many creatures that have made the dark recesses of its halls home, feeding off the leftovers of the Elder Oblex. Meals have been lean as of late.

Erek Nar Encounters

Encounter	Location	Rounds
Swarm of Bats	Left Hall – First Portico	3
Swarm of Rats	Left Hall – Second Portico	3



5. The Right Hand of Mercy

As the Adventurers approach the door to the right of the blessing bowl, the Key to the Garden begins to glow intensely, creating enough light to illuminate the details of their forsaken surroundings.

> Above the entryway to the right, there is a carving in the door frame. The entire opening is draped in torn leather, which upon closer inspection is frighteningly similar to dried-out skin. The realization of body hair flinching in the dim breath of the ruin is only anchored by the sight of claw markings at the door's edges and fingernails on the ground. The ancient symbol is a sword being sheathed by a hand with beams of light emanating from behind it, faintly lit by a pulsating red colour, recognized as the same colour from the activated Pillar of Touch ruins. Scripture is written around the symbol in virtually every language of Faerûn, simply reading: Mercy for All.

The door opens with ease. The floor is covered in fingernails, assorted jewelry, and several empty blood-stained satchel bags. Beyond, a shorter passage connects to a long corridor that runs the full length of the ruin with the remnants of an Orc's massive body impaled in the corner, mouth agape, surrounded by what appears to be the wooded leftovers of smashed temple pews.

The length of the corridor is difficult to navigate as parts of the Garden have reclaimed this section of the ruin, impeding large sections of the hallway. Large roots have penetrated the foundation, allowing the surrounding earth to spill into the hallway, deep mud coating the floor and caking up part of the next wall. Some sections are only passable by squeezing through tighter areas within the decomposing space. To complicate the way forward, an extensive spider nest intertwines between root, stone, and old body parts, its sophisticated network running across the ceiling with long trigger webbing connected to the floor looking to ensnare hapless prey.

Perception Check (DC10):
For all of the refuse strewn about the floor, the players who roll successfully on the perception check will notice that most of the porticos are spotless and where they are not, there are the telltale trails of drip marks going up the portico walls and down into the deep shadow of the larger ruin hall.

The middle of the hallway is sunken in by the stairs leading to the second sub level creating a bowled effect that spreads the entire diameter of the floor and partially underneath. The natural indentation smells of musk as if meant to attract other animals. The hollow within the floor has a different air about it. As the Garden has succumbed to death in many ways, this seems to hold the means of making more life. On all sides of this depression is a mass of entangled snakes, writhing and turning in on themselves in their nest.

Through the shadows, straining to see, the Adventurers encounter the chilling reality of the all consuming infection in the form of a pile of bodies numbering well over a hundred.

Right Hand Hallway Random Encounters

The ruins of the Pillar of Earth have many hidden creatures that have made the dark recesses of its halls home, feeding off the leftovers of the Elder Oblex. Meals have been lean as of late.

Erek Nar Encounters

Encounter	Location	Rounds
Swarm of Spiders	Right Hall – First Portico	3
Swarm of Snakes	Right Hall – Before at Steps	3



6. Method to the Madness

The revelations of the first floor of Erek Nar are a true testament to the horrific consequences when the sacred is overcome by infection. The ruin's history, twisted and stripped, is an impostor to its once true peaceful intention, replaced with a darker, more sinister purpose. Descending the stairs from the first level (left or right side) to the second level of the ruin there is a glow about the landing, particularly strong across the three different steps descending towards the third and last floor, one of worship.

The floor is an open viewing area to the ruin within. Small stools and open pews line the halls of the congregation seating area at the back of the hall overlooking the Pillar. In the centre of the room is a second pool with rotted ancient vines inside it. The stands are sloped downward towards the Great Hall are ornamented with bodies, dried out and hanging off its sloped edges, bodies that were once sages and practitioners turned to warriors in their final moments as they fought to ensure the survival of Erek Nar.

> Grey whispers: "Into the depths now. Let us call out the name of the Pillar to see what we are up against. This is the beginning of the end, my friends. Stay vigilant."

The Player who holds the key raises it for all of the players to see. Grey recites three times in a rising volume that echoes across the hall, shaking the floor of the ruins:

Erek Nar, Erek Nar, Erek Nar

The Key starts to light up causing the Great Hall to stir. The channels and runes engraved in the floors and walls of the Erek Nar alight with sacred energy, blue in colour and highlighting a hall of horrors for a moment, long enough for the Adventurers to make out the following:

1) Six Will-o'-wisps moving towards them across the Great Hall.
2) The slow shifting movement of a thick liquefied shape moving behind the Pillar.
3) The figure of a woman, standing on her own, by the pool and ancient rotted root in the middle of the room. The details of her face and blue glow are reminiscent of the ghost upstairs at the entrance.

The Adventurers are now in the lair of the Elder Oblex giving it advantage on the attack for the first round. As the light begins to dim, there is the sound of wooden pews being forcibly pushed against the marble floor.

Dexterity Saving Throw (DC10):
(Elder Oblex advantage and players who have dark vision)

Elder Oblex: Pseudopod Multi-attack "Pew Throw" for one round. The Elder Oblex throws a pew bench at each of the players. Suggested actions:

- Pew bench throw – from the corners of the Great Hall to the second-floor viewing area.
- Pew bench charge – from the back of the viewing area closest to the Pillar a pew is shifted into a column and charges down the hallway at the players.
- Incorporate Will-o'-wisps attack at the same time as to frustrate the efforts of the Adventurers.

At the end of the second round, while the players are caught up in battling the Will-o'-wisp and dodging the pew attack, the Oblex will deal a devastating blow to the team by landing an additional Pseudopod ensnare attack against Grey, dragging her into the Great Hall and behind the Pillar's shadow.

> Amongst the splintered sections of old seats exploding like cannon fire around the Great Hall, several Oblex appendages whip out ensnaring Grey mid-fight and dragging her into the Great Hall before the Adventurers can react. In her failed attempt to free herself of the binding she throws her satchel to the closest Adventurer and yells –- FINISH THE PURGE! – before disappearing into the darkness. A scream is heard followed by deadening silence.

As the hurling of furnishings comes to an end and the attacking Will-o'-wisps blink out of existence, Erek Nar begins to pulse with blue luminescence, struggling to give the Adventurers more ambient light within their surroundings, welcoming them to their destiny on the large open floor of the Great Hall. It is as if the besieged pillar is calling them to be the cure.



7. With A Plastic Smile

The dust settling from the last encounter provides no clear victor, only the simple reality that what lies here in the deep and dark recesses of Erek Nar is an ancient behemoth of enormous capability filled with memories of terror and fueled by an insatiable hunger. Fully aware of their immediate surroundings, the Adventurers make their way to the large open floor of the Great Hall, keeping a keen eye on all that they can see, shaken at the loss of Grey Ryanne, their Gondar Cleric. Unsettling to all is the impossible fact that in front of them, by the second pool of water, standing atop the ancient root is the blue apparition from earlier, this time rendered in body, her matter composed of a deep red colour, the colour of blood – the colour of the Elder Oblex. The players notice as they approach that the figure acknowledges them with a slight bow of the head and all that she is composed of slowly changes in colour revealing a perfect copy of the ghost the players had spoken to upstairs. It speaks quite calmly.

> "You are quite aggressive guests. You have entered our Garden, taking as you please and casting out our family. For what? Three stones? You could have any other rocks on the face of Faerûn, but you persist on taking away what we have worked hard for."

The Oblex skin and the copy of Ghostly woman seem to flicker with anger and for a moment the copy shakes its head as if having difficulty focusing on the message being delivered. The copy continues with a plastic smile rising across its mocking facade.

> "Your upsetting of plans and impoliteness in our home matters not. We are your survival. You must understand this. Drop your weapons and join us, feed the collective with your experience and give over your life into our communal knowledge so that we might grow again, expand our reach and use your likeness to consume the future. Do not take our word lightly. The time for passive disagreement is over. Refuse to accept our offer of everlasting relevance and purpose and you will be forcefully taken, broken and torn limb from limb. The Cleric will be first." ."

Behind the Adventurers, the sound of steady booted footsteps breaks the silence as Grey walks out from behind the Pillar, eyes red, with a commanding red mass behind her, its appendages wrapped around her legs. The faces of all of the victims of the past push out through the sticky skin of the Elder, a reminder of the complete power this monster has and what it has done to achieve its dominance.

Adventurers Choice:

Submit your Soul – The players agree to lay down their weapons, submitting to the Elder Oblex, forsaking their selves, the Garden, and those who fought before them. Tears roll down the face of the possessed Grey, a part of her deep within still capable of mourning.

Turn and Run - The players agree that this is not a battle they can handle and decide to fight their way out, forsaking the Garden and those who fought before them. Tears roll down the face of the possessed Grey, a part of her deep within still capable of mourning. Cowardice wins the day for as long as they survive trying to get out of the ruin and the Garden.

Hammer and Light - The players agree that enough is enough. The Garden must be freed of this poison. The Oblex colony must be destroyed to restore balance. The time has come to FINISH THE PURGE!

This is the stuff legends are made of. The players assume a battle stance, the last stand, the hopeful saviours of Grey and the Garden of Knowledge.



8. The Worm Turns

The energy within the Great Hall crackles as the battle between the Adventurers and the Elder Oblex begins. The air becomes thick with a sulphurous smell as the Oblex begins to shapeshift en masse to meet the challenge at hand, fighting for its survival and the fate of the Garden.

The final battle is broken into three stages meant to challenge the players in all aspects of the ruin. The main hall floor and the second level are entirely open to the Adventurers to make use of during this fight, to flex their mental dexterity in strategy against this final monstrosity while giving the Oblex an opportunity to stretch its capabilities.

Critical Elements

Hints from the Past:
A) The players can be reminded of the letter (if found) on the body of the warrior in the Pillar of Touch room. The suggested attack is to divide and wear down the Oblex with fire.
B) The ghost hinted that the Garden must be saved, a Baptism by Fire.

The Grey Matter:
A) The players can test to see if Grey is in fact a copy herself by injuring her. They will find that she bleeds and will scream if hurt.
B) At any point during the battle the Adventurers can attempt to sever the Oblex's hold on Grey, freeing her, but will need to take an additional action to get her to safety. She will be unconscious for the remainder of the battle.

To Gild the Lily:
The stone in Erek Nar wants to be saved and wants to be activated. The abhorrence and abomination stages of the fight are meant to be fast and furious exchanges between the Oblex and the Adventurers. Once the Oblex has suffered enough damage and begins to truly weaken the Alarm stage begins and the players can attempt to activate the Key depending on who has the key and who has not been compromised by the Oblex.

The Elder Oblex speaks:

> "We were always meant to be your fate."

Final Battle Stages

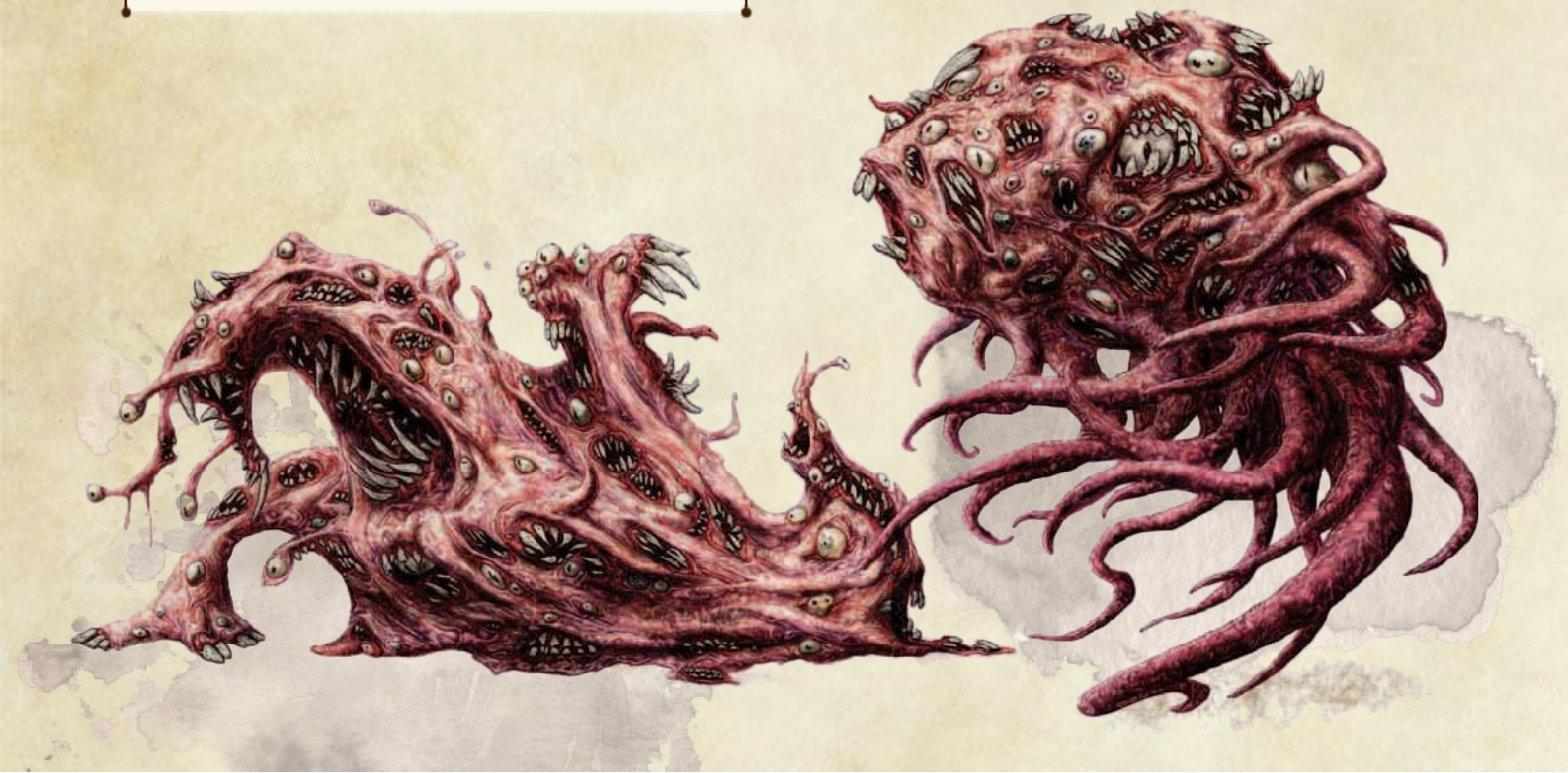
Abhorrence Stage: Multi-attack
There are many uses for the Oblex pseudopod attack, particularly with a multi-attack on any one opponent. Violent attacks throughout the final battle using the multi-attack mechanic can be used to strike terror upon the players. Suggested attack descriptions for the Dungeon Master include:

- Pseudopod strangle wrap around neck, chest, or face. (Used within the portico and balcony settings)
- Pseudopod ensnare around legs, waist or hands. (Used within the hallway and stairwell settings)
- Pseudopod weaponry (During impersonation humanoid appendages turn in to bladed weapons of selected impersonations above)
- Pseudopod impale (During impersonation or regular pseudopod attack a spiked appendage thrusts forward to impale the intended target)

Abomination Stage: Sulfurous Impersonation
The Elder Oblex will make copies of the former students of the Garden of Knowledge in order to wreak havoc on the players within the Great Hall. Suggested use of characters for the Dungeon Master as they would relate to the Garden of Knowledge are the following (stick to the rules of the amount of copies allowed in Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes):

- Dwarven Cleric
- Orc
- Elf
- Tabaxi
- Druid
- Any of the Players who were held by the Oblex more than once.
- Grey Ryanne (a duplicate of her – present at the same time)

Alarm Stage: Pseudopod Panic
As the Oblex weakens and succumbs to the Adventurers' efforts to take it down, the monstrosity begins to panic. In addition to incorporating its offensive tactics above, the Elder Oblex begins to use more defensive measures to divide and conquer its prey.



Elder Oblex: Pseudopod Multi-attack –"Pew Throw" The Elder Oblex throws a pew bench at each of the players. Suggested actions:
1) Pew bench throw – from the Great Hall to the second-floor viewing area.
2) Pew bench charge – from the back of the viewing area closest to the Pillar a pew is shifted into a column and charges down the hallway at the players.

Dice with Death

The exhaustive battle has drawn out the very best and worst between the opponents fighting for ultimate control of Erek Nar. The encounter is bathed in bloodshed and will only leave one side the victor in claiming the Garden.

Should the Adventurers fall...

> The blue light of Erek Nar slowly dims as the Adventurers fall during their battle to the shapeshifting madness of the Elder Oblex. Their bodies are slowly drawn in by ooze stretched tendrils wrapping around the broken remnants of these warriors, pulling them into the dark red bulk, ready to be stripped of their memories to feed the Elder one.

At the back of the Great Hall, the ghost whispers and slowly fades out: "This fate...are there none who can stand?"

Should the Key to Erek Nar be activated...

The Pillar explodes with brilliant indigo light filling the hall. All of the channels and runes within the ruins illuminate. Air flows through the halls carrying the scent of fresh summer wind. Vines recede, releasing their grip on the ruins, and the channels extinguish any chance for an Oblex to move amongst these safeways. The entire Garden shudders as the ancient root within the second pool of the Great Hall starts to slowly twist and grow upward, new branches and flowers blooming, a renewed nature pushing forward. The Elder Oblex starts to burn in its light, sustaining heavy fire damage.

Should the Elder Oblex fall...

> The heaving mass collapses across the floor and spreads up the wall in spastic shapes of different beings. They oscillate between poses of defence, attacking stances, and death. The voices of every victim yell out in unison, a cry of terror and war, as the blood red Elder Oblex shimmers, a fading light within it. A multitude of hands and faces all grasp and pull through the gelatinous battle torn skin of the thick ooze as it contracts in on itself in pain stricken spasms. The Oblex recedes into one last strained shape, that of the blue apparition. The copy's facial expressions only half-formed, her body twitching, the Elder Oblex using the form to speak its last words. "While this Garden lives and our time is over, this is the first step of three. They come. Those who play with horrific providence. Those who rule the mystery from the Far Realm beyond the Great Wheel. The children of the stars come."

The Oblex loses all form and fading, repeats in many whispered voices. *...the stars come....*

The Adventurers take stock of the mess that is the Great Hall. Rendered speechless by the events that have befallen them, the unchecked horrors and discoveries and the unsettling prophecy of a mysterious terror yet to come.

Blessings of The Bygone:
The players receive the Blessings of Shesh Ath Menatu and are welcome back here at any time. The Garden will grant them access through Kryptgarden Forest and offer them restorative powers, a place of rest, and an advantage bonus for 48 hours.

The Adventurers are free to explore the Garden.

9. Epilogue - The Fog of Myth

The Adventurers feel life renewing across the Garden from the waters at its centre, across the open glade, and within its trees. It moves through the Adventurers themselves, this renewal. It's more than just spirits lifted by surviving the trials behind them – the eradication of the Oblex colony through brains and brawn – it's an understanding of the true spirit of camaraderie. Above them, the trees within the Garden open their canopy to reveal that it is later in the day, letting the sun shine down on the ruins, opening flowers and stirring small animals to come forward towards the warmth of sanctuary.

The Adventurers make their way back through the broken hole in the wall entering the atrium where they first gained passage to the Garden. The massive globe inset to the floor has all three colours now channelled into its base, one for each Pillar, rotating the sphere slowly with three points of light on its surface lit.

The brightest light is the location of the Garden, Shesh Ath Menatu, now a beacon of sanctity.

The two other points flicker with uncertainty, their locations on the globe not far but also unknown to the Adventurers.

On the ground at the base of the sphere and leading back down the entrance stairway of the atrium is an unusual smattering of blood leading out of the Garden. On the steps the Adventurers find a white mask, blood drawn finger marks pulling across one side as if to remove it. Further ahead is a torn, red-stained green hooded cloak, identical to the cleric the found earlier constricted within the massive vines of the Shambling Mound within the Garden. A creeping dread sits on the chests of the Adventurers as they find bloodied footsteps leaving peculiar marks, worms twisting from within each step, knotting over each other in a most unnatural way.

> An exhausted Grey speaks (should she survive the ordeal): "The Gondar were right. It's as we feared and now you all know. The Elder Evils have made their move. The Star Spawn are coming..."





Appendix

Grey Ryanne
Cleric of Gond

Medium Humanoid (Human), Neutral Good

Armor Class 19 (plate)
Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills History +5, Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +5
Damage Resistances fire
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages any four languages
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Innate Spellcasting. The priest's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (save DC 13). The priest can cast the following spells innately.

3/day each: *detect thoughts, suggestion*

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*
2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guard*

Forge Soul. While wearing heavy armor, the priest gains a +1 bonus to AC.

Magic Weapons. The priest's melee weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Forge Hammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, plus 9 (2d8) fire damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or ignite in flames. At the start of each of the target's turns, the target makes another Constitution saving throw, taking 4 (1d8) fire damage on a failed save, or ending the effect on a success. If the target or a creature within 5 feet of it uses an action to put out the flames, or if some other effect douses the flames, the effect ends.



Grey is a part of a special sect of the Gondar order that balances elements of the knowledge and forge studies of Gond studies. Followers are dedicated to the professional of study and train extensively in their martial responsibilities.

Followers of Gond suffer agonising dreams of others destroying their creations and live in constant paranoia when working on a project around others.

Grey is a part of a team Gondar Clerics who have uncovered a frightening revelation. Their research at Candlekeep has revealed the coming of the Star Spawn and the ancient machinations designed to draw energy from places beyond the far realms.

Greys Notes – Shesh Ath Menatu, Rune Codex

Research and Findings located within Candlekeep as they relate to the suspected "Key" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11D33e1oof0&list) to Shesh Ath Menatu of a time long since forgotten. Runes have still not been fully translated and as a result the simple cypher relates to the first 6 letters of the alphabet in common. Under the guidance of Rohricht Deepbranch and my two additional researchers we have made loose translations of the suspected combinations for each of the Pillars located within the ancient ruin. I have written down the collective descriptions for each Pillar, three in total, and kept them to myself under the direction of my faithful team to reduce chance of theft, interception or worse.

Fatigue be damned. Wonderbringer help me.

G.R.

Shesh Ath Menatu Ruins "The Key" Combination

Note - To light the Ruins and call forth the energy of the Pillar of Light, call its name in elvish three times. Research also suggests that activating the Pillar will have the same effect by turning on the Pillar, which will have an enlightened and restorative effect within the immediate building and possibly having great environmental impacts across the Garden.

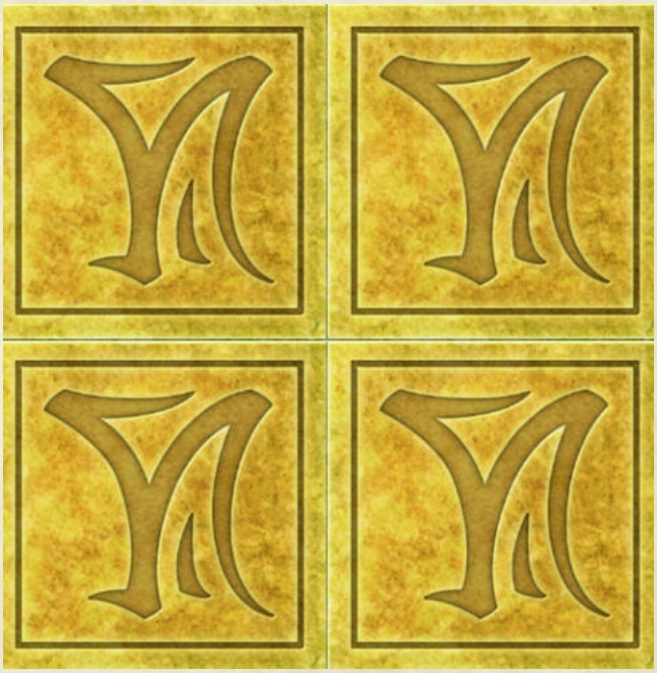
Position "The Key" in hands starting with the elder rune that is representative of what appears to be a tree – loose translation "root" – but I believe it has a ancient connotation to "anchor". Please reference Symbol A of the Codex. To ensure the proper positioning, the B symbol, representing a "hood", upon further research calling to a "door", should be on the back of the key and upside down with the Anchor symbol facing forward right side up.

The following passage locks in the three runs from the Key to "ignite" the Pillar of Light (Ivae Nar) from here forward.

The First Rune in the combination. From A (the Anchor), the blessed stars fall from the sky bringing light and revelation by opening Faerûn (translates as earth) to reveal the truth of a world without order (F symbol loosely translated as Faerûn – and should be upside down). – If done properly this will lock the first rune for Ivae Nar, the Pillar of Light.

The Second Rune in the combination. From the upside down Faerûn rune, The passage continues – The world without order will lay back with the night and be balanced by walkers of the horizon (loosely translated as "Nomads") and represented by E symbol. The "Nomads" rune will lock for the second rune for "They Key".

The Third Rune in the combination. From the Nomad rune, the passage continues – The Walkers of the horizon will open the great "hood" (translation door – rune B) from the ground to the Sky setting balance once again. Rune B being the final key and right side up.



Rune B

The next ruin will start from the "Door" rune as this has ended. Please make sure "The Key" is prepared for the Haran Nar next, the sequential Pillar to activate within the ruins.

G.R.

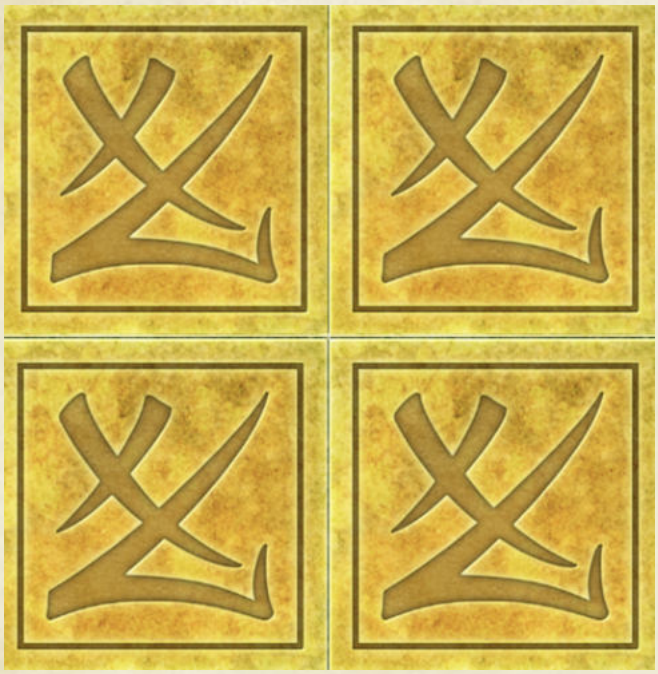
The following passage locks in the three runs from the Key to "ignite" the Pillar of Touch (Haran Nar) from here forward.

Position "The Key" in hands starting with the elder rune that is representative of what appears to be an inset cave mouth – loose translation "Hood" – but I believe it has a ancient connotation to "door". Please reference Symbol B of the Codex. To ensure the proper positioning, the E symbol, representing a "Walker of the horizon", upon further research calling to a "Nomad", should be on the back of the key and upside down with the Door symbol facing forward right side up.

The First Rune in the combination. From B (The Door) the mystical Hood is drawn back revealing enlightment through the Garden (tree symbol – or the A Symbol – Anchor loosely translated) – If done properly this will lock the first rune for Haran Nar, the Pillar of Touch.

The Second Rune in the combination. From the Anchor rune (A symbol), power from within will shake the Anchor with truth beckoning on the Horizon. Falling backward in revelation, the Mountain (D Symbol *may reference the literal Pillars within the ruins based on research) will show the depths of corruption and call forth the cure. If done correctly this should have the Mountain, D-Symbol, upsidedown and lock this rune for "The Key" for Haran Nar.

The Third Rune in the combination. The Collapsed Mountain (From upside down D-symbol)) will bring forth the coming conflict, one that will pull the land and the stars apart, from the sky to the earth, opening a window to a new beginning where Elder knowledge frees all by way of the mystic hand. (The Touch rune has been further interpreted to represent "Conflict" and represented by the rune C Symbol).



Rune C, Touch or Conflict

The next ruin will start from the "Touch" rune as this has ended. Please make sure "The Key" is prepared for the Erek Nar next, the sequential Pillar to activate within the ruins.

G.R.

The following passage locks in the three runs from the Key to "ignite" the Pillar of Earth (Erek Nar) from here forward.

Position "The Key" in hands starting with the elder rune that is representative of what appears to be a sword and lighting bolt– loose translation "Conflict" – but I believe it has an ancient connotation to "Touch". Please reference Symbol C of the Codex. To ensure the proper positioning, the D symbol, representing the "Mountain", should be on the back of the key and upside down with the Touch symbol facing forward right side up.

The First Rune in the combination. From C symbol, the Conflict rune, the passage reads " Through Conflict and sword and bolt, the veil between worlds will be pulled apart, opening the Window (B symbol, related to the "Hood" translation but linked to "Window" in interpretation) bringing forth the era of transformation and settlement. *Ominous in tone, no translation or research identifies this as a peacful event. If done properly this will lock the first rune for Erek Nar, the Pillar of Earth, locking in the B symbol upside down.

The Second Rune in the combination. Lead with the Window rune up, The Window will close with the setting of the sun on a world that once was and will never be the same. The next rune interpretation reads, "as the light falls on the old world, the Anchor will catch its hold, welcoming those children of the stars". Correctly locked, the A Symbol or Anchor, will be presented forward and right side up for the the second rune in the third Pillar.

The Third Rune in the combination. From the Anchor rune, (A symbol) "A realm secured, those from afar will strip this world of inpurities. Turning backward the errors made by those who lived before and building new foundations upon a weak Mountain (D symbol should be revealed and upside down. This will reveal the third and last Rune to activate the Pillar of Earth. There is no mistakening the dark undertone of these findings. "The Key" turns on each Pillar in the Shes Ath Menatu and through unknown means gives it a power beyond our comprehension, but to what end?



Rune A

I wrestle with the ultimate meaning of what we have discovered. Who in this world stalks us? What otherwordly presence watches us from the stars?

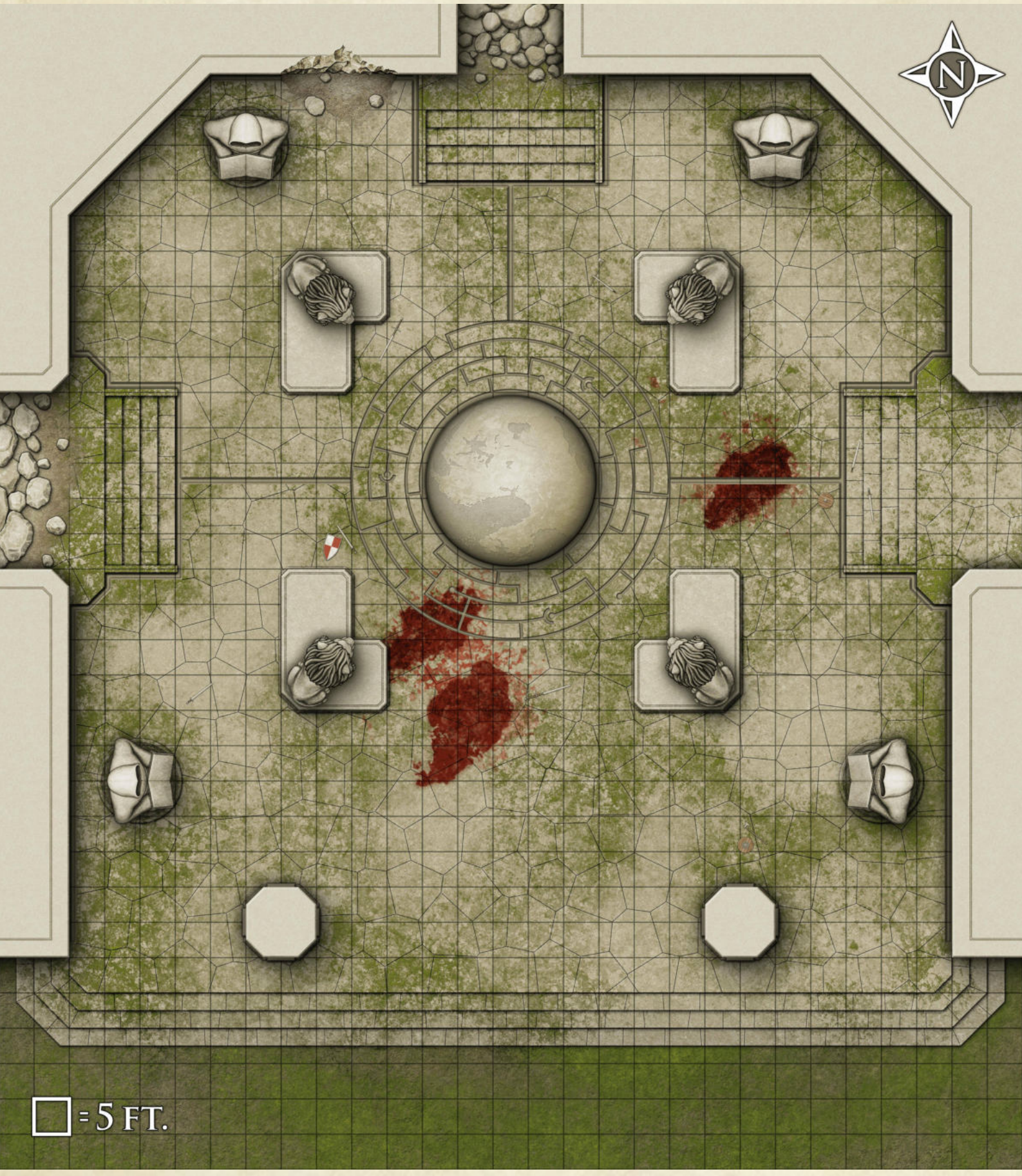
Hammer and Light.

G.R.

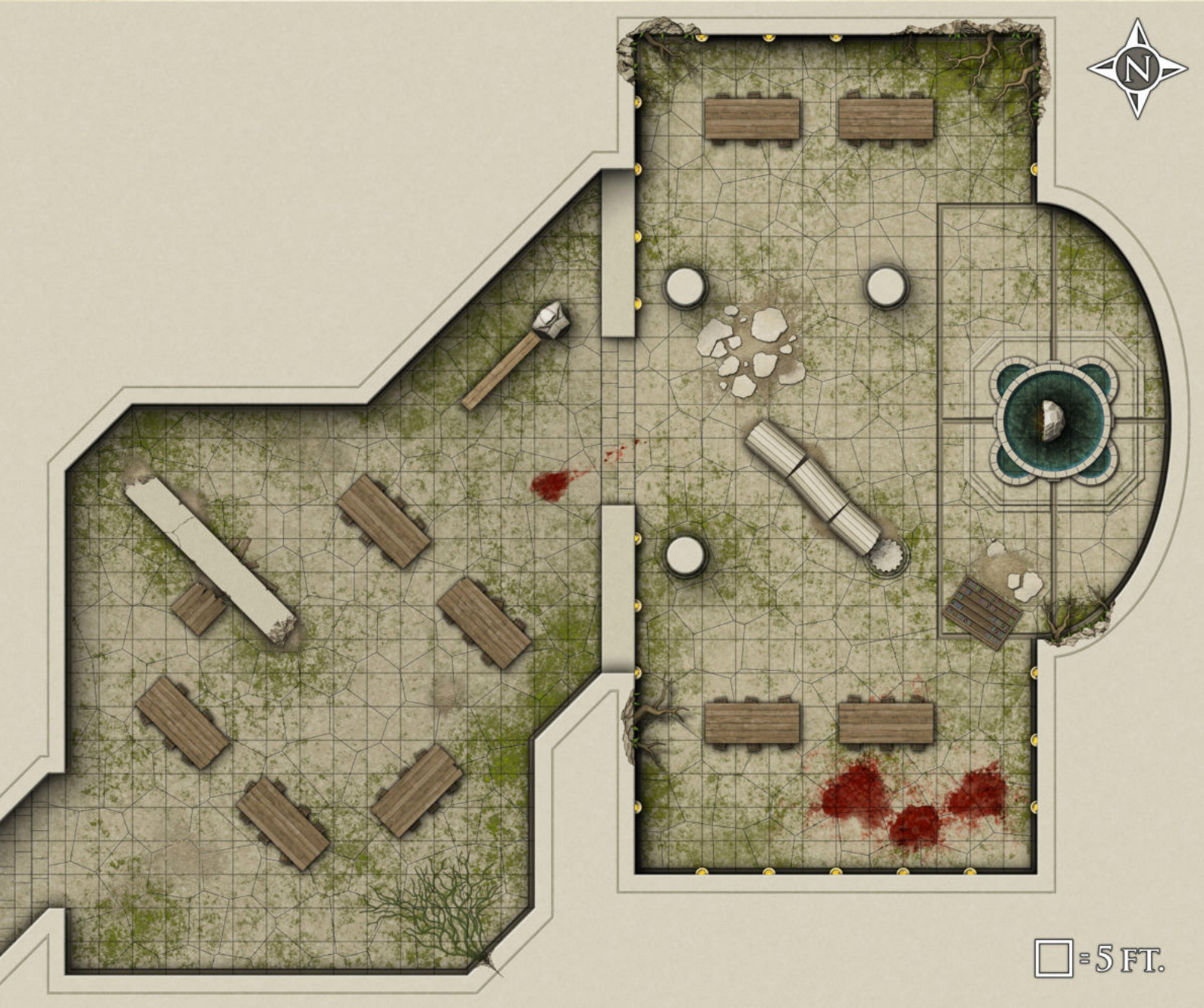


Maps

1) Garden Atrium

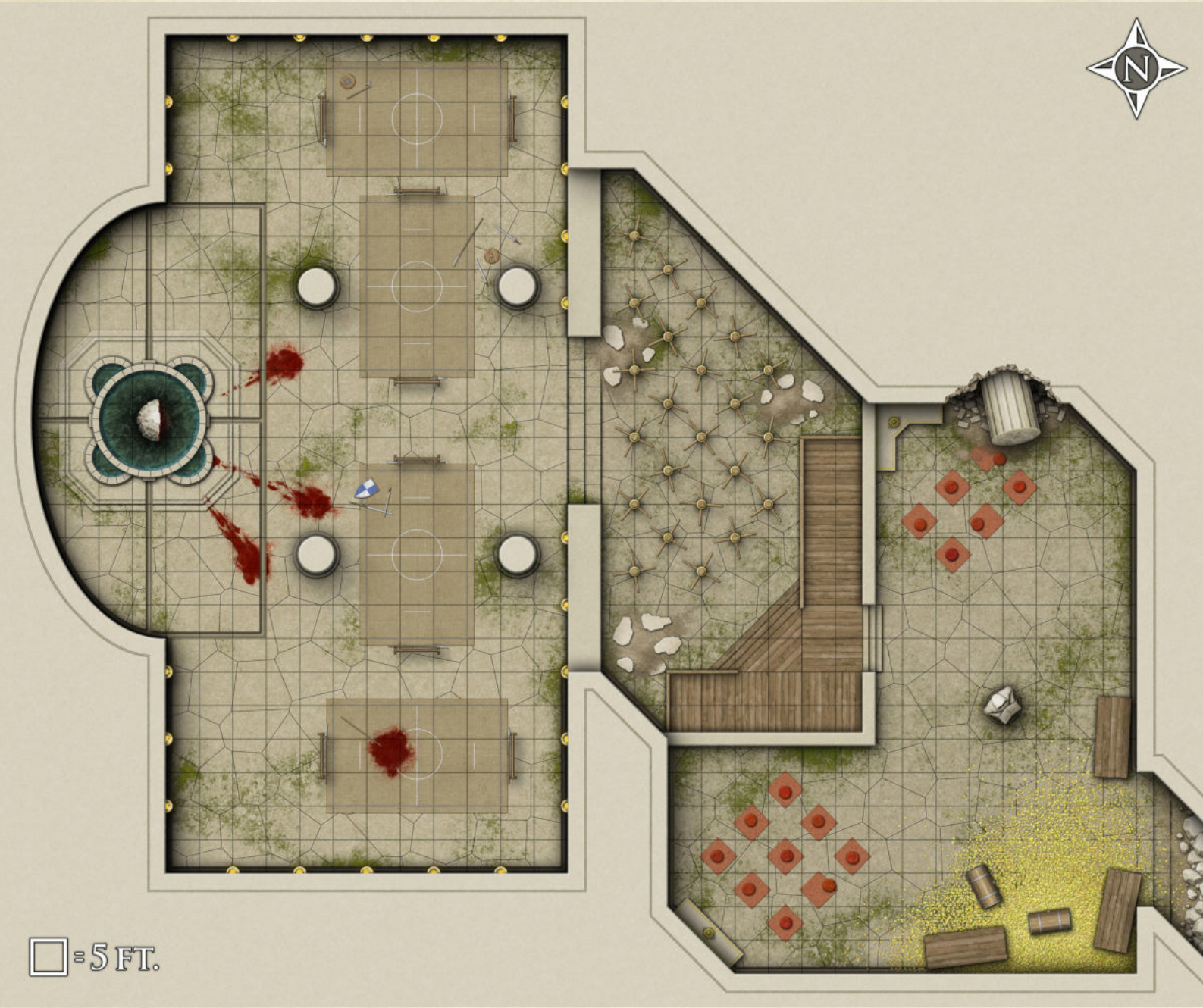


2) Ivae Nar, Pillar of Light




Shesh Ath Menatu
Erek Nar
The Hall of Embrace
Haran Nar
Ivae Nar
N

4) Haran Nar, Pillar of Touch



5) Erek Nar, Pillar of Earth

