

CASTLE SEVERHALLOW

A Cursed Vampire



COUNTRESS SEVERINA HAS WAITED ALL YEAR FOR COMPANY.
THIS HALLOWS' EVE, THE GATE IS OPEN - AND YOU ARE EXPECTED.
CASTLE SEVERHALLOW IS AN ADVENTURE FOR 4 CHARACTERS OF LEVELS 4 TO 6.

MAP 1 - LANDS OF SEVERHALLOW

N



Wall of Fog

H
Weeping Falls

Castle Severhallow

Wall of Fog

J
Bone Gate

I
Coach Fork

G
Wanderers Camp

Chapel

Cemetery

D
Blackwater River

C
Wolfwood

E
The Ghost Village

To the West

F
Junction

B
Iron Thorns

A
From the East

Wall of Fog

Wall of Fog

Not to scale





CASTLE SEVERHALLOW

A CURSED VAMPIRE

An Open Dungeons RPG adventure for 4 characters of levels 4 to 6

All game rules found at [OpenDungeons.com](https://opendungeons.com)



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INTRODUCTION

Once a year the veil grows thin, and a black coach comes down a road that should not be there. Some who ride it are never seen again. Some walk home a year late, with grey in their hair, and will not say where they have been.

Castle Severhallow is an adventure for 4 characters of levels 4 to 6: a gothic horror tale of a cursed land, a ghost village, and a vampire who has waited three hundred years for one soul to come home to her. A balanced party serves best, and at least one character should be able to wield a longsword, for reasons the party will discover.

HOW TO USE THIS MODULE

Read the whole module before play. It is not a straight line: the party can wander the lands, shelter in the village or march straight to the Bone Gate, and the Countess hunts them wherever they go.

Read-aloud text is set apart; paraphrase freely and reveal only what the characters perceive. Suggested lines are examples of a voice, not speeches. The lands are areas A to J (Map 1); the castle (Maps 2 to 10) is keyed by zone, W, K, U, S, L, P and D1-D44. Areas on the castle maps that are not described in this book are empty, ruined or stripped; passages through them still work. All rests are full rests (6 hours), and only a handful of places count as safe.





THE STORY SO FAR

For the DN only. The players learn this piece by piece, if at all.

Three centuries ago Severhallow was ruled from a castle on a pillar of black rock. The elder daughter, Severina, was brilliant, proud and cold as well water. The younger, Livia, was the one the valley loved. Both loved Aurel, a knight of the Chapel of the Last Light, and Aurel was promised to Livia. His betrothal ring read "A. to L., until the last light."



The wedding was held on All Hallows' Eve. Severina went down beneath the chapel and made a pact with something beyond the veil: a life without end, and the one thing her life lacked. She came back up and, in the middle of the ceremony, killed her sister at the altar before Aurel's eyes. In that moment the chapel burned to ash. Aurel ran up the Lovers' Spire and stepped into the mist without a word. The wedding bands were never exchanged.

The pact cut the land away from the world and the gods. Severhallow became a demirealm where the sun never shows and the dead do not leave. Only on All Hallows' Eve does the veil lift, for three nights, and then it closes for a year.

Aurel's soul is reborn again and again and drawn back here. Each Hallows' Eve the Countess sends her ageless driver, Mirela, to gather travelers, searching for him. Twenty years ago Magistrate Grigore took in a lost boy and named him Luca. Luca is Aurel reborn. Severina has bitten him twice; on the last night she means to take him as her consort forever. Last winter Grigore died holding his door shut against her servants. His ghost is the voice in the fog.

FIXED PLACEMENTS

- **The Hallowed Sigil** rests in the last beam of hallowed light on the altar of the Chapel of Ash (K12), where she cannot take it.
- **Severina's Journal**, the pact in her own hand, lies in the Study (U9).
- **Dawnbrand**, Aurel's longsword of captured daylight, lies in the Tomb of Livia (D40).
- **The urn** of hallowed earth she dug on the night of the pact, sits in the Earth Vault (D43); Mirela carried it down forty years ago.
- **Her coffin** lies in the Tomb of Severina (D44).
- **The Veil Seam** (D42), where the pact was sealed, can still unmake it.

‡ **Hallowed Sigil, Dawnbrand**: new magic items; **Severina's Journal**: adventure relic (Appendix: Treasures of Severhallow).







COUNTESS SEVERINA



The adventure turns on the Countess. She knows every stone of her land, she has watched many adventurers die, and the clock is on her side. She appears as a tall, pale woman of perhaps twenty-eight, black-haired, in a gown the color of old wine and a mourning veil she lifts only to feed or to charm.

WHO SHE IS

She thinks of herself as a bride kept waiting, the dutiful daughter handed nothing while her sister was handed the world. The pact was not a crime; it was a correction. She fears being forgotten, and fears that Aurel chose the fall over her. She speaks slowly, in complete sentences, as if dictating a letter; cruelty arrives in the same pleasant tone as courtesy, a beat later. When truly angry she goes still, and strikes.

- "You came all this way in the cold. Sit. I insist, and I so rarely have to."
- "I am not cruel. I am owed. There is a difference, and I have had three hundred years to learn it."
- "Pray, by all means. I used to. Tell me if anyone answers."
- "My sister was easy to love. I was worth loving."
- "Ask me in. It is only good manners."



HER WEAKNESSES OF HEART

Story levers, each once per night unless noted.

- **Livia's name**, spoken gently, stops her: for 1 round she listens and does not attack.
- **Her Own Words**. Once per encounter, a character who read the Journal reads her words back to her: Mind save TN 14 or she loses her next action. During The Countess herself, a failed save also ends the encounter.
- **Livia's ring** (U14), held up to her, wins one true answer. She will offer nearly anything for it.
- **An apology**. A character who sincerely says sorry leaves that scene unharmed. If Luca apologizes on the last night, she delays her plans one hour; the veil still closes on time.
- **Being refused**. A character who resists her Charm Gaze and tells her no becomes her obsession: her next hunting encounter targets them, and she withdraws only at 40 HP.

HOW TO RUN THE COUNTESS

She chooses the moment, and fights from the dark, from above, and from behind a charmed ally. She will not harm Luca or let her creatures harm him. She cannot cross a living home's threshold uninvited, so she charms someone into saying the words.

Spies. Her creatures report at dawn, noon, dusk and midnight: Probability Roll 9+ on d20 (11+ with 3 PCs, 8+ with 5-6). On a success she knows where the party is and may send a hunting encounter within two hours. Dawn and noon reports are acted on at dusk. Once all four hunting encounters are spent, a report still tells her where the party is, but grants no new hunt. She can prepare her defenses or act through an encounter, alarm or night raid that already has its own trigger and limits.

Hunting encounters. She has four, each once across the adventure. Mark one spent when she sends it, even if the party evades it or it cannot arrive. The castle wolf hunt uses only surviving W8 kennel wolves; killing all three also spends that castle pack. Wolves cannot go below the Under-Prison: choose an unused dead or bat hunt there, or send none if neither remains. In her rooms above D43-D44 she fights back for up to 3 rounds if The Countess herself is spent; the final rooms and D42 use their own rules; a thrall's Hold and Call never spends one, and disturbing D14 or the urn brings her by mist without spending one.

1. The Countess herself. She assaults one character for up to 5 rounds, stopping immediately if that character reaches 0 HP or falls unconscious. She withdraws laughing, using mist if able; she neither strikes the fallen victim again nor chooses another. This early withdrawal does not apply when defending D43-D44 or completing the binding at D42.



2. **Her dead.** 1d4+4 ordinary zombies rise at once (stats below; not the Severhallow Zombies of the castle).

3. **Her wolves.** A dire wolf leads 1d3 wolves (in the castle, the three kennel wolves of W8 instead).

4. **Her bats.** A shrieking cloud with 2 giant bats; for 3 rounds, a spellcaster makes a Quick save or loses the spell.

Zombie - HP 8, AC 10, DR 0; 1 attack: slam 1d4+1; Saves Quick -3, Tough +2, Mind -2; Unaligned. Death Grip: on a hit, Quick save TN 12 or be seized until a STR Chance Roll TN 12 breaks free. Mindless: immune to charm and fear.

Dire Wolf - HP 74, AC 15, DR 1; 1 attack: bite 2d8+4; Saves Quick +3, Tough +4, Mind +0; Unaligned. Crushing Bite: on a hit, Tough save or be held and dragged until the wolf takes 10 damage in a round or a STR Chance Roll succeeds.

† **Dire Wolf:** existing creature; Monster Trove: Old Fears and Hungry Things, entry "Dire Wolf". [Rules entry](#)

Wolf - HP 12, AC 13, DR 0; 1 attack: bite 1d6+2; Saves Quick +2, Tough +1, Mind -1; Unaligned. Pack Bite: if another wolf hit the target this round, Quick save or fall prone.

† **Wolf:** existing creature; Monster Trove: Old Fears and Hungry Things, entry "Wolf". [Rules entry](#)

Giant Bat - HP 15, AC 14, DR 0; 1 attack: bite 1d6+2; Saves Quick +3, Tough +0, Mind -2; Unaligned. Swooping Bite: +1d4 damage if it began its turn above the target.

† **Giant Bat:** existing creature; Monster Trove: Old Fears and Hungry Things, entry "Giant Bat". [Rules entry](#)

Night raids. Each night the party rests outside a safe rest, 1d3 wolves and a cloud of ordinary bats worry at the doors. Resolve attacks normally; stepping outside causes no automatic damage. Raids are not hunting encounters.

The urn rule. A blow that reduces her to 0 HP or below forces her immediately into mist at 0 HP and back to her coffin; it does not kill her. Once the urn (D43) is cleansed or destroyed, or the pact is broken (D42), she cannot become mist at all: at 0 HP she collapses, near dead and defenseless, for 1 hour wherever she is. A stake through her heart kills her permanently. If she is not destroyed within the hour, she wakes with 20 HP and makes for her coffin; in the grey hours she sleeps where she lies instead. Without mist, an active Severina can still return from elsewhere in the castle as a bat through the Hollow Shaft and Mist Cleft, taking about 30 minutes. She starts home before the grey hours; if delayed or trapped until they begin, she takes flesh and sleeps wherever she is. This does not let her leave helpless recovery early.



Withdrawal. Below 82 HP, or against Dawnbrand or the Sigil, she withdraws by Miststride, Riftstep or mist, leaving servants in the way. At D42 she refuses voluntary retreat; in D43-D44 she defends those rooms and retreats only to her coffin at 25 HP or fewer. If that coffin is already destroyed, she makes no voluntary retreat and fights on until 0 HP. The urn rule still governs 0 HP.



COUNTESS SEVERINA



Countess Severina - HP 165, AC 17, DR 2; 2 attacks: vampiric claws 1d8+5, +4 to hit; Saves Quick +4, Tough +3, Mind +4; Orderly Vile (Tyrant). Night Vision 60 ft; 2 additional DR against necrotic damage; +2 to saves against charm and fear; immune to poison and disease.

Life Drain: she lunges, grabs and bites one target in melee as her whole attack action, replacing both claw attacks. CON Tough save or take 3d8 necrotic damage and permanently lose 1 level (minimum level 1); she heals half the damage dealt (cooldown 2 rounds). Apply the bite damage to current HP at the existing level first, then reduce maximum HP for the lost level. Do not subtract the lost maximum HP from current HP again; only cap remaining current HP at the new maximum if necessary. At level 1, a failed save still causes damage and heals her, but drains no further levels. Each level lost also removes 2,000 XP, preserving progress toward the next level. A lost level cannot be restored, even after Severina is destroyed. Losing a level removes everything gained at that level, including abilities, spells and Level-Up Bonuses; reduce maximum HP by the class's



HP gain for that level in the Character Builder and recalculate all level-dependent values, including thief skills, Turn Undead and save TNs. **Charm Gaze:** as her whole attack action, replacing both claw attacks, she targets one creature within 60 ft; Mind save or charmed. Duration depends on distance when she uses the gaze: within 30 ft, 1 minute; at 31-60 ft, 3 rounds (15 seconds). The charmed open doors and speak invitations for her.

Spellcasting: as a 5th-level wizard, each spell once per day, resetting at 6 am; sleeping does not give extra castings. This reset does not change Dawnbreak's midnight limit. Level 1: Beguile, Lethargic, Mage Shielding, Mistcall. Level 2: Doppelveil, Miststride, Veil of Obscurity, Mind Probe. Level 3: Dreadwave, Farseeing Eye, Grand Illusion. Level 4: Mind Tangle, Nightmare Vision, Riftstep, Rotburst. Level 5: Bind Creature, Facade Veil, Legion Strings. She casts Mage Shielding and Doppelveil before a planned fight.

‡ Levels 1-3: wizard spells, Wizard Spells for First Castings. Levels 4-5: wizard spells, Wizard Spells Mystic Powers.

Mist: as her action she becomes mist and drifts through cracks, the Hollow Shaft and the Mist Cleft, reaching her coffin from elsewhere in the castle in about 10 minutes; she cannot attack, cast or be harmed by weapons. At 0 HP or below she is forced into mist at 0 HP, unless the urn rule ends that. **Coffin Rest:** in her coffin she takes flesh, the lid locks from within, and she regains 2 HP at the end of each round. While recovering she is helpless and cannot turn to mist; at 100 HP recovery ends and she rises to attack again, unless it is the grey hours, when she enters ordinary daytime sleep under the waking rules in D44. Both squares of grave earth blessed, or the pact broken, stop Coffin Rest. See D44 for the lock and recovery procedure. **Night Shapes:** as her turn, a giant bat or great black wolf, keeping HP, saves and Life Drain; no casting.

Weaknesses. True sunlight (Sunlight Bloom, Dawnlight): 3d10 radiant per round, no save, instead of the listed damage. Dawnbreak uses its own range, damage and save rules (Dawnbrand, Appendix: Treasures). Running water: crosses only by bridges; submerged, 2d10 per round. Holy water: a full flask thrown with a normal ranged attack deals 2d6 radiant on a hit; on a miss it is spent without damage. Pouring it onto an unresisting undead within reach takes an action and deals the same damage without an attack roll. These are this adventure's holy-water attack rules; cleansing soil uses the room instructions instead. A living threshold bars her uninvited. **Hold at Bay:** the Sigil thrust at her forces a Mind save TN 15 or she cannot approach within 10 ft of or attack the bearer until the bearer's next turn; if she is already within 10 ft, she must use her next move to get beyond it. **Dawnbrand:** ignores her DR, +2d6 against vampires.

‡ **Sunlight Bloom:** level 3 wizard spell, Wizard Spells for First Castings; level 3 cleric spell, Cleric Spells for First Blessing. [Rules entry](#)

Turning: the pool (20 x cleric level) is compared to her maximum HP. The Sigil adds +30; a 6th-level cleric with it has 150, still short of 165.



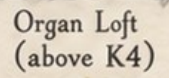
Destroying her: drive a stake through her heart while she is helpless or asleep (STR TN 10). This kills her permanently, whether reached during coffin recovery or brought down under the urn rule; no further finishing blow is needed. Being held, tied, rooted or webbed is not by itself helplessness: if she can still defend her heart, resolve normal attacks. An effect that prevents all bodily defense, such as Bind Creature, permits the stake attempt if her heart is reachable. Bonds alone do not block Mist: she may use it on her normal action if able to act and her mist power still works, never as a free reaction to the stake; recovery and the urn rule still override it. Beheading, burning her body, or running her through with Dawnbrand also destroys her while helpless. Dawnlight burns her away while helpless at 0 HP; ordinary daytime sleep alone does not qualify, though its radiant damage still applies.



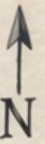
MAP 2 - BONE GATE AND OUTER WARD



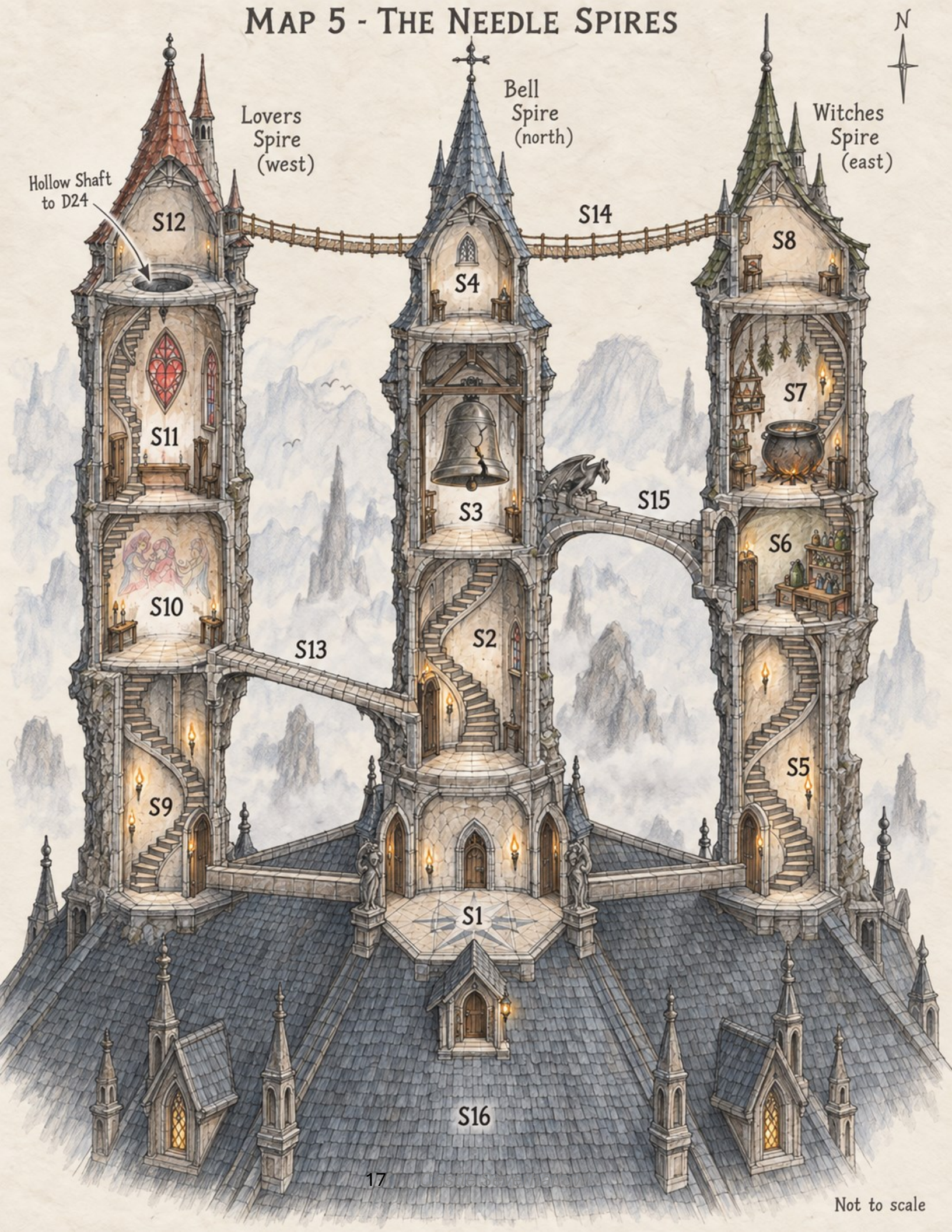
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MAP 4 - THE COUNTESS'S COURT



MAP 5 - THE NEEDLE SPIRES



Hollow Shaft
to D24

Lovers
Spire
(west)

Bell
Spire
(north)

Witches
Spire
(east)

S12

S14

S8

S4

S7

S11

S3

S15

S6

S10

S2

S13

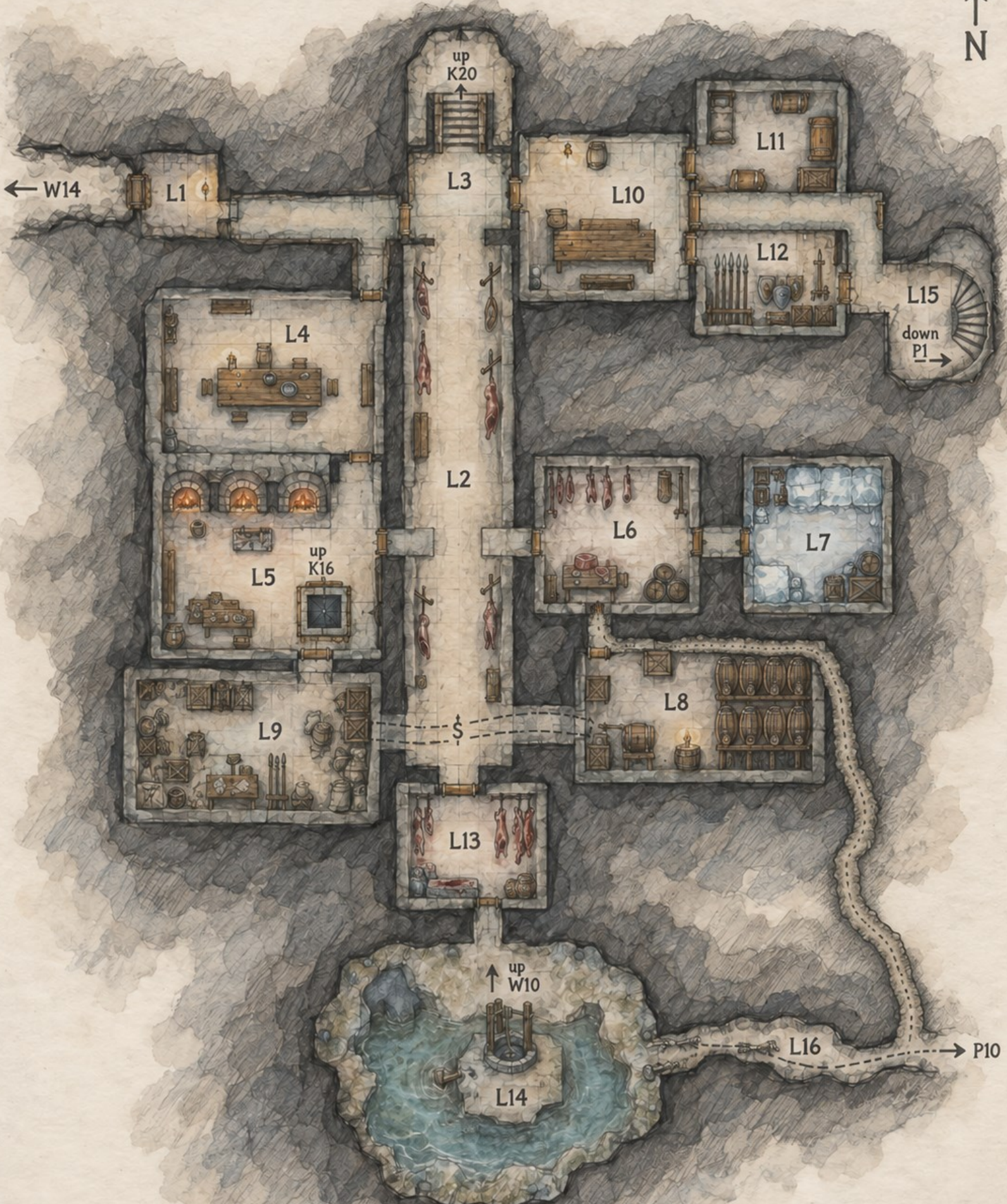
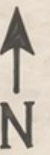
S5

S9

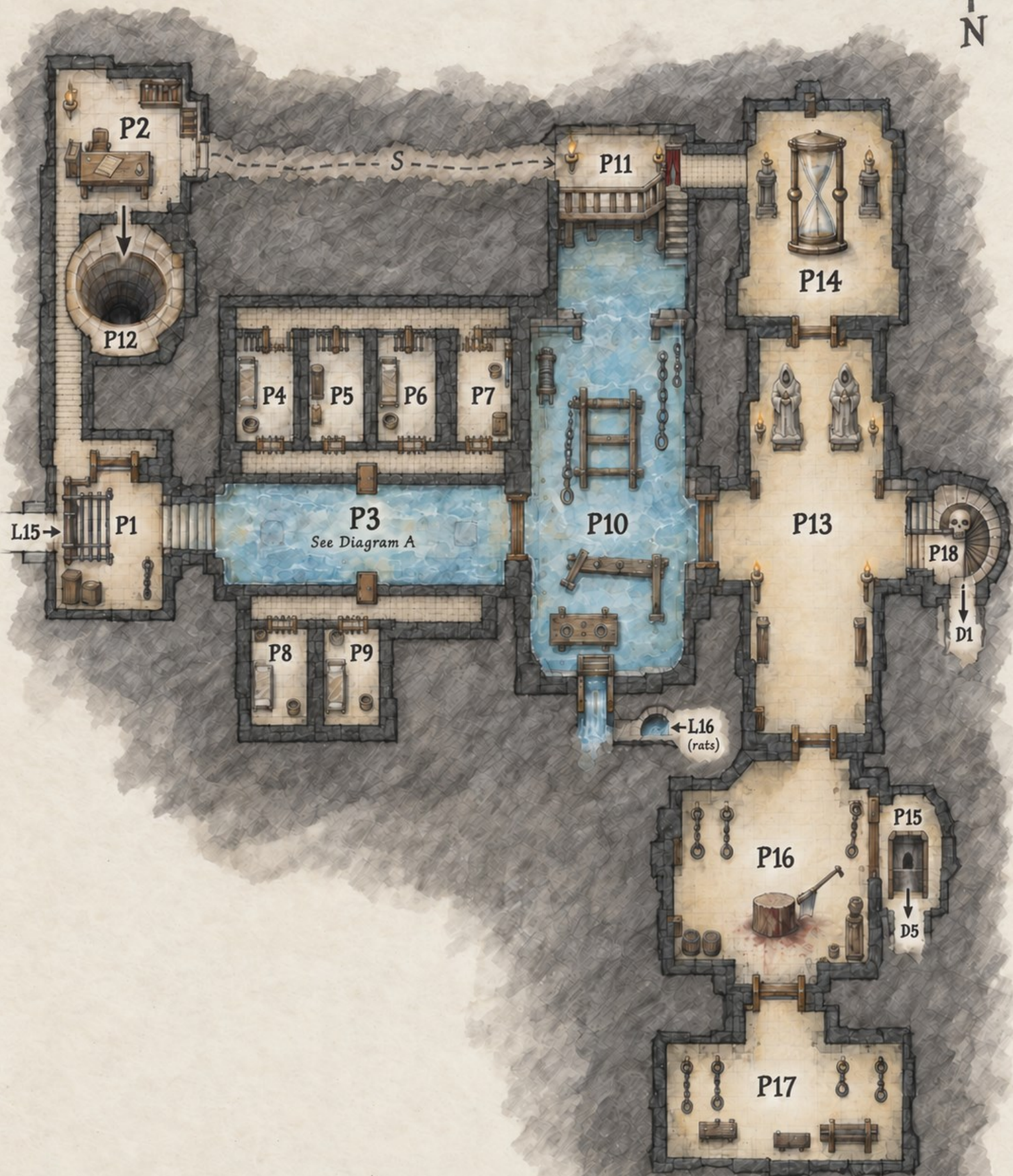
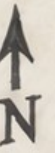
S1

S16

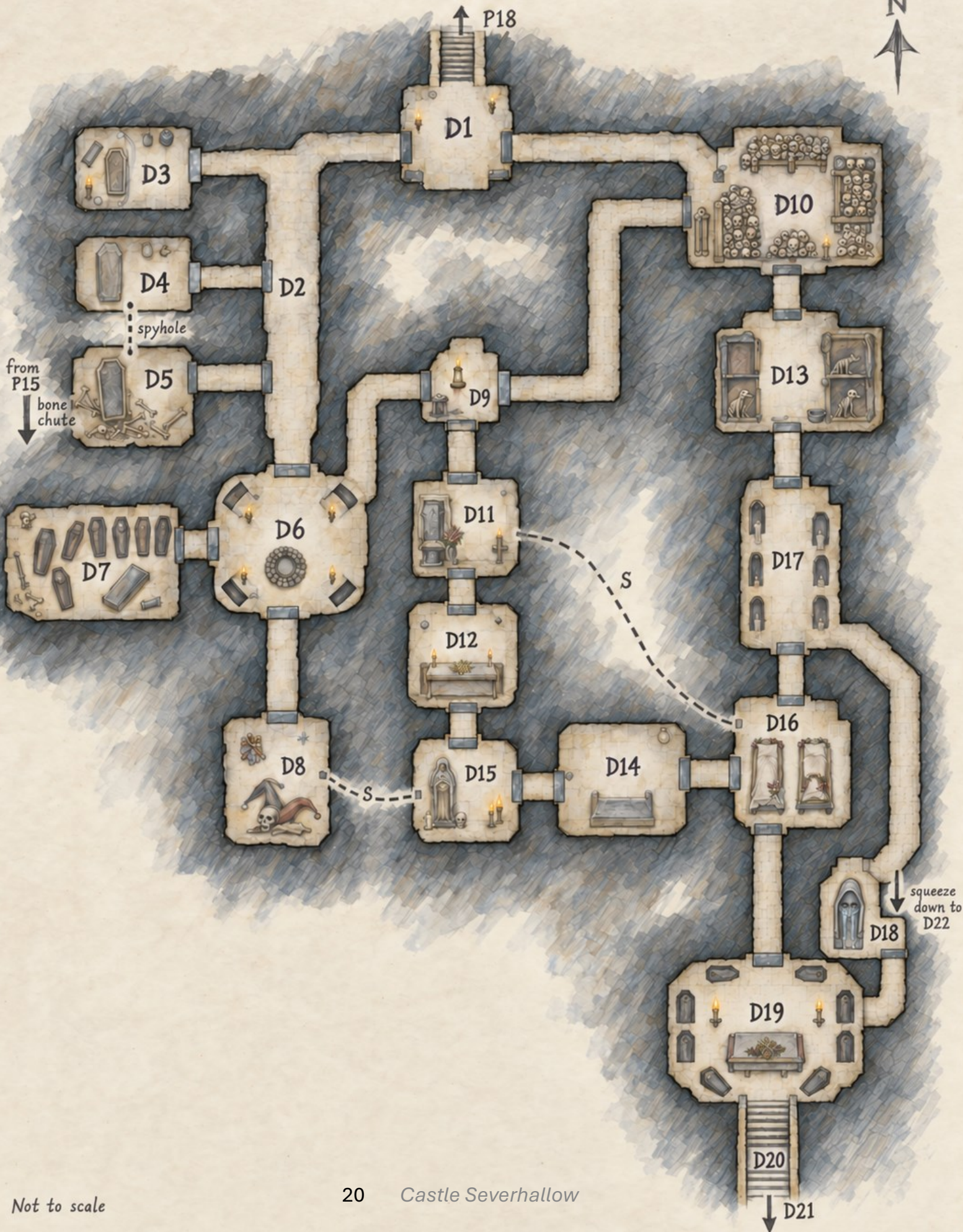
MAP 6 - THE LARDERS OF ILL OMEN



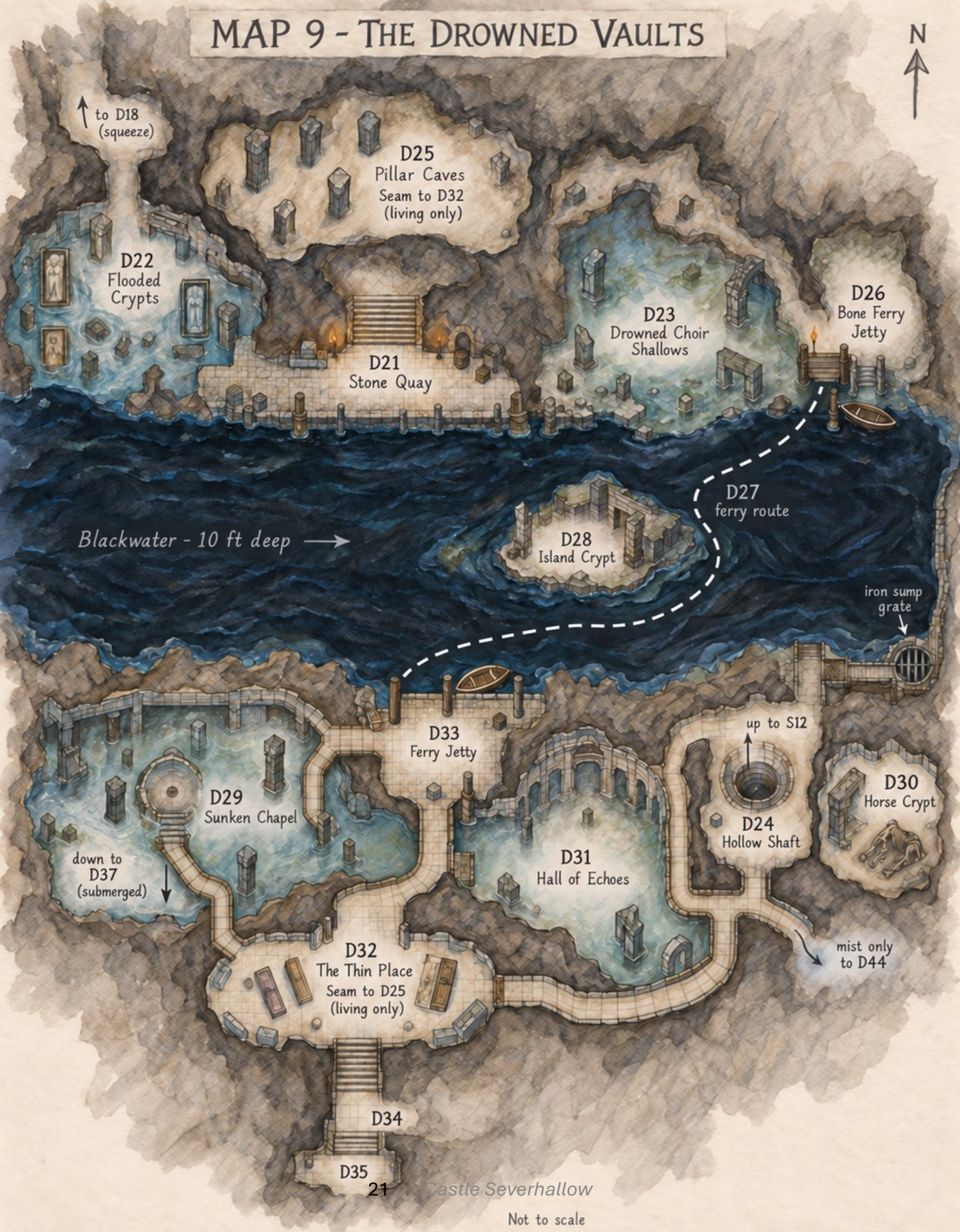
MAP 7 - THE UNDER-PRISON



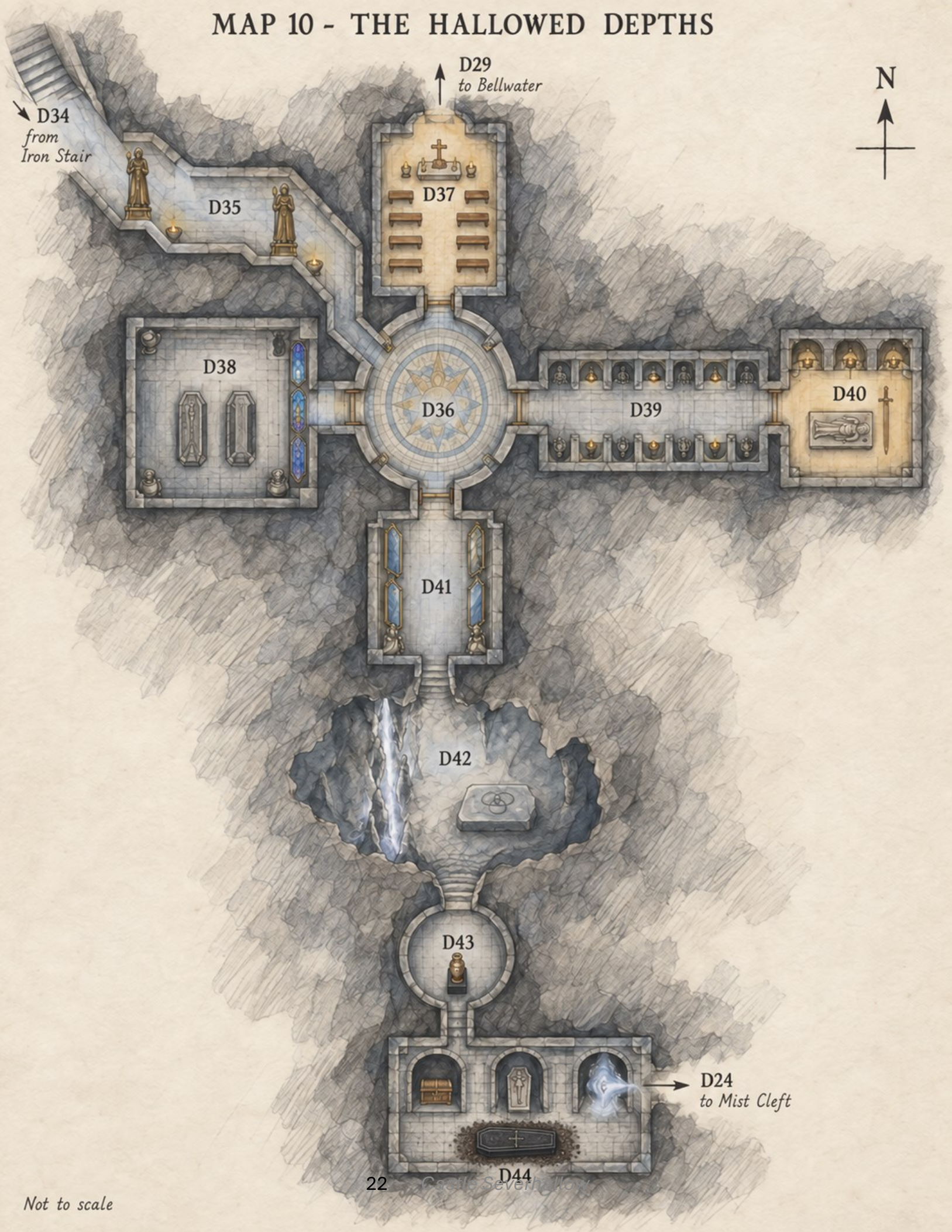
MAP 8 - THE LONG CRYPTS



MAP 9 - THE DROWNED VAULTS



MAP 10 - THE HALLOWED DEPTHS





RUNNING THE ADVENTURE



The adventure has one clock and one hunter. The clock is the veil, which closes at first grey after the last night. The hunter is Severina, who wants Luca before it closes. Shortcuts let a bold party skip floors: the Hollow Shaft (S12 to D24), the dumbwaiter (K16 to L5), the Postern Stair (W14 to L1), the Ossuary Stair (P18 to D1) and the Bone Ferry (D26-D27).

THE SHAPE OF THE ADVENTURE

Step	Where	What happens	Leads to
1	The Withered Road (A)	Mirela's coach; ride, or refuse - meet wolves.	B
2	The Iron Thorns (B)	Gate shuts, the Grey rises, a voice calls.	C



Step	Where	What happens	Leads to
3	Wolfwood, the Blackwater (C, D)	The dead messenger, Grigore's letter.	E
4	The Ghost Village (E)	Ilinca, Luca (E4), the chapel (E6).	F, G, I
5	Junction, Camp, Falls (F-H)	Mother Zora's paid riddles.	I
6	The Night Coach, Bone Gate (I, J)	The driverless coach carries them up.	W1
7	Upper castle (W, K, U, S)	The Sigil (K12), Journal (U9), bell (S3), Luca's prison (S12).	L, Hollow Shaft
8	Larders, Under-Prison (L, P)	Mihnea's hoard (L9), cistern (L14), hourglass (P14).	D1
9	The Deep Layers (D1-D41)	Brides (D16), ferry, Bronze Guardians (D35), Dawnbrand (D40).	D42-D44
10	D42-D44	The pact, the urn, the coffin.	Epilogue

THE THREE WAYS OUT

Way out	How	What it costs
Destroy her	Stake her through the heart while she sleeps or recovers in D44, or cleanse the urn (D43), bring her to 0 HP and stake her where she falls. The stake alone kills her permanently.	Reaching her. The pact breaks: ghosts rest, the Grey lifts, true dawn comes, the Thorns open. Works even after the veil closes.
Break the pact	At D42, once per night, more than half of the PCs still counted (D42: those in the light when it begins, less any who step out before answering) answer the Aspect of the Threshold truly; each liar takes Judgment Cast at once, regardless of its cooldown.	She loses mist and Coffin Rest, her thralls' years come due, and she burns at the next first grey; until then she hunts with everything left.



Way out	How	What it costs
Escape by the bell	Ring S3 by hand at midnight (it rings true once per night); its thread opens the Grey until the grey hours.	A survival, not a victory: the pact holds, and anyone left behind is hers. She sends one unused hunting encounter, preferably Her bats, under S3's pursuit rules; never Noapte on the last night. Luca goes if he saves against The Call, is snapped out of it, or is carried through by two characters (one STR TN 14 roll by the stronger carrier; see Luca).

THE THREE NIGHTS

The W4 wedding procession, U16 dance, K8 shifting doors, E7 march and S9 echo repeat every night while the veil is open; the Night 2 table entries are reminders, not exclusive dates. Every night: spy reports at dawn, noon, dusk and midnight; at midnight Luca makes a Mind save TN 14 against The Call or walks toward Severina (on a bell night, at the edge of the Grey instead). A slap or similar sharp physical shock breaks his trance; restraint does not (see Luca). On Nights 1 and 2, the coven attempts one raid if the party sleeps in the upper castle outside a safe rest (S7).

When	Severina and her servants	The party, probably
Night 1, dusk	The veil lifts; Mirela drives the road; she rises.	On the road (A).
Night 1, evening	She watches; a report may bring her bats.	Thorns, Wolfwood, village.
Night 1, midnight	The dead march; the ripple at W13 fills the sky.	E4 or E6.
Night 1, small hours	A night raid; to her coffin before 6 am.	Resting.
Day 1	Asleep; Mirela and thralls act.	Bury Grigore, pay Zora, the coach.
Night 2, dusk	The organ (K5), the "Below" bell (K16); Noapte leaves D30.	K4 toast, K9-K10, K12.



When	Severina and her servants	The party, probably
Night 2, midnight	Procession W4 to K12; dance in U16; K8 doors shift. She attempts Charm Gaze; servants seek Luca (below).	The Court, the bell.
Night 2, one hour after	Procession climbs S9 to S12; she hunts or sits with Luca.	Spire, or rest in K12.
Day 2	Asleep; Hold and Call brings Mihnea, or the L9 fallback if dead.	The best working day.
Night 3, dusk	Sand runs red-black (P14). She comes for Luca; if she knows he is dead, she hunts the party instead (see "If the Party...").	Deep below, or racing up.
Night 3, midnight	If she holds Luca alive, Noapte carries them down the Hollow Shaft to D24; she walks him over the Iron Stair (D34) and past the Bronze Guardians (he speaks Livia's name) to D42. Later, she leaves at once by that road. Up to two surviving Brides and Vasilka begin their ambush above the Iron Stair when she starts down with Luca (D34).	S12, D24, or the bell.
Night 3, first grey	The veil closes (7 am if the P14 glass was turned). If Luca lies alive in the seam's light beside her, the third bite binds him; if not, she goes to her coffin as mist.	Won, fled, or trapped.

If Noapte is unavailable (destroyed in D30, or destroyed elsewhere and not yet re-formed there at dusk), she climbs down the shaft with Luca on her back, reaching D24 two hours later.

Night 2: her charm attempt. If a PC controls a door or living threshold protecting Luca, she tries to meet their gaze within 60 feet and use Charm Gaze as her whole attack action: a normal Mind save, or charmed for 1 minute within 30 feet, or 3 rounds (15 seconds) at 31-60 feet. Use the distance when she uses the gaze. She wants the PC to open the door and invite her inside: "He is frightened. Let me speak to him. Open the door." Companions may intervene. The charmed PC resists their interference and tries to push past them to obey her; the charm does not force attacks on companions. This resistance ends with the charm. Omit this attempt if no PC is controlling access to Luca.



Night 2: the servants' raid. At midnight, 1d4+1 Thrall Servants (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) seek Luca unharmed at his known village location: E4, or E6 if left there without the party. Omit the raid if he has left the village; E6 remains safe while the party rests there. With PCs present, play round by round: Ilinca defends Luca, and Grigore's Hearthward applies at E4. The thralls must seize Luca and escape with him; PCs can intervene or pursue. With PCs absent, Luca is automatically abducted and taken unharmed to the Lovers' Spire (S12). Ilinca, and Grigore at E4, cannot prevent it. Do not play out NPC combat.





THE GREY HOURS



From about 6 am to 6 pm the pact puts her to sleep in her coffin; she returns before then by mist, or sets out at least half an hour earlier as a bat if mist is unavailable. Caught away from her coffin when the grey hours begin, she takes flesh and sleeps where she is. Woken in D44, she fights only in D43-D44. The Brides (D16), Vasilka (eighth bed, U15) and Noapte (D30) share the sleep. On the last night the grey hours begin only when the veil closes.



IF THE PARTY...

- **...splits up.** This is what she wants. Make the next spy report automatic and, if one remains and can reach them, send an unused hunting encounter after the lone character. With none left, use the report only as described under Spies.
- **...is captured.** Captives wake in the cells (P4-P9); their gear goes to Mihnea (L9). She visits at night to ask which of them is Luca's friend.
- **...loses a PC.** Return to Life fails inside the Thorns: the pact holds the soul. Mother Zora knows the spell but here can only preserve the body with Rest Eternal: it prevents decay and undeath while the party seeks release, but does not free the soul or resurrect the PC. A body carried out once the land is free can be raised. A new character can be Wenzel from the cells (P4-P9) or a freed thrall. For a replacement PC, use a recent captive whose true age can survive the return of borrowed years, and explain that consequence to the player.
- **...loses Luca.** If he dies before the binding, Severina cannot complete the ceremony with his corpse. Luca must be alive for the binding to succeed. His death alone does not break her pact. Aurel's soul remains trapped in Severhallow while the pact holds; Luca's death does not make him her bound consort. She learns of his death when a servant reports it or she sees his body, not at the instant he dies. In grief and rage she blames the party and hunts them, using the existing spy and hunting encounter rules. She still chooses her attacks carefully and retreats to recover under her normal rules; she wants revenge, not her own destruction. On Night 3, once she knows he is dead, there is no wedding procession or vigil at D42: she hunts under those rules until the veil closes, then returns to her coffin under the grey-hours rules. The Aspect still appears in D42; the party can take its test and break the pact while she is elsewhere.
- **...leaves Luca behind.** Ilinca takes him to E6, which bars the dead but not The Call or living thralls. Resolve the Night 2 raid as above; captured Luca goes to S12.
- **...runs out of time.** Turn the P14 glass. Past that, see the Epilogue.

‡ **Return to Life:** level 6 cleric spell, Cleric Spells Sacred Powers. **Rest Eternal:** level 2 cleric spell, Cleric Spells for First Blessing.

RUMORS

When a character asks around, buys an answer or lays a ghost to rest, roll or pick. Three hundred years garble things. Mother Zora is an exception: use her true answers in G1, never a false result from this table.



d8	Rumor	True or false
1	"Ring the dead bell at midnight and it shows you the road home."	True (S3).
2	"Nothing dead can touch the light on her altar."	Partly: her dead rise when the Sigil is lifted (K12).
3	"She sleeps in a red bed in the high rooms."	False: a decoy (U11).
4	"The knight's sword went into his grave."	Partly: into Livia's (D40).
5	"She writes it all down, by a fire that never dies."	True (U9).
6	"Free the honest cooper in her cells."	False: a werewolf (P7).
7	"Say the dead sister's name to the bronze men."	True (D35).
8	"Turn the great glass and buy a whole night."	False: one hour, once (P14).

SAFE RESTS

- The village chapel (E6).
- The Chapel of Ash (K12), once cleansed: Radomir and his dead destroyed, and the Sigil removed from its altar.
- The Lantern Niche (D9): one full rest per night while the lantern is kept; on a Probability Roll 11+, also through the following grey hours.
- The lower chapel (D37): once only, while its window glows.
- The Tomb of Livia (D40).

The wanderers' camp (G) is also a safe rest for a paying party for one night, protected from raids by Lantern Law. A completed rest of at least six hours uses the normal recovery rates: safe, 25% of maximum HP plus CON bonus times level; unsafe, 25% of maximum HP. Fighting or strenuous activity restarts the six-hour rest for each character involved; no rest recovery is gained until those six hours are completed. Brief waking, distant howling or checking a secure door does not restart the rest. A place barred only to Severina is not automatically safe. The Magistrate's House (E4) and the cistern (L14) bar her, but not her raids or servants. Everywhere else, keep rolling.



SCALING

- **3 PCs.** Ilinca can join a party of any size and may wield Dawnbrand; with only three PCs, encourage the party to accept her help. Spies 11+; her dead 1d4+2. One Bride at a time in D16; two witches in S7; the Wight in U3 only watches.
- **5-6 PCs.** Spies 8+. Two more wolves per pack, one more giant bat per cloud. All Brides fight together in D16, and on the last night all surviving Brides, not just two, wait above the Iron Stair. The U3 Wight fights from the first round. Open 1d4+1 crypts a night in D19.
- **Level 4.** Make sure the hymn found in D12 (used in D29) and Livia's name (D35) are found before the fights. Let Zora sell holy water. Lucan (D26), Sister Agafia (D29) and Marga (D41) should never become straight fights. She leaves fights a round early.
- **Level 6.** She casts Mage Shielding and Doppelveil twice each per day. Make a spy report every hour of the last night.



THE LANDS OF SEVERHALLOW



Under a pewter ceiling of cloud, Severhallow has no sun, moon or star. Days are grey twilight, nights are black, and the wind never moves the fog.

The valley is small (Map 1). The Withered Road enters at the eastern Iron Thorns (B), runs about four miles west through Wolfwood (C), whose wolves serve the Countess, crosses the lightless Blackwater (D) by an old bridge, and reaches the Ghost Village (E) in the middle of the valley. North of the village, on a thousand-foot pillar of black rock, crouches Castle Severhallow, pouring a river of bats from its towers every night. West of the village the road forks (F): north to the castle, west to the second Iron Thorns.

The Iron Thorns and the Choking Grey. Where the road enters and leaves the valley stand the Iron Thorns, a spiked fence whose gates open inward only. Beyond lies the Choking Grey, a wall of odorless fog. The veil lets travelers in; the Grey chokes anyone walking out, except along the Midnight Bell's silver thread (S3), or for good once the pact is broken (D42) or the Countess is destroyed. When the veil closes, even the bell's way shuts until next Hallows' Eve. Only the wanderers (G) pass the Grey at will.



Walking outward into the Grey, a creature makes a Tough save each round or takes 1d6 damage (2d6 after 3 rounds, 3d6 after 6); at 0 HP it dies within a minute unless dragged back. Stepping back inward ends it. While the pact holds, ordinary outward travel never reaches the far side of the Grey; the bell's silver thread and the wanderers' Veilwalker gift are the exceptions.

Night Raids. Each night the party rests outside a safe rest, the Countess sends wolves and bats to harass them (see the Countess chapter).

Random Encounters. Every half hour in the lands, a Probability Roll of 1 on a d6 by day (1-2 by night) brings an encounter. Wolves and giant bats use the Countess chapter's stats; none is a hunting encounter.

d8	Day Encounter
1	1d3+1 wolves stalk the party.
2	1d4+1 Wanderers (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) with a wagon trade gossip.
3	In the village: 1d4 Ghostly Villagers (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) at old chores. Elsewhere: nothing.
4	1 dire wolf and 2 wolves.
5	The Night Coach passes, Mirela on the box. She nods and drives on.
6	Howls carry the party's scent: the next spy report succeeds on 7+.
7	A wolf-picked corpse: 2d6 sp, a note: "the coach will come back for you."
8	The Grey creeps across the road: Tough save or choke (1d6) for 1d3 rounds, then Weary.

d12	Night Encounter
1-2	1d3+1 wolves.
3	1 dire wolf and 2 wolves.
4-5	1d4+2 zombies, the drowned and the wolf-killed, drawn to light (zombie stats in the Countess chapter).
6-7	Bats with 1d3 giant bats; casters make a Quick save or cannot cast for 2 rounds.
8	A drowned bride in the river asks for her groom; lied to, she shows her face (Mind save TN 13 or Weary).



d12	Night Encounter
9	1d3 ghoul gnawers (E5).
10	2 tomb wraiths hunting the road out (E2).
11	Near midnight on the castle road: the Marching Dead pass (E7). Otherwise as 1-2.
12	The Night Coach stops, driverless, door open. If The Countess herself is unspent, she rides inside (this spends it).





ADVENTURE BEGINS: THE LANDS

A. THE WITHERED ROAD

The night is cold and bone dry, and a hard autumn wind rolls dead leaves along the ruts like small running feet. Behind you come heavy hooves and the creak of a big coach.

A black coach rolls out of the dark behind four horses dark as wet slate. On the box sits a silver-haired woman in a grey traveling coat, beautiful as porcelain. "This is no road to walk at night. The inn is ten miles on, and I'm going that way. There's room for all of you."

It is All Hallows' Eve. This is Mirela (Appendix: The Recurring Cast), the Countess's thrall. She will never get them to the inn. Attacked, she whips up the horses and is gone.

4 Coach Horses - HP 30 each, AC 12, DR 0; 2 attacks: hooves 1d6+3, 1d6+3; Saves Quick +2, Tough +3, Mind -1; Unaligned. Bound Team: immune to fear and charm; nothing turns them from the road the Countess has set.

If they refuse. Mirela wishes them a safe night, and the coach's sound fades far too fast.

A low howl rolls out of the trees. Ahead, something steps onto the road, far too big to be a wolf, and a wolf all the same.

1 dire wolf (Countess chapter). Afterward the road fades into weeds; each character makes a Tough save or becomes Weary. Then their light finds a shoulder-high spiked fence with no gate. Climbing is a STR or DEX Chance Roll (TN 10); failure costs 1d4 damage, but the character gets over. When the last one crosses, run B.

If they accept. Mirela asks their names through a sliding panel and drops lines like these:

- "A wedding in the hills ended badly once, and the whole valley went into mourning."
- "If a lady asks to come in, be very careful."

After an hour the road turns rough; the coach rolls through an open gate in a spiked fence and stops for a thrown shoe. Would they stretch their legs? Run B. When the fog thins, the coach is gone without a sound.

PLAYING MIRELA

Forty years ago she rode this coach as a passenger with her family; only she was kept. **Wants:** to be told it was not her fault. **Fears:** that there is no way out. **Secret:** the Countess told her no one has ever escaped, and that belief, more than the blood, is her chain; she drops each



year's travelers' tags in the box under the coach seat (W6) unread. **Voice:** soft, warm, a little sad. "I only drive, dear. Where you go after that is between you and the road."

Changing sides. Mirela turns if shown that someone got out: the W6 tag "Pintea, tinker. Rang himself out."; the bell's silver thread (S3), seen with her own eyes; or a captive she knows, such as Rozalia (U12), carried out along it. She then grants two of: one spy report fails; she reveals that the urn in D43, whose earth she carried down, calls her mistress home; or she drives the coach for them on the last night. If the Countess learns, Mirela dies before dawn.

DN OPTION: WHO HOLDS THE REINS?

The coachwoman can be Severina herself, wearing an older face with Facade Veil; anyone who resists her Charm Gaze may notice she does not breathe. Decide before play and apply all the substitutions below. She cannot be won over, W7 stands empty by day with no diary in it, and "Mirela" never appears in the grey hours (skip day encounter 5; on castle table 9, a Thrall Servant brings the invitation by day). In this version Mirela is an invented identity: omit Changing sides, her separate cast statistics, Danut's W7 tip, the claim that Pintea's tag can turn her, and her aging and farewell in Loose Threads and What Became of Them. Use Severina's statistics whenever the coachwoman acts. In Fixed Placements and D43, an unnamed servant carried the urn down forty years ago. Preserve the clues: a loose page under the coach's rear seat in W6 contains the earth-and-coffin paragraph of Handout 4, written by that dead servant. Give only that paragraph under the title A Dead Servant's Page; omit the Mirela heading, family history and other pages. Pintea's tag remains proof of escape. Mihnea can also sell this true answer in L9: "The pot in D43 calls her mist home. Holy water on its earth silences it. Then wounds can leave her where you can stake her." These clues replace the diary and Mirela's possible betrayal; no clue depends on befriending the disguise.

‡ **Facade Veil:** level 5 wizard spell, Wizard Spells Mystic Powers. [Rules entry](#)



B. THE IRON THORNS

(By coach) Behind you iron clangs: the gate you rolled through a moment ago stands shut.

(On foot) Behind you iron clangs: a tall black gate stands shut in the fence where there was none.

On its pillars sit two headless stone knights, their heads in the weeds, watching you. Then fog rises out of the ground until the person beside you is a shadow.



Anyone who climbs back out is in the Choking Grey. Minutes later the fog thins, and far ahead a man's voice calls for help. The second Iron Thorns, west of F, works the same way.

C. WOLFWOOD

The trees close in, trunks wet and black, crowns lost in the grey. There is no birdsong, and the silence feels held, like a breath before a scream.

Half an hour in, a dead villager lies among wolf tracks with 6 cp and a letter sealed with a wax "G":

Give the players Handout 1 (Appendix: Player Handouts).

The wolves gather. Each hour in the wood, a Probability Roll of 4+ on a d6 starts a howl; after 5 rounds the wolves attack: 3 wolves if the party is heading for the village, or 1 dire wolf and 1d3+1 wolves if heading for the border. They break off once the party turns toward the village.

D. THE BLACKWATER

The river comes out of the fog fast, cold and utterly black, and shows no reflection.

Swimming takes a STR Chance Roll (TN 14) each round (failure: 1d6 damage, light drowned). The bridge is safe. The Countess crosses running water only by bridge and will not willingly fight near it.

E. THE GHOST VILLAGE

Roofs grow out of the fog over slick black cobbles. Somewhere a woman sobs on and on. A woman with a basket, grey as smoke, walks through a closed door. The man's voice calls again, close: "Here. Please. He is in the house."

Ghostly Villagers (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) still live out a day long ended; addressed, one may answer a single question, or fade. The voice is Grigore's; he leads the party to his house (E4). Other buildings are gutted shells; a rest in one is unsafe.

E1. CORNELIU'S SUNDRIES

Light glows behind a narrow shop's curtains under a squeaking sign: "Corneliu's Sundries - All Needs Supplied." The paint is three hundred years old and looks fresh.

Corneliu's ghost sells dead travelers' ordinary gear (no holy items or mounts) at five times the price. "Where else will you shop?" Threatened, he fades until dusk.



E2. THE HOLLOW CUP

Warm yellow light falls from an open doorway under a wooden cup split down the middle. Inside, a fire burns and grey shapes hunch over empty cups.

The ghost barman Lazar pours sour, real red wine (1 sp); two ghostly toughs rise if someone skips paying or starts trouble.

2 Tavern Toughs (Tomb Wraiths) - HP 22 each, AC 13, DR 0; 1 attack: life-drain touch 1d6+1 necrotic, heals half; Saves Quick +2, Tough +0, Mind +1; Wild Vile (Reaver). Half damage from nonmagical weapons.

† **Tomb Wraith**: existing creature; Monster Trove for Early Adventurers, entry "Tomb Wraith". [Rules entry](#)

At the back, a longsword across her knees, sits Ilinca (Appendix: The Recurring Cast), the Magistrate's daughter. Her father died last winter, unburied; the Countess has bitten her brother twice. She knows her father's hand and takes the party home. On Night 2, if Severina can approach within speaking distance, she whispers from outside the party's refuge or from the dark: "Give me the little sun, and your brother goes free." She demands the Hallowed Sigil; the offer is a lie. Omit it if there is no opportunity to speak. If the party has risked something real for Luca, Ilinca tells them the offer at once; otherwise she conceals it. If they have the Sigil, she asks to borrow it, meaning to trade it. If not, she asks for their help finding it, hoping to trade it for Luca. Play out the conversation; she cannot simply take an item from a PC or hand over its bearer without the party having a chance to act.

‡ **Hallowed Sigil**: new magic item, found in the Chapel of Ash (K12).

Playing Ilinca. She wants Luca out at any price and keeps a sharpened ash stake in her boot for him if the third bite comes. "I don't need you to be brave. I need you to be there when I say."

E3. THE WIDOW'S HOUSE

The sobbing pours from a narrow townhouse boarded from inside. It is the sound of someone who has forgotten how to stop.

The door is barricaded (STR Chance Roll TN 12). Upstairs among old dolls kneels the ghost of Widow Aneta. Her daughter Dorina climbed out of the window one night toward a beautiful voice. Gentleness quiets her: Dorina went "toward the lady's lights". On her wrist hangs an empty chain; its tin heart locket, holding a curl of Aneta's hair, went with Dorina.

Dorina is Vasilka (U15), who still wears it. It comes home if Vasilka is destroyed, falls to ash with the Countess, or is named Dorina and talked into giving it up. Brought here, it lets Aneta rest (the DN may award a small heroic-feat XP bonus under the normal rules). Roughness, or the truth about what Dorina became, turns her grief to rage.



Widow Aneta (Dusk Banshee) - HP 20, AC 14, DR 0; 1 attack: touch 1d6+1; Saves Quick +2, Tough +2, Mind +2; Wild Vile (Reaver). Wail Echo: 30 ft, Quick save or 1d4+1 sonic (cooldown 3 rounds). Specter Step: reappears up to 30 ft away; cannot attack that turn (cooldown 2 rounds).

† **Dusk Banshee:** existing creature; Monster Trove for Early Adventures, entry "Dusk Banshee". [Rules entry](#)

E4. THE MAGISTRATE'S HOUSE

A clawed mansion crouches behind a rusting fence, a path trodden flat around it by padded feet. Every boarded window is hung with charms and stained with something dark.

Holy signs cover every wall. Through a half-open door a grey-bearded man lies under a sheet, months dead. The young man who lets you in is pale as paper, two dark wounds on his throat.

Luca (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) was found by Grigore as a small boy at the edge of Wolfwood, remembering nothing. A chapel icon kept the worst away until it vanished a month ago, the night of the second bite (a charmed Luca threw it in the Blackwater). The Countess talks "so sweetly" at the door; twice he nearly asked her in.

This living home bars her uninvited: a refuge, not a safe rest (the night raid still comes). If the party did not meet Ilinca in E2, she returns home about ten minutes after they enter E4. Both want to go with the party; refused, Ilinca takes him to the chapel (E6).

Playing Luca. He fears part of him wants to say yes to her, and hides his dreams because they come true. Once per night he may remember a castle passage or name he cannot know. At each night's first rest he dreams of a woman in grey (Livia):

Night	The Dream
1	A garlanded tower stair: "Not that way. Not again."
2	A crypt door carved with his name (D14): "She has made you a bed. Do not lie in it."
3	A sleeping woman with a honey-pale sword (D40): "It was always yours. Bring it to her."

Grigore's Ghost (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) appears here. Buried in the Quiet Rows (E7), he grows fainter but stays until his son is safe, and reveals his strongbox under the study floor: 120 gp, a silver chain (40 gp), a potion of healing, and a cloak clasp worked as a candle inside a sun.

‡ **Potion of Healing:** existing magic item; Magic Items for Early Adventures, entry "Potion of Healing". [Rules entry](#)



Playing Grigore. Pompous when calm, babbling when frightened. His secret: the lost boy wore a man's grey cloak pinned with that clasp; Grigore knew the mark, burned the cloak, and never told Luca.

E5. THE GUEST HOUSE

The guest house behind the mansion stands open to the fog. Four skeletons lie behind a furniture barricade under a scratched line: "Third night. The fog will not let us go."

A WIS Chance Roll (TN 12) finds 34 sp, 9 gp, a silver dagger and one sealed flask of holy water. At midnight 1d3+1 ghouls gnawers claw up through the floor.

Ghoul Gnawer - HP 22, AC 12, DR 0; 1 attack: claw 1d6+1; Saves Quick +2, Tough +2, Mind -1; Wild Vile (Reaver). Gnaw Bite: Quick save or 1d4+1 necrotic (cooldown 2 rounds). Paralysis: hit by a claw, Tough save or paralyzed 1 round. Keen Smell: sneaking within 30 ft needs a Mind save.

† **Ghoul Gnawer:** existing creature; Monster Trove for Early Adventures, entry "Ghoul Gnawer". [Rules entry](#)

E6. THE CHAPEL OF THE LAST LIGHT

At the foot of the castle's rock stands a grey chapel, its bell tower leaning. Inside, a hoarse, thin voice prays without pause.

Before a claw-marked altar kneels the ghost of Father Macarie (Appendix: The Recurring Cast), who died here on the night of the pact. His prayer bars undead from the chapel and its rise, and the Countess's wolves and bats will not cross the threshold (living thralls can enter, but none comes while the party rests here). The chapel is a safe rest. Once per day he can also give Altar Blessing to someone kneeling at the altar: Mend Wound or Sanctified Ward (Appendix: The Recurring Cast). He offers:

- "A stake through her heart will end her for good, if you catch her helpless or asleep. Wounds alone may only send her back to her coffin. She wrote everything down. If she has a weakness, she has written it."
- "Our sigil still sits in the castle chapel, in a light she cannot step into."
- "Her sister was Livia, and Livia was the one the knights loved."

Playing Macarie. He wants someone to ring the chapel bell so he can stop. While the pact holds, the bell has no voice: pulled, it makes no sound. When the pact breaks it rings by itself at first dawn and he goes to his rest; until then his prayer keeps the chapel safe. He was her confessor; a character who earns his trust hears what the journal leaves out: "She asked me whether a man who turns his back on love has chosen. I told her yes. She has never forgiven



me." Pressed, he admits: "Before the wedding she told me she would take him, whatever it cost her sister. I heard her. I warned no one."

E7. THE QUIET ROWS

At every midnight while the veil is open, a bell that does not ring strikes twelve. Pale figures in armor and rags rise from the graves, form up two by two, and march toward the castle, hopeless and brave.

A half-dug grave by the gate is Ilinca's failed attempt to bury her father. The Marching Dead, about forty adventurers who died fighting the Countess, cannot be harmed, turned or reasoned with. They cross W1 and the Fog Court (W4), pass through the Chapel of Ash (K12), climb the Lovers' Spire (S9) to S12 and vanish down the Hollow Shaft. They travel at a steady walking pace, reaching the Bone Gate about three hours after leaving E7, plus any time the followers themselves lose. Inside the castle they keep that pace without stopping. Following them leads to the Hallowed Sigil.

F. ROAD JUNCTION

West of the village the road splits in the fog. A cold wind whistles down the northern lane.

The north fork is the castle road: past G, over the Weeping Falls gorge (H) on a high bridge, to the fork where the Night Coach waits (I), then east up the crags to J. The west fork climbs to the second Iron Thorns.

G. WANDERERS' CAMP

Painted wagons ring a fire beside a still, dark pool, and someone plays a slow, sad fiddle.

Five Wanderers (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) of the Kin keep a cold truce with the Countess. By Lantern Law her creatures cannot enter the lantern ring uninvited, and a paying party may take one safe rest here for one night, using the normal safe-rest recovery rate. Codrin says, "Mother Zora said you'd come," and leads them to G1.

G1. MOTHER ZORA'S TENT

Red light swims from crimson lamps. Over a bowl of dark water bends a tiny old woman in shawls, eyes black as a bird's. "Finally," she says, and laughs too long.

Mother Zora (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) knows each character's name and answers one question each, for a gold coin, a true secret, or a drop of blood. Her riddles are honest:

- Dawnbrand: "A sword of morning sleeps beside the bride who never woke a wife."
- The Sigil: "The old light hangs on an altar the dead walk past every night."



- Her weakness: "By a fire that never dies, she keeps her own confession."
- Luca: "He jumped, last time. She means to catch him this time."

‡ **Dawnbrand:** new magic longsword, found in the Tomb of Livia (D40).

Threaten her and the camp turns on the party. **Her secret:** on the first night she tells the Countess every newcomer's name (which is why the K9-K10 welcome notes know them). A party that cleanses or destroys the urn or brings Luca to her camp gets one free answer, "to square the account."

H. THE WEEPING FALLS

The Blackwater falls in a ragged white veil, sounding like someone crying. High overhead a thin bridge spans the gorge.

A footpath drops here from the castle road. Behind the falling water the Countess cannot reach the party, though an hour there means a Tough save or Weary.





I. THE NIGHT COACH





At the fork waits a black coach and four dark horses. No one sits on the box. The door swings open without a sound.

There is room for Luca and Ilinca. The horses (A) drive to the Bone Gate and nothing turns them. On foot the steep road takes about two hours.

J. THE BONE GATE

The road turns hard east and the castle looms, huge and black. Past two broken guardhouses a fifty-foot chasm drops into bottomless fog, spanned by a lowered drawbridge of grey beams. Beyond, the great doors stand open, spilling warm golden light as if guests were expected.

The guardhouses hold only bones and rust. Run the crossing at W1 (Map 2).





CASTLE SEVERHALLOW

Castle Severhallow crowns a pillar of black rock a thousand feet above the Ghost Village. It climbs from the Bone Gate to the spires and descends through three Deep Layers to Severina's coffin (D44).

Zone	Areas kept	Map	Threat
The Bone Gate and Outer Ward	W1-W8, W13, W14	2	Moderate
The Great Keep	K1, K2, K4-K14, K16, K17, K20	3	Moderate
The Countess's Court	U1, U3-U6, U9, U11, U12, U14-U16, U18	4	Moderate
The Needle Spires	S1, S3, S7, S9-S12, S16	5	Medium
The Larders of Ill Omen	L2, L4, L5, L8, L9, L14	6	Medium
The Under-Prison	P1, P3-P9, P11, P13, P14, P18	7	Hard
The Long Crypts	D1, D9, D10, D12, D14, D16, D19, D20	8	Hard
The Drowned Vaults	D24, D26-D27, D29, D30, D34	9	Hardest
The Hallowed Depths	D35-D38, D40-D44	10	Hardest

Areas shown on the maps but not described here are empty, ruined or stripped.

HOW THE CASTLE WORKS

The grey hours and the night. From about 6 am to 6 pm the pact holds Severina asleep in her coffin (D44); she returns before then by mist, or starts at least half an hour earlier as a bat if mist is unavailable. If she has not arrived when the grey hours begin, she takes flesh and sleeps where she is. Woken in D44 by day, she fights only in D43-D44. The Brides (D16), Vasilka (the eighth bed in U15) and Noapte (D30) share that sleep. On the last night the grey hours begin only when the veil closes.

Her spies and hunting encounters. Spy reports and hunting encounters work as in the Countess chapter. Each of the four hunting encounters happens once across the adventure, but in her own rooms she always fights back, and a thrall's Hold and Call never spends one.



Light and doors. Torches light the main halls and relight at dusk; other rooms are dark. A stuck door takes a STR Chance Roll (TN 10); a thief picks a locked one using the normal Pick Locks percentage skill and tools, or anyone may force it (STR Chance Roll, TN 15). Lock-picking throughout this adventure uses that skill, not a separate Chance Roll.

Resting. The castle's safe rests are the cleansed Chapel of Ash (K12), the Lantern Niche (D9), the Chapel of the Last Light (D37, once, while its window glows) and the Tomb of Livia (D40). Use the safe and unsafe recovery rates given under Safe Rests in Running the Adventure. Anywhere else, keep rolling encounter checks and spy reports.

The Veil Clock. The veil closes at first grey after the last night (6 am, or 7 am if the P14 glass was turned). Read it in the midnight ripple, best seen from the Edge (W13), which thins each night to a thread; in the great hourglass (P14); and in the cracked bell (S3), which rung at midnight shows the way out.

THE SHORTCUTS

- **The Hollow Shaft (S12 to D24).** A natural chimney 800 feet deep, with narrow resting ledges and old iron rope eyes every 50 feet. They are visible from either entrance before anyone commits. A party with climbing gear and 100 feet of rope can climb in stages, looping the rope through the eyes and recovering it at each ledge; no continuous 800-foot rope is needed. W5 and L9 each hold 50 feet. Allow two hours either way for the party, including rigging and recovery, plus delays. Each climber makes eight STR Chance Rolls (TN 12), one per 100 feet. A failed roll means a slip: Quick save TN 13 catches it. If that also fails, a properly secured climbing line catches the climber for 1d6 damage; without one the fall deals 10d6. A caught slip or rope-caught fall leaves that stage unfinished: retry it, adding 15 minutes for each retry. A thief using Climb Walls instead of a rope uses that skill for each stage, with the same slip, time and fall consequences. Explain these risks before the descent. Soft Descent prevents fall damage while its spell effect lasts.
- **The dumbwaiter (K16 to L5).** Drops 90 feet; holds one Small character, or a Medium one folded (hauler's STR Chance Roll, TN 12).
- **The Postern Stair (W14 to L1 and L2)** down the cliff, **the Black Stair (K20 to L3 and L2)** down from the keep, and **the Ossuary Stair (P18 to D1)** into the Long Crypts.

CASTLE RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Check every 30 minutes (the Larders and Long Crypts use their own hourly checks): an encounter on a 1 on a d6 by day, 1-2 at night. Below the Long Crypts there are no checks. Reroll anything destroyed.



d12	Upper castle (W, K, U, S)	Below (L, P, D)
1	Bats snuff torches; 1 Giant Bat (2 at night)	1d3 Thrall Servants hauling a dead traveler's pack
2	1d3 petitioner ghosts of U4 (Ghostly Villager stats) howling for justice, in the Court only	1d4+1 Skeletons (K7) on patrol
3	2 Thrall Servants polishing the polished	1d3+1 zombies (Countess chapter) dragging chains
4	1d3 Thrall Servants with linens; polite, then they cry out	A Thought Leech (K9-K10) in a tight passage
5	2 Skeletons step off their stands (K7)	2 Skeletons (K7) on a dead patrol
6	1 Giant Spider (S3), 2 in the spires	1 Giant Spider (S3) in a ceiling crack
7	1 Livid Slime (W1) on a doorway ceiling	1 Livid Slime (W1) in a drain grate
8	No encounter; coven raids follow the schedule in S7	2 Giant Bats up from a shaft
9	By day Mirela, with a dinner invitation; at night a lost Bride who begs before she bites	At night a Bride, hunting; by day, footprints toward D16
10	Sir Matyas Orben, a knight's ghost: one true answer, or one guided walk (procedure below); then treat as 11	Sir Matyas Orben
11	A Thought Leech (K9-K10) in a bed canopy	Mihnea on his rounds; he slips away to warn her
12	By day an echo of the wedding night; at night the Countess, to talk or hunt	As upper; by day a voice calls a character's name and the next spy report succeeds

Giant Bats are in the Countess chapter; other creatures use the cited room or Appendix: The Recurring Cast. Sir Matyas needs no combat statistics: he cannot be harmed and never attacks. Once, he answers one question truthfully or guides the party along a walkable route to one room they name that he knew in life. He knows the old public rooms and S3 bell, but not the pact, hidden mechanisms or present occupants. Normal travel time, doors, hazards and encounters apply; he gives directions rather than bypassing them. At the destination he salutes and fades; later random results of 10 count as 11.



THE BONE GATE AND OUTER WARD (MAP 2)

W1. THE BONE GATE

The road ends at a chasm brimming with fog like milk in a bowl, spanned by a drawbridge of grey beams on groaning chains. Beyond it rises an arch of bone: thighbones and shinbones fitted end to end, yellow as old piano keys.

Each crossing, a 1 on a d20 snaps a plank: Quick save (TN 12) or the character drops through and hangs by the chains. A companion hauls them up (STR Chance Roll, TN 10). Left hanging alone for 3 rounds, they fall for 10d6, the most any fall deals, and come to rest on scree far below, an hour's climb from area J.

An INT Chance Roll (TN 13) spots a candle-inside-a-sun mark on the keystone, the sign of the Last Light. In the tunnel beyond, a Livid Slime drops on the first warm body; a WIS Chance Roll (TN 14) with a light spots it.

Livid Slime - HP 23, AC 12, DR 0; 1 attack: tendril 1d6+1; Saves Quick +0, Tough +2, Mind +1; Unaligned. Acid Touch: instead of its normal attack, Quick save or 1d4+2 acid (cooldown 2 rounds). Grave Chill: melee attackers make a Tough save or take -1 on their next save this round. Ambusher: after 1 minute motionless in cover, unseen until it moves or attacks.

† **Livid Slime**: existing creature; Monster Trove for Early Adventures, entry "Livid Slime". [Rules entry](#)

W2. THE GATE PASSAGE

The tunnel narrows between walls pocked with square black holes that breathe cold air. Ahead hangs a portcullis, its teeth green with rot. Overhead a chain creaks, then stops.

The holes are murder holes into the winch chamber (stair from W3), where 2 Severhallow Zombies (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) man the winch. Once per day (reset at 6 am), by day or night, when the first half of the party has passed beneath, they drop the portcullis, splitting the party. Anyone under it makes a Quick save (TN 13) or takes 2d6 and is pinned until freed (STR Chance Roll, TN 14). Lifting it by hand takes a STR Chance Roll (TN 16), +2 per helper; the crank in W3 lifts it in one round.

W3. THE GATEHOUSE GUARDROOM

Empty armor racks line the walls, and dented helmets sit on a shelf above a cold brazier. A great iron crank stands in the corner. One helmet wobbles, though nothing touched it.

When anyone touches the crank or raises a voice, the helmets fly. The Poltergeist is anchored to Danut, a carter's lad of fifteen taken two Hallows' Eves ago, hiding in the loft. While he is



here it cannot be harmed; take him a hundred paces away and it stops. Hurt him and its dice double.

Coaxed down (CHA Chance Roll, TN 12, or food), Danut says the coach lady cries at night (W7), the wolves calm for the horn in the hall of heads (K6), and the cliff stair ends at a door "you open with a wire behind the loose stone" (W14). The Magistrate's House or the Wanderers' Camp will take him in.

Danut's Poltergeist - HP 24, AC 12, DR 0; no melee attack; Saves Quick +1, Tough +1, Mind +1; Wild Vile (Reaver). Throw the Room: 30 ft, Quick save or 1d6+2 bludgeoning (cooldown 1 round). Anchored: no damage while Danut is present; Turn Undead has no effect.

† **Poltergeist**: existing creature; Monster Trove: Things Others Swore They Saw, entry "Poltergeist". [Rules entry](#)

Danut (human boy) - HP 5, AC 10, DR 0; no attacks; Saves Quick +1, Tough +0, Mind -1; Impartial Kind (Mediator).

W4. THE FOG COURT

A wide courtyard lies under knee-deep fog that ignores the wind. Stables, a coach house and a kennel huddle against the walls, and up a flight of steps the keep's great doors stand open on warm light.

This hub opens on W5, W6, W8, K1, and through the ruined garden (W11) to the Edge (W13). The well (W10) drops 120 feet to the Cistern (L14).

The procession. At every midnight while the veil is open, the wedding night replays:

Grey guests in old finery flow in through the gate tunnel to music without sound, and a fair-haired bride walks on her father's arm, laughing. Last comes a woman in a gown the color of old wine, walking alone. She does not laugh.

The bride is Livia; the woman in wine-red is Severina. The procession passes through K1, K2, K7 and K11 to the Chapel of Ash (K12). The ghosts cannot be harmed and attack no one. Anyone who walks in step with them is handed a sprig of grey rosemary, the old wedding favor; it never wilts, and its bearer passes the procession on the Lovers' Spire stair (S9) untouched.

W5. THE STABLES

Warm dark and the smell of horses. Two tall black horses turn to watch you, unblinking. At the far end stands a stall with a door of iron, its straw scorched.

The coach's spare team fights only in defense. The iron stall is Noapte's (Appendix: The Recurring Cast). By day it is empty; the first time W5 or S16 matters each night, roll once: on 11 or higher on a d20 she is in the stall, otherwise she is circling the roofs (S16). Record that



location until she is disturbed, ridden, destroyed or summoned for the last-night descent; do not roll her into two places. Open her stall and she screams (an automatic spy report) and attacks. Destroyed anywhere but D30, she re-forms in D30 at the next dusk.

Under the hay lies a dead adventurer's pack: 50 feet of rope, 12 gp and a Potion of Healing.

‡ **Potion of Healing:** existing magic item; Magic Items for Early Adventures, entry "Potion of Healing". [Rules entry](#)

The 2 horses use the Coach Horse stats from The Withered Road (A).

W6. THE COACH HOUSE

A long dry room smelling of harness oil. The Night Coach stands in the middle, its roof polished like a coffin lid, not a fleck of road on its wheels.

If using Severina as the coachwoman, also place the dead servant's page here as specified in the option (A). Under the rear seat, a velvet-lined box with a slot in its lid holds dozens of tagged trinkets: a wedding ring, a watch stopped at midnight. Mirela drops each year's tags through the slot without looking and has not opened the box in thirty years. Every tag reads "Hallows' Eve, the Nth Grey Year," from the 212th to the 299th; an INT Chance Roll (TN 12) sees that the way in opens only on Hallows' Eve.

One tag, in a different hand, holds only a torn bootlace: "Pintea, tinker. Rang himself out. Third night, before the grey." It proves someone escaped by the bell (S3), and can turn Mirela against her mistress.

W7. MIRELA'S ROOMS

Two bare rooms over the coach house: a bed made tight as a drum, one chair, black coats on hooks. A tall mirror hangs on the wall, turned to face the plaster.

By day, on 11 or higher on a d20, Mirela (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) sits here. She fights only if cornered and answers with weary honesty, but never betrays her mistress: "She keeps her treasures where she keeps her grief, and her grief is everywhere."

The diary under the mattress (Handout 4) begins with her arrival with her husband Silviu and their daughter; only Mirela is mentioned again. Later pages say the Countess cannot cross running water (the Cistern, L14), that forty years ago Mirela carried her mistress's earth down from beneath the chapel (D43), and that she recovers in flesh behind a coffin lid that bolts itself from within. A stake through her heart during that helpless recovery would end her for good. The last page: "This year the boy's face came right. She says it is him. Light keep the boy."

If the DN uses the option that Mirela is Severina in disguise, the rooms are bare; move the urn-and-coffin clue to W6 using the complete substitutions in the coachwoman option (A).



W8. THE KENNELS

Behind iron bars, three grey wolves rise as one and come forward without a sound. Behind them an old man in a leather apron fills a trough that never fills. You can see the wall through him.

Inside the castle, these 3 wolves are her wolves hunting encounter (Countess chapter). If they sense strangers, on 6 or higher on a d20 they howl: an automatic spy report. The horn in K6 can turn them.

The ghost is Old Grozav, the kennelman (Ghostly Villager, Appendix: The Recurring Cast). If someone pours well water into the trough, he looks up, says the horn in the Trophy Hall still calls the pack to heel, and adds: "The young master's horse would not go near the chapel that night. Horses know." Then he fades to rest.

W13. THE EDGE

A stone platform juts from the cliff into empty air, its railing low and broken. Below there is only fog, and the wind sounds almost like someone calling a name.

A fall deals 10d6 on the rocks far below. At midnight while the veil is lifted:

A ripple of silver light crosses the sky from rim to rim, like breath across still water. For a heartbeat you see real stars beyond it. Then the grey closes again.

On Night 1 it fills the sky; on Night 3 it is a single thread. A WIS Chance Roll (TN 13) shows the fog thinner to the east over the Withered Road: one place the midnight bell's thread can lead (S3). A gap in the railing opens on W14.

W14. THE POSTERN STAIR

Steps no wider than a coffin are cut into the cliff face, winding down out of sight. There is no rail. The wind pushes at your back as if it wants to help.

The stair zigzags 80 feet down to the postern door into the Larders (L1). Each unroped character makes one Quick save (TN 11), or TN 14 in a gust (a 1 on a d6), or drops 30 feet to a ledge for 3d6 (STR Chance Roll, TN 12, to climb back).

The door is barred inside. Force it with a STR Chance Roll (TN 16), or lift the bar with a wire behind the loose stone: DEX Chance Roll, TN 10 with Danut's tip (W3), TN 15 without. A short passage runs on to the Long Hallway (L2).



THE GREAT KEEP (MAP 3)

K1. THE FRONT DOORS

The great doors stand open, twice a man's height and studded with black iron, and ten paces inside a second pair swings open on its own. Above you, four small stone dragons crouch on the lintel.

Two are Lintel Drakes. They ignore anyone coming in, but anyone except Severina heading out wakes them, spitting sparks. They never leave this room.

2 Lintel Drakes - HP 18 each, AC 15, DR 2; 2 attacks: claw 1d4+1, bite 1d6+1; Saves Quick +2, Tough +2, Mind +0; Impartial Vile (Schemer). Ember Spit: 15-ft line, Quick save or 2d4 fire (cooldown 3 rounds). Stone at Rest: indistinguishable from carvings while still.

K2. THE DOMED ENTRY

A round hall under a dome painted as a night sky, scattered with gilt stars. Arches open in every direction. The stars seem very bright for paint.

Arches lead to K4, K7 and the Wind Stair (K17). One star is a peephole: in a crawlspace above the dome (ladder from the servants' passage, K15) lies the Star-Watcher (Thrall Servant, Appendix: The Recurring Cast), with a bell cord to the Cold Throne Room (U3). A WIS Chance Roll (TN 14) sees the star blink. If he sees the party, the next spy report succeeds automatically; if silenced before he sends word, only that next report instead succeeds on 13 or higher. Later reports return to the normal Spies rules; silencing one watcher does not disable the whole network.

K4. THE GREAT HALL OF FOUR SETTINGS

Three chandeliers blaze over a long table laid in white, and the smell of roast fowl and spiced wine makes your stomach turn over. It is set for exactly as many guests as there are of you, a goblet poured at each place.

The food is real; eating restores 1d4 HP. Doors lead to K5 and K16.

The Countess's welcome. The first time the party is here after dusk:

The organ ends a wedding march slowed into a dirge. A tall, pale woman in a gown the color of old wine comes down from the gallery, goblet in hand. "You came," she says, smiling as if at old friends. "Sit. I set your places myself."

This is the real Countess. She knows every name and fights only if attacked. Lines:



- If Luca is present, her eyes never leave him: "You took a long road home." Once she calls him Aurel, and corrects herself.
- Her toast: "To the guests who stay." The wine does not stain her lips.
- Asked what she wants: "What every hostess wants. A full table, and no one leaving early."

After ten minutes she mentions their rooms (K9-K10) and leaves. If attacked, she spends The Countess herself on whoever struck first (up to 5 rounds). If that is spent, she fights 3 rounds, sighs "Such poor manners," and leaves. 2 Thrall Servants (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) pour the wine and fight only if she is attacked.





K5. THE ORGAN LOFT



Three keyboards of yellowed ivory, stops with little porcelain faces, pipes vanishing into the dark. Sheet music lies open on the stand. The bench is still warm.

Every dusk the organ plays its wedding march, ending on the same chord. Playing it opens the pipe wall onto a spiral stair up to U2 and the secret way into the Study (U9). Anyone who heard the dusk music can pick it out (INT Chance Roll, TN 12; a musician needs none), and three keys are worn pale (WIS Chance Roll, TN 13). A wrong chord makes the pipes scream: Tough save (TN 12) or 1d6 thunder and deafened for an hour, and an automatic spy report.

K6. THE TROPHY HALL

Heads line the walls: stag, boar, bear, rows of wolves. In the place of honor hangs a wolf's head the size of a pony's, a silver hunting horn on a hook beneath it.

When the party is halfway down the hall, or anyone touches the horn, the Old Grey, a phantom wolf, pours out of the wall, fading as it springs. It never leaves the hall and returns at dusk unless its head is smashed (AC 10, 15 HP) or burned.

Each blast of the horn (25 gp, a full action) stops the Old Grey for 1 round. Once only, it also forces the kennel wolves (W8), or her wolves hunting encounter, to make a Mind save or slink back to the kennels.

The Old Grey (Giant Phantom) - HP 53, AC 13, DR 0; Large; 1 attack: bite 3d6+3; Saves Quick +2, Tough +2, Mind -2; Wild Vile (Reaver). Phantom Lash: 30 ft, Quick save or 3d4+3 poison (cooldown 3 rounds). Invisible until it attacks; Mind save to disbelieve. Blindsight.

† **Giant Phantom:** existing creature; Monster Trove for Early Adventures, entry "Giant Phantom". [Rules entry](#)

K7. THE LONG GALLERY

A gallery a hundred feet long, lined with suits of armor bearing painted shields. Carved into the floor at the entrance: WALK, GUEST. THE HOUSE IS SLEEPING.

It links K2, K6, K8 and K11. Three suits hold Skeletons that wake if anyone moves faster than a walk; anyone who stands still is ignored.

3 Skeletons in armor - HP 14 each, AC 14, DR 2; 1 attack: sword 1d6+1; Saves Quick +0, Tough +1, Mind -1; Orderly Impartial (Arbiter). Bare Bones: piercing deals half damage; bludgeoning ignores 1 point of DR.

† **Skeleton:** existing creature; Monster Trove: Old Fears and Hungry Things, entry "Skeleton". [Rules entry](#)



K8. THE GUEST WING CORRIDOR

A carpeted corridor with six numbered doors, each with a brass card holder bearing one of your names. The carpet shows no footprints, not even yours.

Doors 1 and 2 open on K9-K10, 3 on linen, 4 on a privy, 5 on K11, 6 on a back stair to K15. At every midnight while the veil is open, the doors rearrange: roll a d6 for each door the first time it is opened, and it keeps that room until dusk:

- 1: its true room.
- 2: a guest room not there by day, with a cradle rocking by itself.
- 3: the Doll's Room (U12). Rozalia looks up, startled.
- 4: the Bath of Iron (U14).
- 5: bricks. Behind them, someone knocks back.
- 6: this corridor seen from its far end, with the party's backs going through a door.

K9-K10. THE GUEST ROOMS

A warm bedchamber with a fire burning low and the bed turned down. On the pillow lies a folded card with your name on it in a fine, slanting hand.

Each card (Handout 2) names something the character never told anyone: "For the one who counts the exits. There are fewer than you think." Each is cut from a leftover invitation to the marriage of the Lady Livia and Sir Aurel.

The pillow. One pillow in K10 hides a Thought Leech (WIS Chance Roll, TN 15, to see the shimmer). Feeding unnoticed, it drains 1 WIS per hour; each hour a Mind save (TN 13) wakes the sleeper. Once noticed, it fights with its touch.

Thought Leech - HP 26, AC 11, DR 0; Tiny; 1 attack: touch 1d6 psychic and 1 WIS drain; Saves Quick +2, Tough -2, Mind +0; Wild Impartial (Seeker). Mental Anchor: removing it takes a full action and a WIS Chance Roll (TN 13). At WIS 3 the victim is catatonic until a full rest and it stops feeding; lost WIS returns 1 per day of rest. Killing it returns half the WIS it drank; Banish Curse restores all.

† **Thought Leech:** existing creature; OD Realms Guide, entry "Thought Leech".

K11. THE HALL OF WATCHING SAINTS

Painted saints in gilt frames line both walls, their faces gouged out down to the bare board. Only one face, by the chapel doors, is whole.



Severina spared Saint Ambrozie the Lamplighter, patron of the chapel's knights, holding a candle before a rising sun: the mark on the Sigil. His sword hand is empty, and beneath it is lettered: "His blade sleeps beside the bride," pointing to Dawnbrand in the Tomb of Livia (D40). Only the first character to light the candle stub and pray receives +2 on one Mind save before dawn. Extinguishing and relighting the candle does not renew the blessing.

K12. THE CHAPEL OF ASH

Grey light falls through broken glass onto a nave buried in ash, soft as snow. One beam of clean light falls on the altar, where a disc of white gold rests. A robed figure lies across the altar steps, one withered hand stretched toward the light, a finger's width short.

The ash is the chapel itself, burned in a breath the moment Severina killed Livia at this altar. The Hallowed Sigil rests in the beam, the last hallowed ground in the castle above the Deep Layers; no undead can enter it, so she set the chapel's dead to guard what she could not take. A Vile creature that touches it takes 2d6 radiant and drops it. With the Sigil, a cleric's Turn Undead pool gains 30, still short of Severina's 165.

‡ **Hallowed Sigil:** new magic item (see Appendix: Treasures of Severhallow).

The body is Father Radomir Vesk, a Vile priest who came to steal the Sigil. When it is lifted, he rises as a Bitter Ghast and 4 zombies (Countess chapter) claw out of the ash. He mocks every prayer ("Light, light, light. It never once came when I called.") and will not step into the beam. A cleric holding the Sigil turns them easily.

Father Radomir Vesk (Bitter Ghast) - HP 41, AC 14, DR 0; 2 attacks: claws 1d4+1, 1d4+1; Saves Quick +2, Tough +1, Mind +2; Wild Vile (Reaver). Hate Shriek: 30 ft, Mind save (TN 13) or 1d8+2 psychic (cooldown 3 rounds). Stench: 30 ft, Tough save (TN 13) or -2 to attack for 3 rounds.

† **Bitter Ghast:** existing creature; Monster Trove for Early Adventures, entry "Bitter Ghast". [Rules entry](#)

The safe rest. The chapel is cleansed once Radomir and his dead are destroyed and the Sigil has left the altar; pale light then fills it. While the veil is open, no undead, thrall or creature of the Countess can cross the threshold, and no spy report finds the party inside. The midnight processions still pass through harmlessly. Doors lead to K13 and K14.

K13. THE SACRISTY

A small vaulted room. Yellowed vestments hang on pegs, and on the writing desk lies a single folded letter.

A cabinet holds 3 flasks of holy water (2d6 radiant against undead), a Vigorwell Phial (2d8 HP) and two silver chalices (30 gp each). The letter (Handout 5) is Father Cassian's: Lord Varen had the knight's sword laid with the Lady Livia in the deep tombs, "so that whoever ends this



must go to the bride first." It also teaches that a stake through Severina's heart while she lies helpless or asleep ends her forever. Cassian lies in the Long Crypts (D12).

‡ **Vigorwell Phial:** existing magic item; Magic Items for Early Adventures, entry "Vigorwell Phial". [Rules entry](#)

K14. THE BELL ROPE HALL

A tall, bare chamber like the inside of a chimney. Thick ropes hang from a square hole far above, swaying with no wind.

The ropes run 170 feet up to the bell spire through the S2 rope well (empty), beside the Spire Landing (S1). Climbing them takes three STR Chance Rolls (TN 11). Pulling them only clanks the cracked bell, which opens no way out (S3), but it wakes every bat in the castle: an automatic spy report, and a cloud of bats with 2 Giant Bats (Countess chapter) comes down in 1d4 rounds, spending no hunting encounter.

K16. THE BUTLER'S PANTRY

Silver gleams on shelves under one lamp. A board of little brass bells hangs on the wall, and in the corner a square hatch beside a rope opens on a dark shaft.

The silver is worth 60 gp; the hatch is the dumbwaiter to the Kitchen (L5). The bells read Hall, Study, Rose Chamber, Doll's Room, Throne, Ballroom, Spire and Chapel (its clapper torn out); a larger black bell marked "Below" rings by itself every dusk when Severina rises. Ringing a service bell by hand brings 1d2 thralls up from the Larders to wait in that room for an hour. Each bell works once a night.

K17. THE WIND STAIR

A broad stair sweeps up in a long curve. Halfway up, a cold wind pours down the steps and the torch flames lie flat.

The stair climbs 50 feet to the Grand Landing (U1). An open flame goes out on each flight without a DEX Chance Roll (TN 10). At midnight, a character who looks up sees the woman in wine-red at the head of the stair, and then she is gone.

K20. THE BLACK STAIR

A plain black door opens on a stair so steep it is nearly a ladder. Cold air rises with a smell of salt, smoke and a butcher's shop at the end of a hot day.

The stair drops 90 feet to the landing at L3 (empty) beside the Long Hallway (L2). Anyone who runs or fights on it makes a Quick save (TN 12) or falls 1d4 x 10 feet, taking 1d6 per 10 feet.



Halfway down, a gate bell warns the Servants' Hall (L4) unless muffled (DEX Chance Roll, TN 11). Fresh red drips lead down to Mihnea (L9).

THE COUNTESS'S COURT (MAP 4)

The keep's upper floor. By day, each hour here a 1 on a d6 brings 2 Thrall Servants (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) with candles, coldly polite until steel is drawn. From dusk to midnight she holds court in U3; after midnight she may read in U9 (a 1 on a d6).

† **Thrall Servant:** new creature (Appendix: The Recurring Cast).

U1. THE GRAND LANDING

Eight mirrors as tall as doors line a marble landing. In every one it is full of candlelight and people in old finery. None of them is you.

The mirrors keep pace with the wedding night: at dusk the guests arrive and cross toward the chapel, parting around an empty space beside the fair-haired bride. Severina shows no reflection, then or now. Luca appears in a knight's surcoat, bearing Aurel's face.

U3. THE COLD THRONE ROOM

Frost feathers the windows. Empty benches face a black throne of thorns atop seven steps, where three armored figures stand still as furniture.

Bucur Vulpe, a Wight, was Lord Varen's knight; 2 Skeletons of his men stand with him. They act only if someone climbs past the third step or attacks; those who kneel are let be. "My oath was to the house. She is all the house that is left."

By night Severina sits here while the dead of U4 beg: "Guilty. They are always guilty. Next." She greets the party as guests, then asks gently where Luca sleeps tonight: "Only so I can send up a blanket." Attacked, she fights as The Countess herself if it remains, otherwise 3 rounds, then leaves.

Bucur Vulpe, Wight - HP 80, AC 14, DR 1; 2 attacks: blade 1d8+3, 1d8+3 (+2 to hit); Saves Quick +1, Tough +3, Mind +2; Orderly Vile (Tyrant). Life Drain: 5 ft, Tough save (TN 13) or 1d8 necrotic and maximum HP reduced as much until a full rest (cooldown 2 rounds). -2 in true sunlight; Turn Undead: max HP 80.

† **Wight:** existing creature; Monster Trove for Seasoned Adventurers, entry "Wight". [Rules entry](#)

The 2 halberdiers are armored skeletons (stats in K7), but armed with halberds: 1d6+1, +1 to hit.



U4. THE PETITIONERS' HALL

On benches facing tall doors sit people you can see through, each holding a folded paper. A brass bell waits on a clerk's table.

4 Ghostly Villagers (Appendix: The Recurring Cast), petitioners bound to the Court, take the party for clerks. Ringing the bell sends the next one to U3. Granting a petition lays that ghost to rest.

† **Ghostly Villager:** new creature (Appendix: The Recurring Cast).

Petitioner	What it knows	What it asks
Baba Floarea	"My Tavi rang the big bell at midnight. It shows the road home." (S3)	Tavi's fate (his token is in S3).
Catrina, bride's maid	"Lady Livia's ring went into the bath. Her Ladyship threw it." (U14)	The ring laid before Livia's portrait or tomb.
Gavril, miller	"The steward buys dead men's boots. He keeps it all past the kitchens." (L9)	His flour sack from L5.
Nistor, clerk	"Master Emeric keeps her books." (U6)	His name struck from Emeric's ledger.

U5. THE GALLERY OF PORTRAITS

Four candlelit portraits hang down a long gallery. A fair-haired bride with rowan in her hair looks down from a frame whose brass plate reads LIVIA.





Lord Varen's hand rests on a plain-hilted, honey-colored longsword: Dawnbrand (now in D40). Lady Corvina holds rowan. Severina in wine-red has been slashed and sewn with black thread. An empty frame reads "The Consort".

Livia is the Guardian Portrait: it acts if attacked or if anyone touches a portrait. Aurel's name stills it for a round, oil running from one eye like a tear; Livia's ring (U14) stills it for the scene.

Guardian Portrait - HP 30 (the frame), AC 12, DR 2; 1 attack: gilded lash 1d6 (+3 to hit, 10 ft); Saves Quick -3, Tough +2, Mind +3; Orderly Vile (Tyrant). Painted Gaze: 30 ft, Mind save (TN 14) or spellbound 1 minute or until shaken (cooldown 2 rounds). Lifting Hand: 30 ft, Quick save (TN 13) or lifted 20 ft and dropped later (2d6).

U6. THE LEDGER ROOM

Ledgers drift knee-deep on the floor. A thin grey man on a tall stool writes with a dry quill, a chain on his ankle and a bell rope at his elbow.

Emeric Dunavec, blood-bound, has been chained here 300 years. "Unchain me and I tell you three true things. Leave me and I ring for her and tell her one." Freed (STR TN 14) and promised a way out, he tells all three; threats get the rope (1d4 Thrall Servants in 1d6 rounds).

- "The old chapel's silver lies in the Chapel of Ash, in a light no dead thing can enter. The dead rise when it is lifted." (K12)
- "Her own book sits on the reading stand in her Study. No one has ever dared." (U9)
- "Lady Livia lies far below in a hallowed tomb, with the knight's sword. Her Ladyship has never gone in." (D40)

The Ledger of Guests lists every coach traveler by fate; the party's names are already in it. An hour's reading (INT TN 12) finds three "Departed" in three centuries, each marked "by the bell" (S3). Freed, he strikes Nistor's name (U4).

Emeric Dunavec (blood-bound human) - HP 6, AC 10, DR 0; 1 attack: penknife 1d3; Saves Quick +0, Tough +0, Mind +1; Impartial Vile (Schemer).

U9. THE STUDY

A fire burns high, and for the first time in this castle you are warm. Over the mantel hangs a young knight in a candle-and-sun surcoat; beneath him, on a reading stand, lies a slim black book with a faded ribbon.

The knight has Luca's face, down to the scarred eyebrow. Aurel's undelivered letters to Livia lie by the book; the last: "If ever I am lost, look for me where the light is kept."



Severina's Journal is untrapped. A loose leaf is tucked in its back cover (Handout 3). Reading takes an hour. True sunlight crumbles it unless wrapped. She knows it is gone by the next nightfall and comes for it, with a hunting encounter if any remain.

Her Own Words. Once per encounter for the party, a reader reads her words back to her: Mind save (TN 14) or she loses her next action; during The Countess herself, a failure also ends the encounter.

By night, on a 1, she reads here and invites the party to sit: "He hated the cold. I have kept this fire for three hundred years." She fights if attacked or if the Journal or portrait is touched: as The Countess herself if it remains, otherwise 3 rounds.

A hearth panel opens on the hidden stair to K5; the chimney climbs 60 feet to S16 (1d6 fire per round).

THE JOURNAL

Let whoever opens this know that I did not begin as a monster. I began as the elder daughter, which in my father's house was much the same thing as a spare key.

They kept me tutored, laced, and set out at every feast like the good silver. Livia they simply loved. She was the one the chapel bells seemed to ring for.

Then Aurel came up the road in the grey cloak of the Chapel of the Last Light, and I learned what it is to want something more than breath. He was kind to me. He was kind to everyone. That is the cruelty of kind men: you can never tell which kindness was meant for you.

My father gave him to Livia. The wedding was set for All Hallows' Eve, and I was asked to stitch the hem of her gown.

I stitched it. Then I went down beneath the chapel where the oldest stones are, and called through the thin place in the world. Something answered. I asked for time: time enough for him to stop loving her. Time without end. It said the price would be the hallowing of this land, and I told it to take all of it.

Livia died in her wedding dress, and the hands that did it were mine. I will not write more of that.

Aurel saw. He did not raise his sword to me; that would have been a mercy. He looked at me as if I were a stranger, and he ran. I followed him up the tallest spire, promising him forever. He climbed onto the sill and stepped into the mist without a word.

When I came down, the road ended in fog. The bells did not ring. They have not rung for me since.



Every year the veil thins, the coach goes out, and I look into the faces it brings me. Souls come round again. His will. And when it does, I will not let it fall.

Running water has been closed to me since that night, as the hallowed ground is. Father laid Aurel's sword in my sister's tomb, and swore no hand of mine would lift it. I sleep where the first stone of this house was laid, below every other stone.

He has come back. A boy in the magistrate's house, who does not know his own name. On the last night, at the seam where I made my bargain, I will make him mine before the door shuts.

U11. THE ROSE BEDCHAMBER

Rosewater and cold wax. At the foot of a bed never slept in rests a black lacquered coffin, lid ajar.

A decoy over garden soil; staking it does nothing. Holy water poured in is a mortal insult: she aims a hunting encounter at that character, if any remain. A chest holds a box marked "R.": Rozalia's clothes (U12).

U12. THE DOLL'S ROOM

Hundreds of dolls in travelers' clothes line the shelves. A young woman dressed as a porcelain doll looks up from her sewing with a lovely smile.

Rozalia Moraru came on last year's coach; the Countess keeps her unbitten, a favorite doll. The four half-finished dolls in her lap are the party.

- "The Lady sleeps all day, very far down, where it's quiet."
- "Once the big bell rang at midnight, the sky went silver to the hills, and the Lady screamed." (S3)
- The Lady cries "Aurel," then reads her black book "in the warm room" (U9).

Rescue: CHA TN 14, +4 with proof (her ledger entry in U6, the Journal, her clothes from U11). On success she agrees to leave. On failure she refuses, frightened of punishment; a new piece of proof or a materially different approach allows another attempt. Two characters can carry her without a roll, using their hands and moving at half walking pace; one carrier needs STR TN 12 to lift and hold her, with failure leaving her in the room. She protests and clings to furniture, alerting anyone nearby, but does not fight her rescuers. Her 5 HP does not mean she must be injured or knocked unconscious to move her.

Rozalia Moraru (living human) - HP 5, AC 10, DR 0; 1 attack: hairpin 1d3; Saves Quick +2, Tough +1, Mind -2; Impartial Kind (Mediator).



U14. THE BATH OF IRON

An iron tub brims with water dark as old blood, dead rose petals floating on it. A tall mirror faces the wall.

Looking in shows a character their own death: Mind save (TN 13) or Weary. One who passes sees gold below: **Livia's ring**, her betrothal ring, a fair hair wound round it, engraved "A. to L., until the last light" (30 gp). It stills the Guardian Portrait (U5), lays Catrina (U4) to rest, and, laid in the stone hands at D40, counts as the oath.

U15. THE CHAMBERMAIDS' HALL

Eight canopied beds stand in two neat rows. A slim young woman with a feather duster drops it and whispers, "Please. Are you real?"

By night Vasilka, one of Severina's Brides (Appendix: The Recurring Cast), begs to come along, a village girl in forced service. She chose this. Her name was Dorina, and hearing it costs her an action: "Mother kept me in a box all my life. The Lady let me out." She leads true until someone is alone. Tells: cold hands and the tin heart locket with a curl of her mother's hair, matching Aneta's description (E3).

By day she sleeps on the eighth bed, using the same waking procedure as the D16 Brides: on entry and each noisy round, roll a d20; on 17+ she wakes. A sleeper can be staked (STR TN 10).

The locket holds her mother's grey hair. Destroy her, or name her Dorina and talk her down (CHA TN 14, once); laid in Widow Aneta's hands (E3), it lets the widow rest.

† **Severina's Bride**: new creature (Appendix: The Recurring Cast).

U16. THE BALLROOM

Three dead chandeliers hang above a pale floor inlaid with a compass rose. High windows line the south wall.

At every midnight while the veil is open, the chandeliers burn blue and the guests dance the wedding dance that never happened, Livia and Aurel leading. Each who joins makes DEX or CHA TN 12 per figure; while all keep step, three partners whisper:

Figure	The whisper
1	"The elder sister loved him first, but he only ever had eyes for Livia."
2	"She went down below the castle, to the seam where the mist comes through, and asked the dark for forever." (D42)



Figure	The whisper
3	"He saw the bride die, ran up the Lovers' Spire and stepped into the mist rather than be hers." (S12)

All three: +1 to Mind saves until dawn. If Luca dances, Livia finishes with him. A failed roll or attack stops the music: three ghosts attack, screaming names found in D19.

3 Maddened Spirits - HP 12 each, AC 12, DR 0; 1 attack: wail 1d6 psychic (+3 to hit; ignores DR); Saves Quick +2, Tough +0, Mind +1; Wild Impartial (Seeker).

† **Maddened Spirits**: existing creature; Monster Trove for Early Adventurers, entry "Maddened Spirits". [Rules entry](#)

U18. THE SPIRE STAIR

A narrow stair spirals up, its iron rail cold enough to burn. The dusty prints all go up.

It climbs 120 feet to S1. Cut into a ledge: "RING IT AT MIDNIGHT. THE ROAD GOES SILVER. M.O." Sir Matyas Orben's harmless ghost admits he rang the bell once and stayed for a friend who never came.

THE NEEDLE SPIRES (MAP 5)

The Bell, Witches' and Lovers' Spires meet at S1, linked by bridges (S13-S15). Falls land on S16 for 1d6 per 10 feet; a dry-lightning storm (1 on a d6 nightly) puts wind and falling saves at -2.

S1. THE SPIRE LANDING

Wind howls through the slates of an eight-sided room. Three arched doors are carved with a bell, a cat and two clasped hands.

The bell door opens on the rope well (S2), ropes rising from K14, a stair up to S3. The cat door climbs (S5) to S7. The clasped hands, two names gouged beneath, lead to S9. A dormer opens onto S16.

S3. THE SILENT BELFRY

A great bronze bell, cracked lip to shoulder, hangs in a frame choked with webs. The wind sets it humming, a note that never arrives.



3 Giant Spiders drop when the webs, bell or ropes are touched. The K14 ropes are fouled; to ring, stand in the frame and swing the clapper. A cocoon holds Tavi's bones, his bell-ringer's token (lays Floarea to rest) and 18 gp.

3 Giant Spiders - HP 26 each, AC 14, DR 0; 1 attack: bite 1d6+1 (+3 to hit; Tough save or 1d6 poison); Saves Quick +3, Tough +1, Mind -2; Unaligned. Cast Web: 30 ft, Quick save (TN 13) or restrained until STR TN 12.

† **Giant Spider**: existing creature; Monster Trove: Old Fears and Hungry Things, entry "Giant Spider". [Rules entry](#)



THE MIDNIGHT BELL

Cast to ring Livia and Aurel out as husband and wife, it never did; but it was hallowed when it was cast. The silver ripple across the sky (W13), visible through the belfry arches, marks midnight. Ringing takes STR TN 12; a character waiting at the clapper may make this attempt as the ripple passes. At other times the bell only clanks, spending no nightly use. A failed midnight attempt may be retried during that same minute. Once per night at midnight, it rings true:

The fog lies down flat as if pressed by a hand. A thread of silver light leaps from the arch and runs over roofs, river and woods to one bright point at the valley's edge.

Until the grey hours begin, the thread opens a path through the Choking Grey. Following it on foot from the belfry to safety beyond the Grey takes five hours, plus stops and encounter time. Leaving at midnight reaches safety at 5 am if there are no delays. Thread end (d3): 1, the eastern fog over the Withered Road; 2, below the Weeping Falls, where the Blackwater comes down into the valley; 3, beyond the wanderers' camp. She sends one unused hunting encounter that can reach the fleeing party, spending it normally. Prefer Her bats if available; those are hunting encounter 4, not a fresh cloud from K14. If none remain, there is no extra hunting attack. Noapte never joins this pursuit on the last night. Luca saves against The Call at the edge of the Grey. If he fails, a slap or similar sharp physical shock frees him to leave willingly.

S7. THE COVEN'S KETTLE

Green smoke rolls over four women chanting around a kettle big enough to bathe in. Above them, four pairs of green eyes open at once.

The Kettle Sisters serve the Countess for leftovers and stolen sleepers, who lie chained at the hearth. On the first visit there are two living captives: Radu, a charcoal burner, and Sanda, a seamstress, taken from an earlier coach. Each has HP 5, AC 10, DR 0, no useful attack, and is Weary but can walk. Dragomira has their shackle keys; locks or chains can also be opened by the party's chosen methods. Add anyone captured during play and remove anyone rescued; do not replenish them between visits. One-eyed Dragomira speaks for them: "What have you brought us?"

The star chart lies by the kettle with a note pinned under its lid (INT TN 13): the veil shuts at first grey after the third midnight (Handout 6). A tiny bell marks each midnight: "Dragomira says the bell shows the road. Then she says: say nothing of it." The note is signed Zlata.



Parley. Without drawn steel, the party can buy a reading for something alive or something of Luca's (a lock of his hair goes to the Countess within the hour).

Coven Chant: while three or more witches stand within 30 ft (the whole room), their spells use save TN 14 instead of 13; drop two of the four to break it. Two witches can push a held character into the kettle (2d6 fire).

4 Coven Witches - HP 24 each, AC 12, DR 0; 1 attack: iron-nailed rake 1d6+1 (+3 to hit); Saves Quick +1, Tough +1, Mind +3; Wild Vile (Reaver). Spells (once per encounter, save TN 13): Dragomira Beguile, Searing Lances; Vesna Lethargic, Mistcall; Zlata Seal of Warding, Rootbind; Ruxandra Mage Shielding, Storm Pulse. Witch-Bond: senses through her cat.

4 Coven Cats - HP 5 each, AC 13, DR 0; 2 attacks: claw 1d3, claw 1d3; Saves Quick +3, Tough +0, Mind +1; Wild Vile (Reaver). Witch-Bond: its death deals 1d4 psychic to its witch.

‡ **Beguile, Lethargic, Mistcall, Rootbind, Mage Shielding, Storm Pulse:** level 1 wizard spells; Searing Lances, Seal of Warding: level 2 wizard spells; Wizard Spells for First Castings.

With two down, the rest beg. Dragomira carries a Potion of Healing.

‡ **Potion of Healing:** existing magic item; Magic Items for Early Adventures, entry "Potion of Healing". [Rules entry](#)

Raids. On Nights 1 and 2, Vesna, one sister and their two cats attempt one raid per night if the party sleeps outside a safe rest in the upper castle (W, K, U or S). They target the smallest sleeper they can reach, whether PC or NPC. No random trigger or Night 3 raid. Rescued captives are Weary. For safe-rest protections, the sisters and their cats count as the Countess's creatures and cannot enter a protected safe rest, even in pursuit.

Keeping watch. In lantern light, the watcher makes a WIS Chance Roll (TN 14). Success gives time to warn others or act. On failure, Vesna attempts Lethargic: the watcher still gets a Mind save (TN 13). Success leaves them awake and able to raise the alarm; failure causes magical sleep. Vigorous shaking or damage wakes them. Capture is never automatic.

Taking a sleeper. The witches must enter, seize and physically carry their captive away; barricades and wards still apply. Grabbing a natural sleeper wakes them to shout or struggle. An alarm wakes other natural sleepers; magical sleepers need vigorous shaking or damage to wake early. Play out resistance and escape round by round: the party can intervene or pursue. Other captives stay at S7, but the witches know Severina wants Luca alive and escort him unharmed to S12. The party can intercept this escort; capture never moves him there instantly.

A faint scratching comes from beyond the door. Then it stops. Two green eyes catch the lantern light near the floor. The cat is watching the sleepers. From the darkness behind it, an old woman whispers: "Not that one. The other. Lift gently."



S9. THE LOVERS' SPIRE STAIR

A pale stair winds up the tallest spire, its rail wound with paper-dry garlands. From far above come laughter and many feet, then nothing.

At 1 am each night an echo of Aurel's flight climbs here: a knight alone, the guests trailing. Anyone it passes through makes Tough TN 11 or takes -1 to attacks for 10 minutes; grey rosemary bearers (W4) pass untouched. Walking in step (DEX or CHA TN 11) goes unnoticed, and the Grieving Heart (S11) ignores the procession. S10 opens off the first landing.

S10. THE PAINTED LANDING

The curved wall is one wet-looking mural of a candlelit wedding. Apart from everyone stands a woman in wine-red, the only figure facing you.

Once in the adventure, one character may press the painted chapel door and live the wedding night:

The elder sister slips from her pew with a candle and goes down, below the castle, to where silver mist breathes through split stone. She returns with different eyes. At the altar the bride turns and smiles at her sister, and does not stop smiling until it is over. The knight turns. He runs up the pale stair to the highest window, looks at her once, says nothing, and steps into the mist.

Afterward the wine-red figure faces them. The party knows the pact was made far below (D42) and Aurel stepped from S12.

S11. THE GRIEVING TOWER ROOM

A stair spirals sixty feet up a hollow stone throat, halberds fixed along it. High above on three chains, a barrel-sized heart of red glass begins to glow like breathing.

Severina's wedding gift to her sister, filled with her jealousy, the Heart wakes when anyone steps on the stair (except in the procession) and stays awake 12 hours. Only it can be harmed; shoot it from the floor.

The Grieving Heart - HP 30, AC 11, DR 0; 3 attacks: halberd 1d10 each (stair only); Saves Quick -5, Tough +3, Mind +2; Impartial Vile (Schemer). Tower Quake: climbers make Quick TN 12 each round or fall; crawlers are safe. Immobile.

S12. THE LOVERS' SPIRE PEAK

White candles that never burn down ring the highest room in the castle. A black hole fifteen feet across breathes river-cold air; opposite, an arched window stands open to the sky.



"A" and "L" are cut in the sill where Aurel stepped out; Luca lays his hand on them without meaning to.

The Hollow Shaft drops 800 feet to D24. Ledges and iron rope eyes descend into the dark. Use the full Hollow Shaft procedure under How the Castle Works: 100 feet of reusable rope and climbing gear, two hours plus delays, eight STR TN 12 checks per climber; Quick TN 13 catches a slip. A failed catch deals 1d6 on a secured line or 10d6 without one. Soft Descent prevents damage while active.

‡ **Soft Descent:** level 1 wizard spell, Wizard Spells for First Castings. [Rules entry](#)

If Luca is captured and brought here, he lies strapped to boards. Vasilka combs his hair only by night; otherwise 2 Thrall Servants watch. If Luca is alive, at midnight on the last night Noapte carries him and Severina down to D24; if Noapte is unavailable, she climbs down with him on her back (two hours).

S16. THE ROOF OF THE KEEP

Wet black slate slopes steeply away. A slate slides loose, and you never hear it land.

Each round of movement, 1-6 on a d20 starts a slide: Quick TN 13 (+2 roped) to catch; failing, Quick TN 15 at the gutter; a second failure is a 70-foot fall to W4 for 7d6.

Noapte (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) lands here first when Severina rides. Otherwise use the W5 location roll: only while she is circling the roofs, check once per 10 minutes the party remains here; on a 1 on a d6 she lands and confronts them. Track her movement from then on; a Terror Gallop hit also checks for sliding. By day she sleeps in D30.

† **Nightmare Stalker:** existing creature; Monster Trove for Early Adventures, entry "Nightmare Stalker". [Rules entry](#)

Ways down: dormer to S1; 15 feet to U11's balcony (Quick TN 11 or 1d6); 40 feet by rope into U16; the U9 chimney.

BELOW THE CASTLE

Castle Severhallow keeps its appetite downstairs. In the Larders of Ill Omen a household that never died still cooks as if the wedding feast were tomorrow. Below, the Under-Prison holds drowned halls and floors that move people, and a stair of skulls down to the Deep Layers.

Encounters. In the Larders, check hourly (1-2 on a d6) on this table instead of the castle table. The Under-Prison uses the castle's lower table.



Grey hours. A thrall's Hold and Call brings the Countess or a Bride at night; from about 6 am to 6 pm it brings Mihnea (or the L9 fallback if he is dead), and her next spy report finds the party automatically.

d4	Larders encounter
1	Mihnea on his rounds with a lantern and a sack, humming a wedding song.
2	Two Thrall Servants (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) carry a covered tray upstairs: a raw heart on dried roses.
3	Every pan in the Kitchen (L5) clangs at once. Somewhere, Mihnea is upset.
4	Night: Severina as mist from a drain, asking who is closest to Luca. Grey hours: 2 Severhallow Zombies (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) hauling a cask.

† **Severhallow Zombie:** new creature (Appendix: The Recurring Cast).

THE LARDERS OF ILL OMEN (MAP 6)

L2. THE LONG HALLWAY

A vaulted passage runs past the reach of your light. Hundreds of iron meat hooks hang from rails overhead, ticking against one another in a draft you cannot feel, like a roomful of slow clocks.

At the hallway's north end the Postern Stair (W14) arrives through the L1 passage and its barred postern, and the Black Stair (K20) ends on a landing; east of it, through L10 (empty), the Garrison Stair drops 60 feet to P1. West doors open on L4 and L5, an east door on L8. South, through L13 (stripped), a passage slopes 40 feet down to the Cistern (L14).

Anyone hurrying sets the hooks chiming (Quick save, TN 10, to avoid), and Mihnea comes to see.

L4. THE SERVANTS' HALL

A long table is laid for twenty. At the far end three people in faded black livery eat grey bread in perfect silence, chewing in time with one another.

These are 3 Thrall Servants (Appendix: The Recurring Cast). If the party is plainly not guests, one goes to tell Mihnea. They fight only if attacked or stopped.

Stelian Popa, the youngest, came in the Night Coach twelve years ago. Show him something from outside (this year's coin, news) and he stops chewing. Kept from the Countess a full day,



he makes a Mind save (+2 with that piece of home) to break the bond. Freed, he knows the prison gate's word: "White bread, black water."

L5. THE KITCHEN

Three brick ovens glow dull red, though there is no wood anywhere. As you step in, every copper pan on the ceiling turns slowly on its hook to face you.

Doors lead to L2 and L4 only. A hot meal here cures cold-water Weary. The dumbwaiter rises 90 feet to K16 (a Small rider, or a folded Medium one: STR TN 12 to haul). By the bread oven slumps a flour sack stenciled with a mill wheel: Gavril's (U4).

"Cook," a Poltergeist, is Mihnea's three hundred years of unfelt fury. With him in the Larders it pelts those who insult the food or "the Lady"; when he is upset, everyone.

"Cook" (Poltergeist) - HP 24, AC 12, DR 0; no melee attack; Saves Quick +1, Tough +1, Mind +1; Wild Vile (Reaver). Throw the Room: 30 ft, Quick save (TN 12) or 1d6+2 bludgeoning, cooldown 1 round. Anchored: cannot be harmed, banished or dispelled while Mihnea is within 100 paces. Harm the Anchor: if Mihnea is hurt, double dice for the rest of the encounter. Turn Undead has no effect. If Mihnea dies, Cook screams once and vanishes permanently.

L8. THE WINE CELLAR

Low arches march into the dark, a black cask under each. At the far end one great cask rests on a stand of its own, its brass tap polished bright.

The wedding cask bears Livia and Aurel's seal, two linked rings. A cup puts the drinker in the candlelit chapel that night: the fair-haired bride at the altar, a dark-haired woman in wine-red in the front pew. The elder sister rises, smiling, and steps up as if to kiss the bride's cheek. Every candle goes out, someone screams, and the vision ends. Mind save (TN 12) or Weary. The drinker now knows Severina, Livia and Aurel on sight.

The great cask is a door: a quarter-turn left on the tap opens a crawlway to L9 (WIS Chance Roll, TN 13, to spot).

L9. MIHNEA'S NEST

Helmets are stacked to the ceiling and hundreds of boots stand in pairs, all facing the door. A stooped old man in a steward's coat beams up at you. "Guests! Mind the boots, they're sorted."

Mihnea (Appendix: The Recurring Cast), blood-bound for three hundred years, is lonely and quite mad ("Why does nobody leave the Lady's table? They're the main course! Hee.").



Everything here belonged to someone who never left, including captured characters' gear. If he dies, Severina learns by the next dusk; only a witness can identify his killers. Use that knowledge under Spies, without restoring spent hunts. From then on, any encounter or alarm that would bring Mihnea instead brings two surviving Thrall Servants from the household; if none are available, omit it. His hoard and captured gear remain here. Cook gives one terrible scream and is gone for good; ignore later pan-clattering events tied to Mihnea.

Bargaining. A new joke (the player tells it) or news from outside buys an answer; a treasured item buys a hoard item. A blood promise ("When the Lady is done with me, Mihnea may have my boots") buys the Bentwick Candle.

What he knows: "The Lady sleeps at the bottom of the bottom of the bottom. Days only." "One room down below she never enters. Her sister's." (D40) "Dead guards still keep the gate word. White bread, black water!" (P1)

The hoard: an iron-shod pole (+2 to find safe squares in P3); a crowbar (+2 to STR Chance Rolls on doors and bars); 50 feet of silk rope; wolfsbane in a silver locket (10 gp) that "makes the cooper downstairs sneeze"; the Bentwick Candle (1d6 charges; each burns an hour, its flame leaning toward the nearest way to open air).

‡ **Bentwick Candle:** existing magic item; Magic Items for Every Adventurer, entry "Bentwick Candle". [Rules entry](#)

Fighting Mihnea. Threaten him and the hoard hurls itself (Cook's Throw the Room); hurt him and the dice double. It ends if the party calms him (his Mind save, TN 12), subdues him unhurt, or runs, taking him along.

L14. THE CISTERN

A spring fills a clear pool and runs off in a quick stream that circles a low stone platform. Far above, a pale disc of sky shows at the top of a shaft.

Running water. The stream rings the platform. Severina cannot cross it, in flesh or as mist, nor can her Brides; thralls, Mihnea and her other dead wade it. A refuge from her, not a safe rest: keep rolling checks. Scratched into the stone: "SHE CANNOT CROSS. STAY HERE TILL MORNING."

The chain climbs 120 feet to the Outer Ward well (W10, empty): three STR Chance Rolls (TN 11). A culvert, the Rat Run, crawls 200 feet to P10 (empty).

THE UNDER-PRISON (MAP 7)

Black water fills the halls and never drains. After an hour of wading, Tough save (TN 11) or Weary until warm and dry.



P1. THE PRISON GATE

The stair ends at a gate of black iron bars. In its center is a cast-iron face with a closed mouth, the lips worn smooth as if by many kisses or many knuckles.

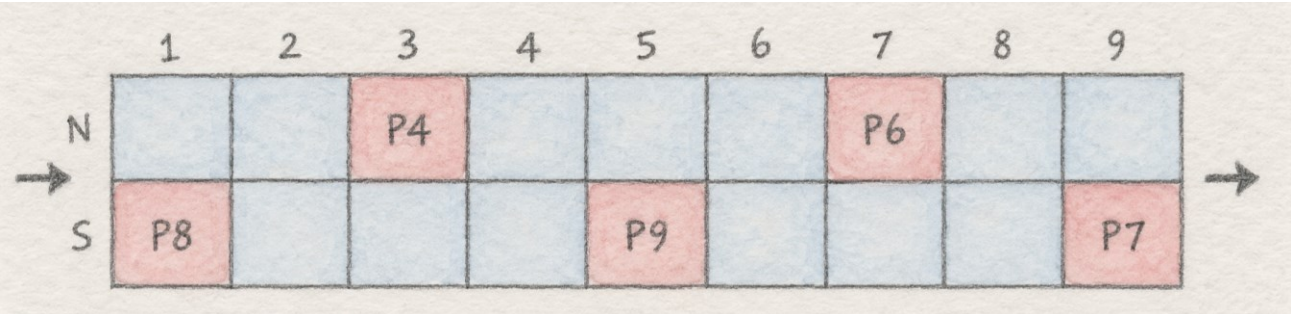
Speak "White bread, black water" (Stelian or Mihnea know it) and the gate swings in. Or pick the keyhole inside the mouth (Pick Locks; failure, the iron teeth bite for 1d4), or force the bars (STR TN 18, loud). Cut into the last step down, read by touch: two notches, three, three, three, two.

P3. THE DROWNED HALL

The steps go down into black water and do not come up again. An arched hall runs east, flooded wall to wall, so still it looks like a floor you could walk on.

Midway, sunken doors lead north and south to the cells; the east arch leads through P10 (empty, flooded) to P13. From P10 a 7-foot climb (TN 12) reaches P11.

The sorting floor. Of two rows of nine 5-foot squares, five are iron panels over demirealm shafts that drop under anything over 50 lb: Quick save (TN 14) to throw yourself back, or land unharmed in a locked cell in chest-deep water (Tough save, TN 12, or Weary).



Floor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
North	.	.	to P4	.	door	.	to P6	.	.
South	to P8	.	.	.	to P9; door	.	.	.	to P7

Cell numbers are shaft destinations. Cells P4-P7 lie north of P3; P8-P9 lie south. No shaft leads to P5.

The safe road zigzags: north 1-2, south 2-4, north 4-6, south 6-8, north 8-9. Two, three, three, three, two, starting north. To use the south door, swing onto its sill from south 4 or 6 (Quick save, TN 10). A pole probe finds stone on a WIS Chance Roll (TN 13) per square (+2 with Mihnea's pole).



P4-P9. THE CELLS

Pale fungus hangs in ropes from a low ceiling and drips into water almost to your chest. Barred cells line a narrow passage, white shapes under the water in the nearer ones.

Cell locks use Pick Locks; bending their bars takes STR TN 16. At night Severina may visit a lone captive as mist, asking which of them is Luca's friend.

North cells. Bones and 26 gp lie in the west cells. Scratched on the walls: "2-3-3-3-2. START NORTH." "Three nights the sky is open. Then it shuts." "The iron men ask the hour. Read it in the great glass." In the last cell, half clawed away: "The cooper is no ... He ate Bartos." (WIS TN 14: "man").

Wenzel Kral, a mapmaker taken last Hallows' Eve, lies catatonic in cell P6 at WIS 3, a Thought Leech still anchored to his neck after feeding for a year. He cannot be roused while it remains attached. Remove it with Mental Anchor (K9-K10); it then seeks the nearest fresh mind unless stopped. After removal he wakes after one full rest, when he can become a replacement PC. Lost WIS returns at 1 per day of rest; killing the leech restores half of what it drank, and Banish Curse restores all, as in K9-K10. Restoring WIS above 3 also ends the catatonia once the leech is removed.

‡ **Banish Curse:** level 3 cleric spell, Cleric Spells for First Blessing. [Rules entry](#)

P7. Costel Vatra. A man clings to the bars of the end cell (bent bars, STR TN 16), chin above the water: "Saints be thanked. Three nights, I think." He claims to be a jailed cooper. He is a werewolf who killed one of the Countess's favorites, and a party delivered to her would buy his way back. He turns at the first good moment: a hard fight, a split party, a lone watch. Clues: a grip too strong for a frozen man (WIS TN 15), the scratching, a flinch from silver and wolfsbane.

Costel Vatra (Werewolf) - HP 72, AC 15, DR 0; 2 attacks: claw 1d8+3, bite 1d8+3; Saves Quick +2, Tough +2, Mind 0; Wild Vile (Reaver). Infectious Bite: Tough save (TN 13) or moon-sick (a curse; Banish Curse lifts it). Hide: DR 1 against nonmagical slashing. Moon-Blood: -2 to saves and AC against silvered weapons.

† **Werewolf:** existing creature; Monster Trove for Seasoned Adventurers, entry "Werewolf". [Rules entry](#)

South cells. Scrubbed clean and waiting. A character taken by thralls or the Countess wakes here stripped, the gear gone to Mihnea (L9). A loose stone (WIS TN 12) hides two Potions of Healing (2d6 HP each) and a note: "I went for the rat tunnel. If you find my boots, I didn't make it."

P11. THE WATCHING BALCONY

Above the drowned racks, in one of two high-backed chairs, sits a grey-faced figure in a judge's black robe. "The court is in session. Approach."



A curtained passage runs east to P14. Justiciar Petrache Cretu, a Wight, passed the Countess's sentences in life; whoever sits in her chair is attacked at once. Each character must confess one true wrong aloud, paid with a touch of the staff (1d6 necrotic, no save). A lie (he knows) or refusal is contempt: he attacks that character until destroyed. If all pay, he waves them on.

Justiciar Petrache Cretu (Wight) - HP 80, AC 14, DR 1; 2 attacks: staff 1d8+3, 1d8+3; Saves Quick +1, Tough +3, Mind +2; Orderly Vile (Tyrant). Life Drain: Tough save (TN 13) or 1d8 necrotic and max HP reduced by the same until a full night's rest, cooldown 2 rounds. Undead Nature: immune to poison, disease, charm and sleep.

† **Wight:** existing creature; Monster Trove for Seasoned Adventurers, entry "Wight". [Rules entry](#)

P13. THE IRON WARDEN HALL

Before a doorway of carved bone stand two four-armed iron figures, small hourglasses on their raised palms. A line of bronze crosses the floor between them.

A north door leads to P14; the bone doorway to P18. Here stand 2 Iron Wardens (Appendix: The Recurring Cast).

† **Iron Warden:** new creature (Appendix: The Recurring Cast).

"What is the hour?" When a living creature crosses the line, a millstone voice asks. The right answer is the hours left until the grey hours begin, as the P14 glass counts them ("Four hours."); in daylight, "No hours. It is day." A right answer, even a correct guess, lets that creature pass. A wrong answer or silence flips the palm-glasses: the Wardens attack everyone past the line for exactly 5 rounds, then return.

P14. THE HOURGLASS CHAMBER

An hourglass taller than two men hangs on a great iron pivot. Grey sand falls through its neck with a whisper you hear in your teeth.

The glass is unnatural. Unseen hands set it running at dusk; it runs empty when the grey hours begin; twelve silver rings above the sand count the hours left. On the last night the sand runs red-black.

Turning the glass. Once ever, while sand falls, two characters can turn it with one STR Chance Roll (TN 14), made by their chosen leader. A failed attempt costs their actions but neither spends the one use nor ages anyone; they may retry. Success delays the final closing to 7 am. On Nights 1 and 2, the grey hours, coffin sleep and bell escape still end at 6 am; only the last night's closing, binding deadline, bell escape and grey hours move to 7 am, even if the glass was turned earlier. The glass still empties each night when the grey hours begin; on the



last night it runs one hour longer, to the new closing. The Wardens always accept the glass's count. Whoever led it ages a year and is Weary. The frame reads "ONE HOUR, ONCE, FOR ONE WHO PAYS."

P15. THE BONE CHUTE

From P16, a niche in the east wall opens onto a steep, 200-foot chute. Anyone entering slides down to D5, taking 2d6 damage (Quick save, TN 12, for half). Downward-pointing spikes prevent climbing back without magic.

P18. THE OSSUARY STAIR

A spiral stair winds around a central pillar, and all of it is skulls. As you descend, the silence grows heavier, as if each one is listening.

The stair runs from P13 down to the Blue Landing (D1). Taking a skull: Mind save (TN 12) or Weary until it is returned. Going down takes ten minutes; coming up, roll 1d6: 1-2 half that, 3-4 the same, 5-6 double. A Bentwick Candle leans hard upward the whole way.





THE DEEP LAYERS

Under the Under-Prison the castle stops being built and starts being dug. Three levels sink into the black pillar of rock, each older and closer to the veil: the Long Crypts (D1-D20), the Drowned Vaults (D21-D34), split by the underground Blackwater, and the Hallowed Depths (D35-D44), where her coffin lies. Ways in: the Ossuary Stair (P18 to D1), the Bone Chute (P15 to D5, one way) and the Hollow Shaft (S12 to D24).

Blue flame. Below D1 every flame burns blue and color drains from everything but silver and cold iron.

The grey hours. From about 6 am to 6 pm Severina sleeps in D44 (she returns before then by mist, or starts at least half an hour earlier as a bat; if caught outside at first grey, she takes flesh and sleeps where she is), the Brides in D16 and Noapte in D30. After dusk any of them may be abroad.

Wandering. Once per hour in the Long Crypts, make a Probability Roll: 17+ on d20 means an encounter. The levels below need no checks.

d6	Encounter
1	2 Skeletons from D10 carrying a body; they ignore the party unless blocked.
2	A Thrall Servant with linen for D14; he flees and cries out.
3	Silent wedding ghosts pass through the party. Harmless.
4	A lost Giant Bat (Countess Severina chapter).
5	By night, Veta (D16) hunting; by day, a draft snuffs a torch.
6	Mihnea stripping a dead adventurer; he would rather trade.

Loose dead follow the party until they lose it, but never cross the Blackwater or enter D9 while its lantern burns.



THE BLACKWATER

No vampire crosses the underground Blackwater by any means. Her only road to the far bank is the Hollow Shaft. At the river's east end, past D26, the sump grate's walkway is a grate over open current, not a bridge, so she will not use it; the living can, at DEX TN 12 or be swept against it (2d6, STR TN 12 to climb out). A party that crosses gains at least half an hour against her in the flesh, about 10 minutes against her mist.

THE DEEP LAYERS I: THE LONG CRYPTS (MAP 8)

Two branches run south from D1 and meet at D19. Unkeyed crypts are stripped and empty.

D1. THE BLUE LANDING

The stair of stacked skulls ends on bare rock, and your torch has turned the pale blue of a winter sky. From a low tunnel east comes a faint, patient clicking, like someone counting beads.

Over a basin of candle stubs hangs the sexton's bell; ringing it summons the five skeletons of D10 in 2 rounds to "receive the dead," and they attack whoever stands here. A WIS Chance Roll (TN 12) spots a tiny lantern scratched low on the arch, its arrow pointing to D9.

D9. THE LANTERN NICHE

A side passage ends in a niche like a hearth, big enough for a few travelers knee to knee. A cold iron lantern hangs inside a painted ring of tiny ochre lanterns, and the walls are scratched with little pictures.

Lantern Law. The Kin's lantern always burns while anyone keeps it. Here, keeping it means at least one living member of the party remains inside the ring; they may sleep, and no awake keeper or extra fuel is required. While the party stays inside the ring, Severina and her creatures will not enter or attack into it unless invited (a welcome or anything handed across counts). It protects one full rest (6 hours) per night; on a Probability Roll of 11+ it also holds through the following grey hours.

The Lantern Kin marks (a wanderer reads them; others need INT TN 14 each):

- A coin above a boat: "One coin each, hand to hand." (D26)
- Three veiled heads, a closed eye, and three names: Natalia, Tereza Lovric, Elske. "The brides sleep in the grey hours." (D16)



- A wavy line, a crossed-out fang: "She cannot cross the black water."

D10. THE OSSUARY

The walls are built of bones, skulls in rows with their faces out. Five skeletons sort a heap of loose bones in silence. As your light touches them, all five look up at once.

Their command is to keep the count. They ignore anyone passing through but attack anyone who touches the bones or lingers past 3 rounds. "The count is finished" stops all five for 1 round while they test it; each new claim works once.

Ossuary Skeleton (unarmored) - HP 14, AC 11, DR 1; 1 attack: bone club 1d6+1; Saves Quick +0, Tough +1, Mind -1; Orderly Impartial (Arbiter). Grasping Bones: instead of damage, holds a target until it wins a STR Chance Roll. Bare Bones: piercing deals half damage, bludgeoning ignores DR.

D12. THE CRYPT OF FATHER CASSIAN MOLDOVAN

A plain door carved with a candle inside a sun. On the slab a man in white vestments lies with his hands folded over a small iron chest, his face untouched by three hundred years.

The prelate of the Last Light is incorruptible: no undead will touch him, and loose dead hesitate 1 round at the door. The chest opens for anyone who first bows or prays (otherwise a thief may use Pick Locks with tools): two flasks of holy water, a cleric scroll of Sunlight Bloom, the chapel's healing balm (as a Potion of Healing), and his prayer book with the Lowwater Hymn of the old sunken chapel (D29). A letter in the back: "The stone hands will not open for vengeance. They will open for one who swears, by her name, to lay her sister down." (D40)

‡ **Sunlight Bloom**: level 3 cleric spell, Cleric Spells for First Blessing. [Rules entry](#). DN note: this is the cleric version: a 90-foot-radius burst affects all creatures, including allies, with 3d6+4 radiant damage (DEX Quick save for half; doubled against undead and other creatures specified by the spell). Warned allies avoid its blindness check, not its damage. Tell the reader this when the scroll is identified; follow the spell for cover and blindness, and Severina's specific sunlight rule for her damage. The scroll is used once to cast the spell; it cannot recharge either treasure.

‡ **Potion of Healing**: existing magic item; Magic Items for Early Adventures, entry "Potion of Healing". [Rules entry](#)

D14. THE EMPTY CRYPT

Fresh letters bright with stone dust read: LUCA: CONSORT. White linen covers the slab like a made bed, black roses lie where the head would rest, and on the pillow sits a folded note.

Her note: "Not yet, my love. First the Seam, where the old promise was made. When the veil shuts we shall be married in the crack of it. Then you shall sleep beside me, and this room will be yours when you wake." It tells a sharp party where (D42) and when (the veil's closing).



Disturbing it (holy water, burned linen, smashed letters) brings her by mist within about 10 minutes, without spending a hunting encounter, and she does not come to talk. By day she comes at dusk.

D16. CRYPT OF THE BRIDES

Three slabs are dressed as marriage beds in grey silk, and tall mirrors show the room but not you. On the beds lie three women in white, faces turned toward the door as if waiting for a knock.





Here sleep 3 Severina's Brides (Appendix: The Recurring Cast): lazy, talkative Iuliana (Natalia); jealous Veta (Tereza Lovric), who strikes first; and tired Smaranda (Elske). An iron door south, barred here, leads to D19. A crawlway from D11 (empty) opens 18 feet up the north wall, good for a day raid.

† **Severina's Bride:** new creature (Appendix: The Recurring Cast).

By day they sleep. On entry and each noisy round, roll for each: on 17+ she wakes, the others at the end of the next round. A sleeper can be staked (STR TN 10).

By night (d6: 1-3 all home; 4-5 Veta out; 6 only Smaranda) they ask questions first: Is Luca handsome? Then Iuliana proposes the bride's choice: each Bride asks one character to dance, a slow cold turn of the room that ends in a Bridal Kiss unless the dancer pulls away (Quick TN 13). They fight when it stops being fun. Speaking a Bride's living name to her face costs her next action, once.

D19. CRYPT OF THE WEDDING GUESTS

Eight crypt doors, each carved with a feast scene and two names beneath. One stands open a hand's width, and from behind it comes a scrape of fingernails on stone.

Every route through the Long Crypts ends here; the Long Stair (D20) is south. Severina sealed her sixteen guests in two by two the morning after the wedding. Each dusk 1d4 crypts grind open and one Severhallow Zombie (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) lurches from each, dressed for a wedding; its partner is long dust. Choose only crypts with surviving zombies. At first grey the survivors return to their own crypts and the doors close; a crypt whose zombie was destroyed stays shut and cannot produce another. This never creates more than the original eight zombies. By night they emerge one per round; they never pursue past the hall's doors. Lifting a cup and calling "To the bride!" turns every zombie toward D16 for 1 round, once per night.

† **Severhallow Zombie:** new creature (Appendix: The Recurring Cast).

D20. THE LONG STAIR DOWN

A broad stair drops into the dark in long flights. Far below, water is running fast.

About 300 feet down to the quay at D21 (empty); the bank runs east to D26. If she hunts the party, let them hear her above, calling that the river will not save them. That is a lie.



THE DEEP LAYERS II: THE DROWNED VAULTS (MAP 9)

The near bank meets the Long Stair; the far bank holds the shaft's foot (D24), D29, D30 and the Iron Stair (D34). A thin place links D25 and D32: a living creature stepping through arrives in the other room with its carried equipment. It works in either direction; undead cannot pass through the seam.

D24. BOTTOM OF THE HOLLOW SHAFT

A chimney of raw stone rises out of sight above a slope of bones and broken things: a lute, a lady's shoe, a split helmet. Overhead the walls rustle with thousands of folded bats.

Passages lead east to D30 and south to D31 (empty). Bright light or loud noise by day sets the roost boiling for 1d4 rounds: casters make a Quick save (TN 12) or lose the spell, and 3 Giant Bats (Countess Severina chapter) attack.

Climbing up to S12: use the full Hollow Shaft procedure under How the Castle Works. The 800-foot chimney has ledges and iron rope eyes every 50 feet. With climbing gear, 100 feet of rope is reused in stages; allow two hours plus delays and eight STR TN 12 checks per climber. Quick TN 13 catches a slip; a failed catch deals 1d6 on a secured line or 10d6 without one. The same procedure applies coming down.

The Mist Cleft. A crack at the foot of the slope, too narrow for anything but mist, bats and rats, runs down to D44. Her retreating mist pours down the shaft into it.

D26-D27. THE BONE FERRY

A long flat boat built of bones glides in to the jetty, a skull on its prow holding a pale lamp. At the stern a tall hooded figure holds out one long grey hand, palm up.

A bell at each landing (D26 and D33) calls the ferry from the opposite bank. D27 is the crossing itself. Lucan, ferryman of the dead since before the pact, answers to an older law. His fee is one coin per passenger, placed in his hand, each way; he carries six. When the last fare is paid he speaks his three rules:

"Keep your hands in the boat. Speak no names of the dead upon the water. No one leaves until we touch the shore."

A cheat (no fare, false coin, hidden passenger, leaving early) is tipped into the river and attacked until dead or paying double from the water.



Lucan the Ferryman (Ghost) - HP 150, AC 15, DR 0; 1 attack: withering touch 3d6+5 necrotic; Saves Quick +3, Tough +2, Mind +3; Impartial Vile (Schemer). Possession: 5 ft, Mind save (TN 14) or he controls a humanoid 3 rounds, cooldown 3 rounds. Horrifying Visage: 60 ft, Mind save (TN 14) or frightened 1 round, cooldown 3 rounds. Incorporeal.

The crossing takes 10 rounds. Anyone who trails a hand or weapon in the water feels the drowned hands close on it (Quick TN 13 or pulled overboard). On round 5 the drowned whisper the names of the characters' own dead; answering aloud breaks a rule, and Lucan stops poling for 1d4 rounds. Speaking Severina's name tells Severina where they are. Saying Livia does not alert her, though speaking still breaks Lucan's silence rule.

If she hunts them during the crossing, she stands on the jetty and uses Charm Gaze as her whole attack action on one character within 60 feet (Mind save; use the duration for their distance when she uses it). On a failed save, the character tries to leap overboard (a friend holds them, STR TN 12): "You think the water is a wall. It is only a door." She sends two Giant Bats from her retinue, reaching the boat on round 4; this spends no hunting encounter.

D29. THE SUNKEN CHAPEL

Half the chapel stands under water, pew backs breaking the surface like gravestones. The altar stands dry with seven cold candles. A woman rises from the pool in a habit of shadow and frost, eyes full of hate.

Sister Agafia drowned on the altar steps singing the Lowwater Hymn. She rises when anyone enters the pool or climbs the dais. While anyone sings the hymn (D12) she stands still; if the others light the seven candles meanwhile, she sinks at rest and the font fills with holy water for three flasks, once.

Sister Agafia (Specter) - HP 150, AC 15, DR 0; 2 attacks: life drain touch 2d8+4 necrotic, 2d8+4 necrotic; Saves Quick +4, Tough +2, Mind +1; Wild Vile (Reaver). Drain: Tough save (TN 13) or maximum HP drops by the damage until a full night's rest. Incorporeal. Sunlight Sensitivity: -2 to attacks and saves in true sunlight.

† **Specter**: existing creature; Monster Trove for Seasoned Adventurers, entry "Specter". [Rules entry](#)

The Bellwater. Behind the altar a drowned stair drops 120 feet through black water to the lower chapel (D37); it emerges from a submerged stair mouth beside the benches in D37. There is air at both ends, none between. For this passage, an unimpeded swimmer crosses in one minute on a prepared breath; make one Tough save (TN 12) for cold and strain on arrival, taking 1d6 cold and becoming Weary on failure. Failure does not prevent arrival, and Weary does not stack. Tell the party the length and lack of air before they enter; the stair can be followed by touch, and a guide rope helps companions keep together. If trapped or delayed beyond that minute without air, make a Tough save (TN 12) each additional round or take 1d6



suffocation damage, ignoring DR; at 0 HP the swimmer is unconscious and must be brought to air. Water-breathing removes this breath limit, not the cold save. It is running water from the Blackwater: no vampire can use it, and the other dead will not.

D30. NOAPTE'S CRYPT

A stall of black stone, a manger heaped with grey ash, hoofprints burned an inch into the rock. The air smells of hot iron.

By day Noapte (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) rests here; each round anyone is within 30 feet, a Probability Roll of 15+ wakes her, and she fights to the death. Destroyed here she is gone for good; elsewhere she re-forms here at the next dusk. Her silver-belled bridle (60 gp) draws her to the thief every night.

† Noapte (Nightmare Stalker): stats in Appendix: The Recurring Cast.

D34. THE IRON STAIR

A black iron stair winds down a round shaft, cold enough to bite. Words are worked round and round its railing of lilies and upturned swords, and a crack of silver light runs down the wall beside it.

The stair descends 120 feet to D35. It is cold-forged iron: undead take 1d6 a round touching it. Only on the last night does the Countess endure it, carrying Luca. Her careful descent takes 10 rounds; apply the stair's 1d6 damage each round using normal DR, and deduct it from her current HP before she reaches D42. She cannot use Coffin Rest along the way. At dusk on the last night, up to two surviving Brides and Vasilka climb down the Hollow Shaft by Wall Walker and go through D24, D31 and D32 to the top of D34. They hide on the stone walls, avoiding the iron. They begin their ambush only when Severina starts down with Luca; if he is dead or never captured, omit this wedding guard. The railing reads: "Bronze bows to the kind of heart, and to the name of the bride who never was a bride. Speak it plainly, for she cannot." The bride is Livia: speaking her name, each for themselves, lets the party past the Bronze Guardians.

THE DEEP LAYERS III: THE HALLOWED DEPTHS (MAP 10)

RUNNING THE HALLOWED DEPTHS

Holy ground. Undead loosed here will not enter D40, or D37 while its window glows.

Where she is. By night she hunts above; by day (on the last night, only once the veil closes) she sleeps in D44 and fights only in D43-D44. Touching her coffin or the urn brings her through the Mist Cleft in about 10 minutes, spending no hunting encounter. If she has lost her mist, she comes in bat shape down the Hollow Shaft and the Mist Cleft in about 30 minutes. By day, cleansing or breaking the urn wakes her and she rises in D44 to fight; she does not leave D43-D44. In her own rooms she always fights back.

D35. HALL OF THE BRONZE GUARDIANS

Two bronze figures twice a man's height face each other, spears crossed, green streaks running from their eyes like old tears. Cut in the floor: WE KEEP THE YOUNGEST. SAY WHOM.





The 2 Bronze Guardians use the Iron Warden entry (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) with the Name-Bound variation. Each living character must speak the name Livia within 10 feet to pass, each for themselves (it is in U5, U9 and U16). Otherwise both wake; answering "Severina" gives them +2 to hit the first round. They never leave the hall and stop when a foe speaks the name. Undead cannot pass. Only on Night 3 does she pass, when Luca speaks the name for her in Aurel's voice.

† **Iron Warden:** new creature (Appendix: The Recurring Cast).

D36. THE GRAND VESTIBULE

A domed chamber floored with a sunburst mosaic. Wall panels tell a tale: two girls under an apple tree, a knight on the road, the fair girl and the knight with wrists bound in ribbon. The last panel is blank grey tile.

Once each night, a palm on the blank panel makes it show the Countess wherever she is right now; by day, a closed coffin. The first time the party stands here, Livia waits in the east doorway, then walks toward her tomb. Exits: north D37, west D38, east through D39 (empty) to D40, south D41.

D37. CHAPEL OF THE LAST LIGHT (BELOW)

Stone benches face a white altar. Above it a round window of yellow glass glows softly, though there is nothing behind it but the mountain. By the door sits a knight's skeleton, a sword across his knees.

Beside the benches, a flooded stair mouth connects to D29 through the 120-foot Bellwater passage. There is air here; use the swimming and breath procedure in D29 in either direction. While the window glows, undead will not enter. The party may take one full rest here, ever; when it ends the glass goes dark for good. The back wall bears plainly readable words; no roll is needed: "Here the world is thin. If the door is broken, do not force it. Call the one who keeps it, and answer it truly." (D42)

D38. TOMB OF LORD VAREN AND LADY CORVINA

Two closed coffins rest on low biers under windows of colored glass lit grey from nothing. Around them, rank on rank, lie armored dead with their swords on their breasts.



Lord Varen holds the silver signet of Severhallow (40 gp). Lady Corvina's prayer book holds a locket of two dark-eyed girls (50 gp) and, on the last page: "Forgive her, if you can. I could not. Let someone end it." A girl's whisper answers: "I did." Three sealed flasks of holy water stand at her bier, enough to bless the grave earth in D44. A note beside them reads: "Hallow the soil beneath her coffin, and it shall no longer mend her wounds."



The Undead Host, the guard sworn "until the last of the blood," now lies here around them, rising if the tomb is robbed (anything but the holy water): 5 skeletons (as D10) and Captain Anton Zgardan. Showing the signet and declaring the house ended stops them 1 round; the captain makes a Mind save (TN 14) or kneels, and the host stands aside.

Captain Anton Zgardan (Wight) - HP 80, AC 14, DR 1; 2 attacks: blade 1d8+3, 1d8+3; Saves Quick +1, Tough +3, Mind +2; Orderly Vile (Tyrant). Life Drain: Tough save (TN 13) or 1d8 necrotic and maximum HP reduced as much until a full night's rest, cooldown 2 rounds.

† **Wight**: existing creature; Monster Trove for Seasoned Adventurers, entry "Wight". [Rules entry](#)

D40. TOMB OF LIVIA

The cold stops at the threshold, and the air smells of lilies. A coffin's lid is carved as a sleeping girl in a wedding veil, her stone hands folded on a real sword the color of pale honey. In an alcove beyond, a carved knight mourns with his sword reversed, and he has Luca's face.

Dawnbrand, Aurel's sword, lies in the stone hands. To take it, lay a hand on the lid and swear the oath aloud, by Livia's name, to put her sister to rest; then the hands part and Livia's lips move: "Not for vengeance. For rest." Full item rules are in Appendix: Treasures of Severhallow. Livia's ring (U14), laid in the stone hands, counts as the oath for whoever lays it. The stone hands are held by Livia's vow: force and spells cannot pry them apart. The oath or her ring opens them. The room is a safe rest.

Livia's Mercy. After Dawnbrand is lifted from her hands, Livia grants this boon once for the whole party; it belongs to the party, not the sword. A character in the Hallowed Depths (D44 included) who speaks her name in real need regains 2d6+5 HP and is freed from one charm, stun, Weary or loss of maximum HP. It does not remove Luca's Mark or the Weary it causes; those last until Severina is destroyed.

D41. THE BRIDE'S MIRROR HALL

The hall runs south from the Grand Vestibule (D36) to the Veil Seam (D42).

A hall paved black and white like a chapel aisle, lined with tall lace-draped mirrors. At the far end a woman in a white veil stands with her back to you, something bright cupped in her hands, humming the tune for a bride walking in.

Marga Vornic, Livia's maid of honor, still waits for the ceremony to finish and asks whether the bride has come yet. Before anyone enters the aisle, she beckons: "Two by two, dear ones. Arm in arm. We must be ready for the bride." Characters who walk the aisle in procession, two by two and arm in arm, are not attacked; running or striking ends it.



The mirrors are Severina's. Ask each player quietly: "What would you take from her, if it cost nothing?" The glass shows it: Mind save (TN 14) or charmed until the end of their next round. These desires may help players find an honest answer in D42, but do not predetermine it or replace the Aspect's test.

The bands. Marga holds the two wedding bands never exchanged. If two characters take them and give them to each other, the ceremony ends; Marga smiles and is gone. The rings are worth 40 gp each, and more to Luca.

Marga Vornic, Mist-Bound Bride - HP 136, AC 15, DR 1; 2 attacks: veil touch 2d6+3, 2d6+3; Saves Quick +2, Tough +2, Mind +0; Impartial Vile (Schemer). False Vow: 30 ft, Mind save (TN 13) or treat her as an ally 1 round, cooldown 3 rounds. Unfinished Ceremony: at 0 HP she reforms once at 68 HP, unless her veil is torn, the bands taken, or the great mirror (HP 20, AC 10) smashed.

† **Mist-Bound Bride:** existing creature; Monster Trove for Seasoned Adventurers, entry "Mist-Bound Bride". [Rules entry](#)

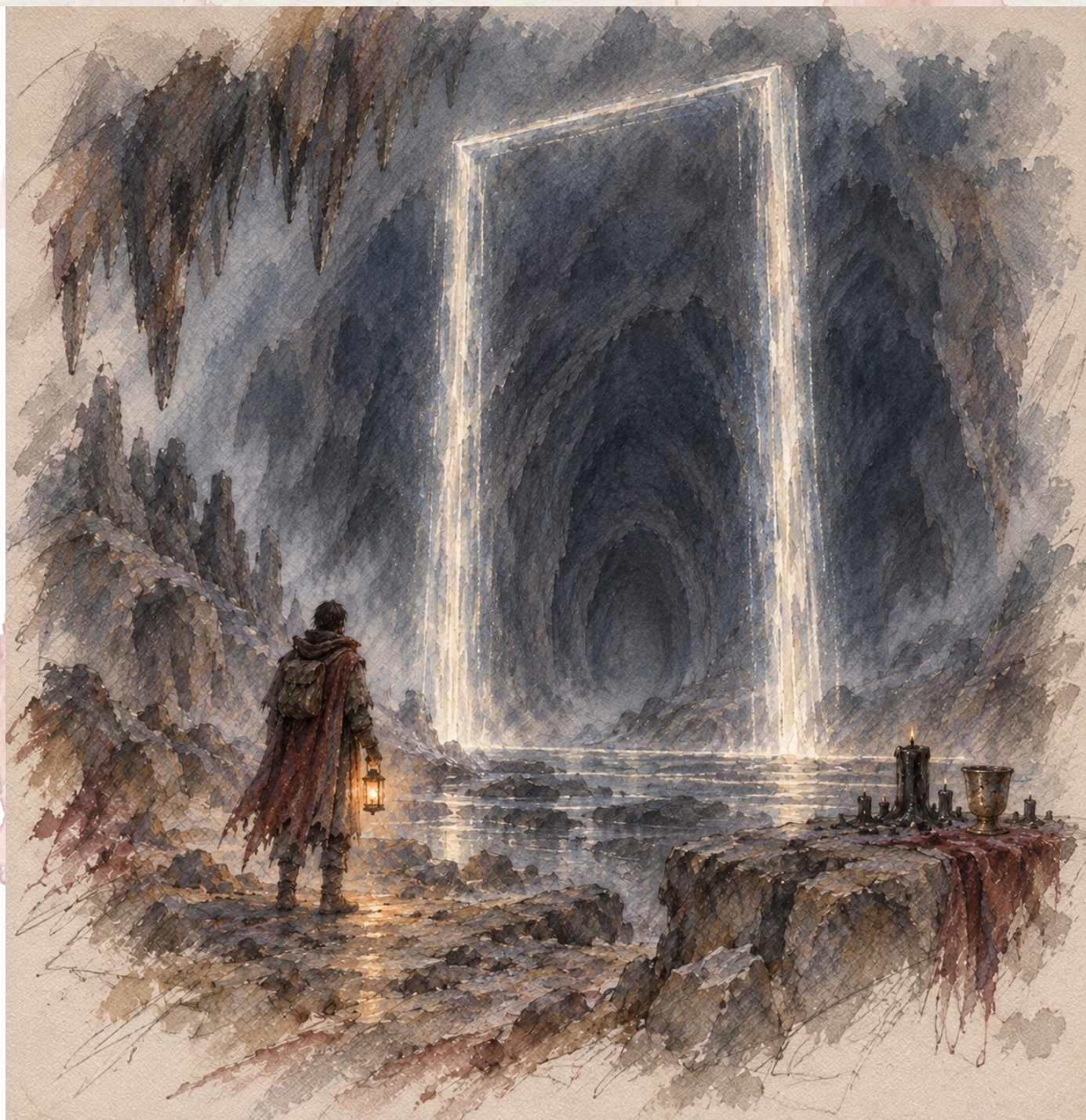
D42. THE VEIL SEAM

The worked stone ends in a cave polished by something that is not water. Above head height hangs a crack of silver light attached to nothing. Beneath it, on a candle-ringed stone, sits a silver cup tarnished black.



Here the pact was made. The Aspect can be called only between dusk and the start of the grey hours, while the seam is open; by day the light gives no answer. A character who steps into the light and says aloud they mean to close the wound calls the Aspect of the Threshold: a silver doorway with no wall. It asks each PC in the light, one at a time: "What part of you already belongs to her?"

A doorway of silver light towers above you, standing without a wall to support it. Its pale edges cast long reflections across the uneven stone floor. Within the frame, the cavern remains dark. There is no door, and no figure waiting beyond it. When it speaks, the voice comes from the threshold itself.



Aspect of the Threshold - HP 230, AC 18, DR 5; 2 attacks: reality strike 2d10+5, 2d10+5; Saves Quick +2, Tough +5, Mind +5; Orderly Impartial (Arbiter). Threshold Ward: at 0 HP it reforms at full HP 3 rounds later. Judgment Cast: each creature within 60 ft that acted dishonestly in the past hour makes a Mind save (TN 18) or is stunned 2 rounds, cooldown 3 rounds.

The test. Once per night for the whole party, not once per character. Each answers for themselves; do not roll. A true answer is specific, about the speaker, and costly to say: "I am



afraid of growing old, and she would fix that." "I like being feared." Untrue: a speech, a joke, an answer about someone else, or a brave "Nothing." Only the PCs standing in the light when the test begins count; one who steps out before answering is not a liar and leaves the count. Others may answer, but their answers do not count. Each answer takes a round. A liar alone takes Judgment Cast at once, regardless of cooldown. Only an attack on the Aspect by someone being tested ends the test; attacking Severina does not cancel it. The Countess cannot touch the Aspect. If half or fewer answer truly, or everyone steps out, the test fails: the doorway fades and the pact remains. They may try again the next night while the seam is open. If attacked, it strikes only its attackers on its normal turns; it stops when they cease attacking and leave the light. An attack on the Aspect by a participant spends that night's test, even if the Aspect is reduced to 0 HP and re-forms. An outsider's attack on the Aspect does not cancel the others' answers.

If more than half of the PCs counted answer truly, the crack shuts like an eye and the pact breaks. She loses mist and Coffin Rest for good; her blood-bound thralls fall senseless as their borrowed years come due; and at the next first grey (about 6 am) she burns to ash wherever she is, the Brides and zombies falling to dust with her. Until then she hunts the party with everything left. On Night 3, that first grey is the veil's closing.

NIGHT 3: THE BINDING

Candles lean toward the crack. Luca lies on the stone in white linen, eyes open and seeing nothing. The Countess kneels beside him in bridal white, his hand in both of hers. "You are early. Sit down. You may as well be witnesses."

If she holds Luca alive at midnight, Noapte carries them down the S12 shaft to D24; she walks him through D31 (empty) and D32, down the Iron Stair and past the guardians. If captured later, they leave at once by that route. Without Noapte she climbs down carrying him, reaching D24 two hours later. The veil closes at 6 am (7 am if the P14 glass was turned). Arrival never resets this deadline. Count down combat rounds; announce the final round as it begins. Resolve closing at its end, after everyone's turn. The third bite binds Luca only if he is alive and lies in the seam's light with her beside him at the closing. At closing, carrying Luca out of the light prevents binding. Hold at Bay can also prevent it if its bearer is within 10 feet of Luca, she fails its save, and its forced movement has taken her away from his side before closing. Dawnlight prevents binding while she is within its light. Used earlier, these only buy time; she lays him down again if she can. Two characters can carry a resisting Luca with one STR TN 14 roll by the stronger carrier, as under The Call. If she is holding him, the same roll also frees him from her grasp; failure leaves him with her, and they may retry next round. Taking an unresisting Luca from the stone needs no roll if she is not holding him. She acts on her normal turn and gains no free attack from their attempt. Passing the test breaks the pact and prevents



binding. At the binding she never withdraws voluntarily, regardless of HP or hunting encounters; she fights to keep him until closing. At 0 HP the urn rule still applies: mist return, or helpless collapse if mist is disabled. On Night 3 the Aspect appears without being summoned, even without Luca or Severina. The party may choose to take its test. "Do not listen to it. It asked me too."

If the binding succeeds, Luca is hers: a pale, silent consort who sleeps in the little coffin in D44 and obeys only her. He is still living, with his remaining HP (maximum 14), and breathes faintly even in the coffin; tell the players they can see this. He is not lost. A stake through his heart would kill him rather than free him. Destroy her, and at the first true dawn he wakes mortal, his bite marks gone.

If the binding fails, at the closing she goes to her coffin as mist, or with no mist sleeps where she stands. Once the veil has closed, the seam sleeps until next Hallows' Eve.

Beyond the seam, a short steep passage leads down to the Earth Vault (D43) and on to the Tomb of Severina (D44).

D43. THE EARTH VAULT

A small round vault. On a black plinth stands a tall urn of black clay, sealed with wax pressed with a rose closed around a thorn. The air tastes of turned earth.

The urn holds hallowed earth Severina dug on the night of the pact. It lay beneath the chapel 260 years; Mirela carried it down forty years ago. It calls her mist home.

Cleanse it by opening its wax seal and pouring one full flask of holy water onto the earth as an action (no roll), or with Sacred Circle, or Sanctified Ward laid on the urn by exception.

‡ **Sacred Circle**: level 3 cleric spell, Cleric Spells for First Blessing.

‡ **Sanctified Ward**: level 1 cleric spell, Cleric Spells for First Blessing.

Destroy it: break the urn (HP 15, AC 10) and pour the earth into running water. Smashed but not poured, the earth still calls her home. Cleansed or destroyed, she can no longer become mist: at 0 HP she collapses, near dead and defenseless, for 1 hour wherever she is. A stake through her heart kills her permanently (STR TN 10); if she is not destroyed within the hour, she wakes with 20 HP (the urn rule in the Countess chapter).

D44. TOMB OF SEVERINA

The darkness is heavier than darkness should be; your light gives up a few paces from your hand. In a bed of loose black soil lies a coffin of black wood polished to a mirror shine.



The grave earth covers two 10-foot squares. An alcove holds Luca's little coffin, lined in white silk, empty unless the binding succeeded; another is the mouth of the Mist Cleft. Her coffin's lid closes as she settles inside; a spring bolt catches automatically on the inside. She knows she must take flesh to recover, and has made her refuge hard to open.



Day guards. By day, two living Thrall Servants (Appendix: The Recurring Cast) stand beside the coffin, household blades drawn. Track these two; slain guards are not replaced. On detecting intruders, either uses its first action to hammer the lid and shout an alarm instead of Hold and Call. Resolve initiative normally; the party can act to prevent the alarm. It wakes Severina immediately from daytime sleep; on her next turn she releases the bolt and rises to fight in D43-D44. It cannot wake her from recovery. If the guards are silenced, deceived or otherwise prevented from warning her, the sleeping-stake opportunity below remains.

By day (on the last night, only after the veil closes) she sleeps behind the locked lid, or where she lies if unable to reach it. If she is still asleep when the lid opens, the opener alone may immediately attempt one stake strike (STR TN 10), before normal turns resume; this is not a free round for the whole party. A failed stake attempt wakes ordinary sleep, and she acts on her next normal turn. Damage, the guards' alarm, Dawnbrand within 30 feet, or cleansing or breaking the urn wakes her; ordinary noise does not. Sleep permits staking but does not trigger Dawnlight's instant destruction; its radiant damage still applies. None of these wakes her from recovery.



RUNNING THE FINAL FIGHT

Blessed earth. A flask of holy water blesses one 10-foot square of grave earth. With both squares blessed, Coffin Rest no longer works: she cannot heal toward 100 HP, and remains helpless during recovery. The flasks in D38 reward a party that found and saved them; holy water from elsewhere works too.

Retreat. In D43-D44, at 25 HP or fewer she uses her next action, if able, to become mist and slip into her coffin. With no coffin, she makes no voluntary retreat and fights to 0 HP. At 0 HP or below she is forced into mist immediately at 0 HP; this is not death. With no coffin, use the fallback below. If the urn is cleansed or destroyed, or the pact broken, she cannot become mist and fights to 0 HP, then collapses helpless under the urn rule.

Recovery. Inside the coffin she takes flesh, the lid shuts and locks, and Coffin Rest restores 2 HP at the end of each round. She remains flesh and helpless until she reaches 100 HP; neither opening the lid, an alarm nor Dawnbrand wakes her early. From 25 HP this takes 38 rounds, from 0 HP 50 rounds; use her actual HP, not a fixed timer. At 100 HP recovery ends. During the grey hours she enters ordinary daytime sleep instead, with the waking and sleeping-stake rules above applying; on the last night those hours begin at the actual veil-closing time, including any P14 delay. Otherwise she releases the bolt and attacks again, adapting to the defenses and weaknesses she has seen. She remembers who wielded the Sigil, who held the sword and which spells hurt her.

Opening the coffin. The players choose how to reach her: force or pick the lock, smash the wood, use fire or magic, or try another workable plan. Adjudicate their method using the normal rules; no single tool or solution is required. The coffin has HP 30, AC 12, DR 2. Destroying it stops Coffin Rest and exposes her flesh; setting the wood alight does not by itself mean her body has burned away.

Her lines. "You found my bed. Most guests are content with the dining room." Struck by Dawnbrand: "That was his. You hold it like a stranger."

Staking her. Once the party can reach her helpless or sleeping body, a stake driven through her heart (STR TN 10) kills her permanently. She cannot defend herself or escape as mist during recovery. Tell the players when the stake has struck home: her body turns to ash, and the pact breaks. Beheading, burning her body, Dawnbrand and Dawnlight remain alternatives as described under Destroying her in the Countess chapter.

If her coffin is already destroyed when she returns at 0 HP, her mist sinks into the earth where it stood and takes flesh, helpless for 1 hour. A stake through her heart ends her there. If she is not destroyed within the hour, she wakes with 20 HP; in the grey hours she sleeps where she lies instead.



THE LAST OF THE NIGHT

DN: These final movements are involuntary; the successful stake has already killed her permanently. If she is destroyed by another method, adapt the physical details to that ending.

The stake drives home. Severina's body arches once, and her fingers close around the wood. For a heartbeat, she holds it there.

Then her grip loosens.

She looks from one of you to another. Her lips part, but no command comes. Her gaze passes beyond you, toward something none of you can see. The fury leaves her face. For a moment, she looks young - and very, very tired.

"Livia."

Her hand falls open. The skin beneath your fingers dries and crumbles. Fine grey cracks spread from the stake across her breast, along her throat, to the corners of her eyes. She exhales, and the last of her breath carries a whisper of dust.

Slowly, her face collapses into ash. Her shoulders follow, then the hands that held so many lives in their grasp. Her clothes settle around the stake. Nothing moves beneath them.

DN: Pause here. Let the players react before continuing.

Somewhere in the castle, a door swings open. Another answers it, far away. The weight you have carried since crossing the Iron Thorns begins to lift.

You have time to look at one another. Time to believe it.

Then, far above, a single bell rings.

A second answers. Then another. Through all the stone of the castle, every bell in Severhallow rings at once, untouched, for the first time in three hundred years.

Continue with the Epilogue.



EPILOGUE: DAWN OVER SEVERHALLOW



DN: Once Severina is destroyed, the escape is assured: the Grey no longer bars the way and the Iron Thorns open, even if the veil had closed. Narrate the journey out without further random encounters or escape checks; do not require room-by-room backtracking. Give the players time to gather living captives, recover belongings and say goodbye, then move to the dawn scenes below.

If she fell in D44, the party climbs out the long way, up through the Deep Layers, the Under-Prison and the Larders to K20, and the air stops tasting of old earth. If she fell elsewhere, or



burned to ash at first grey after the pact broke at D42, begin where the party stands. The true dawn comes at the next first grey (about 6 am); a party out sooner waits for it. A party that destroys her by day climbs out into grey daylight, and the DN skips to dawn. Run it where the party first stands under open sky with Luca: the Edge (W13), the Fog Court (W4) or the village square.

The wind has dropped. For the first time since you crossed the Iron Thorns it is simply quiet, the quiet at the end of a long illness. Past the mountains the eastern sky goes from iron to pewter, and from pewter to a thin, washed gold.

LIVIA AND AUREL

Only if Severina is destroyed and Luca lives, including a bound Luca restored to mortality at this dawn.

A fair-haired young woman stands a few paces off in a wedding gown three centuries out of fashion. "I know you," she tells Luca. "You won't remember. That's all right. I remember enough for both of us."

A knight in a grey cloak steps out of Luca, his hair wet as though from deep water. "Live this one for yourself," he tells the boy. "I had mine. I spent it badly at the end, and I have been falling ever since. Not anymore." To you: "You stood where I could not. Go home. Tell someone she was loved." He takes Livia's hand, and together they walk east and become light. The sun comes through.

Luca is himself again: mortal, shaking, alive, his bite marks gone. He keeps nothing of Aurel's life but a fond ache whenever he hears chapel bells.

THE VILLAGE GOES TO REST

Sunlight runs down the slope like water from a jug. Where it touches, the ghosts stand, look at the sky, and walk into the light. Above the square the chapel bell swings once, then again. Nobody is pulling it.

Every ghost goes, except Widow Aneta if her locket never came home. Grigore waits on his doorstep for his children, says what fathers say, thanks the party by name and is gone; Ilinca presses his seal ring and 240 gp on the party.



LOOSE THREADS

- When the pact breaks, every thrall's held-back years come due, even one already freed from her control: Stelian (L4) wakes 12 years older, Mirela becomes an old woman and lives, and Mihnea and Emeric go to dust.
- Unslain Brides, Vasilka among them, and the zombies fall to dust. The castle's ghosts fade at first light.
- Mother Zora calls the party's debts paid: "You bought the whole valley's freedom. I can let one small debt go."
- Dawnbrand and the Sigil stay with their bearers. The Journal crumbles in sunlight unless kept wrapped. Any living captive can leave with the party.

WHAT BECAME OF THEM

- **Mirela.** Turned, she laughs at her old hands and asks for a town with a chapel. Loyal, she weeps for her mistress on the coach box.
- **Ilinca.** She breaks her ash stake at her father's grave and walks out with Luca; if he was lost, she digs his grave and leaves alone.
- **Rozalia.** Rescued, she gives a rescuer her mother's silver hairpin. Left behind, she is found at dawn in her rocking chair, waiting to be told she may go.
- **Aneta.** If the locket came home, she is already at rest. If not, she alone stays at her window, waiting for a daughter who will never come down the road.
- **Livia.** If the party swore by her name and kept the oath, she goes to Aurel gladly. A swearer who dies in the attempt, or helps break the pact and leaves before it burns her, has kept it. Only a swearer who flees by the bell while others fight on has broken it: if the Countess falls anyway, that character alone sees Livia once more at the Iron Thorns, after she has gone to Aurel, watching without reproach. That is worse.

OUT THROUGH THE IRON THORNS

The fog in the low places is only fog now: wet, cool, smelling of moss. At the border the Iron Thorns stand open. You walk east through them into the rising sun, and behind you the chapel bell is still ringing.



IF LUCA DID NOT SURVIVE

There is no reunion. At sunrise two figures stand far off atop the Lovers' Spire (S12), a knight and a woman in white, before the light takes them.

IF THE PARTY LEAVES BY THE BELL

The pact holds: no dawn comes, the ghosts stay, and the coach runs again next Hallows' Eve. Luca leaves if he resisted The Call, was snapped out of it, or was carried through. Skip the dawn scenes and read:

The silver thread runs on into the fog, and the fog lets you through. When you look back there is only a wet hillside and an ordinary grey morning, and somewhere a coach is already turning for home.



IF THE VEIL CLOSES

The Choking Grey thickens at every border. The party is trapped until next Hallows' Eve.

- **Fight on.** She can still be destroyed; the DN decides how much time has passed outside.
- **The long year.** The wanderers' camp shelters them through the year at a price Mother Zora names, and it is never gold. Each character makes a Mind save or carries a lasting scar of the dark months.
- **Guests of the Countess.** She keeps them as prisoners; the next adventure is an escape.



APPENDIX: TREASURES OF SEVERHALLOW

DAWNBRAND

A plain-hilted longsword the color of pale honey, warm on the coldest night. Aurel carried it; when he stepped from the Lovers' Spire, Lord Varen laid it in Livia's stone hands (D40). They open for anyone who swears aloud, by Livia's name, to put her sister to rest; laying her ring in the hands counts as the oath. Force and spells cannot open the hands; the oath or her ring can. Severina cannot touch it.

Weapon. Longsword, 1d8; +2 to hit and +2 damage. Its damage is radiant and ignores the DR of undead, hers included; +1d6 against undead, or +2d6 instead against vampires (the Countess, the Brides, Vasilka).

Dawnbreak. Found with 3 charges. Once per day (midnight to midnight), the wielder may spend one charge as an action to shed true sunlight out to 60 feet until their next turn. Spent charges never return; the sword's weapon properties remain. Roll 3d10 radiant damage once: undead within 30 feet take full damage, no save; beyond 30 feet through 60 feet, a CON Tough save means half damage on failure, no effect on success. Beyond 60 feet, no effect. Use each monster's normal max-HP save TN, without adding the wielder's level (Severina: TN 8, Tough +3). Resolve this damage only once, replacing damage from sunlight weaknesses. A vampire damaged by the burst cannot voluntarily become mist, regain HP or use its gaze until the end of its next turn. Severina's forced mist return at 0 HP still works unless the urn is cleansed or destroyed, or the pact broken.

Livia's Mercy. As it is lifted, Livia whispers: "Not for vengeance. For rest." This unlocks the party's one use of Livia's Mercy (D40); it is a blessing of Livia, not a rechargeable sword power. A character in the Hallowed Depths (D35-D44) who speaks her name in real need regains 2d6+5 HP and is freed from one charm, stun, Weary condition or loss of maximum HP. This does not remove Luca's Mark or its Weary condition.

Wielding. Anyone trained with the longsword. A blood-bound thrall holding it takes 1d6 radiant each round; undead cannot lift it. If no PC has the training, Ilinca can carry it.

THE HALLOWED SIGIL

A palm-sized white-gold candle-and-sun, a crystal glowing at its heart. Father Cassian laid it in the beam of the Chapel of Ash (K12), the last hallowed light above the Deep Layers, which no undead can enter.

Worn openly. +2 to Mind saves against the gaze, charm and fear of undead.



Hold at Bay. As an action, the bearer thrusts it at one vampire within 30 feet: Mind save (TN 15) or it cannot come within 10 feet of the bearer or attack the bearer until the bearer's next turn. If it is already within 10 feet, it must use its next move to get beyond that range.

Hallowed Turning. A cleric presenting it adds 30 to the Turn Undead pool; undead save at -2. Against maximum HP, a 6th-level cleric with the Sigil has 150, still short of Severina's 165.

Dawnlight. Any bearer may spend one charge as an action to fill a 30-foot radius with true sunlight for 1d4 rounds. Vampires in it cannot attack or move except to leave, and take 2d6 radiant at the start of each turn (Severina 3d10, no save); a vampire it finds staked, or lying helpless at 0 HP, burns away (daytime sleep alone does not trigger this destruction; the radiant damage still applies). Other undead take 1d6 radiant per round and -2 to hit. Found with 1 charge; once spent, it cannot be restored. Its other powers work when empty.

Touch. A Vile creature that touches it takes 2d6 radiant and drops it.

SEVERINA'S JOURNAL

A relic in black kid leather in the Study (U9), where its full text is given. An hour's reading names Livia, tells the wedding night, shows she believes Aurel has returned, and says where she sleeps. A reader who meets Luca may make a WIS Chance Roll (TN 12) to know him. A loose leaf hides in the back cover (Handout 3).

Her Own Words. Once per encounter for the whole party, a reader may speak her own words back to her as an action: Mind save (TN 14) or she loses her next action. During The Countess herself, a failed save also ends the encounter: she leaves.

Fragile. In true sunlight it crumbles to ash in a round, unless wrapped.

LIVIA'S RING

Livia's betrothal ring, a thin gold band engraved "A. to L., until the last light" (30 gp), at the bottom of the Bath of Iron (U14).

It stills the Guardian Portrait (U5) for the scene. Laid before Livia's portrait or tomb, it lays Catrina (U4) to rest. Held up to Severina, it wins one true answer to one question. Laid in the stone hands at D40, it counts as Livia's oath.





APPENDIX: THE RECURRING CAST

SEVERINA'S BRIDE

Past travelers turned and dressed in white, bored, cruel and jealous of Luca. Iuliana (Natalia), Veta (Tereza Lovric) and Smaranda (Elske) keep D16; Vasilka (U15) uses these stats.

DN note. By day they sleep (Vasilka on the eighth bed in U15). On entry and each noisy round, roll a d20 for each sleeper: on 17+ she wakes, and any other Brides present wake at the end of the next round. Vasilka uses the same rule in U15; it does not wake Brides in distant rooms. A sleeper can be staked (STR TN 10). Turn Undead uses each Bride's maximum 45 HP against the cleric's pool: a 5th-level cleric can affect two (90 of 100 HP), destroying each that fails her normal Mind save; a 4th-level cleric can affect one (45 of 80 HP), making her flee for 2d6 rounds on a failed save, not destroying her. On the last night, up to two surviving Brides plus Vasilka prepare at D34 by the route described there; their ambush starts when Severina descends with Luca. They fall to dust with her.

Severina's Bride - HP 45, AC 14, DR 0; 2 attacks: claws 1d6+3, 1d6+3; Saves Quick +3, Tough +1, Mind +1; Impartial Vile (Schemer). Immune to poison, charm and sleep. Wall Walker: climbs walls and ceilings. Bridal Kiss: 1d6+2 necrotic; on a failed Tough save (TN 13) she heals as much (cooldown 2 rounds). Stilling Gaze: 30 ft, Mind save (TN 13) or cannot move for 1 round (cooldown 3 rounds). Vampire's Bane: true sunlight deals 2d6 radiant at the start of each of her turns and she cannot attack in it. If a sunlight spell or item specifies damage, resolve that effect instead of adding this 2d6 for the same source; use its saves and undead modifiers unless its own text overrides them. Dawnligh and Dawnbreak use their printed item rules. No Mist: at 0 HP she falls, and rises at 45 HP at the next midnight unless staked or burned.

THRALL SERVANT

DN note. Travelers given her blood instead of a grave: victims. Kept from her a full day, one may make a Mind save to break her control. Success frees the mind, but the blood's borrowed youth remains until the pact breaks; those years still come due then. When the pact breaks they fall senseless as their held-back years come due.



Thrall Servant - HP 18, AC 12, DR 0; 1 attack: household blade 1d6+1; Saves Quick +1, Tough +1, Mind -1; Orderly Impartial (Arbiter). Blood-Bound: immune to charm and command but hers; ageless while bound. Living: cannot be turned. Hold and Call: instead of attacking, seizes one target (Quick save or held until a STR Chance Roll, TN 12, as its action) and cries out. At night the Countess or a Bride comes in 1d4 rounds if one is near and an open route exists; otherwise she comes as fast as she can travel, and running water and wards still bar her; in the grey hours Mihnea comes (or the L9 fallback if dead) and her next spy report succeeds. When summoned outside D42-D44, the Countess follows The Countess herself: one victim, up to 5 rounds, leaving immediately if that victim falls unconscious or reaches 0 HP. This spends no hunting encounter. Repeated cries during the same fight neither restart that limit nor summon her again after she withdraws.

SEVERHALLOW ZOMBIE

The old garrison rotting at its posts, and the wedding guests sealed two by two in D19 (one per open crypt).

DN note. They never pursue past their rooms, and fall to dust with her.

Severhallow Zombie - HP 22, AC 11, DR 0; 1 attack: grave grip 1d6+2; Saves Quick -2, Tough +2, Mind -2; Unaligned. Immune to charm, fear and sleep. Grave-Bound: counts as 40 HP for Turn Undead. Severed Parts: a hit of 6+ knocks a piece loose (d6: 1-2 hand, 3-4 arm, 5 leg, 6 head) that crawls and attacks for 1d4. Parts have AC 10 and share the zombie's HP; at 0 all fall still. At most three loose at once.

NOAPTE

Severina's black mare: by night in her stall (W5) or over the roofs (S16), by day asleep in D30.

DN note. She carries the Countess and Luca down the Hollow Shaft on the last night. Below half HP she flees down the shaft.

Noapte (Nightmare Stalker) - HP 60, AC 14, DR 0; 1 attack: burning hooves 3d6+3; Saves Quick +2, Tough +0, Mind +2; Wild Vile (Reaver). Large; flies; +2 to saves against spells. Terror Gallop: 30 ft, Quick save (TN 13) or 2d8+2 psychic (cooldown 3 rounds). Fear Aura: 10 ft, Mind save (TN 13) or frightened 1 round. Re-forming: destroyed anywhere but D30, she re-forms there at the next dusk.

† **Nightmare Stalker:** existing creature; Monster Trove for Early Adventures, entry "Nightmare Stalker". [Rules entry](#)



IRON WARDEN

DN note. A four-armed clock, not a fight (P13): it asks "What is the hour?" The answer is read off the great glass (P14); by day, "No hours. It is day."

Iron Warden - HP 70, AC 17, DR 3; 2 attacks: sword 2d6+3, shield bash 1d8+2 (Quick save or prone); Saves Quick -1, Tough +5, Mind -2; Impartial Impartial (Wanderer). Large. Iron Body: immune to poison, psychic, charm, fear and spells (fire heals it). Bound to the Sand: it wakes when a living creature crosses the bronze line without naming the hour, acts for 5 rounds, then returns to its alcove, unharmable until it wakes again.

Bronze Guardians (D35). Spears instead of swords; Name-Bound instead of Bound to the Sand: each living character must speak Livia's name within 10 feet for themselves to pass; the guardians stop when a foe speaks it. Undead cannot pass, except the Countess on Night 3 when Luca speaks the name for her.

GHOSTLY VILLAGER

DN note. The village dead, repeating old tasks; they strike only if attacked. One rests if its task is finished, its true name spoken, Rest Eternal cast on its bones, or it is turned.

Ghostly Villager - HP 10, AC 11, DR 0; 1 attack: grave chill 1d4 necrotic (DR does not reduce; Tough save or Weary); Saves Quick +2, Tough +0, Mind +0; Impartial Impartial (Wanderer). Incorporeal: immune to nonmagical physical damage; double damage from holy magic. Bound: cannot leave the Ghost Village or the Quiet Rows; castle ghosts using these stats (U4, W8) are bound to their zone. At 0 HP it re-forms at the next dusk unless laid to rest.

‡ **Rest Eternal:** level 2 cleric spell, Cleric Spells for First Blessing.

MIRELA

DN note. The coachwoman, kept forty years. Her chain is belief that no one ever escaped; proof turns her (Pintea's tag, W6; the bell's silver road, S3). Turned, she grants two favors: a failed spy report, the truth about the urn (D43), or a coach ride on the last night. When the pact breaks she becomes an old woman, and lives. Option: she is the Countess in disguise.

Mirela - HP 40, AC 14, DR 0; 1 attack: driving whip 1d8+2 (10 ft); Saves Quick +3, Tough +1, Mind +2; Impartial Vile (Schemer). Blood-Bound and Living, as a Thrall Servant. Coachwoman's Seat: +2 AC while driving. Whip Snare: 10 ft, Quick save or pulled 5 ft and knocked prone (cooldown 2 rounds). Honeyed Voice: 30 ft, Mind save (TN 13) or the target will not act against her for 10 minutes or until harmed (cooldown 3 rounds).



MIHNEA

DN note. The giggling, mad steward (L9), blood-bound three hundred years, trading dead men's gear for jokes and boots. If he dies, she knows at dusk; replace later appearances and Hold and Call responses with two available surviving Thrall Servants, and Cook is gone (L9); when the pact breaks he goes to dust.

Mihnea - HP 18, AC 12, DR 0; 1 attack: meat cleaver 1d6+1; Saves Quick +1, Tough +1, Mind -1; Wild Impartial (Seeker). Blood-Bound, Living, Hold and Call: as a Thrall Servant. Anchor: "Cook" (L5) is bound to him; it stops if he is moved 100 paces off.

LUCA

DN note. The magistrate's pale, bookish adopted son, Aurel reborn. Fears part of him wants to say yes to her. Secret: a month ago, charmed, he threw the chapel's icon into the Blackwater.

Luca (level 2 human clerk) - HP 14, AC 12, DR 0; 1 attack: short sword 1d6; Saves Quick +1, Tough +0, Mind +1; Orderly Kind (Guardian). The Countess's Mark: bitten twice; Weary until she is destroyed; the third bite, given in the seam's light as the veil closes (D42), binds him to her. The Call: once each night at midnight, Mind save (TN 14) or he walks toward Severina; two characters acting together can hold or carry him with one STR Chance Roll (TN 14), made by the stronger carrier. On a bell night this one save is made at the edge of the Grey instead. The Countess's Prize: her creatures will not harm him. Old Echoes: once per night he remembers a passage or name he cannot know.

Breaking the Call. He follows available routes to Severina's current location. If he reaches her or her servants without being freed, they take him into custody unharmed and escort him to S12. On Night 3 at or after midnight, they instead bring him to Severina and follow D42's binding route immediately, or bring him to D42 if she is already there. The veil-closing deadline does not change. The trance lasts until a slap or similar sharp physical shock (punch, bite or kick) breaks it. Restraint never breaks it. A failed hold or carry attempt lets him slip free and keep walking; retry next round. Once freed, he faces no new Call until the next midnight.

ILINCA

DN note. Grigore's blunt daughter wants Luca out, at any price. Secret: an ash stake in her boot, for him if the third bite comes. She mistakes the binding for irreversible undeath: before using it she declares what she means to do and raises the stake, giving the party a chance to stop her. Evidence that he still lives and can be freed persuades her to wait. On Night 2 the Countess may offer Luca for the Sigil; use E2's delivery and response, and give the party time to intervene. She can carry Dawnbrand.



Ilinca (level 3 human fighter) - HP 26, AC 15, DR 1; 1 attack: longsword 1d8+1; Saves Quick +1, Tough +2, Mind +0; Orderly Kind (Guardian). Shield Sister: once per round she may take a hit meant for an adjacent ally. Hold the Door: +2 AC defending a doorway or stair.

GRIGORE'S GHOST

DN note. The voice in the fog (E4) wants his children safe and his body buried. Secret: the boy came wearing a candle-and-sun clasp, now in his strongbox. Buried, he stays until his son is safe.

Grigore's Ghost - HP 45, AC 13, DR 0; 1 attack: grave hand 2d6+2 necrotic (only to defend his children); Saves Quick +2, Tough +1, Mind +4; Orderly Kind (Guardian). Incorporeal. Bound: his house, garden and grave. Willing: no save against Turn Undead; by exception, it sends him to his grave until the next dusk rather than destroying or releasing him while his children remain in danger. His Hearthward is absent while he is away. Hearthward: in his house her undead and thralls take -2 to hit and need a Mind save to cross the threshold.

FATHER MACARIE

DN note. The ghost priest of E6 wants the chapel bell rung so he can stop praying. Secret: he was Severina's confessor, heard her plan and warned no one.

Father Macarie - HP 40, AC 12, DR 0; no attacks; Saves Quick +0, Tough +1, Mind +5; Orderly Kind (Guardian). Incorporeal; Turn Undead does not move him. Endless Prayer: his prayer bars other undead from the chapel and its rise; her wolves and bats will not cross the threshold; living thralls are not barred. Altar Blessing: once per day, Mend Wound or Sanctified Ward on a living creature at the altar; by exception, the ward rests on whoever kneels there.

‡ **Mend Wound:** level 1 cleric spell, Cleric Spells for First Blessing.

‡ **Sanctified Ward:** level 1 cleric spell, Cleric Spells for First Blessing.

MOTHER ZORA

DN note. The Kin's seer (G1) sells one answer per character for a gold coin, a true secret or a drop of blood. Secret: she tells the Countess the newcomers' names (the K9-K10 cards). She knows Return to Life fails inside the Iron Thorns; Rest Eternal can preserve a corpse until the soul can be freed.



Mother Zora - HP 32, AC 12, DR 0; 1 attack: iron-shod staff 1d6+1; Saves Quick +1, Tough +1, Mind +4; Impartial Impartial (Wanderer). +2 to saves vs. spells. Veilwalker and Lantern Law, as a Wanderer. Lantern Glare: 20 ft, undead and thralls make a Mind save or keep 10 ft away for 1 round (cooldown 3 rounds). Seer: casts as a 7th-level cleric, favoring Sense Malice and Oracle's Sight.

‡ **Sense Malice:** level 1 cleric spell, Cleric Spells for First Blessing. Oracle's Sight: level 4 cleric spell, Cleric Spells Sacred Powers.

WANDERER

DN note. Five of the Lantern Kin are in camp (G). They give nothing free and will not guide outsiders through the Grey; a paying party is sheltered one night.

Wanderer - HP 16, AC 13, DR 0; 1 attack: long knife 1d6+1 or sling 1d4+1; Saves Quick +2, Tough +1, Mind +1; Impartial Impartial (Wanderer). Veilwalker: unharmed by the Choking Grey; cannot share it. Lantern Law: the Countess and her creatures do not enter the lantern ring uninvited. Close Ranks: +2 to hit a foe another wanderer is adjacent to.



APPENDIX: PLAYER HANDOUTS

Give players the in-world text when their characters find it. "Found" lines are for the DN.

HANDOUT 1: GRIGORE'S LETTER

Found: on the dead messenger in Wolfwood (C), sealed with a wax "G".

To any traveler of courage who finds this, from Grigore, Magistrate of the village below the castle.

My son Luca is dying. Once she has fed on him, and she will come again. She calls herself the Countess. Every night her wolves are at my doors, and my heart will not stand it much longer.

If you have a sword, bring it. If you have prayers, bring those too. Take my son and my daughter Ilinca away from here, if any road will let you. If you come too late, I beg you, at least do not let her have him.

Grigore, Magistrate

HANDOUT 2: THE CARD ON THE PILLOW

Found: on each pillow in the Guest Rooms (K9-K10). Fill in the name and one line.

For _____.

Your fire is lit and your bed is turned down. Sleep as late as you like. No one in this house keeps hours but me.

- S.

On the back, in faded print, the edge cut with scissors: ...*the marriage of the Lady Livia of Severhallow to Sir Aurel of the Last Light, on All Hallows' Eve...*

Lines for the blank: "For the one who counts the exits. There are fewer than you think." "For the one who prays. I did too, once."

HANDOUT 3: A LOOSE LEAF FROM SEVERINA'S JOURNAL

Found: inside the back cover of Severina's Journal in the Study (U9).

The magistrate held his door against my people all winter, and died holding it. I was not asked in. I will be, before the end.



Twice he has come out to me in his sleep. Twice I have tasted him. The second time, a month ago, with the old man dead and no one to stop him, he carried the chapel's ugly little icon down to the river and threw it in, and smiled at me as he did it, and remembered none of it in the morning.

I have had his name cut on the door below. New guests came through the Thorns tonight, and the doll is already sewing them.

I can write her name. Livia. Livia. I can write it a hundred times. I cannot say it.

Three nights. On the last, the Seam. He will wake beside me when the door shuts, and he will not fall this time.

HANDOUT 4: A PAGE OF MIRELA'S DIARY

Found: under the mattress in Mirela's Rooms (W7).

The first page. We came up the road tonight, Silviu and I and our girl, grown now and still sulking at the cold, and a kind lady in a black coach offered us a lift as far as the inn. The coach smells of roses.

A later page. She cannot cross where water runs. I have seen her stand an hour at the cistern stair and turn back.

A later page. My Lady sleeps where the castle has its oldest stone. I carried her earth down in a sack. Without it, she says, the mist would have nowhere to carry her home. Wounded, she returns as mist but lies flesh again inside the coffin. The lid bolts itself shut. She cannot defend herself while her wounds mend. She made me swear to guard it: one stake through her heart then would end her forever.

The last page, in a shaking hand: I have driven past the magistrate's house every Hallows' Eve for twenty years. This year the boy's face came right. She says it is him. Light keep the boy.

HANDOUT 5: THE CHAPLAIN'S LAST LETTER

Found: on the writing desk in the Sacristy (K13). The writer lies in the Long Crypts (D12).

To whoever comes after. I have laid the Sigil on the altar, in the one light She cannot enter. It will keep while any heart in this valley keeps the Last Light. Lord Varen has ordered the knight's sword laid with the Lady Livia in the deep tombs, so that whoever ends this must go to the bride first. If wounds drive her into mist, follow her to the coffin: there she must take flesh to mend. Reach her while she lies helpless, or find her asleep, and drive a stake through her heart. That alone ends her forever. The Lady Corvina begs me to pray for her elder daughter.



Light forgive me, I cannot. I go below tonight to keep watch with the dead of this house. -
Cassian

HANDOUT 6: THE COVEN'S RECKONING

Found: pinned under the lid of the star chart in the coven's den (S7), in a spidery hand.

Rings reset at dusk. Sky opened at dusk on the Eve, as always.

Shuts at first grey after the THIRD midnight. Not a breath later.

At each midnight mark the little bell again, and the silver line from it to the rim. Dragomira says the bell shows the road. Then she says: say nothing of it.

Watch the rings. If they ever slip by an hour, someone has turned the great glass below. Only that moves them.

- Zlata

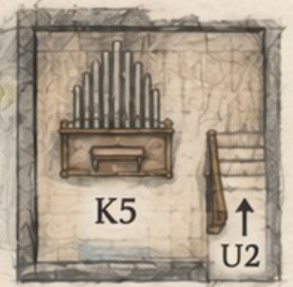
MAP 1 – LANDS OF SEVERHALLOW



MAP 2 - BONE GATE AND OUTER WARD



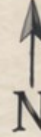
MAP 3 - THE GREAT KEEP



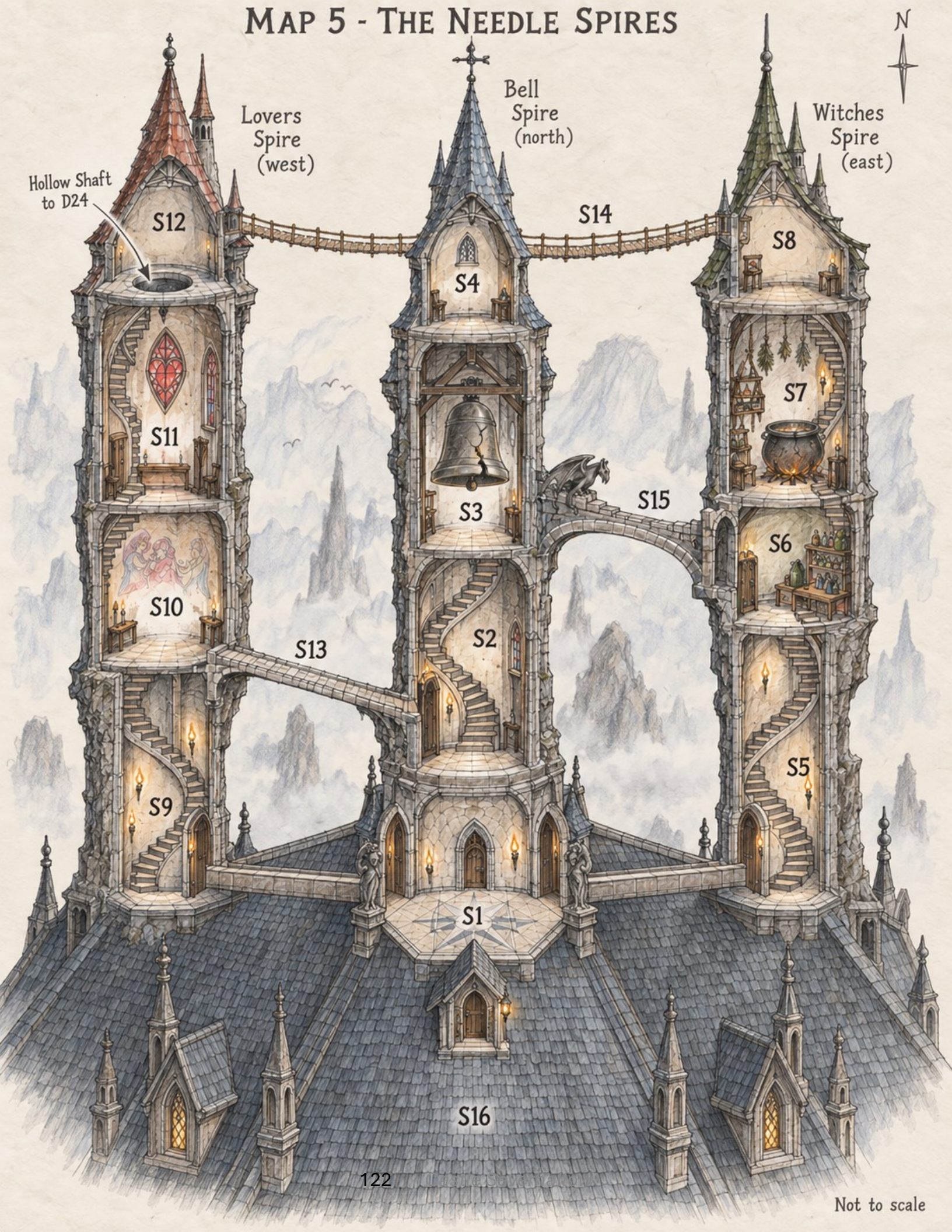
Organ Loft
(above K4)



MAP 4 - THE COUNTESS'S COURT



MAP 5 - THE NEEDLE SPIRES



Hollow Shaft
to D24

Lovers
Spire
(west)

Bell
Spire
(north)

Witches
Spire
(east)

S12

S14

S8

S4

S11

S7

S3

S15

S10

S6

S13

S2

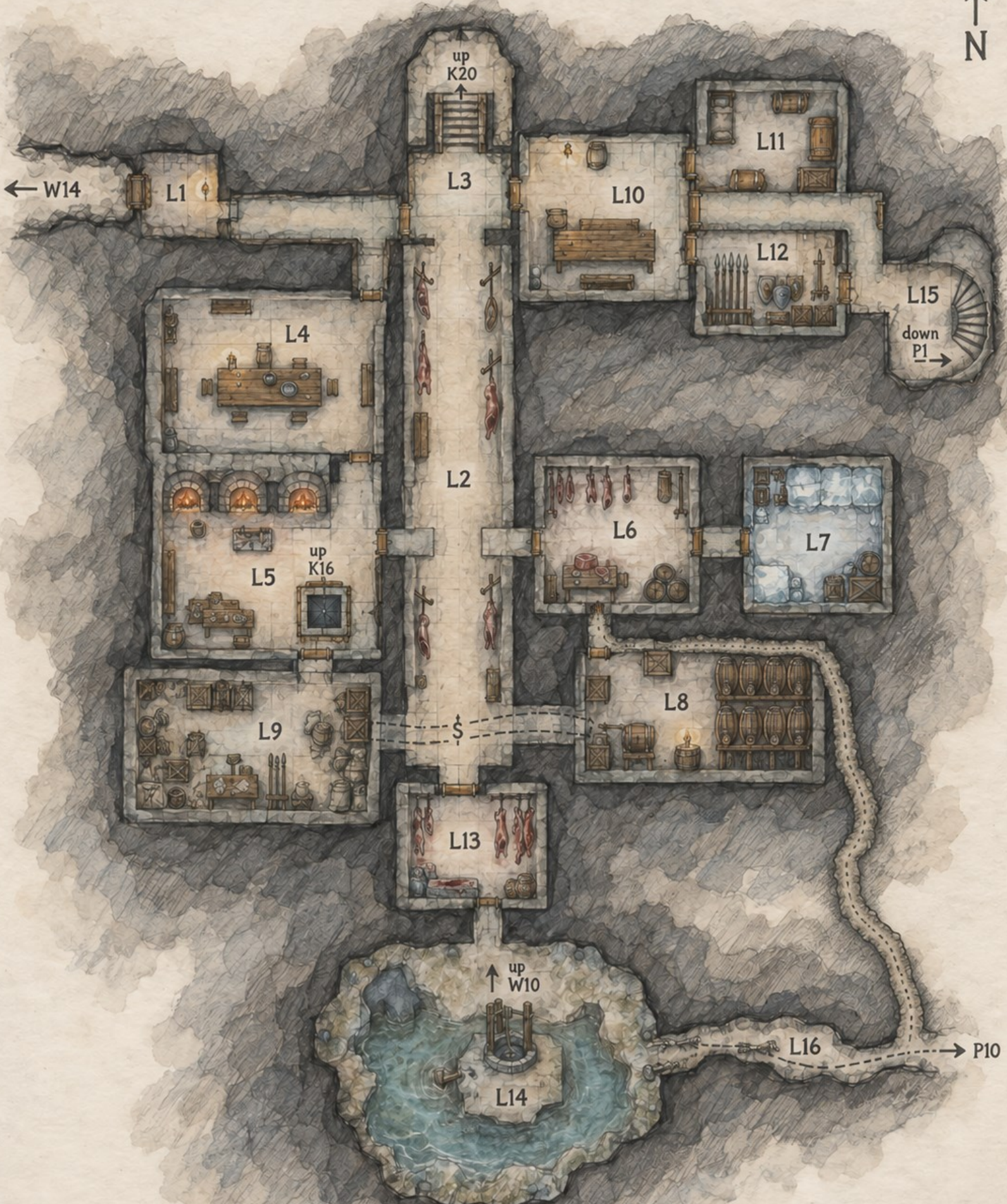
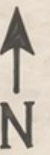
S9

S5

S1

S16

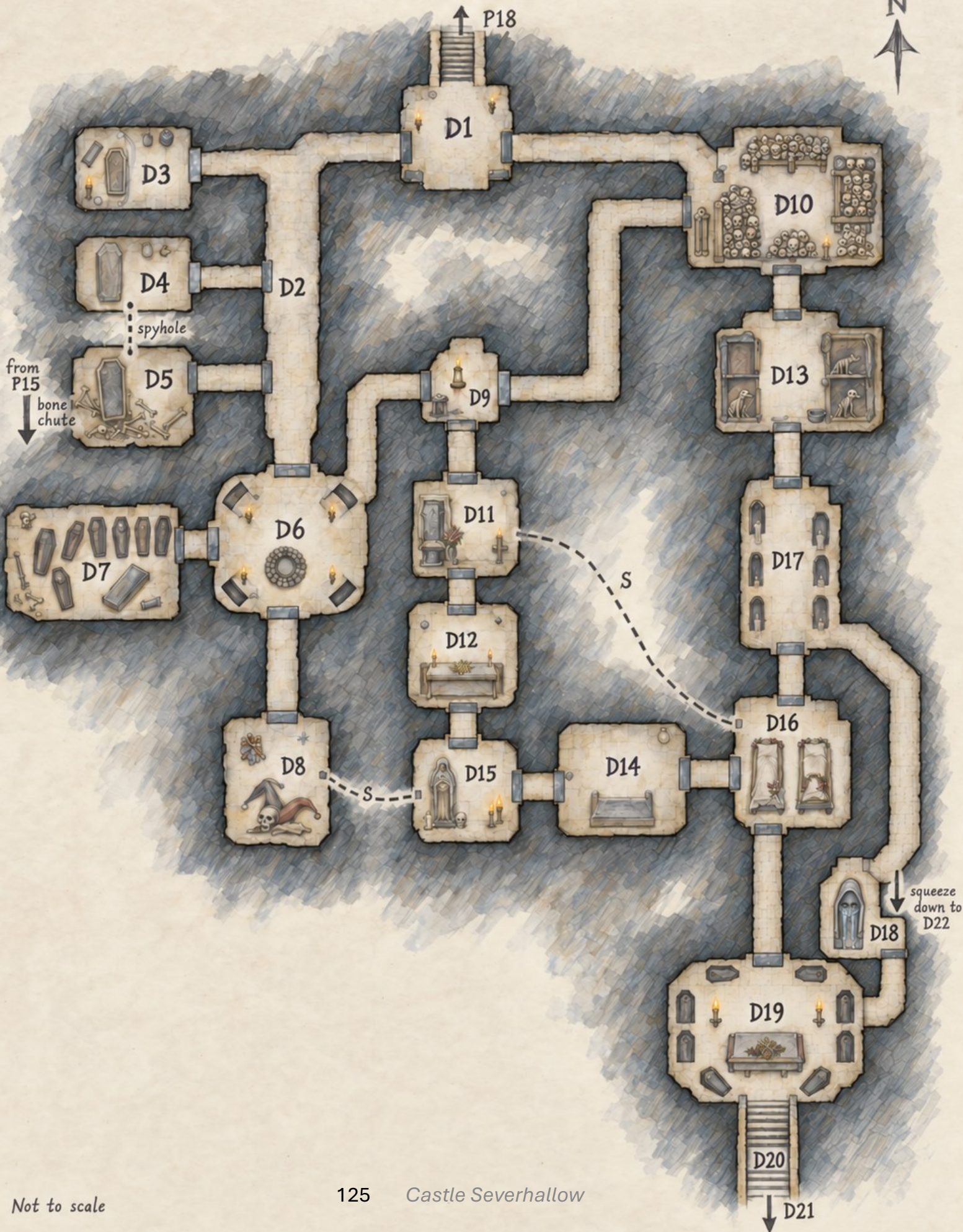
MAP 6 - THE LARDERS OF ILL OMEN



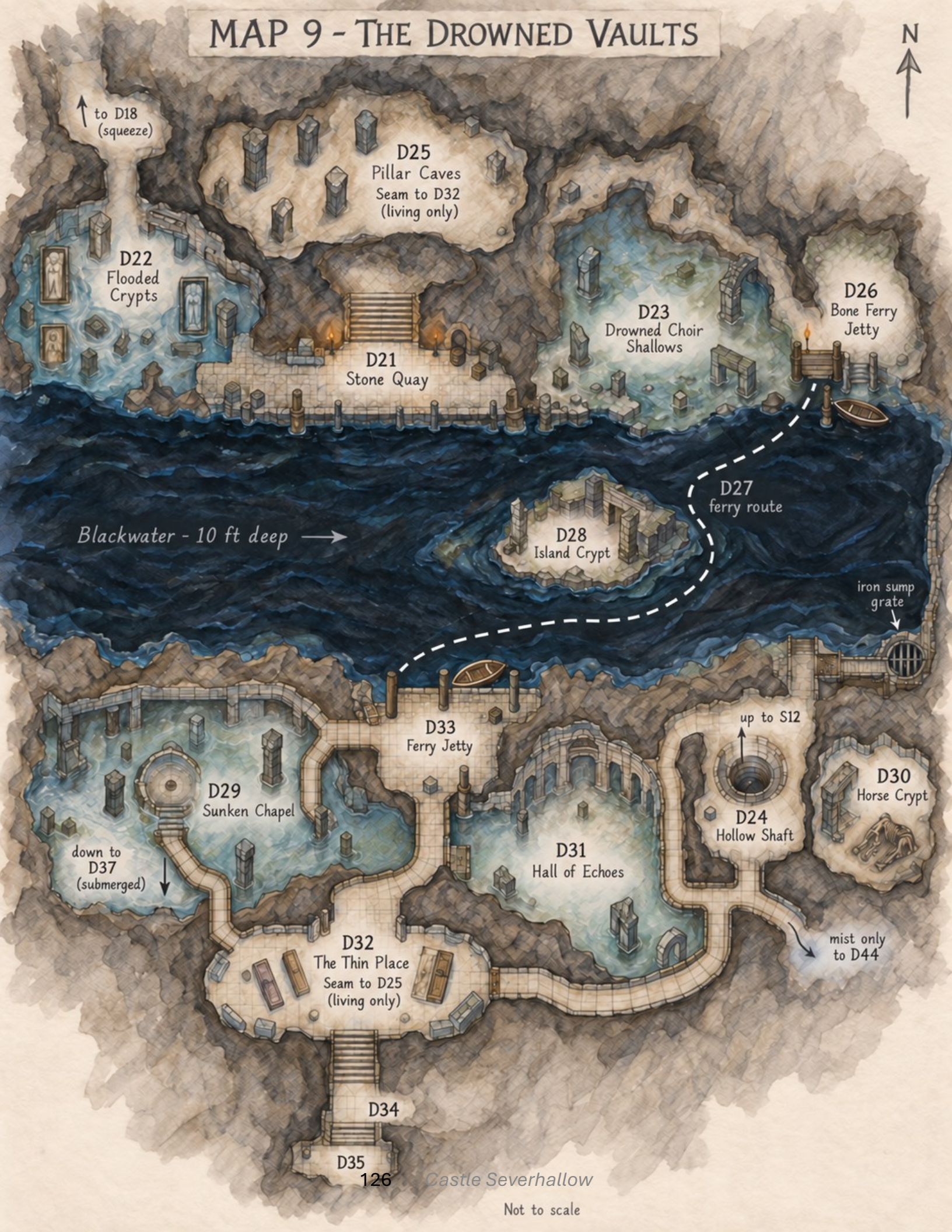
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N



MAP 8 - THE LONG CRYPTS



MAP 9 - THE DROWNED VAULTS



Blackwater - 10 ft deep →

D27
ferry route

iron sump
grate

up to S12

down to
D37
(submerged)

mist only
to D44

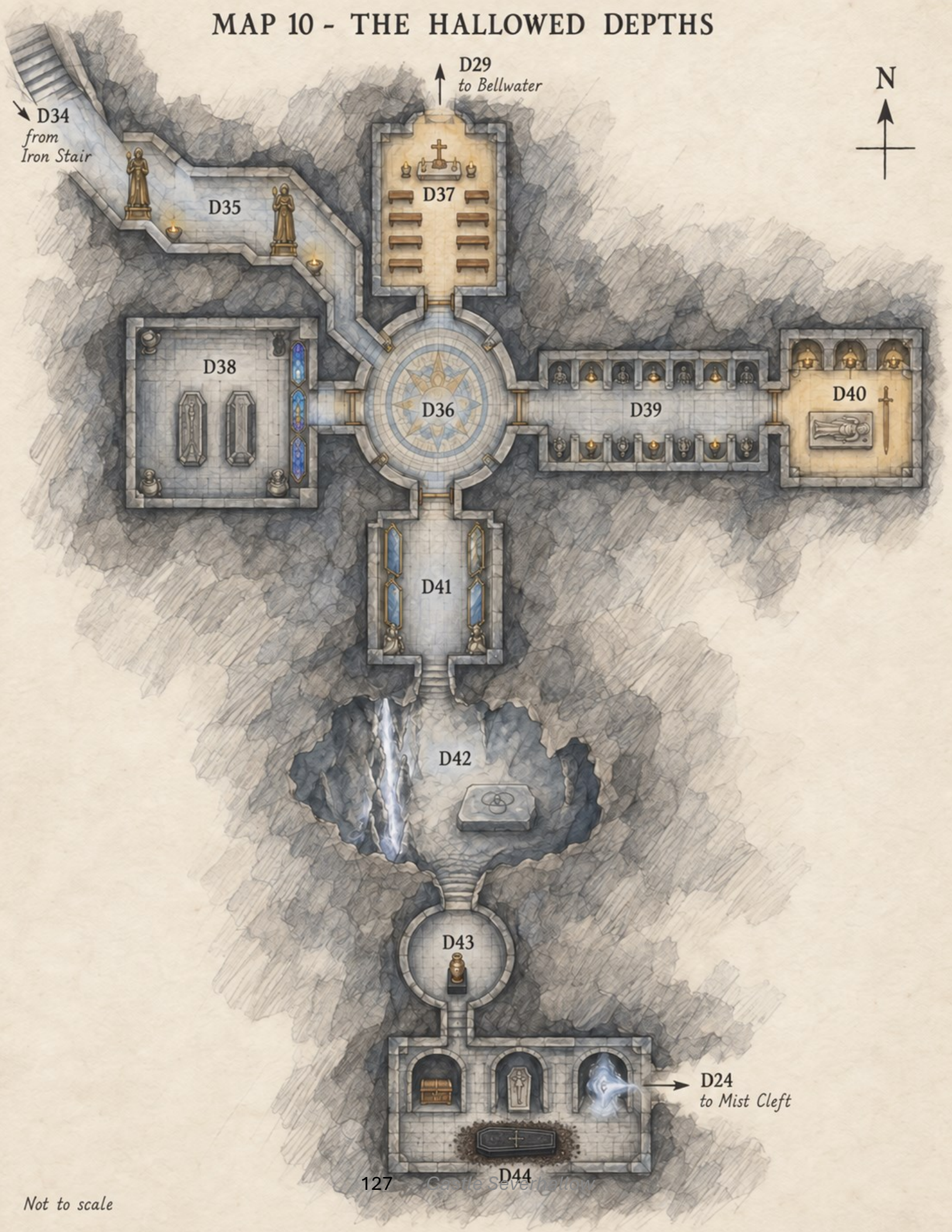
D34

D35
126

Castle Severhallow

Not to scale

MAP 10 - THE HALLOWED DEPTHS



It is a cold, windy autumn night, and the road has grown long and strange.

Somewhere ahead lies Severhallow, a land the world forgot, where the fog keeps what it takes and the dead still keep watch. Above it all stands Castle Severhallow, where the Countess has waited all year for company.

The veil lifts only on All Hallows' Eve. Not everyone who enters gets out before it falls.

Castle Severhallow is an adventure for 4 characters of levels 4 to 6.

