

How to Use This Product

This adventure is designed to be easily dropped into your existing 3rd edition D&D campaign. It can be run in a single session, and makes for an excellent evening's gaming. To prepare yourself to run it, you should read it completely at least once to familiarize yourself with the material, and you may wish to photocopy the map in the center of the book for ease of use as well. The text on the back of the book can be read to your players in order to introduce them to the adventure. After that, you're ready to begin. Good luck!

Dungeons and Dragons®

This module requires the use of the Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast.® You won't be able to run this adventure without it.



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Against the Barrow King

by Steve Hough

DM Background

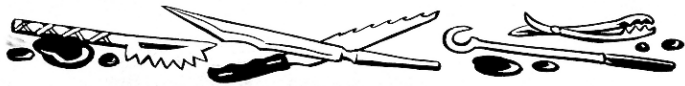
Six months ago, a cult devoted to Voodrith, the god of slaughter, began seeking a location to found a new temple. Since the open worship of Voodrith is forbidden in many parts of the world, the devout sought a site that was far away from prying eyes, and yet someplace that would glorify their dread god. The cultists found their locale in the form of an ancient burial ground far from any large towns or well traveled roads. After conditioning the burial ground's resident ghouls by providing equal amounts of bloody brutality and juicy morsels to eat, the cult moved into the warrens beneath the graveyard.

Several miles to the east of the burial ground lay the small farming village of Glenn Hollow. The superstitious residents of Glenn Hollow all knew about the ancient burial site and stayed far away, fearing that they might disturb the Barrow King, an entity that they believed stalked the area.

After the initial consecration of the new temple to their dark god, Abraxes, the cult's warchief, sent scouting parties out into the wilderness to insure that the temple's location would remain secure and secret. Abraxes was furious to learn of the existence of Glenn Hollow and was preparing a war party when the cult's spiritual leader, Mordiggian, calmed him by claiming that the presence of the village was a blessing from Voodrith. The village would provide fodder for the cult's bloody sacrifices as well as Mordiggian's own blasphemous surgical experiments. After some discussion, it was decided that sentries would be posted all around Glenn Hollow and charged with ensuring that no villager be allowed to leave the area.

The first raid on Glenn Hollow happened a little over three months ago. The villagers awoke one morning to discover that a house at the edge of their village had been sacked and all its occupants had gone missing. The villagers mounted their own search party but found no trace of the missing family. In the weeks that followed, the raids continued. After the third attack, with no sign of the missing villagers, a messenger was sent to seek aid from a larger town. He never returned.

In the past month the raids on Glenn Hollow have grown progressively bolder. Instead of skulking into the village in the dead of night and using silence spells to cover their work, the cultists have begun storming into the village at least once a week, taking prisoners and keeping the rest of the villagers properly cowed before disappearing again into the western woods.



The villagers, seeing their fellows dragged off in the direction of the forbidden burial ground, have begun to believe that the cultists are the servants of the legendary Barrow King come to punish them for some unknown transgression.

Adventure Summary

This module is intended for four to six characters of levels 4-6. To successfully complete the adventure, PCs must stop the vile activities of the cult leaders (Abraxes and Mordiggian), and rescue as many captured villagers from the temple as possible.

The village of Glenn Hollow has been left deliberately vague so that you can substitute any sleepy town or hamlet from your own campaign. The only requirement is that the village be semi-secluded and not within a days travel of another town or village. The forgotten burial ground is described as being west of Glenn Hollow, but GMs should feel free to change this to fit their own campaigns.

The Village of Glenn Hollow

You are traveling west along a slightly overgrown but easily traversed road. The sun is setting in the autumn sky and a chilling breeze is picking up. The sky is growing dark quickly and the night is sure to be cold. Ahead, you can see the inviting glow of warm fires shining cheerfully through the windows of small cottages. After being on the road all day, the idea of a warm meal and a good night's rest in a comfortable bed is quite appealing.

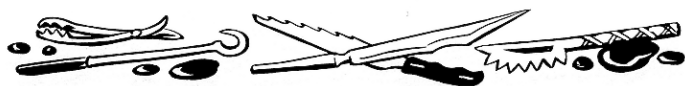
If they cry out a friendly greeting as they calmly approach the village, their welcome will be little warmer. The women and children of the village will all retreat to the safety of their homes. Only Obed, his two grandsons, and a few other men will greet the PCs as they enter the village.

The old man steps forward and introduces himself. "I am Obed," he says, "You'll have to forgive our less than hospitable greeting. Our village has fallen on dark times and we thought you might be servants of the Barrow King." Obed looks as if he's about to ask a question, but then reconsiders. "Let's go inside where it's warm. We can talk more then."

A bard can make a bardic knowledge check (DC 15) with a bonus equal to the bard's level plus intelligence modifier to have heard of the Barrow King. According to local legend, the Barrow King is a restless spirit from an age long past. This

Obed (male human Com 2; Local Lore +4) Village Elder.

Obed's Grandsons (male humans Com 1; Handle Animal +2).



malevolent spirit is said to loathe all life. It seeks to destroy the living whenever possible, especially delighting in the suffering it can inflict upon its victims before it snuffs out their lives.

The elder leads the PCs into his cottage and has them sit around a great oak table. Obed waits until everyone is comfortably seated with a hot meal in front of them before he begins to speak again. He tells the PCs about the raids as described in the Adventure Background above. He describes the black-clad raiders and how they sweep out of the western woods to pillage their poor village. He also relates the legend of the Barrow King, the restless spirit of a forgotten king that haunts an ancient burial ground several miles to the west of Glenn Hollow. Obed then asks the PCs for their aid and offers the party 100 gp. for their help. At this point, Obed will retire for the evening to let the PCs discuss their plans.

Assuming that the PCs have agreed to aid the villagers of Glenn Hollow, they are given fresh supplies the next morning and told that the burial ground lies six miles to the west. Following the path left by the cultists on their last raid is a relatively easy task for any PC with the Track feat (Wilderness Lore check DC 15). If they succeed, the PCs locate the burial ground in only 4 or 5 hours. If they fail this test or no member of the party has the Track feat, it takes almost a full day to locate the burial ground.

1. The Burial Ground

After traveling for several hours, the sight before you is unmistakable. The burial ground is just as the villagers described it. Sixteen ancient burial mounds form a ring on the grassy knoll below you. Each of the mounds has a round opening that faces the center of the circle. Most of these openings are filled with rocks or a rotting wood panel, but one stands open. A burning torch is placed to either side of its entrance.

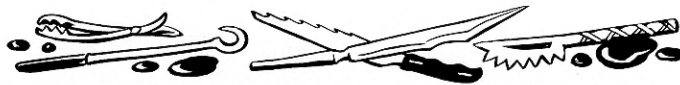
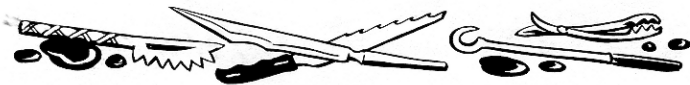
The grass around the entire area has been trampled down. A large bonfire blazes in the center of the burial ring. You can see several shapes moving against the flames.

The barrows are approximately 30 feet wide and do not contain anything of interest.

Five orcs guards and four ghouls are currently stalking around the burial mounds. The orcs will attack anyone who approaches the open barrow.

The orcs will fight to the death. They are fiercely loyal to Abraxes. The ghouls, on the other hand, will only attack someone with the scent of the purple mushrooms in #14 on them. Otherwise, they are content to stay clear of any fights

Orcs (5): CR 1/2; SZ M (humanoid); HD 1d8; hp 5 each; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atk: greataxe +3 melee (1d12+3); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8. Skills: Listen +2, Spot +2. Feats: Alertness.



Ghouls (4): CR 1; SZ M (undead); HD 2d12; hp 13 (x2), 15, 10; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Atk bite +3 melee (1d6+1 and paralysis), 2 claws +0 melee (1d3 and paralysis); SA paralysis, create spawn; SQ undead, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con -, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16. Skills: Climb +6, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Intuit Direction +3, Jump +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Spot +7. Feats: Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (bite).

that occur and sate their hunger on the fallen once it is safe. If the ghouls attack, they run as soon as two of their number are slain.

Once the PCs have dealt with the orc guards (and possibly the ghouls lurkers) they may make their way safely into the open crypt. If the PCs leave mounts outside the crypt and the ghouls have not been slain or driven away, the unprotected animals will be eaten by the time the PCs return.

2. The Crypt Hall

A set of shallow stairs descends for about 20 feet from the opening you just entered to a corridor below. The walls are made of rough stone blocks tightly fitted together. Three alcoves line either side of the corridor. At the far end of the hall, a filthy hide rug hanging from the ceiling conceals the back wall. Tracks can be clearly seen in the dust on the floor leading back and forth between the hide curtain and the top of the stairs where you are standing. Cracked and peeling paintings of a long forgotten hero line the inside of the first four alcoves. Two rotting, wooden doors are set into the last two alcoves.

There are no actual dangers in the crypt hall, but feel free to add to the gloomy atmosphere. The hide hanging against the back wall hides the entrance to the ghoulish warrens described in locations 5-17.

3. The Queen's Room

The air is thick and stale. Cobwebs dominate every corner of the room, but the doorway remains clear. Man-sized footprints can also be easily seen in the dust on the floor. Discolored spots on the floor reveal where chests or barrels once stood. A stone sarcophagus lies on a raised dais in the center of the room. The lid shows signs of being recently moved and lies cracked on the floor. A bas-relief of rather plain-looking woman in an unfamiliar style of dress is depicted on its worn surface. There are no sign of valuables in the chamber.

All of the valuables from this tomb were looted months ago by the cultists and have been moved to #17.

4. The King's Room

A nauseating odor hangs in the air of this room. Man-sized footprints can be easily seen leading through the dust on the floor. Discolored spots on the floor reveal where chests or barrels once stood. Upon a raised dais stands a stone sarcophagus. The stone lid of the sarcophagus lies shattered on the floor.

All of the valuables from this tomb were looted months ago by the cultists and have been moved to #17.

If the PCs enter the room, The King and Queen, now transformed into ghouls, will attack them from the corner of the room to the left of the door, and will fight until destroyed.

The Queen has an antique hair comb crafted into the shape of a gold dragon set with a red garnet clinging to her matted hair. The comb is worth 1,050 gp.

5. Room of Gibbering Chirurgeons

Pushing aside the filth-encrusted hide, you see a large, irregularly-shaped room. Two corridors lead off from this room to the west and the east. Both are large enough for a man to travel through with ease. Gliding towards you are three twisted parodies of the human form, standing 6-feet tall. Steel pins and rods stretch the flesh of these creatures in horrific mockeries of their original appearance. Stitches crisscross their bodies making them look like living jigsaw puzzles. Gore-smeared surgical tools extend from the stumps of their arms like slender fingers. A constant gibbering caterwaul comes from their twisted mouths.

There are three **Chirurgeons** (hp 11, 10, 9) here that attack the PCs as soon as they enter the room and fight to the death (see Appendix for complete statistics).

6. Ghoul Cave

From the dark recesses of this room come the wet sounds of tearing flesh, punctuated by the cracking of bones and feral growls. Loud laughter, cheering, and curses in a guttural language can be heard from the north.

Ghasts (2): CR 3; SZ M (undead); HD 4d12; hp 35, 28; Init +2 (Dex) Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural); Atk bite +4 melee (1d8+1 and paralysis), 2 claws +1 melee (1d4 and paralysis); SA stench, paralysis, create spawn; SQ undead, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 15, Con -, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16. Skills: Climb +6, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Intuit Direction +3, Jump +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Spot +8. Feats: Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (bite).



Six ghouls (hp 15, 13 (x2), 12, 11, 10) are skulking in this room, feeding upon the remains of a cultist thrown to them by the orcs at #7.

The ghouls will only attack someone with the scent of the purple mushrooms in #14 on them unless they are attacked themselves. Once four of the ghouls have been killed, the remaining two will attempt to flee north along the corridor, alerting the orcs in #7 of danger.

The ghouls themselves have no treasure, but a large fire opal (worth 1,000 gp.) can be found on the remains of the unfortunate cultist the ghouls are eating.

7. Ore Guard Post

This irregularly-shaped room has several old crates and barrels stacked along the walls. In the center of the room, four crates have been pulled together around a large barrel to form a crude eating area.

The crates and barrels are empty, as the orcs are using them for a makeshift table.

There are six orcs (hp 7, 6, 5, 5, 4, 4) standing around the central table placing bets on a game of chance. The orcs have just finished feeding the ghouls in #6 and are not expecting any trouble from that direction. If the PCs are attempting to be stealthy at all, the orcs are surprised and only receive a partial action during the first round of combat.

However, if any of the ghouls from #6 have run in this direction, the orcs are alert for danger and ready to attack the PCs.

The orcs will fight to the death. They fear the wrath of Abraxes more than they fear death. 1,000 gp in treasure from assorted nations, and two gold teeth from the cultist they fed to the ghouls worth 5 gp apiece.

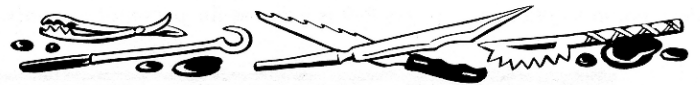
8. Choker Cave

The ceiling of this roughly circular room rises over 11-feet above your head. At the back of the room hangs a moldy velvet curtain. The stench of mildew hangs thickly in the air.

A choker is clinging to the ceiling near the entrance to room 9. The PCs must make an opposed skill check against the choker's Hide skill to spot it. If it goes unnoticed, the choker will patiently wait for the party to investigate the room and begin entering #9. It will strike out at the last person entering #9.

9. The Mimic's Lair

Strange, glowing fungus grows along the walls of this kidney-shaped room. The floor is dusty and shows signs of recent traffic. Four massive chests and two stout barrels are stacked up in the center of the room.



Choker (1): CR 2; SZ S (aberration); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +4 (improved initiative); Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +5 natural); Atk 2 tentacle slaps +6 melee (1d3+3); SA haste, improved grab, constrict (1d3+3); AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 7. Skills: Climb +16, Hide +7, Move Silently +4. Feats: Improved Initiative.

Aside from the chests and barrels, there is nothing of interest here. One of the objects in the room is a mimic. Feel free to let the PCs poke around for a bit to lure them into a false sense of security before revealing the mimic.

Located in the chests or barrels surrounding the mimic is 1,500 gp, a large folded tapestry with mildew stains (worth 100 gp) a well-crafted bag of elven silk (in reality a *bag of devouring*), a slender rod of birch wood (a *wand of magic missile*; casts as a 5th-level wizard, 3 charges), a silver dagger with a deep blue spinel set in the pommel (in reality a +2 dagger), and a blue star sapphire (worth 1,000 gp).

10. Desecrated Antechamber

The unfinished walls of this circular room are splashed with blood and gore. The sand on the ground is stained a deep crimson. A feeling of evil so deep you can almost taste it hangs in the air. Launching themselves toward you are three gaunt figures with razor-tipped fingers.

Three **Chirurgeons (hp 12 each)** attack the PCs as they enter the room and fight to the death. Aside from the bloodstains (which are from the chirurgeons' last victim), there is nothing of interest in this room.

11. The False Altar

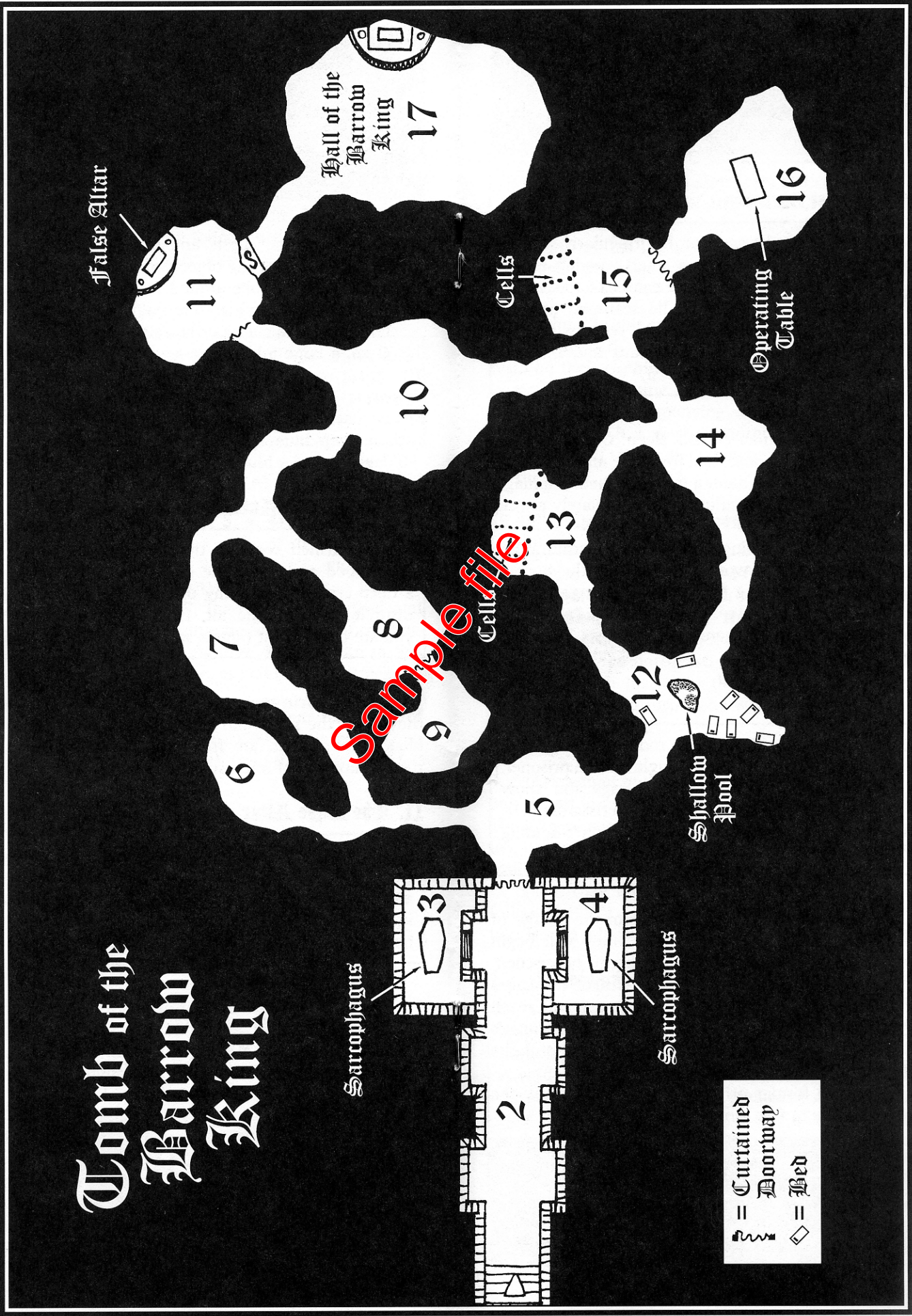
The walls of this roughly hewn cavern are covered in softly glowing fungus. At the back of the room stands a stone altar. The altar is bathed in blood, and the sand before it is stained almost black. Four human supplicants kneel before it, chanting softly.

Concealed against the northeastern wall is a secret door (Search skill check DC 20 to find) The secret door opens with a loud grating sound alerting anyone in #17.

The four cultists rise and attack anyone who enters this sacred area and fight to the death.

Mimic (1): CR 4; SZ L (aberration); HD 7d8+21; hp 52; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 10 ft.; AC 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural); Atk slam +8 melee (1d8+6); SA adhesive; SQ mimic shape, acid immunity; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10. Skills: Climb +9, Disguise +12, Listen +11, Spot +6. Feats: Skill Focus (disguise).

Tomb of the Barrow King





Human Cultists (4): CR 1/2; SZ M (humanoid); HD 1d8; hp 6, 4, 4, 3; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk morningstar +1 melee (1d8); AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 13. Skills: Hide +1, Listen +2, Search +3, Spot +2.

12. Human Cultist Barracks

Seven beds stand along the walls of this irregularly-shaped room. At the foot of each bed is a small wooden chest. There is a pool of fresh water in the center of the room. Several buckets and drinking cups lie scattered around the lip of the well. Blind cave fish can be seen swimming contentedly in the cool water. Soft moans and sobbing come from the corridor to the northwest.

This is where the human cultists sleep. Common items like idols, peasant clothing, and food items are all that occupy most of the chests. However, hidden in one of them is a magic emerald guarded by a homunculus who immediately attacks anyone that opens the chest.

The homunculus is guarding a deep green emerald. When activated with a command word ("Voodrith"), the magical gem heals the person holding it of 2d8+5 damage (as *cure moderate wounds* spell cast by a 5th level cleric). Each use of the gem expends 1 charge. There are 3 charges left in the gem. If sold, it is worth 500 gp.

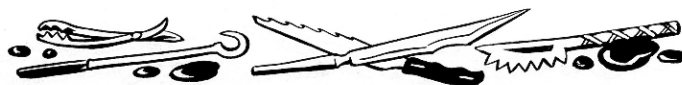
13. The Cells

Along the western wall of this square room are four sturdy wooden cages. Each cage contains a single human prisoner. All the prisoners are dressed in soiled rags and show signs of severe malnourishment. Lash marks crisscross their bodies and they moan or weep in obvious despair. Standing guard over these prisoners are three human cultists.

The four prisoners in the cages are from the village of Glenn Hollow. Once they notice the PCs, they will begin clawing at the bars of the cages and begging to be rescued. If any cultist guard comes within arm's reach of the cages during the combat with the PCs, the prisoners will reach between the bars to claw at the guard. Treat the prisoner's attack as having a +1 to the attack roll. If successful the attack inflicts 1d3 damage to the guard.

Once freed, the former prisoners will gladly follow the PCs as they continue to free more imprisoned villagers.

Homunculus (1): CR 1; SZ S (construct); HD 2d10; hp 11; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (good); AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 size); Atk bite +2 melee (1d4-1 and poison); SA poison; SQ construct; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 15, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 7.



Three cultists (hp 6, 5, 4) attack the PCs as soon as they enter this location and fight to the death to prevent the rescue of the prisoners.

14. The Hall of Bone

Bones of all shapes and sizes form intricate patterns along the walls and ceiling of this room. All the bones show obvious tooth and claw marks. The caps of odd mushrooms peek up through the sand floor like plump purple fingers. The sickly-sweet stench of death and decay clings to the air.

Nothing in this room is actually dangerous to the PCs. If the PCs cross the room, the mushrooms will leave a sticky resin on their clothing and exposed flesh. It is this resin that is responsible for the unpleasant odor of the cavern. The resin, and the accompanying scent, will remain on clothing and flesh until it is washed thoroughly. The ghouls (located in #1 and #6) will immediately attack anyone with this scent on them.

15. The Surgical Prep Room

Along the western wall stand four steel cages. In the first cage, a slender woman with matted hair lies curled in a fetal position on the floor. The second cage is empty and its door hangs open. Drag marks lead from the cell through a curtain to the northeast. The male prisoner in the third cage sits with his knees drawn up to his chest, slowly rocking back and forth. The woman in the fourth cage is weeping quietly.

The woman in the first cage is actually a **ghoul** (hp 17), and moves to attack anyone who opens the door to her cage. The prisoners in cages 3 and 4 (human Com1) are unaware of her true nature. The ghoul will spring to attack the nearest available target as soon as the door to her cage is opened.

Once they are freed, the former prisoners will gladly follow the PCs as they continue their quest to free more imprisoned villagers.

16. Mordiggian's Operating Theater

Magical light from multiple sources floods this room. Standing in the center of room is a sturdy wooden table. A wild-eyed man bound hand and foot to the table cries desperately for aid. A thin, menacing man with deep-set eyes glares at you from the far side of the table. He grips a sharp knife in his hand. Two gaunt figures with razor fingers stand by his side.

The bound man is an imprisoned villager, and acts like the others if freed. Mordiggian and his two **Chirurgeons** (hp 15, 12) attack the PCs as soon as they enter this area.