



Dark Domains I: The Lost Reliquary

The *Lost Reliquary* is a Fifth Edition adventure for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 1, 3, 5, or 8**. This document offers details for each level and makes adjustments accordingly. The adventure starts when a wealthy family asks the characters to investigate a recent attack on their manor perpetrated by undead animals. After a search of the surrounding bog, the characters learn that the animals were controlled by mummies risen from the bog's peat-choked pools. The mummies are ancient druids who were angered when one of the family members stole an ancient relic from the reliquary's vault.

Running the Adventure

To run the adventure, you need the three Fifth Edition core rulebooks. If you don't have a copy, you can access a free basic rule set from the official source.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under specific circumstances, as described in the text.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block as a way of saying, "Hey, game master, make sure you get this creature's stat block ready—there's going to be an encounter!" If the stat block appears in the Appendix of this adventure, the text tells you so; otherwise, you can find the stat block in the core rulebook.

Spells and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the core manual for players. *Magic items* are described in the core manual for game

masters unless the adventure's text directs you to an item's description in the Appendix.

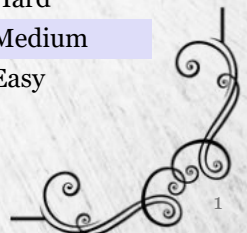
Level Selection

Before play, be sure to know the character level for which you wish to run the adventure. Overall, the locations and their descriptions in the adventure remain unchanged throughout the character levels. However, most of the encounters, hazards, traps, and treasure scale with the character level of the adventure. The keyed locations will present the differences between the character levels (if any).

Also, the adventure works for more than just the listed character levels. If you wish to run this adventure for character levels other than 1st, 3rd, 5th, or 8th, the chart below shows you which version of the adventure you should select for each level. Offering this adventure for parties whose average level is greater than 10 might not offer enough challenge to keep the players engaged.

Scaling the Adventure

Average Party Level	Recommended Adventure Version	Relative Difficulty
1	1st-level	Hard
2	1st-level	Medium
3	3rd-level	Hard
4	3rd-level	Medium
5	5th-level	Hard
6	5th-level	Medium
7	8th-level	Deadly
8	8th-level	Hard
9	8th-level	Medium
10	8th-level	Easy



Plug-in Adventure

If you prefer to forego the given narrative hook for this adventure, you can instead use the eponymous location, the Lost Reliquary, as a plug-in adventure instead. As a plug-in adventure, the adventure content serves as drop-in material for game masters who wish to add a small dungeon to a preexisting campaign or need a side quest. The table below offers additional hook ideas to use the location in your game.

Lost Reliquary Hooks

d8	Side Quest Type	Details
1	Fetch Quest	The characters are tasked to retrieve an item hidden in the reliquary's vault (area 14).
2	Recover Stolen Item	Instead of the mummies trying to recover their own stolen item, they're actually the thieves! They store the stolen item in the reliquary's vault (area 14).
3	Receive Information	The characters' patron asks them to investigate an ancient temple in the swamp.
4	Rescue Mission	The bog mummies kidnapped a young traveler. The traveler's significant other wants the characters to find them and return them. Unfortunately, the traveler was killed by the mummies—their corpse is in area 7.
5	Missing Person	Two young adventurers entered the temple, hoping to make a name for themselves. One was killed; their corpse is in area 7. The other is hiding in the well room, area 10.
6	Monster Hunt	Bog mummies continue to plague the nearby swamp. The heroes are tasked to find their source and put an end to them.
7	Supernatural Investigation	Undead animals continue to rise and attack from an old, ruined temple in the swamp. The characters are sent to learn why.
8	Secure Aid	To secure aid from a wealthy noble, the characters must enter the temple and rid it of the ghost druid and its followers.

Adventure Hook: Meet the Bormiers

After they discover a flyer requesting mercenary services, the characters travel to the Bormiers' estate, a gargantuan mansion standing at the edge of a peat bog. Although their attire and attitude initially catches the Bormiers' goblin butler, Helmut, off guard, they're quickly ushered into the home by Frau Greta Bormiers, the lady of the manor. Like the rest of her family, Greta is a relatively intelligent **ogre** (her Intelligence score is 10).

The Bormiers' goblin servants treat the characters to drinks, hors d'oeuvres, and other niceties until the lord of the manor, Herr Garret Bormiers, finally arrives. Herr Bormiers is a top-hat clad, monocle-wearing **ogre** with an Intelligence score of 9. The industrialist constantly smokes; he's rarely seen without a thick stogie between his teeth. A bit boorish, he starts nearly every conversation with a look of confusion and the phrase, "Well, what's all this then?"

After some quick introductions, Herr Bormiers claps his meaty hands together and begins.

"That's enough chit-chat, chaps. Down to brass tacks. Afterall, *time is money*, innit?"

"Three times this last week—three!" the noble ogre says, holding up three huge fingers, "My estate's been attacked by a mess of animals. Not just any animals, mind you. Dead ones. That's right, chaps: the by-gol living dead are coming here to my estate—*my* estate—and breaking things, killing my servants, and makin' a huge mess of things. Nearly clawed the eyes out of my young daughter, Helge, too!"

Herr Bormiers motions to a large painting hanging nearby. The painting depicts a plump female ogre in a pink hooped-crinoline dress with a matching bonnet and parasol. A golden pendant in the shape of a gear set with a stylized B clings to her lapel. The Bormiers' estate lingers in the background.

"Unbelievable, innit? I need you lot to investigate just where these damn animals are coming from and put a stop to 'em. I'm a busy man, and the last thing I need is this headache on my plate. Do this for me and I'll pay you lot 500 gold pieces. My man, Helmut, will issue you papers to sign.

"Unless you have any objections, I'll be heading back to my study. I'm a busy man and *time is money*, after all!" With that, he tips his hat, bids you all a good day, and departs.



Papers and Flesh Rights

Once the characters have asked Helmut everything that they're going to ask, the goblin requests that they sign official papers. The papers are mostly a massive stack of bureaucratic nonsense absolving the Bormiers' estate from any injuries or deaths caused throughout the course of the mission. The characters are free to read the papers, which take a minimum of 1 hour to review. At the end of the hour, a character may make a DC 15 Intelligence check. The character gains a +1 bonus for each additional hour beyond the first hour they spend reading the documents (maximum +5 bonus). On a success, the character discovers fine print that explains that in the event of the characters' deaths, their bodies become property of the Bormiers' estate. In some settings, especially those where scientific research on cadavers is commonplace, this is not unusual. If your setting does not employ such strange customs, you are free to remove this element of the adventure. Or, you can have Helmut explain that the Bormiers have a close relationship with a nearby necromancer or golem-creator who pays well for bodies; however, Helmut will happily remove this clause if the characters protest—Helmut has his Juris Doctorate from the local university and is more than comfortable with legalese.

Question and Answers

Bormiers is gone before the characters can get a word in edgewise. Fortunately, his butler, Helmut, is there to answer any questions that the characters might have.

Where did the animals come from?

"Each time, the animals came out of the bog to the west of the mansion."

Who's controlling the animals?

"We aren't sure who the animals' master is, or even if they have a master. It's possible, however, that they're being controlled by the hag, Nell Bogwiggle. She lives two miles west of the mansion in a small shack."

When do they attack?

"The animals always attack in the early morning, just after the sun rises."

Why are they attacking the mansion/what do they want?

"We aren't sure why they're attacking the mansion. Each time that they've attacked the mansion, they've targeted the Bormiers' daughter Helge's bedroom at the west wing of the building."

Interviewing Others at the Estate

The characters can linger around the estate for as long as they like. Many areas, such as the kitchens and upstairs, are off-limits to anyone but servants and/or family members.

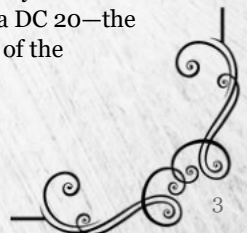
Herr Bormiers is too busy to deal with the characters, and stays in his study where he spends long hours dictating to his three goblin assistants. The only thing shorter than his temper is his attention span.

Meanwhile, Frau Bormiers spends most of her time enjoying the lap of luxury her husband's wealth provides her. She can be found drinking coffee in the garden, reading mystery novels in the library, or playing bridge with other well-to-do ogresses. She has little to offer the party other than friendly words and smiles.

Meeting Helge

Helge, the Bormiers' only daughter and heir to the Bormiers' fortune, spends her days locked in her room, weeping. Recently, she and her beau, a hobgoblin named Zenek, "ran away from home." The two camped in an old temple in the neighboring bog. Everything was fine until Zenek discovered something that he shouldn't have, triggering an attack by the temple's undead guardians (see page 7 for more details).

Unless the characters force or talk their way into seeing her, the Bormiers' servants won't allow the characters to speak with her. Because Helge's relationship with her mother and father has been somewhat strained since her excursion, both Herr and Frau Bormiers are somewhat sensitive about others visiting her. Unless the characters are particularly convincing—assume that all Charisma checks they make to visit Helge are made with disadvantage versus a DC 20—the Bormiers' and their servants will toss them out of the mansion for blatant impudence.



Servants' Gossip

While the Bormiers aren't particularly helpful, many of their goblin servants have loose lips and are more than happy to share gossip for a little coin. The characters can spend 1 hour interviewing the Bormiers' servants. At the end of the hour, have one of the characters make a Charisma (Persuasion) check. The character gains a +1 bonus for every 10 gp they spend padding the goblins' palms (to a maximum of +5). Refer to the Servants Gossip table below to determine what the characters learn.

Servants' Gossip

Result Gossip Learned

9 or lower	The servants do not have any useful information to provide the characters.
10-14	It's doubtful that the animals came from the hag, Nell Bogwiggles. The servants believe it's more likely that they originated from the old temple in the swamp, some 10 miles from the mansion.
15-19	Two weeks ago, Helge "ran away from home" with her boyfriend, a hobgoblin named Zenek. Supposedly, the two camped at an old, ruined temple in the swamp. Then, surprisingly, Helge returned home but Zenek was nowhere to be found.
20 or higher	When Helge returned home, she seemed terrified. She spent hours with her mother, crying. Also, one of our servants noticed that she had something with her—some sort of idol made of orange glass.

When Zombie Animals Attack

If the characters are patient and willing to spend the night in the Bormiers' stable—despite paying them for the mission, the Bormiers aren't interested in having "mercenaries" stay in their home—another group of undead animals attacks right at sunrise. A cete of twelve **giant badger zombies** (see the Appendix) crawl out of the bog and attack any living creature they can reach. A character who succeeds on a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check recognizes that the zombies are headed for the wing of the house that contains Helge's room. The zombies fight until destroyed.

After the combat, the characters can follow the zombies' trail back into the bog. Because the swamp is moist and filled with damp peat, the trail is relatively easy to follow, requiring only a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check. The tracks lead to the Lost Reliquary. Unless the characters possess magical means of flight, it takes a full eight hours of travel to reach the Reliquary from the Bormiers' mansion.

Into The Bog

The reeking bog that borders the Bormiers' mansion is a peat-choked realm of biting insects, fierce creatures, terrifying monsters, and other hazards. This section details the special rules for traveling and surviving in the bog.

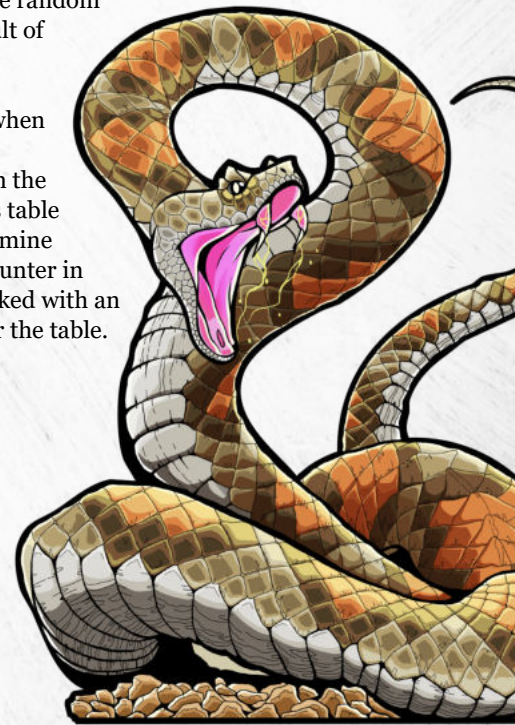
Travel Through the Bog

While it's recommended that you use the "hunting for clues" rules to run the characters' exploration of the bog, if you wish to have the characters travel through the area using the traditional travel and exploration rules, assume that the bog has the following features.

Difficult Terrain. With the exception of a few horse trails and paths made from laid, wooden planks, the entirety of the bog counts as difficult terrain. Traveling at a normal speed, it takes the characters eight hours of marching to cover 10 miles. If they choose to travel at a fast pace through the swamp, they can cover 15 miles per day; however, they suffer a -5 penalty to their passive (Wisdom) Perception scores and make checks to forage at disadvantage. If they choose to move at a slow pace, they can do so stealthily, but only travel 5 miles per day.

Insects. Insects are a constant nuisance in the bog. Each day that the characters travel through the swamp, have each character make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. A character carrying a torch makes this check with advantage. At your discretion, characters of races that have natural bonuses to their Constitution scores or natural armor automatically pass their saving throws, so long as their Constitution score is 12 or higher. On a failed saving throw, the target has disadvantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma ability checks as well as on Constitution checks made to maintain concentration until the character completes a long rest. If a character fails their saving throw by 5 or more, the character also contracts sewer plague (see the Fifth Edition guidebook for gamemaster's for details on this disease).

Random Encounters. Each day that the characters travel through the bog, roll a d20. On a result of 11-18, the characters experience one random encounter. And on a result of 19 or 20, the characters experience two random encounters. You decide when and where the random encounters occur. Roll on the Bog Random Encounters table on the next page to determine what the characters encounter in the bog. Encounters marked with an asterisk are detailed after the table.





Random Encounters in the Bog

d12 + d8 Encounter

2	1 young black dragon
3	Sorrowsand*
4	Nell Bogwiggle*
5	1d4 ogres zombies
6	2d6 zombies
7	1d8 + 2 bog mummies*
8	1d4 swarms of poisonous snakes
9	1d6 swarms of insects (any)
10	1d4 commoner crawfishers or hunters
11	2d4 giant frogs
12	1d6 + 2 giant poisonous snake zombies*
13	1d6 lizardfolk riding giant lizards
14	1d6 giant poisonous snakes
15	1d6 giant badgers
16	1 flesh golem
17	1 ghost
18	2d6 skeletons
19	1 wraith
20	The Lost Reliquary*

Bog Mummies. The **bog mummies** (see the Appendix) appear, but don't immediately attack the characters. So long as the characters don't attack the bog mummies, the mummies mutter the phrase, "They stole it..." repeating it over and over again. They then point their crooked fingers in the direction of the Bormiers' estate. Once the characters encounter the bog mummies, all checks made to find clues leading to the Lost Reliquary are made with advantage until the characters gain five total successes or three failures.

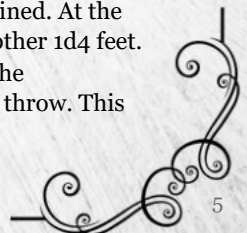
Giant Poisonous Snake Zombies. A mob of **giant poisonous snake zombies** (see the Appendix) attacks the party, and fights until destroyed. The zombies originated from the Lost Reliquary. Regardless of the number of successes and failures the characters have while hunting for clues (see below), they can find the Lost Reliquary within the hour if one of the characters follows these creatures' tracks and succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check (the players' choice).

The Lost Reliquary. Through sheer luck, the characters stumble upon the Lost Reliquary. Continue to the section titled "The Lost Reliquary" below.

Nell Bogwiggle. The characters discover Nell Bogwiggle's shack or Nell Bogwiggle herself. See "The Hag Nell Bogwiggle" section below for details.

Sorrowsand. Each character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 11 or lower stumbles into a pool of sorrowsand. Sorrowsand is a semi-psychoic hazard that feeds on negative emotions. The pool is 10 feet deep and covers a 20-foot-square area. A creature who steps into it sinks 1d4 + 1 feet into the sucking mud and becomes restrained. At the start of each of the creature's turns, it sinks another 1d4 feet.

A creature can use its action to escape from the sorrowsand by making a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. This



saving throw is made with disadvantage if the creature recently suffered the loss of a close ally or dear family member, or experienced a similar tragedy (your discretion). If the creature fails its saving throw, its mind is flooded with the most recent tragedy it experienced; the next time it makes a Wisdom saving throw against this hazard, it does so with disadvantage. If the creature succeeds, it is no longer restrained by the sorrowsand and can escape by swimming to the edge of the pool as if they were in normal water. A creature that is completely submerged in sorrowsand is blinded, deafened, and can't breathe.

A creature can coax another creature that can hear it out of the sorrowsand by using its action and succeeding on a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check (the creature's choice). If the check succeeds, the creature is no longer restrained by the sorrowsand.

A creature that succeeds on a saving throw against the hazard or is coaxed out of it cannot be restrained by sorrowsand for 24 hours.

Hunting for Clues

Unless the characters know exactly where they're going, because they're following the tracks left by the undead animals that attack the Bormiers' mansion or they're headed to Nell Bogwiggle's shack, they will need to search the bog for clues pertaining to the undead animals' origin.

To find clues in the bog, the characters must make a series of checks called a skill challenge. A skill challenge simulates an attempt to perform a task that takes a longer time and a greater effort than a single ability check. In its most basic form, the characters make a series of ability checks with the goal of earning a required number of successes before accumulating a maximum number of failed checks (similar to how death saving throws work).

In this case, the characters must make the ability checks given below in the order that they're presented. The characters need only five checks to succeed in the skill challenge; therefore, any additional checks listed can be avoided after they reach that goal.

Each skill check made as part of the skill challenge represents one day of searching through the swamp. See above for random encounters that can occur each day.

Overall Success. If the characters achieve five successes before they get three failures, they discover that the undead animals originate from an old temple hidden approximately ten miles from the Bormiers' estate. See "The Lost Reliquary" below for details.

Overall Failure. If the characters get three failures before they get five successes, they fail to find the clues that lead them to the reliquary. To continue their mission, they must start the skill challenge all over again, losing all previous successes.

Ability Checks. To search the bog for clues, the characters must make the following ability checks in order, using the skill challenge rules above as guidelines. Most of the listed checks must be made by only one character. The character cannot receive help on the check, but can benefit from spells and features that boost the results (such as the *guidance* spell or Bardic Inspiration). A group check requires all of the party to perform the check. If half the party succeeds, then the check is successful. Otherwise, it counts as a failure.

If a character has a background, feature, or trait that makes them knowledgeable about swamps—such as the ranger's Favored Terrain feature—they make their checks with advantage.

Searching the Bog for Clues

Order Skill Check

1st	Wisdom (Survival), DC 10
2nd	Wisdom (Animal Handling), DC 15
3rd	Intelligence (Investigation), DC 15
4th	group Constitution check, DC 10
5th	Wisdom (Survival), DC 10
6th	Intelligence (Nature), DC 12
7th	Wisdom (Survival), DC 10

The Hag Nell Bogwiggle

A clue offered by the Bormiers' butler, Helmut, points toward the hag Nell Bogwiggle as a possible culprit. Surprisingly, Helmut has precise directions to her hut. Although he won't share it, the reason is simple—she's his former lover. Helmut hopes that the characters give her trouble, vengeance for ill-feelings he has toward the hag.

Nell Bogwiggle, a **green hag**, lives alone in a simple stilt hut roughly one mile from the Bormiers' estate. Covenless and tired, she's hardly the threat she was in her younger years—her younger years being her third and fourth century.

If Nell senses the characters approaching her hut, she assumes the form of an elven maiden and uses her innate charm to learn what she can about the characters. Helmut's involvement in the characters' accostation doesn't surprise Nell, and she has no problem sharing that Helmut only sent them to her because he's still not completely over their break-up. She also shares that he was a bad kisser.

Nell knows that the undead animals are coming from the Lost Reliquary. However, she will only share this information with the characters if one or more of them sign over the rights to their corpse. Otherwise, nothing short of reducing her hit points to less than half will cause her to cough up the details. If one of the characters agrees to giving up their flesh rights, she conjures her familiar, an **imp** named Stax, to pen an infernal agreement. She then casts an invisible glyph marking the character's body as her property—only Nell, fey creatures, and creatures with truesight can see the glyph. The glyph can only be removed with a *remove curse* spell. Of course, doing so violates the characters' contract with Nell, the consequences of which are left up to you (eternal damnation usually does the trick).

Nell didn't live to be over eight hundred years old without having a keen sense of self-preservation. If combat breaks out in her shack, she immediately turns invisible and flees into the surrounding bog. Because she is a green hag, she leaves no physical evidence of her passing and can only be tracked by magical means.

Investigation. Characters who spend an hour searching Nell's shack discover that it is filled with all sorts of unusual nicknacks, bizarre trinkets, and other esoteria. Among these peculiar items, the characters discover various pieces of jewelry worth a total value of 150 gp, two *spell scrolls* of *remove curse*, and a scroll made of lizardfolk leather detailing a mysterious location (your choice where it leads).

The Lost Reliquary

Inevitably, the characters discover the presence of the ruined temple and reliquary hidden in the swamp. Right away, they should recognize that this is the place that they seek. Eight **bog mummies** (see the Appendix) stand guard at its four entrances.

When the characters approach the temple, read the following:

Amid the vines, creepers, and stinking peat of the bog, a frustum-shaped structure rises from the black muck. The ancient building seemingly offers four entrances to its open-air interior. At each entrance, two undead guards stand. Their dark flesh wraps closely around their thin bones and oblong skulls. Curly auburn or red hair, untouched by time and preserved by the bog, cascades over their eyeless sockets and ever-grimacing, yellow teeth. They stand eerily still. Were it not for the few gentle, methodical movements that they make—a head turn here, a twitch of the hand there—one would swear that they were nothing more than macabre scarecrows.

Because of their bog bound nature, the bog mummies cannot leave the water in which they stand. Curiously, they will not attack the characters unless they are attacked, in which case, they all work together to stop the characters.

Investigation. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History or Religion) check (player's choice) recognizes that the bog mummies are actually the reanimated corpses of druids who were killed and dumped in the bog centuries ago.

General Features

The exterior of the temple suffers from the same conditions described in the "Travel Through the Bog" section on page 4. Unless stated otherwise, the underground reliquary level has the following features:

Architecture. Time has not been kind to this old stone structure. The interior's dressed stone walls are weak and crumbling. Plants, insects, and mold coat most of its ceilings, floors, and walls. The ceilings in the reliquary are 10 feet high.

Doors. The reliquary's old stone doors have stood the test of time. With the exception of the door that leads to area 14, none of the doors have locks.

Environment. The entire place reeks of black mold, peat, and decay. At all times, there is the sound of water dripping somewhere in the distance.

Illumination. There are no torches or lights in the reliquary. The text blocks assume that the characters have darkvision or their own source of light.



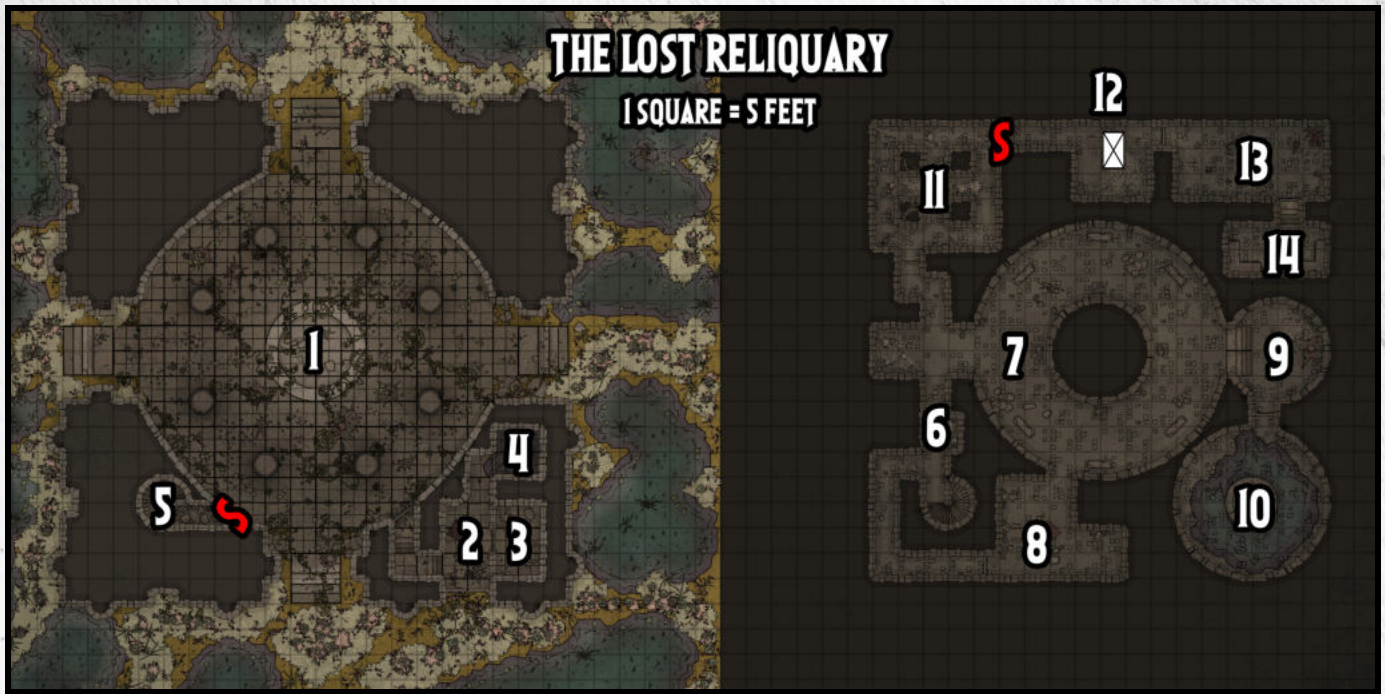
Helge and Zener's Refuge

Two weeks before the characters took Herr Garret Bormiers' mission, he and his daughter had an argument regarding her choice of a suitor, a hobgoblin soldier named Zenek. In a fit of despair, Helge fled the Bormiers' estate and escaped into the bog with her love. She remembered an old temple hidden in the bog, a favorite spot for exploration when she was a child. The two lovers set up camp inside the temple.

Soon recognizing that the two lacked the necessary resources to make it on their own, the pair began to rethink their scheme. Just as they were about to turn back to the Bormiers' estate and surrender themselves, Zener discovered a secret passage that led to the lost reliquary below the frustum. The pair searched the underground chambers and eventually discovered the hidden vault in area 14. That's where they discovered an ancient relic, the amber stone. Assuming that the stone could be sold for a pretty penny, the pair stole it from the vault. Unfortunately, removing the stone woke its ancient, undead guardians. Desperate to reclaim the artifact, the restless spirits attacked the couple. Zenek bravely held them off, allowing Helge to escape with the relic. As she fled into the bog, the undead overpowered Zenek and killed him.

Helge returned home, shaken by the encounter and Zenek's sacrifice. She told no one of the lost reliquary or the amber stone she stole from it. The young ogress hid the amber stone at the base of her wardrobe. Then, a few days later, undead animals attacked the estate—servants of the undead druids.

Each day the druids gain more power. If the amber stone isn't returned, the druids will have enough magic to completely destroy the estate in their bid to recover the relic.



Keyed Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of the temple and reliquary on this page.

1 - Main Temple

The stench of mold and death batters your sense of smell. Everywhere you look, bog creepers cover the floors and walls of this open-air chamber. Dim light from a hole in the ceiling some 20 feet above you illuminates an old, broken fountain at its center.

Encounter: Undead Animals. Undead horrors populate this chamber. The nature of the encounter depends on the adventure's level, as shown on the table below. The creatures remain completely still and calm, and only fight the characters if they are provoked or they sense that the characters' intentions are poor. Creatures marked with an asterisk are featured in the Appendix.

Area 1 Encounters

Adventure Level	Encounters
1st	2 giant poisonous snake zombies* and 2 giant badger zombies*
3rd	4 giant poisonous snake zombies* and 4 giant badger zombies*
5th	3 zombie owlbears*
8th	2 wraiths and 4 specters

Investigation. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check made in the area reveals a gold pendant shaped like a gear, with a stylized B set into it. There is a bit of torn, pink fabric stuck to the pendant's pin. If the players don't immediately get the reference, it's the same pendant depicted in the painting of Helge at the Bormiers' estate. As she fled, the pendant was torn from the lapel of Helge's dress.

Secret Door. There is a secret door set into the southwestern corner of the frustum. Having previously been opened by Helge and Zener, the door is relatively easy to find; any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 or better notices it. The door leads to area 5.

2 - Storage Area

A relatively new tent stands in the middle of this chamber. Scraps of paper, empty cans, and other fresh litter surround it. Otherwise, this chamber looks just as old and overgrown as the rest of the ruins.

Investigation. Looking through the tents, the characters discover two sleeping bags: one large enough for a human and another large enough for a giant. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) identifies two sets of tracks in this area, one made by a humanoid and the other by an ogre. Helge and Zener camped here.

3 - Workshop

The stone door to this workshop is stuck shut. If a character succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check while inspecting the door, they discover fresh scrapes in the stone below the door. The hobgoblin Zenek tried to force the door open, but failed.

A character can push the door open with a successful DC 15 Strength check.

Investigation. Other than old, rotting bones and water-logged benches, there is nothing of value in this room.

4 - Old Guardroom

This door is barred from the side facing area 2. The hobgoblin, Zenek placed the bar here to trap the creatures inside.

Water fills this entire area, creating difficult terrain.

Encounter: Stirges. There are twelve **stirges** trapped in this small, cramped room. Starving, they attack the character on sight.

Investigation. Ancient rusted spear heads hide under the murky water. Beyond that, there is nothing of value in this chamber.

5 - Secret Staircase

The secret door in area 1 hides this narrow, rubble-strewn hall which terminates in a crumbling spiral staircase. The stairs descend to area 6 of the lost reliquary.

6 - Destroyed Library

Soggy planks and rusted hooks set into the walls are all that remain of the bookshelves that once stood here.

Trap: Arrow Trap. Any creature who steps into the square at the base of the steps triggers an arrow trap set into the left-hand wall. Unless disarmed, the trap makes a +7 attack roll against the creature that triggers it. On a hit, the trap deals 1 piercing damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. The target takes the full amount of poison damage the trap deals on a failed saving throw, and half as much damage on a successful one. The full amount of damage the trap deals depends on the level of the adventure, as shown on the Arrow Trap Damage table below.

Arrow Trap Damage

Adventure Level	Poison Damage
1st	7 (2d6)
3rd	14 (4d6)
5th	24 (7d6)
8th	35 (10d6)

Investigation. A character who carefully searches the area at the foot of the steps and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that there is a broken arrow stuck in the right hand wall. Zenek triggered the trap, but narrowly avoided it. The trap can be disarmed by jamming the pressure plate set into the floor by the steps. Doing so requires a successful DC 13 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools.

7 - Central Temple

This wide hall circles a solid pillar of stone at the chamber's center. Four ancient stone statues stand with their backs to the stone column, each one facing one of the four cardinal directions. Time and moisture have distorted and reshaped the statues' delicate faces, leaving visages of abject horror. Stone benches line the outer walls, most crumbling and ruined.

Creatures in Area 9. If the characters make too much noise in this chamber, they draw the attention of the creatures standing in area 9.

Zenek's Body. The corpse of Helge Bormiers' hobgoblin lover, Zenek, lies in the northern section of this chamber. Although his armor, gear, and weapons appear mostly brand new, his body is withered and desiccated like a mummy's—the result of the life-draining powers wielded by the undead that haunt this tomb. Any character who previously discovered the two pairs of fresh tracks found throughout the temple automatically recognizes that the humanoid tracks were made by Zenek's boots.

A character who casts *Speak with Dead* or a similar spell over Zenek's corpse learns what happened to him. Reference the section "Helge and Zenek's Refuge" on page 7 for the answers Zenek's corpse provides.

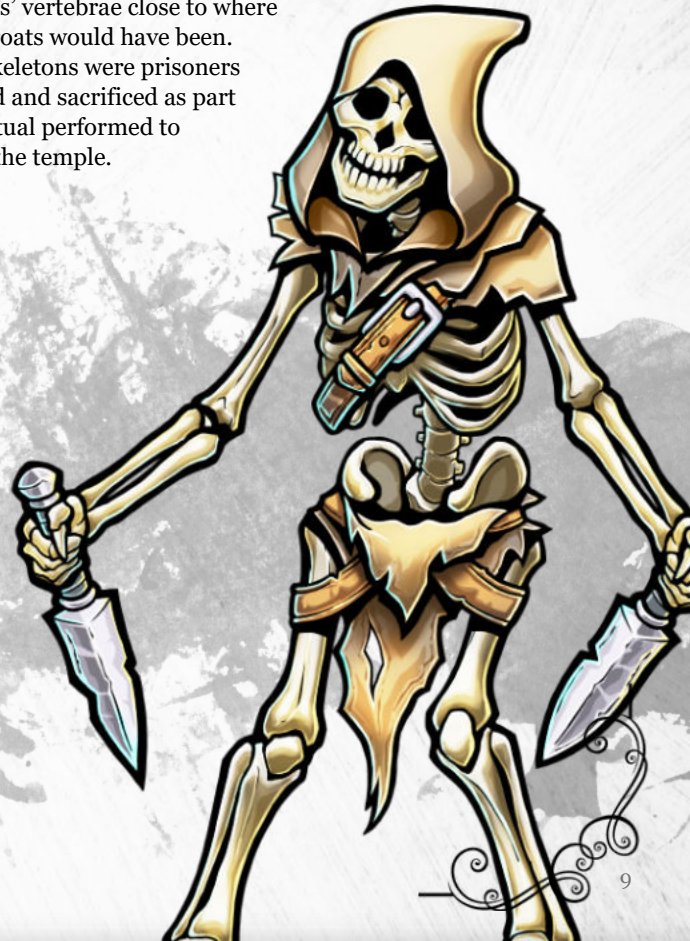
Treasure: Honor's Guard. Zenek's sword is actually a family heirloom passed down to him from his grandfather, a mighty hobgoblin captain. Any character who can speak or read Goblin can read its name scrawled across the cross-guard: Honor's Call. Honor's Call is a +1 *longsword* that grants its wielder a +1 bonus to Dexterity saving throws. Zenek's corpse wears a matching scabbard. All members of the Bormiers family and their servants will immediately recognize the sword as Zenek's.

8 - Prison

Three moldy skeletons hang from manacles set into the walls.

Encounter: Skeletons. The three **skeletons** animate and flail about as soon as the characters enter this area. They are restrained and prone, have no armor (AC 12) and no useful weapons. They gasp and hiss at the characters until the characters leave their sight or they are destroyed.

Investigation. A character who inspects the bones and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check recognizes long lacerations cut into the skeletons' vertebrae close to where their throats would have been. These skeletons were prisoners captured and sacrificed as part of the ritual performed to protect the temple.



9 - Destroyed Kitchen

Broken dishes and pottery are all that remain of the kitchen that once stood in this circular room.

Encounter: Undead Animals. Undead creatures wait in this area, the nature of which are determined by the level of the adventure as shown on the table below. If the characters have entered the temple with poor intentions or have attacked any of the temple's guardians, the creatures attack. Otherwise, they remain in place, watching the characters as they pass. Creatures marked with an asterisk are detailed in the Appendix.

Area 9 Encounters

Adventure Level Encounters

1st	3 giant poisonous snake zombies*
3rd	2 zombie owlbears*
5th	2 wights
8th	4 wights

Investigation. Murky water slowly sludges out of the southern stone door that connects this area to area 10.

10 - Well

A large well dominates the center of this room. Murky water overflows from its 2-foot-high lip, sloshing onto the ruined stone floor surrounding it.

Hazard: The Drowning Well. Centuries of hate and death have cursed this room. Any humanoid that steps into this chamber must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or become possessed by the evil that saturates it. Targets that can breathe underwater automatically pass their saving throw. The possessed target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The room now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. Although the room is sentient and capable of possessing the living, it can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead. On its turn, the possessed creature attempts to drown itself in the overflowing well by holding its own head under the water. Another creature can stop the target from drowning itself by grappling the target or shoving it away from the well.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the target is removed from the room, or the room is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. After the possession ends, the room cannot target another creature, including the original target, for 24 hours. Also, a target that succeeds on its saving throw against this effect is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

The only way to completely destroy the evil in this room is to cast the *hallow* spell, targeting the chamber. Pouring five flasks worth of holy water throughout this chamber also destroys the room's evil.

Investigation. Characters who search this chamber discover the remains of countless humanoids who've died drowning themselves in the well. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check recovers six pieces of jewelry—bracelets, necklaces, earrings, and the like—worth a total of 100 gp per level of this adventure.

11 - Cells Interlinked

Four angular columns hoist this chamber's relatively low ceilings (they're only 6 feet high).

Investigation. Oddly, this room is relatively dry compared to the rest of the temple. Ashes cover the ground, through which the characters can easily find fresh footprints leading to and from the secret door in the northeastern corner of the room. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies the tracks as having been made by a humanoid and an ogre.

Secret Door. There is a secret door in the northeast corner of this room that leads to area 12. Because Zenek and Helge found it shortly before the characters arrived, it's relatively easy to find, requiring only a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot. There was a locking mechanism on the door, but Zenek broke it to gain access.

12 - Ruined Robing Room

Strange marks cover the floor of this otherwise empty chamber.

Trap: Concealed Pit. A 10-foot-long, 5-foot-wide, and 20-foot-deep pit is hidden in the center of this chamber (see the map for its exact location). It's concealed by a trap door that pivots on a central hinge running north to south. If a creature weighing 50 pounds or more steps onto the trapdoor, the trapdoor swivels open and the creature falls into the muck-covered pit, taking 7 (2d6) damage from the fall. The characters can spot the edge of the trapdoor with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. Jamming a piton or similar wedge into the trapdoor's edges stops it from swinging open, no check required.

Investigation. Zenek easily spotted the trap and led Helge around its edge. Their tracks are visible with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check (the player's choice).

If a character inspects the writings on the floor and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check, they recognize that the writings are mostly gibberish. Furthermore, a character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recognizes that the writings are not nearly as old as the rest of the temple. It's graffiti left by a band of tomb raiders from a few years ago.

13 - Abandoned Divination Room

Smashed pottery litters this room. Otherwise, there is nothing of interest here.

The door to area 14 was left wide open. Its locking mechanism has been shattered (courtesy of Zenek's sword).

14 - The Vault

Crumbling, mold-covered stone shelves line the walls of this small storage chamber. A 3-foot-tall altar stained black stands against the southern wall. There is a chill in this room.

This room exudes pure evil. It was here that the amber stone was stored, resting atop the blood-stained altar.

When the characters enter this room, the spirit of the temple's ancient archdruid materializes before them.

Read the following:

The temperature in this chamber suddenly drops. The air leaving your lungs condenses into mist. Ice forms on the walls and stone tiles. Suddenly, in a blast of dark light, a vaguely-humanoid figure materializes before you. It floats a few inches above the ground, rotating slowly in space like a hanged horse thief. Its eyes are completely hollow and its mouth is twisted into a permanent scream.

Without moving its jaw, a slow, sick voice crawls out of its throat.

"They stole it..." the apparition croaks.

It continues to float there, wispy tendrils of shadow crawling over its vile form.

The archdruid is a **wraith**. It won't answer any of the characters' questions, instead content to repeat the phrase "they stole it..." over and over again.

It will not attack the characters unless they attack it first, or if they have intentions to steal from the temple. In the 8th-level version of this adventure, four **specters** join the wraith if the characters attack it. If the wraith is destroyed, it reforms in this area in 24 hours. The only way to completely destroy the wraith is to find its body—the soggy bones of its corpse are hidden below the crumbling tiles of this room's floor, buried deep enough that most spells will be unable to detect them—and consecrate it by burning the bones or spreading the contents of a flask of holy water over its body.

Investigation. A character who investigates the altar and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check recognizes that there was once something standing on the altar. The two sets of tracks found throughout the cavern—those of a humanoid and those of an ogre—can be found entering this room then quickly leaving it.

Development. The archdruid wants the characters to return the amber stone that Helge stole. If the characters confront Helge (see below) and return the stone, the undead that haunt this temple and the bog around it return to their graves. Otherwise, the attacks continue until the undead are completely destroyed or they recover the stone themselves (see Aftermath for details on how that plays out).



Confronting Helge

If the characters successfully reached area 14 of the reliquary and spoke with the archdruid's apparition, they learned that Helge stole the temple's amber stone. Despite this truth, it will still take some coaxing to convince the Bormiers of Helge's crime.

Herr Garret Bormiers believes that his daughter is perfect and would never do anything wrong—only a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check will make him change his mind. Once he does, he searches Helge's room and discovers the stone hidden at the base of her wardrobe. He commands the characters to return the stone, lest the attacks by the undead continue.

Frau Greta Bormiers is a little easier to convince, requiring only a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince her of Helge's wrongdoing. However, she's too afraid of her stubborn husband to confront him or Helge. Instead, she suggests that the characters steal the stone from Helge's room while she distracts Herr Bormiers. While no map is provided of the Bormiers' estate, the characters can accomplish this task by succeeding on two of the three following ability checks: Dexterity (Stealth), Wisdom (Perception), Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion; the players' choice). The DC for each check is 13. If the characters fail to secure two successes, they're caught by Herr Bormiers who refuses to listen to reason. The characters can try to convince him by making the same check as the one detailed above, but the check is made with disadvantage.

Finally, the characters can try to meet with Helge. To do so, they will need to stake out the manor and wait for her to step outside her chambers. How the characters do this without being noticed is up to you—for example, they can hide in the surrounding bog by succeeding on a DC 15 group Dexterity (Stealth) check, or they can convince the servants to let them camp on the property with a successful DC 10 group Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Each hour that the characters wait, roll a d20. On a result of 18 or higher, Helge emerges from her room. Still distraught by the death of her boyfriend, Zenek, she's a little easier to convince than her father. One of the characters can talk her into relinquishing the stone with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If one of the characters possesses Zenek's sword and Helge notices it, this check is made with advantage. If the check fails by 5 or more, she reports the characters' accostation to her father, who responds with hostility.

Aftermath

If the characters fail to return the amber stone to the Lost Reliquary and can't convince the Bormiers to do the right thing, inevitably, the druids raise a small army of undead animals, numbering in the hundreds. The next dawn, the creatures kill both Greta and Helge Bormiers and severely injure Herr Garret. They also retrieve the stone and return it to the Lost Reliquary. From there, the attacks cease. Driven mad by the encounter and deaths of his wife and daughter, Garret's business empire crumbles. He becomes obsessed with destroying the temple and any druids he meets.

If the characters decide to take the amber stone for themselves, they become the target of the undead guardians' ire instead of Helge Bormiers. Each day, undead animals attack them, with each subsequent attack becoming more and more deadly. Because these attacks are brought on by the curse surrounding the amber stone, don't award experience to the characters for any creatures they defeat related to the curse. A *remove curse* spell ends the curse for the character, as does permanently destroying the wraith in area 14 of the reliquary.

The true nature of the amber stone featured in this adventure was intentionally left vague. On one hand, the stone could possess absolutely no power. It's simply a mundane relic once valued by the druids who used to worship in the temple. Alternatively, the amber stone might be a source of great evil. If such an artifact were to fall into the wrong hands, it could spell doom for all living creatures anywhere.

Ultimately, the choice is yours. Ω

Credits

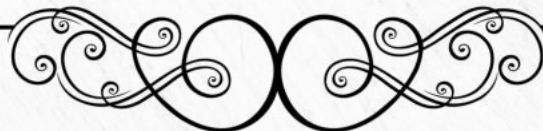
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Cartography. Dyson Logos, DMDave, Tom Cartos

Art. Darryl Jones, Dean Spencer, Fat Goblin Games, Paper Forge, Shutterstock

Editor and Proofers. Benjamin Gilyot, Laura Jordan



Appendix: New Creatures

Dark Domain: *The Lost Reliquary* includes four creatures not found in the core rulebooks. Their stat blocks are printed below. As undead creature raised by the archdruid, they are based on creatures found in swamps. If you wish to create similar creatures, especially if the archdruid sends more undead against the characters, you can take inspiration from how they change swamp-dwelling animals found in the base rules.

Undead Nature. The Bog Mummy, Giant Badger Zombie, and Giant Poisonous Snake Zombie don't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Bog Mummy

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 9 (natural armor)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Wis +2
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities acid, necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Bog Bound. The bog mummy ignores difficult terrain created by bogs, marshes, and swamps. The bog mummy dies if it leaves the water of the bog to which it is bound or if that water is destroyed.

Actions

Preserving Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage. If the target is a creature, it must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target's Dexterity score is reduced by 1d4. If this reduces the target's Dexterity score below 0, the target dies. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a humanoid dies from this attack, the target returns as a bog mummy 1d4 days later.

Giant Badger Zombie

Medium undead, unaligned

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +1
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

Actions

Multiattack. The giant badger zombie makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) slashing damage.



Giant Poisonous Snake Zombie

Medium undead, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	3 (-4)

Saving Throws Wis +0
Skills Perception +2
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. The target takes 9 (2d8) acid damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Zombie Owlbear

As far as zombie companions go, owlbears make perfect subjects. Not only are they innately powerful, but their natural durability lends itself well to the difficult-to-kill nature of animated dead. The only drawback to reanimating owlbears is a noticeable lost of agility.

Undead Nature. The zombie owlbear does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Zombie Owlbear

Large undead, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +1
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

Actions

Multiattack. The zombie owlbear makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.



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