

**BEST
COPPER
SELLER**

J To Rock ONTO Death



UNRAVEL A MYSTERY INSIDE A SCHOOL'S NECROMANCY BASEMENT
FOR THE WORLD'S GREATEST ROLEPLAYING GAME

TO LOCK ONTO DEATH

"To lock onto Death" is optimized For: APL 5
for use with the 5th Edition ruleset.



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LIUXIAN'S SCHOOL FOR THE GIFTED

AMESSAGE ABOUT AN INFESTATION terrorizing the necromancy students of *Liuxian's school for the gifted* has been posted on a notice board. School staff have been busy with this semester's finals and deem the problem too inconvenient to be able to continue teaching in their classrooms, but not serious enough for them to waste their own time on as they have more pressing matters to deal with.

They've requested the help of mercenaries to come in and rid the school of the infestation, which has slowly been growing out of control. As more mercenary bands run from the task at hand, students are getting injured, one has gone missing, your party will be the schools' last hope.

Unbeknownst to the characters, the infestation is merely a distraction, and as they begin to explore the ruined classrooms of the necromancy basement, they will slowly realise something more malevolent is going on.

FINDING THE NOTICE

Characters might come across a notice detailing the quest's objective, including but not limited to, the following:

- Bounty for 50gold per Topi head
- Reward for 100gold if you find the missing student alive
- 500 gold reward will be paid upon complete eradication of any and all pests within the necromancy basement, seeing as the Topi have caused other creatures to escape and wander the halls as well.

LIUXIAN'S SCHOOL FOR THE GIFTED

The grand entrance, adorned with iron-wrought roses displaying metal flower petals and vines, looks both realistic and strangely too accurate for it to be made by human hands. There are dozens of people moving around dressed in a range of colours from orange to deep reds, all tied with a golden embroidered sash around the waist. Young students from the ages of twelve to late twenties are all walking, talking, debating, laughing and practising flourishes of magic on stone circles with colourful runic symbols etched into them. Suddenly, a young girl screams in fear as she is lifted up in the air. A man in vermillion robes runs towards the

scene casting two spells in quick succession, before the neophyte falls as light as a feather into the man's arms. He sets the fledgling mage down and admonishes her for her carelessness before she walks off sulking under the raucous laughter of some later-year students.

TOWER OF TUTELAGE

From the imposing school entrance to the highest tower, Liuxian's school for the gifted contains wonders for those with patience to find them. This adventure, however, focuses only on the necromancy level, but you will find a short overview of other locations below as each school of magic has their own enormous floor within the tower of tutelage. Liuxian's school for the gifted has more than one building on its grounds.

BASEMENT:

Necromancy school - Master Azrail Mrithun

GROUND FLOOR:

Abjuration school - Mistress Deletha Darvesh

FIRST FLOOR

Illusion school - Mistress Oshma Fumblecrisp

SECOND FLOOR

Conjuration school - Master Araju Peng

THIRD FLOOR

Transmutation school - Master Iruru Ishi

FOURTH FLOOR

Evocation school - Master Bastijn Nuis

FIFTH FLOOR

Divination school - Mistress Divina Incantates

SIXTH FLOOR

Enchantment school - Mistress Roseline Dior

CENTRAL CAMPUS

ARCHWAY COMMONS

Park of practice right by the entrance gate

TAIYŌ HOUSE

(house of the sun) Boys dormitories

TSUKI HOUSE

(house of the moon) Girls dormitories.

COMMISSARY CONCOURSE

Dining halls
Thaumaturgy Tavern
Catnap Café

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Dean Domiciles
Office of Scholarship
Liuxian's tower

THE CLOISTERS

LABORATORIES

Alchemy Lab
Herbalism Greenhouse

EXTRACURRICULAR HALLS

Theatre
Auditorium
Atelier
Prime Chapel
Hortus Botanicus

THE ATHENAEUM

Library tower of the school



ADVENTURE INTRODUCTION

The characters are drawn into the adventure by finding the notice "Extermination Required" in appendix A.

Chapter 1 describes the first encounter with one of the school's students; Peyton, and the descent into the basement where the characters will face the infestation. Whilst they are busy with ridding the various rooms of its inexplicable pests they will also slowly uncover clues as to what is really going on.

Early on in the adventure, they'll find out that somewhere hidden in one of the basement's classrooms is the Skeleton key, which might be the only way of opening the door to the Lecture hall and unlocking the finale of this adventure.

Throughout this adventure the characters might discover that last year three students perished. A boy named Elias Clover had also died, but because of his reputable and affluent family, he was the only one who was resurrected back to life. The others were not so lucky.

Elias is now obsessed with obtaining the power to resurrect his companions as a result of this horrible tragedy. He has been looking for more nefarious ways to accomplish this, unable to do it with the knowledge he has learned thus far at school.

He was able to obtain a banned book, which enabled him to communicate with a mysterious and charismatic Deathlock. This creature promised him that if Elias could help open a rift that would allow the Deathlock to enter the Material world, he would be able to resurrect his beloved girlfriend and friends.

Before the party finds the notice, Elias has already initiated the ritual that would bring this Deathlock to our world. The corridors of the basement are infested with small pests and malevolent spirits as a result of his actions, including the triggering of the basement's protective wards to keep any students and staff out of the lecture hall while the ritual takes its time to complete.

It's now up to the characters to discover this plot in time to stop this Deathlock from completing the ritual by which he drains the magical wards from their energies to power it. Because once freed, this deathlock will stop at nothing to eventually find the key to free their dread lord from the dread prison they are in.

CHAPTER 1: THE HUNT



FTER THE PLAYERS HAVE FOUND THE NOTICE and arrived at the school's Central campus, they will be accosted by a seventeen-year-old student with his chest proudly puffed out and a small badge pinned to it. He takes great care of this pin, as it seems to glimmer brightly with an unnaturally buffed up shine.

The student will *emo-hair-flip* his mousy-brown fringe out of his face, and scrape his throat before he asks in the most annoyingly indignant manner;

"Welcome to Liuxian's school for the Gifted, my name is Peyton Hilless, you may refer to me as Prefect Hilles of Liuxian's school for the gifted. Can I help you?"

Give your players time to respond to this character.

"You're here to solve the necro-kids' problems? Ah yes, Misstress Darvesh already told me all about the notice to bring in more mercenaries to solve the current issues. I heard they even upped the bounty to 50 gold per Topi head on top of the reward for clearing out the classrooms. Seems they really want to get rid of the pest!"

"I've been instructed to escort the new crew to the necromancy chambers. In case you were wondering, it's the basement of the tower of tutelage."

Peyton will point with a face of utter disgust at the ground.

"How original right? The creeps in the basement..."

"I heard an entire class of first years got attacked by the topi and they're still not discharged from the hospital ward. Suits them well, maybe they'll consider picking a more respectable school of magic to focus on! Like transmutation."

Peyton will puff out his chest proudly at the mention of his own expertise.

Peyton leads you through a beautiful courtyard through cloistered corridors that look out over well-maintained herb gardens. Stepping inside a small sideway entrance you follow a slightly curving staircase, furthering you down some steps where the walls are getting colder and clammier. Eventually you stand before a large black oaken door that is barred and buzzing with arcane magic.

Peyton will explain that the necromancy basement is locked. To prevent the infestation from spreading or escaping, he'll have to lock the door behind the characters.

Because the necromancy floor is designed for emergency scenarios like these, none of the spirits can leave the basement's magical wards. He'll leave the group with a final warning after wishing them luck; he's heard from the last squad that a variety of monsters have broken loose with the assistance of some of the more malevolent spirits. They too must be cleared.

CATCH MORE FLIES WITH HONEY

If the players are able to keep their composure and appeal to Peyton's proud nature, he will be extremely helpful and disclose the following additional information. Though with every snarky remark from the party, or less-than-desirable response, the likelihood of him withholding information out of spite increases.

- The walls of the necromancy basement are warded in the event of emergencies. All wards should be up, which prevents any undead, spirit or otherwise, to use their *Incorporeal Passage* ability.
- Beware of the plumbing, students have reported screams coming from the pipes. Inhuman screams.
- Every door is locked (with a DC 15). On a failure to open the door or when opened with brute force (AC 17 with 27 (5d10) HP) a trap will spring and deal 2d8 radiant damage. This is to prevent undead from leaving. The only exceptions to these are the doors of D8.
- The doors of D8 are magically sealed. They can only be opened with a spell of Knock, a spell of disintegration, or a Skeleton key.
- There is a sentient skeleton key that in the event of an emergency will hide and run from anyone trying to get it.
- If they cunningly appeal to Peyton's proud nature, he will part with a case of 5 healing potions from his personal collection in his bag. (Persuasion DC 20)

THE DESCENT

The staircase leads deeper down into the dungeons, a significant change in atmosphere can be felt. The characters breaths will show in the freezing cold air, and the walls of the dungeon glow with an eerily dim green light, which almost thrums like the beating of a slow heart.

A1. STAIRCASE ENTRANCE

There are blood splatters everywhere, and a small fingerbone on the stone cold floor appears to be slowly crawling its way towards the staircase.

Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 16 or higher, read:

You can see that the blood splatters have a pattern to them. Whoever went through here was bleeding profusely. You notice the tracks are from a group of people carrying an unconscious person whilst being attacked from behind. The crawling fingerbone indicates that undead are to be expected.

The door (D1) ahead is locked, the first of many, with a lockpicking DC of 15. If the party chooses to break down the door instead, treat it as an object with an AC 17 with 27 (5d10) HP.

DEVELOPMENT

Door (D1) leads to "A2. Circular Hallway". If the characters enter this area making noise or carrying light sources, the topi close to door (D3) will be drawn to them immediately and wait at the other side of door (D1).



A2. CIRCULAR HALLWAY

Before he set out to start a ritual within the lecture hall, Elias tried his hand at some ancient spells to raise undead creatures. Instead of resurrecting the corpses he had brought with him, he had opened small rifts from which Topi emerged. These creatures now pace the circular corridors, tirelessly seeking for a way out to devour anything that comes in their way.

This dimly lit, slightly curved corridor has multiple doors behind which strange sounds of clanking metal pipes and indiscernible whispers can be heard. The stench is overwhelming, but even in the gloom of the eerily green light emanating from the walls, you can make out tiny monstrous shapes skittering down the hall toward you. When the dim light can no longer hide their shadowy nature, your eyes are treated to a terrifying visage of multiple 2ft tall shrunken humanoids with leathery skins.

These (1d6) **Topi** (TTP p. 22) attack anyone in their path.

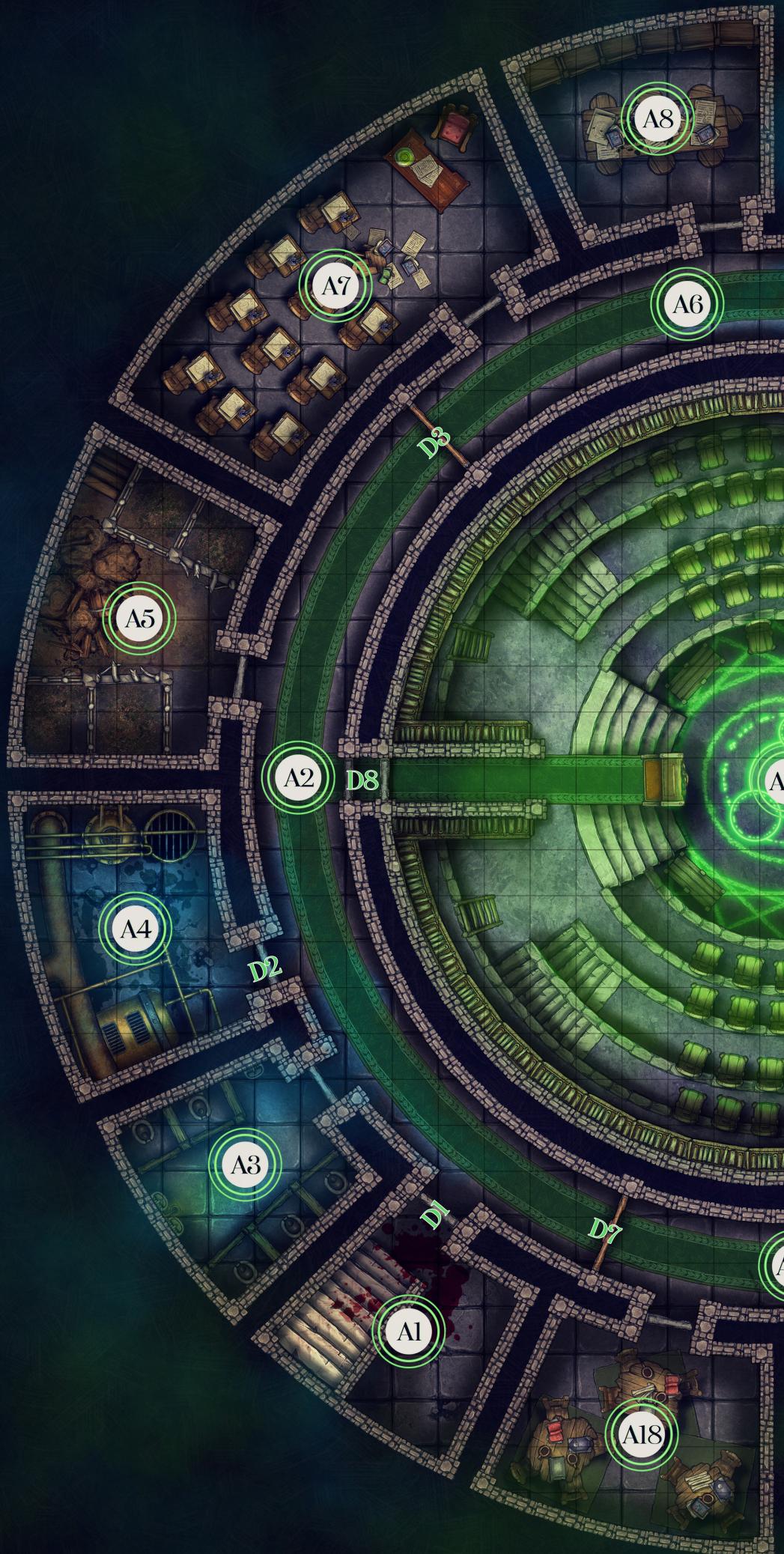
When the characters pass the door to the lecture hall (D8), read:

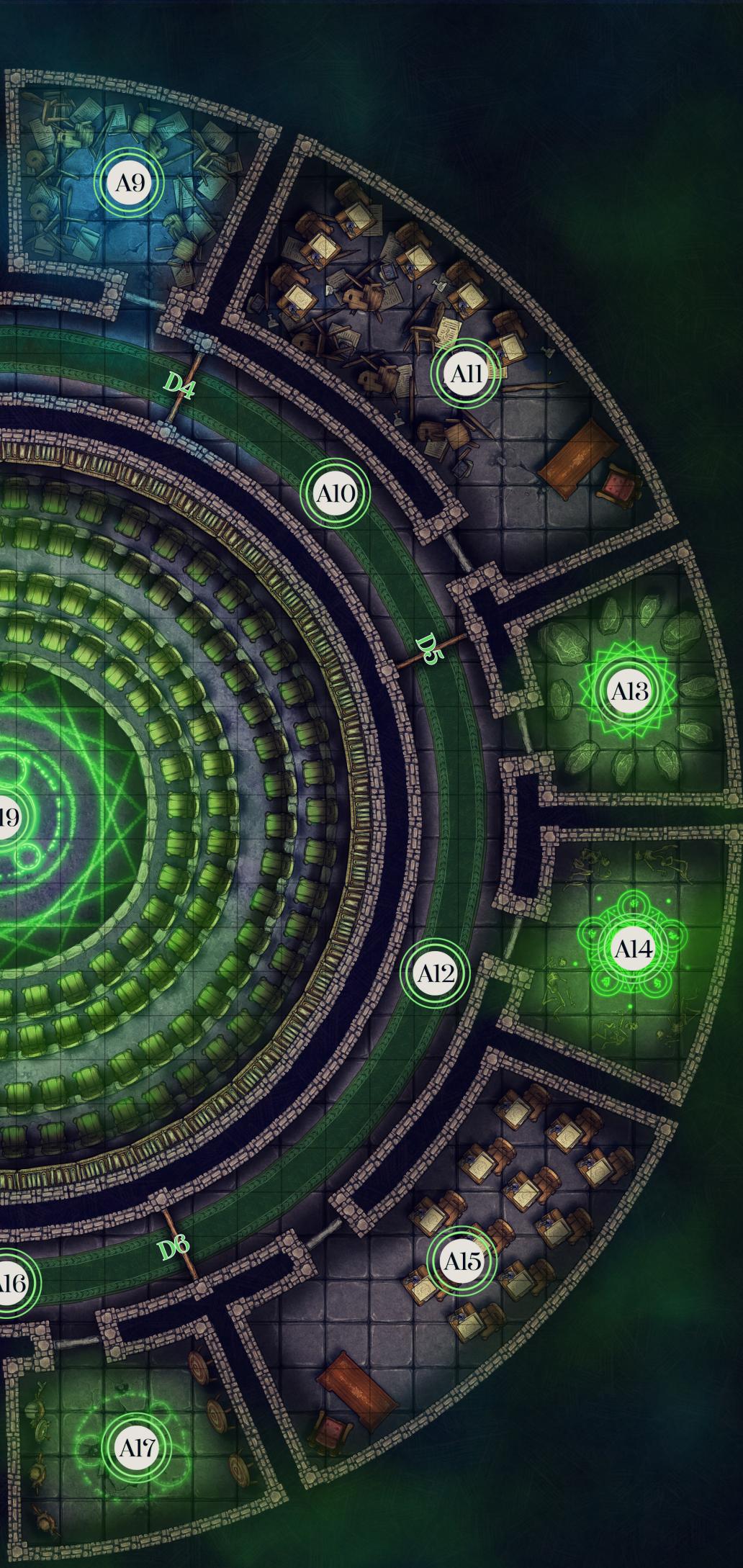
This door seems to be magically sealed. There is no lock to be found that can be picked. It looks like it would need a special sort of key to open. On the floor in front of this door you notice a forbidding looking acid-burned grimoire.

These doors can only be opened with a spell of Knock, a spell of disintegration, or a Skeleton key. There are two sets of doors with a 5ft corridor in between them. The Grimoire's contents are rendered indiscernible due to acid, but characters are able to just about make out the title: "Malumortinum". A DC20 (Arcana or history) check will reveal this is a grimoire to contact entities from known dread domains.

A3. LAVATORIES

A large puddle of foul-smelling liquid lies in the middle of this moldy, 20 ft wedge-shaped room. Three lavatory cubicles are spaced along the south-east wall, and two more are opposite on the north-west wall. Mounted on the south-west wall you can see two sinks.





2 **Ghosts** are in here; they're discussing some details about what is going on in the basement. If the characters stop to listen, read:

"Do you think the boy will be as able as the master says he is?"
"He summoned us and tricked the faculty of this dreadful school into thinking that there's nothing more than a pesky Topi problem, didn't he?"
"Yes.. but.."
"But what? It's not like you've been summoned for your tactical plans, Demosthenes. Didn't you die in battle by falling on your own pike?"

- There is a sentient skeleton key, a literal key made out of bones with a mind of its own. It opens all doors in the basement.
- When specifically asked about Elias Clover, she says; "Such a sad story. He was in love with this wretched girl named Lavender, a super bad influence, if you ask me. She and some others died last year because of drug-overdose. There's a poster and obituary about them in Classroom A."
- When asked about the Teacher's Desks, she excitedly explains that she has never tried opening one. Last year a student ended up in the hospital ward when he wanted to get his confiscated spell scroll back. She does know that the desk contains high-level emergency scrolls; like revivify and greater restoration in the event of a disastrous spell gone wrong.

A4. PLUMBING ROOM

Throughout the corridor and the lavatories you hear an eerie scream echo inside the pipes, seemingly originating from within the plumbing room. Wedged underneath the door that leads to this room is a small note.

When carefully wiggled out from underneath the solid stone door (D2), a character might notice there is a snowflake drawn on it with a beautiful shimmering ink. The note seems to have no dirt or smudges on it, which is curious, seeing how filthy both door and floor seem...

A modified version of *Illusory script* has been used by a student trapped inside the plumbing room. Right before she turned to ice, she wrote the following note, but hid it behind this spell to keep the ghosts and topi from understanding her plea for help. If a player dispels the magic, they can read the note. If they say the magic word: "Snowflake" the note will also reveal its true meaning. If the characters are able to open and read the note, show the players "Rohe's Note" in appendix A.

Inside of a large vat of water in the plumbing room that is being used to supply the lavatories sits an **Ice Banshee** (appendix B), haunting the place. She is at half health, and cursed with vulnerability to fire. She has used her Bonechilling scream already.

ROLEPLAYING ROHE

Rohe (appendix B) stands 5 ft, 7 inches tall and has a lithe frame. A second-year necromancy student, she hides her true powers well. Born as a daughter of a priest to Shar, she escaped her toxic household after being accepted into Liuxian's school for the gifted.

Being a death domain cleric and a necromancy student, she defies her stereotype by loving anything cute and cuddly, albeit undead. Bubbly and energetic, Rohe will attempt to help the party as best as she can, but will also convince them to help her find her pet dog "Wroof". She can not be convinced to go back without her dog and will be adamant that she can help the characters on their quest forward.

Characters who question Rohe learn the following information:

- She doesn't know why there are Topi everywhere, but she does know someone is behind all of it. The ghosts have been talking about a bigger plot.



ROHE THE STUDENT

TREASURE

A potion of Health and a potion of Invisibility have rolled underneath one of the large vats in this room. They can be found with a DC 12 (investigation) check.

A5. UNDEAD BESTIARY

The thick fog that fills this wedge-shaped room swirls, as if eager to escape. A large pile of rubble fills the centre of the room and along the perimeter, tucked under an overhanging wall, are several wooden stables with broken open doors. Within these stables are 4 gangly and rotting undead corpses of wildly bucking horses, seemingly being tormented by objects that are being thrown violently at them from a single spot within this room.

There are 4 **Zombie horses** (PSD p. 17) in here, Whinnying loudly as they're trying to escape a **poltergeist** (MM p. 279) tormenting them. Professor Silverheart using a statblock of an **Ghost** (MM p. 147) is hiding inside as well. As soon as the characters open the door, several things happen all at once.

- Professor Mudrouc Silverheart will attempt to secretly possess the least charismatic character closest to the door.
- The poltergeist will attack whoever is the loudest.
- The horses, fed up with being tormented, will cause mayhem as they attempt to charge out of the room now the door has been opened.

TEXT TO THE POSSESSED PLAYER:

You are possessed by Mudrouc Silverheart, the ghostly teacher of Necromantic Animal Handling.
He will try and pretend to be you, and convince your friends to not harm or kill his animals and destroy the poltergeist in the room. With each passing round, Mudrouc's speaking will gradually reveal an accent of your choosing, until at one point Mudrouc's accent will be thick and unmistakably different from the PC's. (your pick)

TREASURE:

If the players have helped Mudrouc, he will gift them the contents of the medicine cabinet on the far wall. If they have killed Mudrouc, the cabinet requires a lockpicking check DC 15 to open. It contains the following:

- 3 Healer's Kit
- 2 Potions of Healing
- 1 Potion of Vitality

A6. CIRCULAR HALLWAY

From beyond the door (D3) scratches and high-pitched zombie gibberish can be heard. These (1d6) **Topi** (TTP p. 22) are preparing themselves to attack anyone who opens the door. As soon as they hear the characters trying to open the door, they will quietly back up and hold their actions to attack.

DEVELOPMENT

If the players enter this area from a counter-clockwise exploration, read:

Throughout your exploration of this basement, the walls have been giving off a dim green glow. You suddenly begin to notice that the walls are thrumming more violently, and much of the glow is faintly fading to a bare minimum. Something seems to be draining the magical wards and barriers of its power, and it's close to bringing this protection down. The walls are no longer able to emanate a dim light.

A7. CLASSROOM A

Two crawling claws have escaped their magical containment jars and are having an arm-wrestling competition on top of the teachers' desk. They look shocked and throw their fingers in the air when you enter.

Crawling claws (MM p. 44) are the severed hands of murderers, animated by dark magic so that they can go on killing. These Crawling Claws will continue to imitate and recreate the same murderous acts they committed in life. They will try to kill and choke any character who sets foot in the room.

When the characters investigate the room, read:

An official-looking mahogany desk with locked drawers and a matching high-back chair face the rest of the classroom. Only one of the student desks has been destroyed, its papers scattered on the floor. Behind the teacher's chair is a large framed pinboard on which several messages and notices are displayed.

Characters who search the destroyed desk or otherwise inspect the scattered contents on the floor can, with a successful DC 12 (perception or investigation) check, find out that it belonged to Elias Clover. They will also find a love letter from Lavender to Elias amongst his books. Show the players "Lavender's Love Letter" in appendix A.

Characters who search around the teacher's chair or otherwise inspect the notices displayed on the board behind it find an obituary of three deceased students. Show the players "Obituary" in appendix A.

The desk has several items resting atop it: an oil lamp, a jar of ink, a quill pen, and four blank sheets of parchment. The drawer is locked, and if the desk is opened by anything other than the skeleton key, an **Undead Spirit** (4th-Level Spell) (TCE p. 114) will be summoned. It contains the following scrolls when opened:

TREASURE:

- 1 scroll of Locate Object
- 1 Scroll of Revivify with a diamond inside this scroll case.
- 1 Scroll of Greater Restoration with diamond dust worth at least 100 gp, which the spell consumes

A8. STUDY HALL B

A ghostly golden retriever is fighting over a bone from a skeleton that is chasing after them. You see the skeleton trying to pull their bone from the dog's maw, only to have the dog take its other arm off and run away to the other corner.

The **Ghostly Retriever** (Appendix B) is Wroof, Rohe's pet that she was looking for. He'll be very happy to see her. Rohe will not come up with this suggestion herself, but Wroof can be used to find the skeleton key. When asked, he is able to search any room the party has opened for bones, making the search much faster.

TREASURE

Although some of the students' homework spells did not survive the onslaught of a dog fighting for the bones of a skeleton, some scrolls hidden away in the cabinets at the far wall did. A box in the cabinets labelled "confiscated" contains the following illegal spells for students:

- 1 Scroll of Disintegrate
- 1 Scroll of Catnap

A9. STUDY HALL A

Dominating this room is a twelve-foot-tall vortex of Topi violently swirling in a mass of chittering screams and venomous claws. Behind it, thrown against every wall in this room, are some ruined furnishings and furniture.

A **Vortex of Topi** (appendix B) can be found in this room, attacking all creatures that enter. They will immediately try to escape the room when the door is opened.

TREASURE:

There are 3 potions of healing hidden amongst the rubble, that can be found with an investigation check of DC 15.

A10. CIRCULAR HALLWAY

There is a striking absence of noise, so profound that it seems to have its own quality.

A11. CLASSROOM C

This room, once a classroom, is littered with broken furniture. Scattered about the room are the remains of a teacher's desk, eleven student desks and several chairs. Torn-up books, old quill pens, empty potion bottles, and ripped homework are also strewn about. There's an unsettling silence amongst the ruins.

A dozen **Topi** (TTP p. 22) lurk beneath the stacks of ruined desks, waiting for an opportunity to escape the room. They will jump and attack as soon as most of the characters have entered the room.

A12. CIRCULAR HALLWAY

If the party enters this area from a clockwise exploration, read:

Throughout your exploration of this basement, the walls have been giving off a dim green glow. You suddenly begin to notice that the walls are thrumming more violently, and much of the glow is faintly fading to a bare minimum. Something seems to be draining the magical wards and barriers of its power, and it's close to bringing this protection down. The walls are no longer able to emanate a dim light.

A13. PRACTISE ROOM C

This room, once a practise room, is decorated with large ancient-looking monoliths that glow with Eldritch runes. There's a small snowglobe lying on the floor, in the middle of an arcane circle drawn with sigils. It lies on its side as it seems to have been rolled over.

The snowglobe can be anything you want it to be.

A14. PRACTISE ROOM A

This room is crammed with bleached-bone-skeletons that lay spread on the floor surrounding a carved arcane circle with sigils. Upon entering this room there's an inexplicable ominous feeling of being watched.

Characters will find nothing but an ominous feeling of being watched. There is an arcane eye above the door.

TREASURE:

- 2 potions of healing



WROOF THE GHOSTLY RETRIEVER



THE SKELETON KEY

A15. CLASS ROOM B

This *pristine* classroom looks to be completely devoid of any destruction or interruptions. The desks are still fully intact, books open at the same page, almost as if it had been evacuated in time before anything foul could enter the room.

The **Skeleton Key** (ToA p. 126) to all the doors, including the lecture hall can be found hiding in here. It will actively attempt to evade any and all capture. This key is considered *tiny*, with a **+6 bonus to stealth**, and has a **flying speed of 30ft** with its small skeletal dragonfly wings.

A16. CIRCULAR HALLWAY

Scratches and high-pitched zombie gibberish can be heard from beyond the door (D6). These (1D6) **Topi** (TTP p. 22) are getting ready to attack whoever opens the door. They will silently back up and hold their actions to attack as soon as they hear the characters attempting to open the door.

A17. PRACTISE ROOM B

This room, filled with target practise dummies, looks to be bereft of life. The stone underneath the carved arcane circle seems to have been violently attacked by something. Large cracks are visible through the glow of the sigils.

The ceiling here is 12ft high. Any character who enters the room will feel a sense of cold running up their spine. They will know there is something sinister here. A **poltergeist** haunts this room and will try to barricade the door behind the first person who enters, with a large

plank of wood. They will then telekinetically hurl broken stones at the trapped character, from different locations in the room, so as not to give away its location.

TREASURE

Two potions of greater healing can be found in satchels attached to the target dummies (investigation DC 15.)

A18. STUDY HALL C

This room is packed with three round tables, surrounded by several chairs. An assortment of books and scrolls of homework are scattered in disarray. There's a large skeletal giant owl; it flies through what looks like a shrinking rip in the air, and comes out with a Topi in its beak. It smashes the creature against the wall and tears its head off. With a loud plop, you see the remains of a vortex disappear from sight.

The giant skeletal owl (IMR p. 33) had been trapped in here with a Vortex of Topi, but managed to destroy the vortex on its own. If the party has found Rohe and her dog, the owl will be friendly and helpful to the party. Otherwise, it will be indifferent (unless provoked) and munch on the remains of Topi within the room.

TREASURE:

1 Scroll of Knock can be found here. It can be used to open the first door (D8) to the Lecture hall, but there is a second door right behind it that is also magically sealed.

CHAPTER 2: LECTURE HALL



HE DEATHLOCK IS A DEADLY CHALLENGE for the characters. If they confront it too soon, without the benefit of magic items, scrolls, Rohe and her dog, or professor Mudrouc, they will likely perish. Characters can improve their chances of survival by exploring the necromancy basement, defeating lesser minions, gaining allies and magic items.

But beware, for the ritual within the lecture hall will be finished after three hours starting from the moment the characters have entered the basement.

Whether the characters have managed to walk a fine line between being efficient and thorough determines which final showdown commences.

If the characters only had 1 short rest, they will be in time to stop the ritual from completing. They will trigger the “**Just in time**” ending.

If they had 2 short rests, they will arrive just as the Deathlock finished his ritual and they’ll have to fight him with everything they have, in “**Fight or Flight**”

More than 2 short rests, and the party is too late, and will trigger “**No rest for the wicked**” ending

JUST IN TIME

When the characters open the door to the Lecture hall read:

Smooth slabs of marble stairs lead down to a bizarre sight; a large thirty-five-foot-diameter arcane sigil that dominates the space of this auditorium is ablaze with Eldritch energy. A crystal in the dead centre of this circle seems to be syphoning off the magic from the walls, with animated books violently flying off of the shelves. Skulking around the platforms of chairs are six gangly humanoid creatures covered in bulging blisters ready to burst.

The three humanoid creatures are **Husk Zombie Bursters** (EGW p. 293), brought into the auditorium to protect the ritual against intruders who will try to stop it. They will attack anyone who comes near the crystal, or those who use ranged attacks on them. It will trigger them to rush to the attacker, before they explode, and spread their horrid infection.

In order to stop the ritual from completing the party needs to destroy the crystal within 6 rounds upon entering the auditorium. The crystal has an AC 15 and 50 hit points. If the crystal is reduced to 0 hit points, it shatters, and its crystal shards transform into acid which splashes violently outwards to anyone who stands near it.

Within a 15-foot radius, every creature must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or be covered with acid. To remove the acid, a creature must scrape or wash it away with their action. At the start of each turn, an acid-covered creature takes 3d4 acid damage.

IF THE PARTY BREAKS THE CRYSTAL IN TIME

In the aftermath of the destruction Headmaster Liuxian will rush into the Lecture hall impressed that the party has managed to stop the ritual in time. They will be rewarded handsomely for their efforts and receive her favour. She will aid the characters in healing their wounds, and help with any further questions they might have.

IF THE PARTY CAN NOT BREAK THE CRYSTAL IN TIME

Proceed the fight with a **Deathlock** (MTF p. 128) and three **Will-o'-Wisps** (MM p. 304) under his control entering through the crystal. Headmaster Liuxian, using a statblock of an **Archmage** (MM p. 342), rushes in behind the characters just a few moments later. The Deathlock will attempt to cast a **Resilient Sphere**, on the headmaster by reading a scroll.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

As soon as the characters have explored the last room, or are about to leave area A15 with the skeleton key to beeline towards the door of the Lecture hall, read:

Sounds of earsplitting screams and brabble pierce the air, and the slamming of doors echo throughout the stone corridors. The green glow from the magical barriers on the walls is snuffed out entirely, plunging everything into darkness with only the sounds of screams and battle drawing you closer.

Clopping hooves and fear-stricken hinnicks can be heard in the far distance, with professor Silverheart's voice bellowing through as he shouts:

“Noooo! Noooo, not Professor Liuxian! Song! I'll come and save you!”

You then hear a large, heavy door slam shut, and fighting continues in the halls. What would you like to do?

A **Deathlock** (MTF p. 128) has succeeded in entering the material world, by draining energy from the magical wards to open a rift for him to step through. He serves the lord of a dread domain. His goal is to find a way to release his master from their dread prison. Elias Clover has been in contact with this Deathlock, filled with promises of being able to resurrect his beloved girlfriend, and take revenge upon those who caused her death. All he had to do was facilitate the opening of a rift that would allow the Deathlock to enter the Material world.

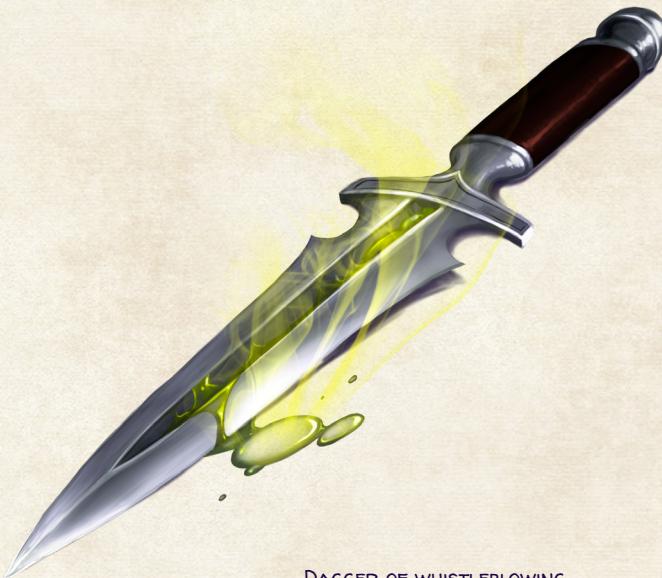
When the characters reach the Lecture hall read:

Smooth slabs of marble stairs lead down to a bizarre sight; a large arcane sigil that dominates the space of this auditorium is ablaze with Eldritch energy. A putrefied figure dressed in dark robes, wearing a spiked crown of thorns has his hands raised. Six gangly humanoid creatures exploded around the room, leaving pools of acid burning on the stone floors. A figure crouched down inside a sphere of shimmering force, her wordless screams of panic unable to reach your ears. The skeletal figure coldly states: “You too will fail...”



DANIEL
COMERCI

The Deathlock has three **Will-o'-Wisps** (MM p. 304) under his control, and has managed to trap Headmaster Liuxian inside of a (level 6) *Resilient Sphere*, she looks to be screaming to let her out, though no sound can escape the sphere. If the party can help her escape by breaking the Deathlock's concentration, or by using the spell *disintegrate*, she can aid the party in the defeat of the Deathlock. Headmaster Liuxian has the statblock of an **Archmage** (MM p. 342).



DAGGER OF WHISTLEBLOWING

NO REST FOR THE WICKED

Whilst having your third short rest you barely notice the last hint of arcane energies leaving the walls' wards. When the hour is up there is a cacophonous sound coming from the centre of the basement. Multiple cracks can be seen fracturing through the thick stone walls. It looks like the entire ceiling is about to descend down on all of you.

SKILL CHALLENGE: ESCAPE THE TOWER

Skill challenges are divided into "rounds," each of which has a single success or failure outcome. The difficulty of a skill challenge is determined by two numbers: the total number of successes the PCs need to succeed, and the total number of failures the PCs can earn before failing altogether. The *degree* of success varies. The decision is yours.

Round	Successes	Failures
1st	2	4
2nd	3	3
3rd	3	2

Each round of this skill challenge introduces a random hazard that the PCs must overcome—or face the consequences.

Random Hazards

d20 Effect

- 1 A chasm appears before the players, blocking their way forward
- 2 A plumbing pipe has erupted, about to gush boiling water over the party
- 3 A wall is about to collapse before them, blocking their way forward
- 4 An explosive blast hurls a stone door towards the party from their left side
- 5 Horde of undead beasts threaten to trample the party from behind
- 6 Pillar of Topi bursts forth from a wall on the left
- 7 Gravity suddenly shifts and reverses
- 8 You find a student trapped underneath a collapsed wall, they look at you pleadingly
- 9 A fountain of churned earth and stone erupts in a 20-foot cube centered on the party.
- 10 Fissures open throughout the hallway. Each is 10 feet deep, 10 feet wide, and extends from one edge of the hall to the opposite side
- 11 The collapsed wall the party is trying to climb over suddenly starts to hover and is being lifted up in the air
- 12 A 20-foot-radius sphere of crushing force forms at a point behind the party, trying to tug and pull them inside.
- 13 The gravity around the party suddenly seems to magical increase for a moment
- 14 Bottles filled with various liquids are about to fall and explode on the ground with the party in the splash zone.
- 15 The ceiling is about to collapse
- 16 A senior student appears before the party, extending a hand as they scream they can only take one other with them to safety. (dimension door)
- 17 A beautifully shimmering dagger is revealed as its lockbox is crushed beneath the weight of rubble. The item is a dagger of whistleblowing
- 18 The body of Husk zombie burster is hurled towards the party
- 19 Six pillars of stone are about to burst from places on the ground that the party can see within range
- 20 The staircase to the outside is crumbling before the party's eyes

Failure has consequences. This might be damage (e.g. 2d6 bludgeoning damage for failing to evade a crumbling wall), a debilitating condition (e.g., covered in Acid due to a splash from one of the errant Husk Zombie Bursters), or even levels of exhaustion.

Upon successfully completing the skill challenge the characters are able to make it safely out of the tower.

Read the following text as they are catching their breath:

Standing just outside of the crumbling tower you're surrounded by terrified looking undead creatures. Professor Mudrouc Silverheart, shakes his head despondently.

"I hope your little rest was worth it." He speaks in a soft, broken voice. More voices can be heard outside the doors, and several official looking mages are rushing past. The very walls of the tower look to be hanging on by a thread of magic. The inner circle of the tower has exploded outwards. Dozens of mages are using their magic to slowly but steadily move the upper floors onto solid ground next to the gaping hole that was once the necromancy basement.

"You can find the margrave outside. He's aware of your presence here. A lot has happened in the last ten minutes. I immediately phased out of the dungeons when the wards fell and managed to warn the headmaster in time for her to get down and close the rift to prevent an even greater cataclysm from happening."

DEVELOPMENT

Once the Deathlock completed his ritual, headmaster Liuxian ran into the auditorium to stop him. She was soon trapped inside of a resilient sphere, and several young students rushed to her aid once she didn't return from the basement fast enough.

These students were killed one by one, right before her eyes. The very last student was able to break the spell cast upon her with his dying breath. Once freed from the resilient sphere, she tried to banish the Deathlock, but he counterspelled her, and teleported out with the reanimated bodies of her students.

EPILOGUE

Headmaster Liuxian can tell you that one of her students, Elias, a star student, who before had mostly focused his efforts in transmutation and enchantment, wanted to change his school of expertise to necromancy a few months ago. Liuxian suspects the student has been trying to broker a deal with a powerful entity to restore someone he held dear back to life. Which is something the school doesn't forbid to study, but does not, however, allow the actual practise of.

WHERE IS ELIAS?

You can find him in the boys dormitories. He's in the upper floors, and has a room to himself, he's heartbroken about all the chaos he has caused. When interrogated, he will explain his reasoning.

Last year three students perished because of an overdose of a very potent magical substance. Elias had also died, but because of his affluent and rich family, he was resurrected. The others were not so lucky, as their family lacked the funds to afford such an incantation. Shortly after the three bodies disappeared without a trace from the hospital ward. Elias admits to hiding their bodies in a bag of holding, as he had been adamant on resurrecting them, especially his girlfriend Lavender. For he doesn't want to continue to live on without her.

He was willing to do anything for the power to bring them back. Even making a pact with a Deathlock. He will not put up a fight anymore.



APPENDIX A: HANDOUTS

NOTICE

EXTERMINATION REQUIRED

In name of

Song Liuxian | Headmaster of Liuxian's School
for the Gifted

This is an official call from Headmaster Song Liuxian to eradicate an infestation currently festering within the basement layer of the Tower of Tutelage.

School staff must concentrate on its core responsibilities, and it is therefore decided to outsource this particular problem.

If the infestation turns out to be a threat to the school, any adventurer or mercenary is hereby authorised to solve this problem by any means necessary. The aforementioned party receives compensation in form of the following:

- 50 gold per Topi head
- 100 gold for finding our missing student
- 500 gold will be paid upon complete eradication of any and all pests or problems within the basement.

Song Liuxian



ROHE'S NOTE

HELP!

Crazy Ice lady ghost that screams turned me to ice.
I cursed her, half health, vulnerable to fire now.

LAVENDER'S LOVE LETTER

My sweet Elias,

I long to unpack the treasures I hoard for you, those that we whisper about when we walk silently amongst the stars. Each time you come into the room, I feel a ripple of flame all over me & whenever you touch me, a heart beats under your touch. Any time your fingers entwine with mine, I don't seem to be able to speak, nor utter a single spell to release me from this hold you have over me. It's because all the words in me seem to have become throbbing pulses, & all my thoughts are a great golden blur.

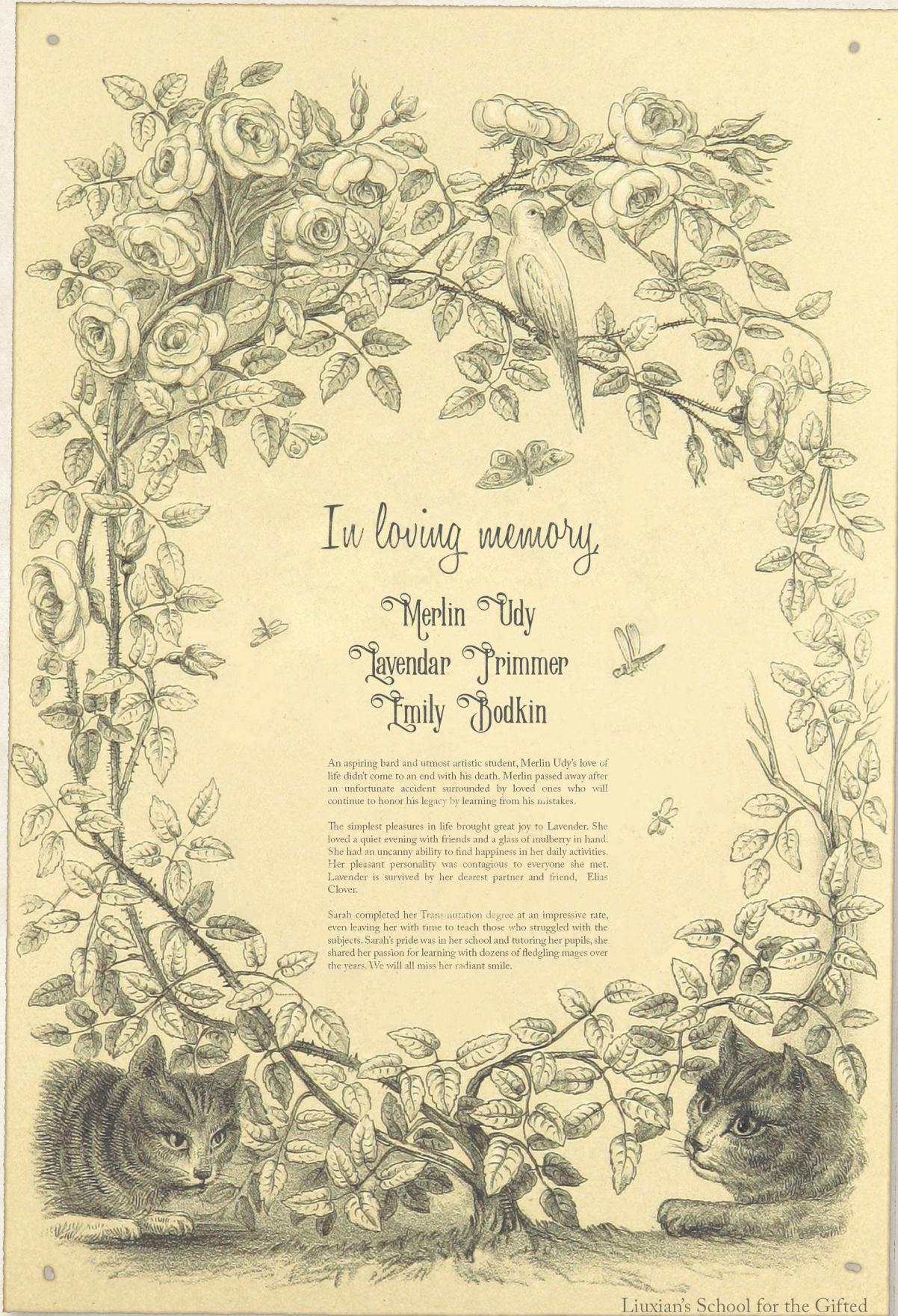
It's the simple things about you that turn me inside out, but, when we kiss, I burn raw... deep down inside. I crave that next kiss; the one that always leads to more.

I will be forever and always by your side,

Your love,

Lavender

OBITUARY



In loving memory

Merlin Udy
Lavendar Trimmer
Emily Bodkin

An aspiring bard and utmost artistic student, Merlin Udy's love of life didn't come to an end with his death. Merlin passed away after an unfortunate accident surrounded by loved ones who will continue to honor his legacy by learning from his mistakes.

The simplest pleasures in life brought great joy to Lavender. She loved a quiet evening with friends and a glass of mulberry in hand. She had an uncanny ability to find happiness in her daily activities. Her pleasant personality was contagious to everyone she met. Lavender is survived by her dearest partner and friend, Elias Clover.

Sarah completed her Transmutation degree at an impressive rate, even leaving her with time to teach those who struggled with the subjects. Sarah's pride was in her school and tutoring her pupils, she shared her passion for learning with dozens of fledgling mages over the years. We will all miss her radiant smile.

Lixian's School for the Gifted

APPENDIX B: MONSTERS AND NPCs

Ice Banshee

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 65/130 (29d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +2, Cha +5

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Ice Aura. At the start of each of the Ice Banshee's turns, each creature within 5 feet of it takes 3 (1d6) cold damage and nonmagical liquids within the area are frozen solid. A creature that touches the Ice Banshee or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Incorporeal Movement. The Ice Banshee can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. She takes 5 (1d10) force damage if she ends her turn inside an object.

Actions

Corrupting Touch. Melee Spell Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (3d6 + 2) necrotic damage plus 7 (2d6) cold damage.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the Ice Banshee that can see her must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if the Ice Banshee is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the Ice Banshee's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours.

Bonechilling Scream(1/day). The Ice Banshee releases a bone-chilling scream, provided that she isn't in sunlight. This scream has no effect on constructs and undead. All other creatures within 30 feet of her that can hear her must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a success, the creature takes 10 (3d6) cold damage. On a failure, the creature magically begins to turn to ice and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is frozen solid until freed by the spell greater restoration or other magic.

Rohe

Medium humanoid (cleric-wizard), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 135 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common plus any two languages

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Excited to Be Here. Rohe has advantage on initiative rolls.

Touch of Death. (1/day) When Rohe hits a creature with a melee attack, she can use deal extra 9 necrotic damage to the target.

Actions

Spellcasting. Rohe casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12):

At will: mage hand, prestidigitation, toll the dead

1/day: detect magic

2/day: inflict wounds, false life

Magic Flare. Melee or Ranged Spell Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d12 + 1) force damage.

Ghostly Retriever

Medium beast, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 45 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (v-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +3

Damage Resistances Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Thunder; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Necrotic, Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision 60ft, Passive Perception 13

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Hallowed Howl. Anyone within 60 feet that can hear the hallowed howls of the Ghostly Retriever cannot be charmed, frightened, or possessed by any undead. Any creature charmed, frightened, or possessed by undead is no longer charmed, frightened, or possessed upon entering the area. Additionally dead bodies interred by a Ghostly Retriever can't be turned into undead.

Incorporeal Movement. The Ghostly Retriever can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The Ghostly Retriever has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Actions

Multiaction. The guardian makes two bite attacks and uses its bark ability if able.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Bark (Recharge 5-6). The guardian barks with thunderous noise in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 22 (5d8) thunder damage and is pushed back 30 feet. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't moved.

Vortex of Topi

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 69 (12d6 + 24)

Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (0)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities Thunder

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60ft, Passive Perception 10

Languages –

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Produce Topi (Recharge 5-6). The Vortex opens up and expels a Topi as a bonus action. The topi appears in an unoccupied space adjacent to the Vortex and acts as an ally of the Vortex. It remains animated for 10 minutes, until it or the Vortex dies, or until the Vortex of Topi reabsorbs it.

Actions

Venomous Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of the target's next turn.

Reabsorb Topi. The Topi pillar moves 5 feet into the space of a topi it created and destroys it, gaining 13 (3d6 + 3) temporary hitpoints.

