

The Grand Illusionist's Delusion

A D&D Next playtest adventure for 5th-7th level characters
Written by Ambrose Ingram (ambroseji@gmail.com)

The Grand Illusionist's Delusion is an adventure designed for a party of four 5th-8th level adventurers. The adventure was designed with 6th level characters in mind but it is still appropriate for characters of 7th or 8th level. Characters of 9th level or higher will have a much easier time because of spells such as *true seeing*. For a smaller or lower-level group, the dungeon master should consider reducing the number of illusions to one or two illusions covering each floor of the mansion. Reducing the number of illusions in the house will also speed up the adventure and can be used to turn the adventure into a more straightforward dungeon crawl.

Adventure Background

The *Tome of Absence* is a powerful spellbook of illusion magic. Many of the greatest illusionists throughout history possessed the tome, but most hid it someplace secret, died at the hands of a rival magician, or simply disappeared. The tome has a dark secret: it feeds on the spirit of its owner, using the magician's own life to fuel his or her illusions, eventually killing its master and trapping his or her soul.

The Tome's previous owner, Albrecht Sparrowing, once lived in a mansion outside Dinton, but he disappeared thirty-five years ago. Looters have explored the mansion, but none have returned. For many years the mansion sat, dilapidated and ignored. Recently, the townsfolk of Dinton have noticed lights coming from the mansion and the worn-down exterior was restored to its former grandeur, seemingly overnight.

Urlach the Grand Illusionist is a rogue wizard who fancies himself the greatest illusionist of the current age. He has sought the *Tome of Absence* for more than a decade, believing that the tome will elevate him to be the greatest illusionist of all time. He tracked the tome to Sparrowing and rightly suspected that it would still reside within the wizard's home. He entered the mansion, claimed the *Tome of Absence* for himself, and dove into studying the text, taking few precautions as he did. By the time he learned of the Tome's deadly secret, it was too late. Now, Urlach is frantically searching for a way to remove the tome's curse before it kills him.

In order to save himself, Urlach spends his time in the mansion's library, continuing Sparrowing's research. He kidnapped two clerics, but they were unable to remove the curse. Urlach is keeping them alive to heal him as the book slowly drains his life. Urlach has sent doppelganger servants out into Dinton and other nearby towns to seek anyone who might have information that could save him.

Adventure Summary

The PCs might become the targets of one of Urlach's servants, hunt Urlach for the bounty on his head, or be hired by the people of Dinton to rescue the missing priests. When the PCs first explore Sparrowing's mansion it seems welcoming, but they will quickly realize that nothing within the mansion is what it seems. Illusions, traps, and arcane defenders hinder their progress through a mansion that is literally falling apart around them. If the PCs encounter and defeat Urlach, they will be left with the dilemma of responsibly disposing of the tome - or perhaps the temptation of using its power for themselves...

Adventure Hooks

Rescue Mission: The party is passing through the small town of Dinton and is approached by Brother Astor. Brother Astor asks the party to investigate the disappearance of two priests from his order, offering a small reward.

Bounty Hunters: A woman named Catherine approaches the PCs and tells them about the bounty on Urlach's head. She has her own motives, but can tell the PCs where to find him.

A Familiar Face: Replace Dinton with the party's home base. An NPC the party knows approaches them and asks probing questions about magical artifacts, tomes of magic, and breaking enchantments. The NPC invites the party to visit a friend of his or hers at Sparrowing's mansion. The NPC is actually one of Urlach's doppelgangers, and if the party figures this out, they can get enough information from the creature to learn that their real friend has been kidnapped by Urlach.

Information Gathering

Any character who spends time talking to people in Dinton can learn the following:

- Most townsfolk believe the mansion is haunted. Maybe it isn't, but a few treasure hunters who entered the mansion many years ago never returned.
- For the last month, villagers have seen lights in the mansion at night. At least one person claims that the formerly rotting mansion was completely restored overnight "as if by magic." Some people believe Albrecht has returned but others justify the changes as "new ghostly tricks."
- Albrecht Sparrowing built the house for himself with money he earned as an adventurer. He disappeared without a trace over thirty years ago.
- Two priests went missing two weeks ago. When Captain Blaylocke investigated the mansion six days ago, he never returned.
- There have been many strangers passing through town recently, often asking odd questions about curses and artifacts.

Any character who makes an Intelligence (Arcana) check about Albrecht might learn the following:

- DC 10: Albrecht Sparrowing was a mage and adventurer who retired at a surprisingly young age.
- DC 20: Sparrowing specialized in conjuration and the creation of arcane constructs.
- DC 25: Sparrowing was the last known owner of an artifact known as the *Tome of Absence*.

Any character who has heard of Urlach and makes an Intelligence (Arcana) check about him might learn the following:

- DC 15: Urlach is a rogue magician with a 500 gold bounty on his head.
- DC 20: Urlach fancies himself the greatest illusionist of the age and gave himself the moniker, “the Grand Illusionist.”
- DC 25: Urlach employs a gang of doppelganger rogues as servants.
- DC 30: Urlach has been searching for an artifact known as the *Tome of Absence* for many years.

Any character who has heard of the *Tome of Absence* and makes an Intelligence (Arcana) check about it might learn the following:

- DC 15: The Tome holds the secret to powerful illusion magic.
- DC 20: Most owners of the Tome either died or disappeared within a year of acquiring it.
- DC 25: Albrecht Sparrowing was the last owner of the Tome and he possessed it for longer than most, for about a decade.
- DC 30: The Tome was created by a powerful devil many centuries ago. The Tome uses the life force of its owner to power its magic, slowly killing and consuming its owner’s spirit.

Summary of NPCs

Bartholomew

Doppelganger rogue (assassin), lawful evil

Bartholomew is three years into a five year contract working for Urlach. The other doppelgangers serving Urlach are Bartholomew's gang and are loyal to him.

Prior to his employment with Urlach, Bartholomew was a member of an assassins’ guild, but ended up on the wrong side of a coup and is considered a traitor. He is loyal to Urlach because their contract pays well and Urlach provides some protection against Bartholomew’s former allies. Bartholomew is not willing to lose his life for his work, however, and will abandon or betray Urlach if he believes it is the only way to ensure his own survival.

Bartholomew normally takes the form of a tall, gaunt half-elf and will take the identity of Barty Sparrowing if he interacts with the party. While conversing with the PCs, Bartholomew attempts to get them to talk about themselves, their abilities, and their past adventures in order to ascertain if they are useful to his employer. Bartholomew knows the predicament that Urlach is in and is doing his best to help, if for no other reason than another two years of guaranteed work.

In combat, Bartholomew always tries to attack from surprise in order to assassinate a target and uses up to two of his *potions of invisibility* to stalk and surprise a foe. He always flees combat if it looks like he will lose and saves his last potion for this purpose. In general, he will attempt to capture the PCs so that Urlach can question them.

Stats for Bartholomew can be found on pg. 12.

Brother Astor

Human male cleric (healing), neutral good

Brother Astor is a young, devout cleric and an active priest at the Dinton church. With the disappearance of Brother Harmond and Sister Felicy, he is the highest ranking clergyman and highest level cleric in Dinton (level 3). Brother Astor only knows common knowledge about Albrecht Sparrowing and the mansion, but gladly shares what he knows with the PCs if he thinks they will help.

Brother Astor does not personally believe that the Sparrowing mansion is haunted, but he thinks that it has a new owner. Regardless, he is afraid of the mansion, especially since the disappearance of Captain Blaylocke. If the characters agree to track down the missing priests, Brother Astor will promise 50 gold to each party member and a year of free church services.

Brother Harmond and Sister Felicy (Captured Priests)

Human clerics (healing), lawful good

Brother Harmond and Sister Felicy are the priests captured by Urlach. They are both level 5. They are suffering from pneumonia and are barely conscious when the party finds them. Urlach has kept them both bound and gagged in the attic

of the mansion, which is exposed to the elements.

Urlach has kept the pair alive so that he can continue to interrogate them and so they can heal the damage he suffers daily from the tome. They have picked up some information about the *Tome of Absence* from Urlach's interrogations. They know that the Tome can only be touched by the person attuned to it, and that it will slowly kill its owner. They do not know how it can be unattuned or destroyed.

Catherine

Doppelganger rogue, neutral

Catherine works for a member of Bartholomew's former assassins' guild. She knows that Bartholomew is working for Urlach and will point the party towards the bounty on Urlach's head in hopes of flushing Bartholomew from out of the protection of his employer.

If she approaches the party and they do not trust her motives, she will remain evasive, revealing only that her employer is interested in Urlach's capture or death. If pressed, she will explain that it's not Urlach, but Bartholomew who she is after, and explain that he is a traitor who will be brought to justice.

Catherine prefers to take female forms and will appear to the party as an attractive halfling unless she has reason to believe a different form will get a better reception.

If necessary, use doppelganger rogue stats (pg. 12) for Catherine.

Urlach the Grand Illusionist

Human male mage (illusionist), neutral evil

Urlach, the self-styled "Grand Illusionist," has been tracking the *Tome of Absence* for a decade. He believes that he is the greatest illusionist of the age and believes that with the Tome he will go down in history as the greatest illusionist of all time.

Despite learning the tome's dark secret, Urlach is still convinced that it can be controlled and is attempting to find a way to remove the curse but keep the Tome. In addition, the tome speaks to Urlach with the voices of its past victims, especially that of Albrecht Sparrowing, urging Urlach to continue his research and promising that there is a solution. Between his impending death and the tome's whispered advice, Urlach is rapidly losing grip on his sanity.

Urlach knows how the tome can be destroyed (the details of which are up to the dungeon master) but will refuse to do so and will not tolerate anyone who tries to destroy it. He also knows how to unattune the Tome, but will stubbornly cling to the possibility of keeping the Tome.

Although difficult to do, it is possible for the PCs to convince Urlach to seek a cleric to cast *wish* if they provide a reasonable suggestion of where or how to do so.

Because part of Albrecht Sparrowing's spirit is still contained in the *tome of absence*, Urlach has subconsciously recreated the mansion as it appeared when Sparrowing was alive. In addition, Urlach has gained some control over Sparrowing's constructs and summoned servants.

The bounty on Urlach's head is old, but legitimate. Twenty years ago, when Urlach was an apprentice, he killed one of his classmates, the son of a powerful nobleman, and has been hiding from lawmen ever since.

Stats for Urlach can be found on pg. 13.

The Adventure:

Exploring Sparrowing's Mansion

Urlach has "fixed up" Sparrowing's mansion using his illusions. The result is a mansion that outwardly appears well taken care of and luxurious. In reality, the mansion is in horrible disrepair. Some hazards are suppressed by Urlach's magic as long as the PCs believe in the illusion, while others are merely concealed and threaten the party unseen.

While the characters believe Urlach's illusory mansion, rich tapestries and paintings adorn the walls, the floors are covered in lush carpeting, and everything lit by wall-mounted lamps that faintly emit the scent of spicy incense.

If a character sees through one of Urlach's illusions, he or she will see the true nature of the mansion. The carpeting has rotted away, revealing floorboards that are beginning to decompose and are covered in broken glass and rusty nails. Only the tatters of wall hangings remain, revealing peeling plaster and bare studwork.

Illusions (DC 18): Urlach enchanted each room in the mansion with an illusion, using the *Tome of Absence* to make the spells permanent and partially real. As long as a character believes in a particular illusion, he or she will be able to interact with the illusory features in the room as if they were real.

If a character interacts with something in way that his senses contradict each other, allow that character to make a Wisdom (Perception) check to see through the illusion. For example, if a character successfully kicks down a rotting door that appears to be sturdy.

Once the PCs have realized that almost everything in the house is an illusion, they can attempt to "disbelieve" as an action. When a character does so, that character makes a Wisdom (Perception) check to see through the illusion, but if it fails that character cannot attempt to disbelieve that illusion until he or she gets another opportunity by interacting with the room.

Each numbered room is enchanted with its own illusion, forcing characters to continue making Wisdom checks as they

progress through the mansion. Any character that sees through an illusion will be unaffected by that illusion until he or she takes an extended rest.

Walls and Doors: The interior walls and doors of the mansion are rotten and termite-ridden. Most doors in the mansion are unlocked, but breaking down a door or smashing through a wall is easy to do and any character that does so can make a Wisdom (Perception) check to see through the illusions in the connected rooms.

Rotting Wooden Door: AC 5; hp 5; resistant to piercing; immune to poison, psychic, and all conditions.

Rotting Interior Wall: AC 5; hp 5; resistant to piercing; immune to poison, psychic, and all conditions.

Floors: The floors of the mansion are treacherous; broken glass and rusty nails cover the ground and some sections of the upper floors have completely deteriorated.

Nails and Broken Glass: Unless otherwise noted in the individual room descriptions, any space adjacent to a wall or doorway should be treated as if it were covered in caltrops.

Urlach's illusions suppress this effect, so characters who believe the illusion in a room ignore this hazard.

Weak Floorboards: Certain sections of the floor are so decomposed they collapse when stepped on. Unsafe regions are noted in the individual room descriptions.

Characters who have seen through the illusion recognize unsafe sections of floor with a DC 10 Intelligence (Search) or Wisdom (Perception) check. If a character walks onto an unsafe region then that character makes a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save the character falls through to the first floor of the mansion. The fall is 15 feet from the second floor and 30 feet from the third floor. If a character falls onto a section of floor that is covered in nails and broken glass (see above) he or she takes 1d6 extra falling damage.

The Adventure:

Entering the Mansion

A neat gravel path, bordered by small white flowers leads up the hill to Albrecht Sparrow's mansion. It is architecturally simple; a rectangular home with a sloped, shingled roof, and wooden siding that is painted forest green. Behind the main house, you see the rotting foundation of what was once a servant's home or guest house.

If the party sees through the illusory house, read the following:

The house is barely standing. It is impossible to tell what color it once was because the paint has completely peeled away, revealing warped, termite-riddled walls. The roof sags horribly in the middle and entire sections have fallen through. The path leading to the house can barely be seen beneath

thick, thorny vines that cover most of the yard.

Entering via Diplomacy: If the characters knock on or the front door of the mansion or otherwise announce their presence, Bartholomew (pg. 2) will greet them. Bartholomew will take on the persona of Barty Sparrow, the son of Albrecht Sparrow, and invite the characters inside for coffee.

A tall, gaunt man opens the door. He is wearing fine clothes and sips a cup of coffee as he examines you for a moment. Suddenly he smiles, "Greetings," he says, "my name is Barty Sparrow. I'd be delighted if you join me for a cup of joe. I haven't had visitors since I moved in; I think the townsfolk are a bit scared of my father's old house!" Barty chuckles at his own joke and waves for you to step inside.

If the PCs join Barty for coffee, he will lead them to room #3 and excuse himself to prepare the coffee. The party will have about five minutes to look around before Barty returns with the drinks.

Barty poisons the PCs' coffee, which kicks in 5 minutes after being ingested. Barty uses his sleeping poison unless there are two or more elves in the party, in which case he will use his intoxication poison.

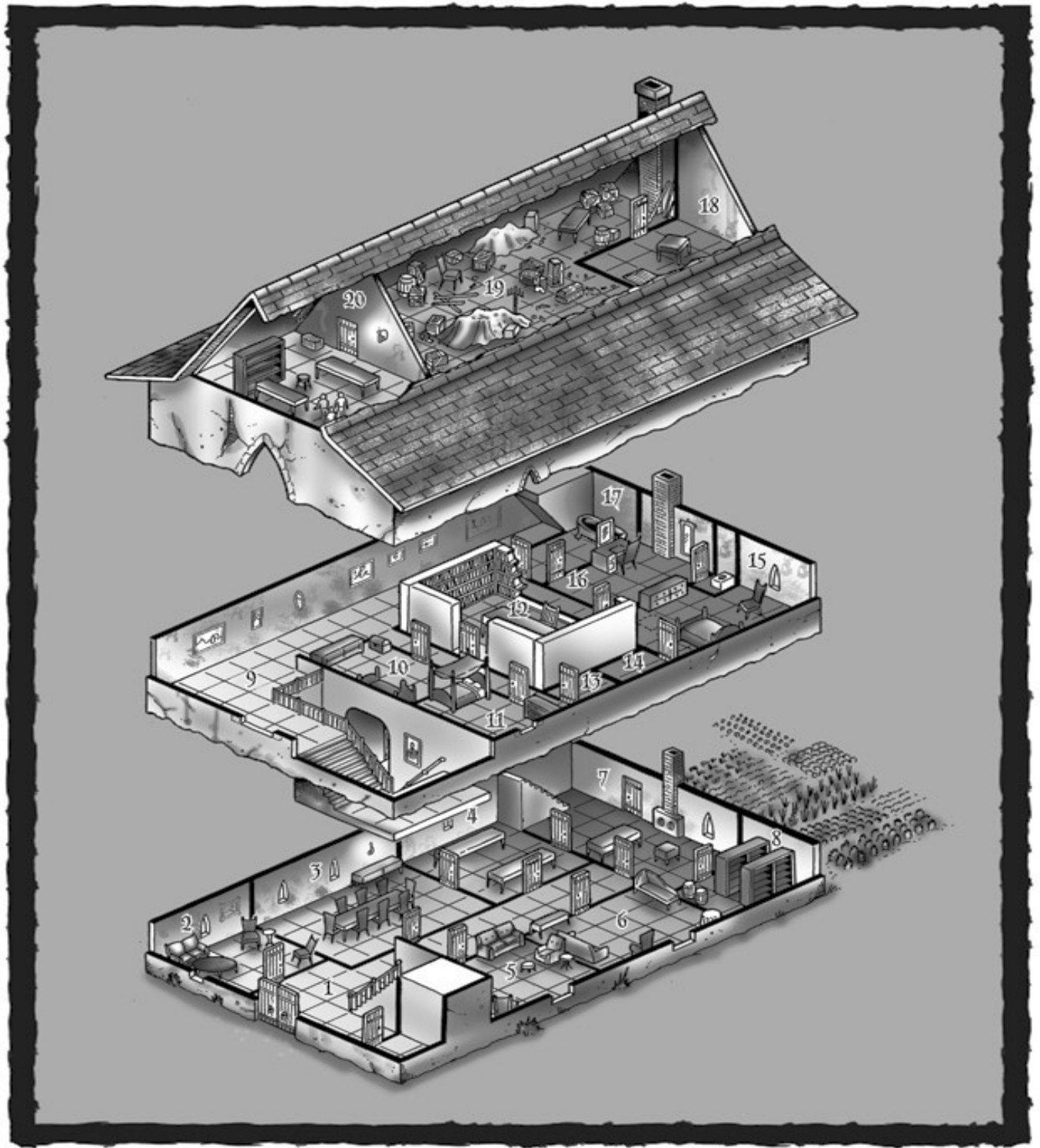
While waiting on the poison, Barty will start the conversation by asking what brings the party to Dinton and tries to keep the characters talking about themselves. If the poison doesn't seem to affect the party, Barty will engage in conversation until the characters finish their coffee and then politely suggest that he has work to do and that the characters should leave.

Breaking in through the Front Door: The front door is unlocked, but warded with an audible *alarm* spell. The alarm (a faint, jingling bell) will sound if any person who isn't one of Urlach's servants opens or breaks the door. Triggering the alarm will alert Bartholomew in room #2, the doppelgangers in room #4, and Urlach in room #12. Initially, only Bartholomew will react to the alarm. He will drink one of his *potions of invisibility* and quietly following the PCs until they start another encounter, then attack. Urlach will continue his research, trusting his servants to handle intruders.

Breaking in through the Back Door: The back door is barred from the inside and boarded up. However, Urlach's illusion makes it appear well-kept and unbarred.

Any attempt to unlock the door will automatically fail, but if the character who makes the Dexterity check rolls a 20 or higher, allow that character to make a Wisdom (Perception) check to see through the illusion. Successfully breaking down the door allows the character who did so to make a Wisdom perception check to see through the illusion.

Reinforced Wooden Door: 5ac, 20hp; resistant to piercing; immune to poison, psychic, and all conditions.



This map was published by Wizards of the Coast and used with permission.

Breaking in through a Window: The windows are boarded, but Urlach's illusions make them appear to be well-kept, glass windows. Characters looking through a window will see the illusory room on the other side, but not any creatures in the rooms.

The illusion makes anyone trying to open the window believe that it is latched from the inside. If any character attempts to break open a window or break the illusory latch, allow that character to make a Wisdom (Perception) check to see through the illusion.

Boarded Window: 5ac, 10hp; resistant to piercing; immune to poison, psychic, and all conditions.

The Adventure: Keyed Map Entries

1. Entrance Hall

The entrance hall connects to most of the rooms on the first floor. A small, plain door under the stairs leads to a cloakroom that is not encompassed by Urlach's illusion.

Fine blue carpeting covers the floor of the entrance and hallway. Oil lamps are hung at even intervals on each side of the hallway and between them are several large portraits of the same smiling man wearing different rich or exotic outfits. The blue carpet continues up a wide, open staircase in the front entryway, leading to a landing on the second floor that overlooking this room.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

The walls and floors are incredibly dilapidated. Mildew covers everything, and the carpeting on the floor is completely rotted away. All that remains are a few dirty blue scraps. Splinters from former picture frames and shards of glass cover the hallway floor.

Portraits: The man in the portraits is a half-elf, and a DC 10 Intelligence check is enough to guess that the man is Albrecht Sparrowing.

Cloakroom: Urlach overlooked this room when he created the illusion in the entryway. Mildew covers the walls, and the floor of the closet has completely rotted away. The hole in the floor gives characters access to a crawl space underneath the house.

Characters in the crawl space can travel under any room on the first floor and will be able to see through the rotten floorboards into the rooms above. It takes a DC 10 Strength check to break through the floor into a room. Any character who does can make a Wisdom (Perception) check to see through the illusion.

2. Front Parlor / Bartholomew's Chamber

Bartholomew (see pg. 2) spends most of his time in this room reading books he has borrowed from the mansion's library.

Bartholomew has made mundane reparations to the room, such as sweeping the floor and covering the walls with drapes. Still, Urlach's illusory room will be the first thing the PCs see upon entering.

Several fine chairs and a couch sit around a low coffee table. Dozens of books are piled on the floor next to the couch and cover the table. A tapestry on the back wall depicts a peaceful sylvan scene of elves and beasts dancing together in a merry circle.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

Black sheets cover the walls of the room and peeling, mildewed plaster can be seen through cracks in the drapery. The floors have been recently swept; a pile of broken glass and fragments of wood sits in one corner of the room. The piles of books remain around the couch, which is covered in coarse blankets.

Creatures (650xp): Bartholomew is usually sitting on the couch reading. If he is attacked here, he will shout for aid, calling the doppelganger rogues from room #4, who will arrive after 2 rounds of combat.

Hazards: The caltrops effect from the broken glass is only present in the north corner of this room.

Books: Any character inspecting the books can make a DC 20 Intelligence (History). On a success, the character recognizes a book, *The Adventures of Compendium Copper, Gnome Detective*, penned by its original author. The book is worth 10 gold to most merchants but a collector might pay as much as 50 gold.

3. Dining Room

The dining room remains empty most of the time, but is used when Urlach meets with Bartholomew and the doppelgangers.

The table and chairs in this room are illusory, but because of the *Tome of Absence* they support anyone who uses them as long as that person believes the illusion.

A large oak table takes up the center of this room, surrounded by blue cushioned chairs that match the carpeting. A chandelier of candles and crystal hangs over the center of the table. Dozens of paintings of fruit bowls, feasts, and scenes of drinking or revelry cover the walls.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

The room is completely empty. Fragments of wood and shards of crystal are scattered across the floor, but little else remains.

3. Mess Hall

Several of Bartholomew's doppelgangers spend their time here when not on assignment. The doppelgangers avoid the oozes in the kitchen so they cook meals in this room over an open fire.

Although characters entering the room will see Urlach's illusion, the doppelgangers' cooking could provide a clue about the illusory mansion.

Two plain wooden tables stand parallel to each other in the middle of the room. There is no carpeting here, but instead a worn, but well-polished floor. In one corner of the room is a cauldron full of stew which is bubbling despite the lack of fire beneath it. Simple lanterns hang on walls that are otherwise unadorned.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

The tables stand in the room, although one has a large hole in the middle of it. The plaster on the walls has peeled away, revealing studwork and glimpses of the surrounding rooms. Underneath the boiling cauldron is an open fire pit with a small crackling flame.

Creatures (500xp): Five doppelganger rogues (pg. 12) are usually in this room. The doppelgangers remain polymorphed as humans or half-elves and only take their natural forms if necessary.

If the doppelgangers are attacked here, they will shout for help, calling Bartholomew from room #2. If Bartholomew is called, he will arrive, invisible, after two rounds of combat and attempt to assassinate the biggest threat in the room.

5. Main Parlor

The parlor has been largely ignored by Urlach and his servants. When Captain Blaylocke investigated the mansion a week earlier, Bartholomew killed him and stowed the body in this room, relying on Urlach's illusion to conceal the rotting corpse. By the time the characters explore the mansion, the smell of the captain's corpse is beginning to penetrate the illusion.

Plush chairs and couches fill this room, surrounding a coffee table with an ivory and obsidian chess set on it. As in other rooms of the mansion, the lamps on the walls give off a faint scent of incense, but in this room, the spicy aroma barely covers up the putrid stench of rotting flesh.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

Shards of wood and bits of stuffing cover the floor of this room. In the southern corner, on top of a large pile of ruined furniture, is a bloated, rotting corpse wearing studded leather armor. The ceiling in the western corner of the room has fallen through, revealing an empty closet above.

Captain Blaylocke's Body: If a character takes at least a minute to examine the body of the late captain, he or she can make a DC 10 Intelligence (Medicine) check to notice a stab wound in the captain's stomach. A result of 15 or more will also reveal that whatever blade stabbed the captain was poisoned.

Treasure: If a character sifts through the broken furniture under the body, a DC 15 Intelligence (Search) check will uncover 6 chess pieces.

There are 4 obsidian pawns, each worth 9 gold; 1 obsidian knight, worth 15 gold; and an ivory king, worth 20 gold.

Hole in the Ceiling: The hole in the ceiling leads to room #13. Characters can jump up to pull themselves into that room with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. This is much more difficult for a small character (DC 25) unless they have something to stand on.

With a grappling hook and rope, characters can easily climb into the room above with a DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check.

6. Lounge / Storage Room

The lounge is being used to store the doppelgangers' food and supplies. Several of the doppelgangers also sleep in this chamber from time to time.

Several chairs are placed along the walls of this room. A five-foot tall marble statue of a naked nymph stands in each corner of the room, and along the back wall is a gilded clavichord with a pastoral scene painted inside its open lid.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

All but one of the statues are smashed and strewn across the floor. The body of the clavichord remains intact but its lid is shut and its legs have rotted away. In one corner of the room is a pile of backpacks and in the middle of the floor are several empty, unrolled bedrolls.

Backpacks: The backpacks contain mundane gear used by the doppelgangers. Any character who searches the packs will find any of the gear normally found in an adventurer's kit, thieves' tools, and several containers of specialty food items: a sack of coffee worth 10 gold, a small pouch of spices worth 5 gold, and two bottles of fine wine worth 2 gold each.

Nymph Statue: Sparrow found these statues as an adventurer. The statues are valuable, but also cursed. The intact statue weighs about 250 lbs and is worth 250 gold, but a character could easily sell it for more to someone who is affected by the statue's curse.

Any person who touches the statue must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become infatuated with it. An infatuated character will believe the statue is the most beautiful piece of art he or she has ever seen, insist on claiming the statue as their own, and will refuse to get rid of it.

Explain to the player of an infatuated character how they now feel about the statue and prompt the player to describe how his or her character treats such a priceless treasure.

Only *remove curse* or *greater restoration* can remove the statue's curse.

Clavichord: The clavichord is magical, which has kept it mostly preserved. Asking the clavichord to play a song activates it, causing it to start playing on its own.

All but three of the strings inside the instrument are broken, so only a few notes will play, but if a character puts at least 50 gold into restoring the instrument, it can be repaired. The repaired clavichord will play a sweet, common tune and is worth 500 gold.

7. Kitchen

The kitchen has been left alone by Urlach and his servants because of the oozes that make it their home. Urlach's illusory room conceals the oozes, making them invisible until characters see through the illusion.

A stove and several small prep tables take up the floor of the kitchen. Pots and pans hang from the ceiling and a water basin, complete with indoor water pump, stands empty in the western corner of the room. Although everything appears to be in good condition, there are no signs that the kitchen has been used recently.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

The stove is completely covered in rust and nothing remains of the tables except for a few splinters. Rusty pots and pans are strewn across the floor, which is also covered in puddles of dirty water; the pipes leading to the water pump have rusted through, allowing a slow stream of water flow into the kitchen.

If a character sees through the illusion prior to being attacked by the oozes, read the following as well:

Three of the puddles of water suddenly coalesce into grey blobs and surge forward with tendrils of ichor outstretched.

Creatures (600xp): Three gray oozes (Bestiary pg. 51) make this room their home. They typically lie quietly in the puddles of water but will immediately attack anyone who enters the room. Because of Urlach's illusion, the oozes are invisible to any character who hasn't seen through the illusion.

Pots and Pans: The pots and pans on the floor make it difficult to move quietly in this room. Any character attempting to move stealthily through the kitchen has disadvantage on Dexterity (Sneak) checks.

Development: If the doppelganger rogues from room #4 hear the sounds of combat they will start preparing for a fight. One will immediately go to alert Bartholomew and returns with him after 4 rounds.

Once the doppelgangers hear the sound of combat stop, they attack, entering the kitchen from room #4 and room #1.

8. Pantry

Russet mold has taken over the pantry, covering the remnants of the shelves and foodstuffs that were once here. Urlach's illusion conceals the mold, making it invisible until characters see through the illusion.

Two large wooden shelves that reach the ceiling are stocked with bags and jars full of foodstuffs. Several barrels, perhaps full of mead or wine, sit in one corner.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

The shelves and containers are gone. Completely covering the floors and walls is a flakey, red substance that looks like rust.

Russet Mold (250xp): The red substance is a russet mold (Barrier Peaks pg. 15). The mold is invisible to anyone who hasn't seen through Urlach's illusion. Any character that makes a saving throw against the mold's paralysis may also make a Wisdom (Perception) check to see through the illusion.

9. Second Floor Overlook and Corridor

This hallway connects all the rooms on the second floor and has staircases that lead to room #7 and room #1.

Urlach created the illusion in the hallway to conceal the doorway to room #10. In place of the door to that room, characters see a long tapestry of an oak tree.

Urlach trapped the top of the landing to prevent anyone but himself from entering the second floor of the house.

The floor in this hallway is covered in plush blue carpeting and dozens of paintings of scantily clad elven women are hung along the walls. Two narrow passages branch off the hallway that must lead to the mansion's living quarters.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

The carpeting has rotted away, revealing weak floorboards that flex and creak as you move across them. No sign of the lewd portraits remain, but a purple glyph glows on the wall across from the main stairwell.

Glowing Glyph (400xp): Any creature that reaches the top of the staircase who doesn't look like Urlach or Albrecht Sparrowing triggers the rune. Each creature within line of sight of the glyph must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a character sees a minotaur charging down the hallway towards them. Any character that successfully saves sees nothing.

The minotaur is an illusion, but the *Tome of Absence* allows it to affect the characters as if it were real (Bestiary pg. 67). Any character can take an action to save against the illusion again, or urge a friend to disbelieve, granting one ally a free saving throw.

The glyph can be removed by casting *dispel magic* on it.

Hazards: There are two patches of weak floor (see pg. 4) in this room. The first is a 5 ft. square patch at the top of the stairwell leading to room #7. The second region stretches from in front of room #11 to the door to room #13.

Locked Door: In addition to being hidden by the illusion, Urlach has cast *arcane lock* and *alarm* on the door to room #10.

Urlach used the audible version of *alarm*, and triggering the spell will draw the attention of Urlach and his shield guardian from room #12, as well as the invisible stalkers from room #11.

Locked Rotting Wooden Door: AC 5; hp 15; resistant to piercing; immune to poison, psychic, and all conditions; lock cannot be picked.

Development: When the trap triggers, someone falls through the floor, or the *alarm* from room #10 triggers, the invisible stalkers in room #11 emerge and attack. Urlach only emerges if his *alarm* is triggered.

11. First Guest Chamber / Urlach's Chamber

Urlach has taken over this room as his own while he stays at Sparrowing's mansion. He concealed the entrance to this room and placed *arcane lock* and *alarm* spells on the door in order to protect his personal belongings.

If the party has not seen through the illusion in the hallway and a character examines the tapestry that appears in place of the door, allow that character to make a Wisdom (Perception) check to see through the illusion.

A solid oak bed piled high with pillows sits along one wall of the room. A brazier with smoking incense stands across from the bed next to a large armoire.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

There is a bed in this room, but it is little more than a cot covered with rough wool blankets. In place of the armoire stands a large oak chest locked with an impressive iron padlock.

Chest: Urlach keeps his belongings in this chest, which is protected by *arcane lock*.

Inside the chest are three spare robes, one in blue and silver and two that are red and gold, each worth 15 gold; and a coffer containing 20 platinum, 180 gold, and four moonstones worth 40 gold each. In addition, Urlach's primary spellbook is in the chest (see pg. 13).

Locked Sturdy Wooden Chest: AC 5; hp 25; resistant to piercing; immune to poison, psychic and all conditions; lock cannot be picked.

11. Second Guest Chamber

Urlach stationed two invisible stalkers in this room. The entire floor is weakened, making exploring the room difficult

A four-poster with wave patterns carved in the posts dominates the room. A desk and a chest of drawers stand against the wall opposite the bed.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

Rotting scraps of wood are all that remain of the furniture here. The floorboards are riddled with holes, and termites crawl over every surface in the room.

Creatures (920xp): Urlach has two invisible stalkers (White Plume pg. 7) in his service, standing guard with orders to attack any intruders who reach the second floor of the mansion.

If the PCs reach this room without alerting the invisible stalkers, the stalkers will attack on sight.

Hazards: The entire floor of this room is weakened (see pg. 4). A character that falls through this floor will land in room #5.

12. Library

The library is the one room in the house that was protected from the effects of the elements and time. It is also one of the few rooms that Urlach has not concealed with an illusion.

Urlach spends most of his time here, reading Sparrowing's extensive collection of arcana and hoping to find some clue to saving himself from the *Tome of Absence*.

A large desk made of dark wood takes up the center of this room. The desk is piled high with enormous tomes and bundles of scrolls. All four walls of the room are made up of

bookshelves that extend from the floor to the ceiling. Two balls of light float near the ceiling, illuminating the room in a gentle glow.

If Urlach is in the room, read the following as well:

A human man with long, waxed mustaches and wearing a deep blue robe embroidered with silver symbols sits behind the desk, poring over an open tome. The edges of his form seem hazy, trailing wisps of smoke, and his entire body is partially translucent. Every few seconds he disappears from view completely, returning an instant later in a slightly different position. Behind him stands a humanoid-shaped, featureless construct made of iron and wood. As soon as the door opens, the construct moves around the desk, blocking the doorway into the room.

Creatures (2,380xp): Urlach and one of Sparrowing's old shield guardians are in this room (pg. 13). Urlach does not necessarily resort to violence right away, preferring to speak with intruders before combat breaks out in hopes of learning something that helps his situation.

If the PCs do not insist on entering the library, neither Urlach nor his protector will attack immediately. See Urlach's entry on page 3 for advice on how he might interact with the party.

Development: If combat does break out in this room, the invisible stalkers from room #11 will join after 1 round.

13. Guest Closet

Urlach did not create an illusion for this room. The floor has fallen through into room #5 and characters might be able to climb into this room from the first floor.

This small chamber was probably once a linen closet. The remnants of wooden shelves can be seen against the back wall, but the center of the floor has fallen away completely, revealing the parlor below.

Hole in the Floor: There is just enough floor left along the back wall for a person or two to stand.

14. Master Closet

Urlach did not create an illusion for this room. The closet is full of the moldering remains of Sparrowing's wardrobe.

The gust of air from opening the door sends up a cloud of dust. A couple of dirty are still hanging from hooks, but the majority sit in a rotting pile on the floor, covered in the corpses of dead moths.

15. Sparrowing's Bedroom

This was once Albrecht Sparrowing's bedroom but Urlach has opted not to take it over, preferring the guest room across from room #10.

There is a trapdoor in the ceiling, which is the only entrance to the attic. Urlach has left two of Sparrowing's shield guardians in this room with orders to attack anyone who enters.

This room is clearly the master bedroom. It is full of ornate furniture, including a four-poster bed, several chairs, and a large armoire, all made of mahogany and carved with a delicate ivy pattern. Standing in the middle of the room are two man-sized constructs made of metal and wood.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

All the furniture in this room is rotten or smashed, littering the floor with debris. Set in the ceiling in front of the entrance to the room is a wooden trap door with a string hanging from it.

Creatures (1,760): The two shield guardians (pg. 13) are instructed to attack anyone who enters the room. They treat each other as each other's master for the purposes of their arcane defender ability.

Development: If combat breaks out here, the invisible stalkers from room #11 will join after 3 rounds.

Trapdoor: The trap door in the ceiling leads to room #18. Pulling the string opens the trap door, causing a rope ladder to drop into the room.

16. Study

This was once Sparrowing's study, a room that Urlach has not disturbed at all. Characters can enter from room #17, but the door into this room is trapped.

The walls and floors of this room are bare, the carpeting and wall hangings have rotted away, but the woodwork itself still seems to be sturdy. An oak desk sits against one wall with a large, dust-covered book sitting on it. Several inkpenns stand in empty inkwells near the book.

Book: The book is Albrecht Sparrowing's spellbook and contains the following spells: *alarm, burning hands, cause fear, charm person, disguise self, magic missile, shield, sleep, arcane lock, darkness, hold person, invisibility, knock, phantasmal force, scorching ray, suggestion, aura of invisibility, blink, dispel magic, lightning bolt, major image, remove curse, ice storm, polymorph, stoneskin, hold monster, seeming and true seeing.*

Desk: Searching the drawers of the desk reveals a *wand of enemy detection*.

17. Antechamber

Three treasure hunters who attempted to explore the mansion many years ago perished here to one of Sparrowing's traps.

Urlach has concealed the evidence of that explosion with his illusion.

This small room has no furniture, but many certifications, letters of thanks, awards, and the stuffed head of an owlbear hang on the walls.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

Nothing remains of the wall hangings and all the surfaces in the room are blackened and charred. Three soot-covered skeletons lie in the middle of the room.

Trapped Door: The door leading to room 16 is magically trapped. *Detect magic* reveals moderate evocation on the door. The trap can be dispelled with *dispel magic*.

If the door is opened while the trap is active, the room is engulfed in a burst of flame. Creatures in the room must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw.

Failed save: 3d6 fire damage.

Successful save: Half damage.

18. Attic Entrance

In this empty chamber, Urlach's illusion conceals the door leading into room #19 and places a false door in the north-east wall of the room, where a hole in the wall allows characters to walk themselves out of the mansion into empty air.

The ceiling in this empty room has many holes in it and the floor is damp and covered in shingles and wet leaves. Despite exposure to the elements, the floorboards appear sturdy. A single wooden door leads out of this room through the north-east wall.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

The door in the north-east wall is actually a hole in the wall that leads out of the mansion into thin air. The real exit is a dilapidated wooden door in the north-west wall.

False Door: Anyone who opens the door will see a small, 5ft. by 5ft. room with a wooden chest against the back wall. Any character that willingly walks through the doorway must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, they fall 30 ft., landing just outside the mansion.

Players paying attention to the layout of the house may notice that the north-east wall is an exterior wall. Any character who notices this, or who witnesses a friend fall out of the house should be allowed to make a Wisdom (Perception) check to see through the illusion.

Weak Floors: There is a 10 ft. by 10 ft. patch of weak floor in this room (see pg. 4). The weak area is the four squares underneath the small table in the map illustration.

Characters who fall through this section of floor will land in room #8.

19. Storage Room

Urlach keeps his prisoners in this room, including the two kidnapped priests and any kidnapped NPC who was added by the dungeon master as a plot hook.

Urlach's illusion in this room disguises the hostages as monsters and hides the door that leads to room #20.

Boxes, chests, and fragments of broken furniture cover the floor in this large room. Along the south-east wall, several orcs are chained to the wall by their hands and feet. The orcs curse and growl unintelligibly. Two vaguely humanoid clouds of air and lightning begin to swirl in the middle of the room, hurling debris in every direction.

Seeing through the illusion reveals the following:

The debris and elementals remain, but the orcs are actually Urlach's prisoners, chained, gagged, and unconscious. Along the south-west wall is a rotting wooden door.

Prisoners: Brother Harmond and Sister Felicity are being kept alive to heal Urlach when he loses life to the tome. The chains holding the prisoners are rusted and can be broken with a DC 12 Strength check, or picked with a DC 12 Dexterity check.

Creatures (700xp): Two air elementals (Bestiary pg. 40) are bound to the room and guard the prisoners. They attack anyone who enters without Urlach being present.

20. The Tome of Absence

This is where Sparrowling stored the *Tome of Absence* when he was alive and Urlach has continued to do so.

A black podium stands in the middle of this otherwise empty room. On top of the podium is a thick, silver-bound book with a large blue gem set in its cover. The gem glows faintly, illuminating the room in dim azure light.

The Tome of Absence: The book is the *Tome of Absence*. See pg. 15 for more details about the Tome.

Creatures (1,440): If the PCs reach this room while Urlach is still alive, the spirits of the tome's past owners will emerge and defend the book. The spirits take the form of six wraiths (Bestiary pg. 86) and attack until killed.

The spirits in the Tome respawn after one hour.

Wrap Up

When the characters finish exploring the mansion they should be left with the dilemma of what to do with the *Tome of Absence*. If Urlach is still alive, he will insist on finding a way to find a way to keep the Tome without losing his life to its curse. This is impossible, and if left to his own devices Urlach will lose his physical form after 15 days, then his life and soul 25 days later.

Urlach will adamantly refuse to destroy the Tome, but he knows how to do so. If Urlach is killed, the party will be unable to move the Tome without attuning to it.

If the party decides to move the Tome to a safe location, a character will need to become attuned to it to do so. This could lead to further adventures if the attuned character then wants to unattune via the *wish* spell, or even end in a heroic suicide if a character wants to hide the Tome and keep it safe.

If the party chooses to try and destroy the Tome, it is up to the dungeon master to decide how that can be accomplished. If you wish to wrap up the adventure quickly and neatly, allow the Tome to be destroyed if *sacred flame* and *magic missile* are cast on it simultaneously. If you prefer to keep the Tome around as a continuing challenge or plot device, allow it to be destroyed only if its infernal creator chooses to unmake it.

If the party successfully rescues the priests from the mansion, award each player 200 experience points. Brother Astor in Dinton will pay 50 gold to each character for their service, and promise a year of free temple services from his order. He will sign and date a document that can be shown to other members of his order, who will usually uphold the promise.

NPC, Monster, and Item Statistics

The following pages contain stats for monsters, NPCs, and items unique to this adventure; and glossaries of the monsters items, spells referenced from the playtest packet.

Bartholomew, Doppelganger Assassin

Medium Monstrosity (Shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (leather)

Hit Points 61 (8d8+8)

Speed 30 ft.

Str 12 (+1) **Dex** 18 (+4) **Con** 13 (+1)

Int 15 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+2) **Cha** 17 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +2, Deception +2, Insight +2, Sneak +2, Sleight of Hand +2, Persuasion +2

Special Senses darkvision 60ft.

Languages Common, Elven, Dwarven

Ideal Personal Wealth

Flaw Fears Retribution

Bond Contract with Urlach

Level 6

Experience Points 650

Traits

Sneak Attack (3d6): As the Rogue ability by the same name (Classes pg. 51).

Assassinate: As the Rogue ability by the same name (Classes pg. 53).

Immunities: Bartholomew cannot be charmed or put to sleep.

Cunning Action: As the Rogue ability by the same name, except Bartholomew may also use read thoughts, or change shape as his extra action (Classes pg. 51).

Actions

Melee Attack - Poisoned Dagger: +6 to hit (reach 5ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4+4 piercing damage and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. *Failed Save:* The target takes 1d4 poison damage.

Ranged Attack - Heavy Crossbow: +6 to hit (reach 100ft./400ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d10+4 piercing damage.

Change Shape: As the doppelganger ability by the same name.

Read Thoughts: As the doppelganger ability by the same name, except the save DC is 15.

Reactions

Evasion: As the Rogue ability by the same name (Classes pg. 52).

Equipment

Poison: Bartholomew carries several vials of poison. His poisons have a saving throw DC of 12. He has 2 vials of sleep poison and 1 vial of intoxication poison (as described by the poison mastery ability, Classes pg. 53). Bartholomew also has a jar of Virulent Poison with 4 charges remaining. Virulent Poison functions as Basic Poison, except with a save DC of 12, and lasts for 10 minutes.

Potions: Bartholomew carries 3 *potions of invisibility* and 2 *potions of healing*

Ring of Shattered Glass: This ring was gifted to Bartholomew by Urlach. Bartholomew will use the ring if he is preparing for a fight he believes will be difficult. See pg. 14.

Doppelganger Rogue

Medium Monstrosity (Shapechanger), neutral

Armor Class 12 (leather)

Hit Points 22 (4d8+4)

Speed 30 ft.

Str 12 (+1) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Con** 12 (+1)

Int 13 (+1) **Wis** 14 (+2) **Cha** 13 (+1)

Skills Deception +2, Sneak +2

Special Senses darkvision 60ft.

Languages Common

Ideal Self-Preservation

Flaw Lacks Empathy

Bond Gang Leader (Bartholomew)

Level 3

Experience Points 100

Traits

Ambusher: As the doppelganger ability by the same name. This ability does not stack with Sneak Attack.

Sneak Attack (1d6): As the Rogue ability by the same name (Classes pg. 51). This ability does not stack with Ambusher.

Immunities: The doppelganger cannot be charmed or put to sleep.

Actions

Melee Attack - Shortsword: +4 to hit (reach 5ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6+2 piercing damage.

Change Shape: As the doppelganger ability by the same name.

Read Thoughts: As the doppelganger ability by the same name.

Shield Guardian, Lesser

Medium Construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 77 (9d10+27)

Speed 30ft.

Str 21 (+5) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Con** 16 (+3)

Int 3 (-4) **Wis** 10 (+0) **Cha** 1 (-5)

Special Senses darkvision 60ft.

Level 7

Experience Points 880

Traits

Arcane Defender: As long as the shield guardian is within 5ft. of its master, any attack made against the guardian's master suffer a -2 penalty to hit.

Actions

Melee Attack - Slam: +6 to hit (reach 5ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d8+5 bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Shield Other (3/day): When one of the shield guardian's allies is hit by an attack while within 25ft. of the shield guardian, the shield guardian may use its reaction to deflect the attack with a shield of force. The shield appears in front of the target of the attack and functions as the *shield* spell.

Urlach the Grand Illusionist

Medium Humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (mage armor, *ring of protection*)

Hit Points 54 (9d6)

Speed 30ft.

Str 8 (-1) **Dex** 13 (+1) **Con** 10 (+0)

Int 20 (+5) **Wis** 15 (+2) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +3, History +3, Perception +3

Languages Common, Draconic, Giant, Elven, Dwarven, Infernal

Ideal Seeks Renown

Flaw Hubris

Bond History and Learning

Level 9

Experience Points 1,500

Traits

Dissolving Spirit: Urlach is incorporeal and permanently affected by the *blink* spell. See pg. 15 for more information about this ability.

Dreams made Real: Urlach can enhance his illusion spells by sacrificing his own hit points. See pg. 15 for more information about this ability.

Improved Minor Illusion: As the Mage ability by the same name (Classes pg. 33).

Master Illusionist: Urlach has a +2 bonus to the saving throw DC of any spell he casts from the illusion spell school.

Spellcasting: Urlach is a 9th-level spellcaster who uses Intelligence as his magic attribute (DC 16, 18 for illusions). Urlach has the following spells prepared:

At will: Invisibility, Light, Minor Illusion, Read Magic, Shocking Grasp.

1st level (3/day): Color Spray, Magic Missile.

2nd level (3/day): Mirror Image, Scorching Ray.

3rd level (3/day): Major Image, Slow.

4th level (3/day): Confusion, Dimension Door.

5th level (1/day): Cone of Cold.

Actions

Melee Attack - Dagger: +4 to hit (reach 5ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4+1 piercing damage.

Ranged Attack - Dagger: +4 to hit (range 20ft./60ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4+1 piercing damage.

Reactions

Disappearing Trick: As the Mage ability by the same name (Classes pg. 34).

Equipment

Ring of Protection (Attuned): The ring grants Urlach a bonus to armor class (included) and saving throws.

Tome of Absence (Attuned): Urlach is attuned to the Tome, granting him its benefits even though it is stored in the attic of Sparrow's mansion. Urlach has sacrificed a total of 355 hit points to the tome.

Potions: Urlach carries 3 *potions of healing* with him at all time.

Spellbook: Urlach's spellbook is stored in his chamber in room #10 inside a locked chest. Urlach's spellbook contains the following spells:

1st level: All mage spells

2nd level: All mage spells

3rd level: Aura of Invisibility, Blink, Dispel Magic, Haste, Major Image, Remove Curse, Slow

4th level: Arcane Eye, Confusion, Dimension Door

5th level: Cone of Cold, Seeming.

Monster Glossary

Air Elemental.....	(Bestiary pg. 40)
Doppelganger.....	(Bestiary pg. 32)
Gray Ooze.....	(Bestiary pg. 51)
Invisible Stalker.....	(White Plume Mountain Bestiary pg. 7)
Minotaur.....	(Bestiary pg. 67)
Russet Mold.....	(Expedition to Barrier Peaks Bestiary pg. 15)
Wraith.....	(Bestiary pg. 86)

Equipment Glossary

Adventurer's Kit.....	(Equipment pg. 10)
Basic Poison.....	(Equipment pg. 10)
Caltrops.....	(Equipment pg. 9)
<i>Potion of Healing</i>	(Equipment pg. 11)
<i>Potion of Invisibility</i>	(Magic Items pg. 17)
<i>Ring of Protection</i>	(Magic Items pg. 19)
Thieves Tools.....	(Equipment pg. 11)
<i>Wand of Enemy Detection</i>	(Magic Items pg. 15)

Spells Glossary

<i>Alarm</i>	(Spells pg. 5)
<i>Arcane Lock</i>	(Spells pg. 7)
<i>Color Spray</i>	(Spells pg. 13)
<i>Cone of Cold</i>	(Spells pg. 14)
<i>Confusion</i>	(Spells pg. 14)
<i>Detect Magic</i>	(Spells pg. 18)
<i>Dimension Door</i>	(Spells pg. 18)
<i>Dispel Magic</i>	(Spells pg. 19)
<i>Greater Restoration</i>	(Spells pg. 28)
<i>Invisibility</i>	(Spells pg. 32)
<i>Light</i>	(Spells pg. 33)
<i>Magic Missile</i>	(Spells pg. 34)
<i>Major Image</i>	(Spells pg. 35)
<i>Minor Illusion</i>	(Spells pg. 37)
<i>Mirror Image</i>	(Spells pg. 38)
<i>Phantasmal Force</i>	(Spells pg. 40)
<i>Read Magic</i>	(Spells pg. 44)
<i>Remove Curse</i>	(Spells pg. 45)
<i>Sacred Flame</i>	(Spells pg. 46)
<i>Scorching Ray</i>	(Spells pg. 46)
<i>Shocking Grasp</i>	(Spells pg. 48)
<i>Slow</i>	(Spells pg. 49)
<i>True Seeing</i>	(Spells pg. 55)
<i>Wish</i>	(Spells pg. 57)

Ring of Shattered Glass

Very rare ring

This wide steel ring is bright and polished and the wearer's visage constantly reflects in its surface.

The ring has shards of sharp crystal on the inside. Putting the ring on or taking it off briefly causes the wearer to feel like his or her body is being torn into pieces and doing so deals 1 hit point of damage.

Frequent use of the ring's ability will leave the wearer with a permanent, jagged scar around his or her finger.

Property [Attuned]: Once per day, as an action, you can twist the ring on your finger, creating 1d4+1 illusionary copies of yourself. For each copy that is created, you take 3 points of damage that cannot be prevented.

The copies function in the same way as the *mirror image* spell. However, they also trail shards of glass through the air as they move, adding +1 damage to your melee and ranged attacks for each active copy. The effect lasts for one minute or until dispelled by the wearer.

The Tome of Absence

Legendary wondrous item

This silver-bound tome has a large sapphire set in its cover, which constantly gives off a faint blue light. The Tome is immaterial and can only be touched except by the person attuned to it.

Properties [Attuned]: As long as you are attuned to the Tome, you can physically interact with it and you may summon the tome as an action from wherever it is located as long as you and it are on the same plane. As long as you are attuned to the Tome, it whispers advice to you in the voices of its past past owners. You do not need to physically carry the tome to use these abilities.

The Tome has instructions to cast every illusion spell from the mage spell list and you may prepare those spells directly from the Tome if you are able to prepare spells from a spellbooks. Copying a spell from the Tome takes half the time and gold.

While you are attuned to the Tome the saving throw DC of any illusion spell you cast is increased by 2.

The most important property of the tome is the ability to sacrifice hit points to enhance your illusion spells. Damage taken from the tome cannot be healed naturally, but can be restored through magic healing.

- By spending 5 hit points, you may cause any illusion spell you cast to become permanent. You do not have the ability to dismiss an effect that you cause to become permanent, but *dispel magic* affects the illusion normally.
- By spending 10 hit points, you increase the realism of your illusion to the point that it can harm others. This effect is similar to *phantasmal force*. If a creature who believes they would take damage from your illusion, it takes 1d6 damage. If the creature affected by your illusion has reason to doubt that it is real, that creature find a way to rationalize your illusion.
- By spending 20 hit points, you create an illusion that is physical and real. For example, creating an illusion of a minotaur creates a creature that uses the statistics and abilities of a real minotaur. Creating a bridge over a ravine creates a bridge that supports the weight of anyone who believes in it. Despite this, the effect is still is an illusion, allowing creatures to ‘disbelieve’ by taking an action and succeeding at a Wisdom saving throw, or Wisdom (Perception) check against your spell save DC.

Secret: Once attuned to you, the Tome cannot be unattuned except by a *wish* spell cast by a divine spellcaster or when you die. If you die from damage dealt to you by the Tome, your soul is trapped permanently and your physical form disappears.

Using the Tome gives it a greater hold on your life force, unlocking more abilities, but bringing you closer to death. The dungeon master should secretly keep track of the total amount of life that is sacrificed to the tome. Additional effects that can be unlocked by the tome are as follows:

- When 20 hit points have been sacrificed to the tome, you may cast *invisibility* at will and it is always prepared for you.
- When 50 hit points have been sacrificed to the tome, the tome automatically deals 5 hit points of damage to you at the end of every extended rest. This damage adds to the counter of life fed to the tome.
- When 100 hit points have been sacrificed to the tome, you are permanently affected by the *blink* spell as your physical form begins to disappear.

- When 150 hit points have been sacrificed to the tome, you become permanently incorporeal as your body continues to dissolve.
- When 250 hit points have been sacrificed to the tome, you begin to lose 10 hit points at the end of each extended rest.
- When 500 hit points have been sacrificed to the tome, your physical form disappears making you permanently invisible and incapable of interacting with the material world except through spells.
- When 750 hit points have been sacrificed to the tome, your soul gets sucked into the tome permanently and you die.

A Note About the Tome

The *Tome of Absence* is not a balanced magic item. Its abilities have the potential to be abused. This is intentional and for that reason the Tome is designed to kill anyone who uses it. Still, some players may not be deterred, and if a player decides to use the Tome in ways that unbalance the game, the Dungeon Master should not be afraid to expedite that rate at which the character is affected by the Tome's curse.