

THE FLAMING TOMB OF THE UNDYING
Campaign Based on Dungeon Squad 2

Overview: Attempt to solve a small-town mystery and recover a trove of missing valuables by venturing into a strange house that gives the local population the creeps.

Beginning: It is late in the afternoon. You stand at the entrance of a small house. It is average in appearance by most standards – four outer walls painted a stark, gleaming white, a sturdy dark roof, a painted black door and tiny paned windows. The yard is neatly kept, with cut grass and a large oak tree planted right in the middle. There is a distant sound of a lawnmower humming as neighbors around you tend to their outdoor chores, and the occasional commotion of children laughing and shouting as they ride their bikes down the street, chasing the setting summer sun. The strong smell of charcoal and smoke drifts on the warm wind signaling the preparation of an evening barbeque nearby. Everything about the neighborhood and the house before you seems completely normal from your point of view.

However, you spent the last few hours at a pub nearby, talking to the locals about how this was no ordinary house. When you first arrived in the town, Littleton as it's called, after a long day of traveling, you saddled up to the long wooden bar expecting to order a drink, grab a seat, and relax. The pub was small, but in accordance with the town size, with wood-paneled walls, floors, and furniture. The lights were expectedly dim, but you could make out a pair of patrons enjoying the pool table beyond the bar - the sound of balls clacking together and general gruffs and mumbles of conversation bouncing off the paneling. The air smelled of stale beer and dusty musk correspondent to the age of the place.

You took a seat and waited for the barkeep to finish waiting on a small group on the other side of the bar. As you did, a young patron of the pub seated at the bar near you immediately noticed you were not from the town and struck up a friendly conversation. He introduced himself as Flint, a local landscaper. His appearance gave him away as someone who works outside, with dark, slightly unkempt hair, a sweat-stained t-shirt, grass-stained jeans and heavy boots with clods of dried mud stuck to the outer soles. He was surprisingly clean-shaven, with medium brown skin and a faint scent of fresh earth that hung about him as shifted in his seat to chat.

You asked him about his work, more in an effort to be polite than out of genuine interest, and he mentioned that he just finished up for the day, his last job being at a local property that paid well but more than gave him the creeps. Becoming slightly intrigued, you pressed him for more information. He told you that occasionally, he would hear strange noises as he tended to the yard – sounds like a soft humming, grinding stone or muffled screams. He also felt a general sense of unease, almost like an inevitable feeling of doom each time he set foot on the grounds.

Clearly overhearing your conversation, the barkeep, a short, thick woman with long yellow hair and crow's feet around her tired eyes, sauntered over to tell Flint to keep it down. She looked at you

with a wary eye, introduced herself as Eliza, and asked if you wanted a drink. Her manner toward Flint suggested that she knew about this house's strangeness so you ask her what she knows about it. She was hesitant at first, but perhaps sensing your earnest interest, she told you that her family used to live on the same street as the house, and often as a child she would see strange folk enter the house, but never come out again. Rumors had spread that the house actually contained an entrance to a secret vault containing the previous inhabitants' wealth: cash, jewelry, and other valuables. But, according to her, no one in the town remembered who used to live there, or even when the house had been built.

You considered this for a long moment before suddenly noticing that the group at the end of the bar had finished their drinks and now sat in rapt attention to Eliza's story. You made eye contact with one of them and they took that opportunity to introduce themselves. (MAKE CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS). After introductions you chatted about your experiences with forgotten places, how some of you have grown quite fond of investigating them and learning more about their history. Additionally, the prospect of valuables left behind seemed to intrigue each of you. You asked Eliza and Flint for directions to the house to check it out for yourselves, and despite their warnings, you convinced them to oblige.

As you walked toward the mysterious house, you prepared yourselves to learn more about the inexplicable noises and screams coming from within that the locals warned you about, and perhaps claim the great treasure trove of money and jewelry they said was left abandoned by the previous inhabitants. And as you reach the front door of the peculiarly ordinary house, you give each other a final glance. Are you sure about this? There's safety in numbers after all, and who knows, there might be more than enough treasure for all of you, if you all come out of this alive.

Dungeon:

Entrance:

You enter the house. The room is stark white, windowless somehow, and the walls seem to glow white. No light source can be seen. There are two white elevator doors (one to the east, one to the west), with a small white button on a panel next to each elevator. You can't tell if they go up or down. The room is odorless and the only sound is the faint hum of the elevators moving.

East Room/West Room:

You press the button and the doors slide open immediately. The elevator itself is white like the previous room, and a bit small, but you each manage to fit and the doors immediately close after you. You begin to descend. After about a full minute, the elevator stops and the doors slide open.

You all shuffle into a dank, dusty room with dark grey cobblestone walls and a dirt floor. The air is heavy and smells of dust, mold and decay. There is a dim light from small wall sconces and you can hear faint sound of rats scurrying among piles of rusted and broken weapons, armor, and bones that are littered around the room. You notice a solid steel door on the north wall.

Almost immediately after you enter, the elevator doors close silently behind you and you hear the hum of the elevator moving again... up to the entrance? You can't tell. However, you do notice that groups of rats suddenly begin to assemble in the center of the room. Within seconds they have formed a swarm and are quickly moving toward your group.

- **Encounter:** Swarm of Giant Rats *Challenge 2* (4 HP). They are an enormous, writhing mess of matted and stinking brown and grey fur, scabby pink tails, and beady red eyes. Their tiny claws grasp and grip as they pile onto each other, clawing their way toward you. Their teeth are yellowed, needle-sharp, and gnashing. They clearly have not dined on anything so fresh in a long time and are eager to devour your warm flesh and blood.



Image by aidenmckinney, October 13, 2017,
http://rollplaywestmarches.wikia.com/wiki/Giant_Rat

After the encounter with the rats, you look around and notice a corpse that is more recently dead than the picked-clean bones strewn around the room. Will you look closer?

You decide to investigate the body. You find a loose page clutched tightly in the corpse's gloved hand, apparently torn out of a book. It is yellowed and cracking with age, and nearly disintegrates as you take it. Most of the text is completely illegible except for the following passage toward the bottom of the page: "...the air most foul. Awareness of the nosferatu in this region is almost non-existent. It is as if..." The rest has faded. What could it mean?

- **Investigation:** The decaying weapons and armor can be searched. Items drop at a rate of one per player. "Pretty Good Weapon" (adds +1 to any successful attack roll, increasing damage to an enemy by 1 point), "Pretty Good Armor" (adds +1 to any unsuccessful attack roll, decreasing damage to yourself by 1 point)

Room of Doors:

You walk through the steel door into a relatively small six-sided room. As the door slams shut behind you with a *clonk*, you hear it lock followed by a dense silence. The walls of this room are grey stone, with a heavy door on each wall, each constructed of a different material: One steel (the one you just entered through, now locked behind you), One marble, One maple, One jade, One oak, One copper. There is a faint scent of iron, perhaps stale blood, and decay coming from the direction of the oak door. A large wooden candelabra chandelier hangs from the ceiling, lighting the room. The grey stone floor of the room is completely bare, save for in the center of the room is carved a large symbol that you've never seen before – like a sun with six pointed rays turned in on themselves. Which door do you choose? (Note to GM: all doors are locked or unmoving except the oak door)

Long Hallway:

The heavy oak door creaks open and you peer inside into complete darkness. There is a strong smell of iron, perhaps stale blood, and decaying flesh. You hear the familiar sound of rats scurrying in the darkness. Do you try to light the room?

Using your new light source, you see now that you are in a long hallway with stone walls and floors. There are a few rotting corpses slumped on the floor at various places. You do not see an end to the hall, only more darkness. As you begin to move forward, you hear a faint *thwip... thwip thwip*. You've triggered an ancient poison dart trap.

- **Encounter:** Poison Dart Trap *Challenge 3* (any damage is doubled), success avoids it. The darts fly forth from the walls in bursts of speed so fast you have no time to even see them coming. When they encounter the opposite wall they hit with a small *tik* and fall to the floor. The ones that hit you are unnoticeable on impact, but you begin to feel the poison as it burns its way through your body, starting at the wound and coursing toward your heart. The pain is unbearable. Too many of these, and you will certainly die.

After the encounter with the trap, you stop for a moment to catch your breath and take a look behind you. Where were those darts coming from? You cannot see any holes or protrusions in the walls. Additionally, you see no possibility of going back to look through the corpses for any treasure or clue to this place. You would surely be killed.

Room of Chance:

When you decide to press on, you peer forward and see that the hall opens up into another dimly-lit room straight ahead. You walk in slowly, attempting to survey the space as quickly as possible. The first thing you notice is the thick smell of dust and putrid decay. It is a stone-walled room like the others, with bones strewn and piled about the floor. You notice several doors at the far side of the room, but before you can begin making your way toward them, you hear a rattling and scraping as bones seem to jostle and scrape against the stone floor. They are configuring and assembling themselves. In a matter of seconds, a small army of skeletons is standing before you, ready to attack.

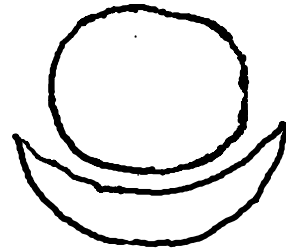
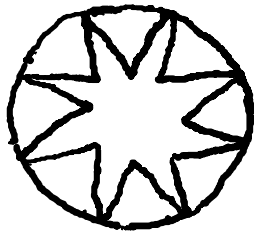
- **Encounter:** Skeleton Army *Challenge 3* (8HP) – 8 individual skeletons each with 1 HP. The skeletons are imposing at six-feet tall with small chunks of flesh still clinging to their yellowish-white bones. They seem to grin and growl with the fresh opportunity to tear you apart limb from limb, perhaps so that you may join them in their unholy existence. They don't wear any armor or carry any weapons, but you get the sense that they can rip into your body with a ferociousness that you're keen to avoid.



Image by OddHJS, July 8, 2016,
<https://imgur.com/gallery/u6Aq1>

When the last skeleton has been sent back to the dust from whence it came, you move toward the doors. There are three carved wooden doors, all very old, and each depicting a different arcane symbol: the first door displays a

circle with six short inverted rays pointed toward the center, the second contains an eye shape with a triangle carved into the iris, and the third has a large circle with a half-moon cradling it from underneath. Which will you choose?



Burial Chamber:

If player picks,

Door #1: You decide to enter the first door. Strangely, it makes no sound whatsoever as you push it open and step beyond it.

Door #2: You decide to enter the second door. There is a long, loud groan from the door as you push it open and step beyond it. Suddenly, you feel the earth give way from beneath your feet and you can feel yourself falling.

- **Encounter:** Pit of Spikes *Challenge 3*, one success avoids trap for the entire group. The earth crumbles away to reveal a pit of rusty steel spikes a foot tall about 4 feet below the surface. Damage from these spikes leave deep gashes in your skin.

Door #3: You decide to enter the third door. There is a long, thin screech from the door as you push it open and step beyond it. Suddenly, you hear a click and feel a whoosh of thick, hot air streaming up your body.

- **Encounter:** Floor of Fire *Challenge 3*, one success avoids trap for the entire group. The floor around you ignites in red-hot fire up to your waist. Damage from this trap causes your clothing to catch fire. It is difficult to put out and your skin becomes burnt and charred in places where your clothes burnt straight through. The pain of your cooked flesh is indescribably awful, as is the smell.

As soon as you enter the room, the perimeter ignites with knee-high blue flame where the walls meet the floor. Torches on the walls also light one by one with a *whoosh*, to spread a flickering orange around the room. The two colors of flame dance and bend, casting strange shadows on the floor. You hear behind you the door you walked through closing and latching with a solid *clack*, locking. It is then that you notice that there is no other way in or out of this room: you are trapped. The strong, almost suffocating smell of death and chilled blood fills the dense air. You glance around and see a large stone altar sitting heavily in the middle of the room, but no other objects or items are present. As you move further into the room, you hear the sudden chilling sound of a woman's voice: "Weeeelcome... I have been waiiiting for youuuu. I am soooo THIRSTYYYYY!!" followed by a loud *whoosh* toward you.

- **Encounter:** Vampire Queen *Challenge 5* (6HP), Anyone bitten and not healed will become a vampire in 24 hours! The Vampire Queen is tall and beautiful, with dark grey skin and blood red eyes and hair. She wears a long, dark red dress that seems to glitter as she moves. Her hands and nails are long and sharp, like claws, and her pointed fangs protrude slightly from her blood red lips. She is wild and angry. You imagine that she has been down here for a very long time, waiting for the occasional travelers who descend to her lair to have enough strength to make it to her chambers. Clearly, she intends now to take that strength from you at all costs.



Image by KingKatanova, November 15, 2014,
<http://kingdomsofterfall.wikia.com/wiki/File:Vampire-0.jpg>

After one round of attacks from all members of your party, the Vampire Queen calls forth a swarm of bats to aid her. You are now forced to fend off both enemies.

- **Encounter:** Bat Swarm *Challenge 2* (2 HP) Dozens of bats seem to swoop forth out of nowhere, swarming around your heads, screeching and clawing at your faces. They are unholy beasts, with dark brown bodies and glowing red eyes. They are defenders of their mistress and seethe with her viciousness.

Upon defeating the ancient Vampire Queen, you slump to the floor to catch your breath and recover from the horror of what just happened. You look around the room at your party and each of you are clearly grappling with the unbelievability of it. You suddenly have a chance to reflect on the entire ordeal: deadly traps, an army of undead skeletons, and bloodthirsty vampires? What in the hell is going on in this town?

You slowly get up and walk toward the altar in the center of the room. As you get closer, you realize that it isn't an altar at all, but instead a stone sarcophagus of the ancient queen. The lid is carved repeatedly with the same inverted sun symbol from the Six-sided Room of Doors. You notice a small gap where the lid has been moved from the bottom part of the sarcophagus. Will you look inside?

You struggle as you attempt to push the lid of the sarcophagus with all your strength. Grunting, you ask your companions to help you. Together you shove the entire lid with a long stony *scraaaaaape* and it hits the ground with a thunderous *SLAM*, cracking into pieces.

You all peer inside, and are amazed to see a glittering hoard of precious gems, piles of gold coins, and various metallic and jewel-encrusted treasures. Glancing at each other, you wordlessly decide to divvy up the riches fairly amongst your party. Among the booty you each EITHER find a "Great Weapon" (adds +2 to any successful attack roll, increasing damage to an enemy by 2 points), OR some "Great Armor" (adds +2 to any unsuccessful attack roll, decreasing damage to yourself by 2 points). You may choose which you'd like to take with you.

At the very bottom of the sarcophagus, underneath the mounds of treasure, you find a worn, leather-bound book. The cover reads "Nosferatu of Littleton Valley." You open the book and quickly begin to read aloud to the group. Apparently, before the town was properly settled in 1804, a clan of vampires lived in caves and ancient ruins around the region. When settlers moved in, the clans went to ground and hid from the newcomers, but it did not take long for them to be discovered. Many vampires were slaughtered in the years that followed. The ones that remained had inconspicuous homes built atop their deep, dark dwellings in order to dispel suspicion and remain alive. Occasionally, some nosy townspeople or curious traveler would venture into the vampire's den, never to be seen again. And thus the remaining nosferatu have continued in Littleton: a hidden, terrible secret in a simple valley town.

You all stand amazed, looking at each other. It takes a minute before one of you suggests that you take this book to Eliza to see what she makes of it. You all agree, and once you've all geared up, you suddenly notice that a stone stairway has been revealed on the far wall of the burial chamber. You are almost certain that there were no stairs in this room when you first entered. And it is so strange that you did not notice them before. Will you see where they lead?

Ending: You all decide that this must be the way out of this miserable place, and begin to ascend. The stairs in the room give way to a steep tunnel, sloping upwards. It is dark and musty, but you all climb and climb, for what feels like forever. There is no sound save for the heavy breathing and clanking weapons and armor of your group. After some time, you begin to see a sliver of light up ahead. You scream to the rest of your party "There's something up ahead!" and scramble quickly forward. You reach the light and see that it is pouring in from around a small, round wooden door. You shove the door with all of your strength and it flies open into the daylight. You all fall out of the tunnel in a heap, exhausted from the climb.

Laying in what you have now noticed is some of the softest grass you've ever felt, you look around to see a familiar yard. Sitting up, you glance behind you at the perfect white house with the dark roof and black door. In front of you looms the large oak tree, now with a small door swinging outward from its trunk. You are in the well-kept yard of the mysterious house into which you all set forth.

You all stand and dust yourselves off, and begin the victorious walk back to the pub to tell your tale to the barkeep and her patrons. As you head off, you listen to your groupmates talk of a hero's welcome. But you are unsure. After all, who could believe such a fantastical story, especially in this small town? You decide to fall back from the group, eventually disappearing into the night. "There are other towns, and other treasures to hunt," you think to yourself as you set off on your next adventure.

