**The Haunted Heist**

**A short D&D 5e adventure for 4-6 characters of level 3-5**

**Summary**

The adventurers are hired by a notorious thief, who has learned of a valuable artifact hidden in the abandoned mansion of the late Lord Blackwood. The thief offers to split the loot with the adventurers, if they can help him break into the mansion and steal the artifact. He also warns them that the mansion is rumored to be haunted by the restless spirits of Lord Blackwood and his family, who were killed by a cult that sought to summon an ancient evil.

The adventurers arrive at the mansion, which is surrounded by a high wall and a locked gate. They can either find a way to climb over the wall, pick the lock, or persuade the gatekeeper, a skeletal figure who speaks in riddles, to let them in. Once inside, they discover that the mansion is indeed haunted by the ghosts, zombies, and cultists, who will try to stop them from reaching the artifact. The adventurers must use their stealth, cunning, and combat skills to explore the mansion, avoiding traps and enemies, while searching for clues about the artifact’s location.

The adventurers eventually find a hidden staircase that leads to the basement, where they encounter the cult leader, a twisted necromancer who has captured a young woman and plans to sacrifice her to complete the ritual. The adventurers realize that the woman is the daughter of a wealthy noble, who was kidnapped by the cult. The adventurers must decide whether to save the woman or focus on stealing the artifact, which is revealed to be a powerful magic item that can either seal or unleash the ancient evil.

Depending on the outcome of the final confrontation, the adventurers can either escape from the mansion with the artifact and/or the woman, or fail to do so and face the consequences. They can also betray or cooperate with the thief, who may have ulterior motives for wanting the artifact. They can also loot the mansion for treasure and secrets, or uncover more details about Lord Blackwood’s tragic past and his connection to the cult.

**Introduction**

**Background**

The late Lord Blackwood was a renowned wizard and scholar, who devoted his life to the study of magic and history. He amassed a vast collection of books, artifacts, and secrets, which he kept in his secluded mansion. He was also a benevolent and respected noble, who used his wealth and influence to help the people of the nearby town.

However, Lord Blackwood had a dark secret. He was obsessed with finding a way to unlock the power of an ancient evil, a primordial force that was sealed away by the gods long ago. He believed that he could harness this power for good, and use it to create a new era of peace and prosperity. He spent years researching and experimenting, until he finally discovered a ritual that could break the seal and summon the evil.

Unfortunately, he was not the only one who sought this power. A cult of necromancers, led by a former apprentice of Lord Blackwood named Malak, had been spying on him and learned of his plans. They decided to infiltrate his mansion and steal his research, hoping to use it for their own nefarious purposes. They also kidnapped his daughter Lyra, who had followed her father’s footsteps and became a bard and adventurer.

One night, while Lord Blackwood was preparing to perform the ritual, the cult attacked. They killed Lord Blackwood and his family, and took Lyra and the ritual components to the basement. There, they attempted to complete the ritual and summon the ancient evil. However, something went wrong. The evil proved to be too powerful and unstable for them to control. It unleashed a wave of dark energy that destroyed the cult and corrupted the mansion. The evil then retreated back to its prison, leaving behind a twisted and haunted place.

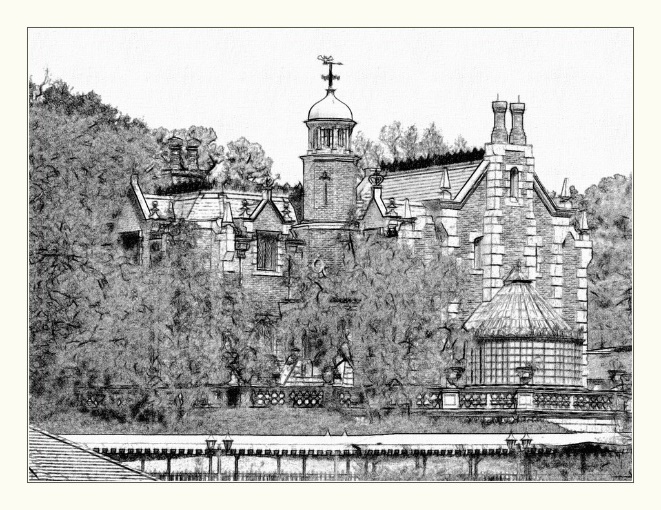
The mansion was abandoned and forgotten by most people, except for a few who still remembered Lord Blackwood’s legacy. One of them was Remy, a notorious thief who had once worked for Lord Blackwood as a courier and spy. Remy had learned of a valuable artifact that Lord Blackwood had hidden in his mansion, a magic item that could either seal or unleash the ancient evil. Remy decided to hire a group of adventurers to help him break into the mansion and steal the artifact, promising to split the loot with them. He also warned them that the mansion was rumored to be haunted by the restless spirits of Lord Blackwood and his family, who were killed by a cult that sought to summon an ancient evil.

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**Story Hooks**

* **The Thief’s Offer**: The adventurers are approached by Remy in a tavern or inn, where he offers them a job. He tells them about the artifact and the mansion, and asks them if they are interested in joining him. He also mentions that he has some information about the mansion’s layout and defenses, which he can share with them if they agree.
* **The Noble’s Plea**: The adventurers are contacted by Lyra’s father, a wealthy noble who is desperate to find his daughter. He tells them that she was kidnapped by a cult while exploring the mansion, and begs them to rescue her. He offers them a generous reward for finding her alive, or bringing back proof of her fate.
* **The Cleric’s Request**: The adventurers are met by Eliana and Zane, two clerics who are members of the Order of the Dawn, a religious organization that opposes the cult. They tell them that they have been investigating the mansion and its connection to the ancient evil, and ask them for their help. They offer to assist them in exploring the mansion and fighting the undead.

**Adventure Overview**

The adventure consists of three parts:

**The Mansion**: The adventurers arrive at the mansion, which is surrounded by a high wall and a locked gate. They can either find a way to climb over the wall, pick the lock, or persuade the gatekeeper, a skeletal figure who speaks in riddles, to let them in. Once inside, they discover that the mansion is haunted by the ghosts, zombies, and cultists, who will try to stop them from reaching the artifact. The adventurers must use their stealth, cunning, and combat skills to explore the mansion, avoiding traps and enemies, while searching for clues about the artifact’s location.

**The Basement**: The adventurers eventually find a hidden staircase that leads to the basement, where they encounter Malak, who survived the ritual and became a powerful necromancer. He has captured Lyra and plans to sacrifice her to complete the ritual. The adventurers must decide whether to save Lyra or focus on stealing the artifact, which is revealed to be a powerful magic item that can either seal or unleash the ancient evil. They must also deal with Zane, who is actually Malak’s brother and loyal follower, and who will try to sabotage their mission and help Malak with the ritual.

**The Conclusion**: Depending on the outcome of the final confrontation, the adventurers can either escape from the mansion with the artifact and/or Lyra, or fail to do so and face the consequences. They can also betray or cooperate with Remy, who may have ulterior motives for wanting the artifact. They can also loot the mansion for treasure and secrets, or uncover more details about Lord Blackwood’s tragic past and his connection to the cult

**The Mansion**

The mansion is a large and imposing structure, built in a Gothic style. It has three floors, a basement, and an attic. The mansion is surrounded by a high wall and a locked gate, which can be bypassed by climbing, picking, or riddling. The mansion is haunted by the restless spirits of Lord Blackwood and his family, who were killed by the cult. The mansion also contains traps, secrets, and clues that can help or hinder the adventurers in their quest.

**Area Descriptions**

The following are brief descriptions of the main areas of the mansion, with features and possible encounters. The DM can use these descriptions as a guide, and add more details or modify them as they see fit.

**The Gate**: The gate is made of iron bars and has a large lock. It is guarded by a skeletal figure who speaks in riddles. The figure will only open the gate if the adventurers can answer one of its riddles correctly. Alternatively, the adventurers can try to climb over the wall (DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check), pick the lock (DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves’ Tools) check), or force it open (DC 20 Strength check).

**The Courtyard**: The courtyard is a spacious area with a fountain, a statue, and some benches. The fountain is dry and cracked, the statue is of Lord Blackwood holding a book and a wand, and the benches are covered with dust and cobwebs. The courtyard is patrolled by two zombies, who will attack any intruders on sight.

**Zombies** Med. undead, neutral evil CR 1/4 (50 XP)  
AC 8 HP 20/24 Speed 20 ft., darkvision 60 ft.   
**Slam.** Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

**The Foyer**: The foyer is a grand hall with a staircase, a chandelier, and several doors. The staircase leads to the second floor, the chandelier is dimly lit and sways slightly, and the doors lead to various rooms on the first floor. The foyer also contains a large portrait of Lord Blackwood and his family, which has been defaced by the cult. The portrait hides a secret passage that leads to the basement (DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find).

**The Library**: The library is a large room filled with shelves of books, scrolls, and maps. The library contains Lord Blackwood’s collection of knowledge and secrets, which he amassed over his lifetime. The library also contains a fireplace, a desk, and a globe. The fireplace has a hidden lever that opens a secret door behind one of the shelves (DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find). The secret door leads to Lord Blackwood’s study, where he kept his most valuable and dangerous items. The desk has a locked drawer that contains a clue about the artifact’s location (DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves’ Tools) check to open). The clue is a note that reads: “The key to the seal lies in the stars”. The globe has a hidden compartment that contains a star map (DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find). The star map shows the constellation of Orion, with one of its stars marked with an X.

**The Dining Room**: The dining room is a large room with a long table, chairs, and candles. The dining room was where Lord Blackwood and his family had their meals, until they were murdered by the cult. The dining room also contains a piano, a painting, and a cabinet. The piano is out of tune and plays eerie notes when touched. The painting is of a landscape with mountains, trees, and a lake. The painting hides a safe that contains some treasure (DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find). The safe has a combination lock that requires three numbers to open. The numbers are hidden in the painting: 12 (the number of mountains), 7 (the number of trees), and 4 (the number of birds). The cabinet contains some plates, cups, and silverware.

**The Kitchen**: The kitchen is a small room with an oven, a stove, and a sink. The kitchen was where Lord Blackwood’s cook prepared his meals, until he was killed by the cult. The kitchen also contains a pantry, a fridge, and a knife block. The pantry contains some rotten food and rats. The fridge contains some frozen food and ice cubes. The knife block contains some knives and scissors.

**The Ballroom**: The ballroom is a large room with a wooden floor, mirrors, and curtains. The ballroom was where Lord Blackwood and his guests had their parties and dances, until they were interrupted by the cult. The ballroom also contains a stage, a gramophone, and some chairs. The stage has some instruments and microphones. The gramophone plays some old music when turned on. The chairs are arranged in rows facing the stage.

**The Upstairs**

**The Second Floor**: The second floor consists of several bedrooms, bathrooms, closets, and balconies. These rooms were where Lord Blackwood and his family slept, bathed, dressed, and relaxed, until they were attacked by the cult. These rooms contain various personal items, such as clothes, jewelry, toys, and photos. Some of these items are valuable, some are sentimental, and some are cursed. The DM can decide which items are which, and what effects they have. The second floor also contains a ghost, who is the spirit of Lord Blackwood’s wife. She is friendly and helpful, but also sad and lonely. She can provide some information about the mansion and the cult, but also asks the adventurers to stay with her or take her with them.

**The Attic**: The attic is a dark and dusty space with a low ceiling and a window. The attic was where Lord Blackwood stored his old and unwanted items, such as furniture, boxes, and paintings. The attic also contains a trapdoor, a telescope, and a skeleton. The trapdoor leads to the roof, where there is a weathervane and a flagpole. The weathervane is shaped like a dragon, and the flagpole has a flag with Lord Blackwood’s crest. The telescope is pointed at the sky, and can be used to see the stars. The skeleton is the remains of one of the cultists, who was killed by Lord Blackwood’s traps. The skeleton holds a key that opens the basement door (DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find).

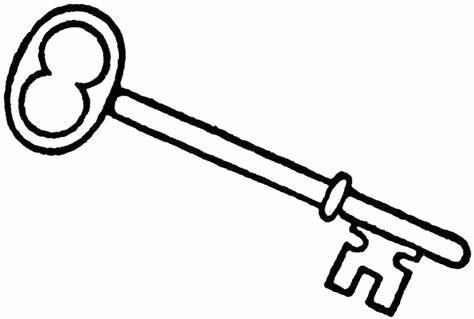
**The Basement**

The basement is a dark and damp space with a stone floor and walls. The basement was where Lord Blackwood performed his experiments and rituals, until he was betrayed and killed by the cult. The basement also contains the final confrontation with Malak, who survived the ritual and became a powerful necromancer. He has captured Lyra and plans to sacrifice her to complete the ritual. The adventurers must decide whether to save Lyra or focus on stealing the artifact, which is revealed to be a powerful magic item that can either seal or unleash the ancient evil. They must also deal with Zane, who is actually Malak’s brother and loyal follower, and who will try to sabotage their mission and help Malak with the ritual.

**Area Descriptions**

The following are brief descriptions of the main areas of the basement, with features and possible encounters. The DM can use these descriptions as a guide, and add more details or modify them as they see fit.

**The Basement Door**: The basement door is a heavy wooden door with a metal lock. It is located behind the portrait in the foyer, and can be opened with the key that is held by the skeleton in the attic (DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find). Alternatively, the adventurers can try to break down the door (DC 20 Strength check), or pick the lock (DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves’ Tools) check).



**The Laboratory**: The laboratory is a large room with tables, shelves, and cabinets, containing Blackwood’s equipment and materials, which he used for his experiments and rituals. The laboratory also contains a cage, a bookshelf, and a trap. The cage holds a mutated rat, which was one of Lord Blackwood’s test subjects. The rat is aggressive and will try to bite anyone who comes near it. The bookshelf contains some books and scrolls, some of which are useful and some of which are cursed. The DM can decide which books and scrolls are which, and what effects they have. The trap is a pressure plate that activates a flamethrower (DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice). The flamethrower shoots a jet of fire at anyone who steps on the plate (DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid, 4d6 fire damage on a failed save, half as much on a successful one).

**The Storage Room**: The storage room is a small room with crates, barrels, and sacks. The storage room contains some supplies and resources, such as food, water, tools, and weapons. The storage room also contains a chest, a skeleton, and a secret door. The chest contains some treasure and a clue about the artifact’s location (DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves’ Tools) check to open). The clue is a pendant that has Lord Blackwood’s crest on one side and an inscription on the other. The inscription reads: “The seal lies within the heart of the dragon”. The skeleton is the remains of one of Lord Blackwood’s servants, who was killed by the cult. The skeleton wears a ring that has Lord Blackwood’s crest on it. The ring is actually a key that opens the secret door behind one of the crates (DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find). The secret door leads to Lord Blackwood’s vault, where he kept his artifact.

**The Vault**: The vault is a small room with a metal door and a lock. The vault contains Lord Blackwood’s artifact, which is his most prized possession and his greatest discovery. The artifact is a spherical device that can either seal or unleash the ancient evil, depending on how it is activated. The artifact has two buttons: one red and one green. The red button unleashes the evil, while the green button seals it. However, activating either button requires a sacrifice of life force from someone who wears Lord Blackwood’s crest (such as Lyra or Zane). If no one wears the crest, activating either button will have no effect. The vault can be opened with the ring that is worn by the skeleton in the storage room (DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find). Alternatively, the adventurers can try to break down the door (DC 25 Strength check), or pick the lock (DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves’ Tools) check).

**The Ritual Chamber**: The ritual chamber is a large room with an altar, a circle of candles, and a pentagram. The ritual chamber is where Malak performs his ritual to summon the ancient evil, using Lyra as his sacrifice. The ritual chamber also contains Malak himself, along with Zane and some cultists. Malak is a human necromancer who is ruthless, ambitious, and fanatical. He leads a group of cultists who worship the ancient evil, and plans to sacrifice Lyra to complete the ritual. He has a personal vendetta against Lord Blackwood, who was his former mentor and rival. Malak is a CR 6 NPC, who has the following abilities: dark magic, necrotic blast, raise dead, and life drain. Zane is a human cleric who is Malak’s brother and loyal follower. He pretends to be a member of the Order of the Dawn, but he actually works for Malak and helps him with the ritual. Zane is a CR 4 NPC, who has the following abilities: healing word, guiding bolt, spiritual weapon, and turn undead. The cultists are human fanatics who serve Malak and the ancient evil. They are CR 1/4 NPCs, who have the following abilities: dagger, scimitar, and fanaticism. Lyra is a half-elf bard who is adventurous, curious, and rebellious. She was kidnapped by the cult while exploring the mansion, and is now held captive in the ritual chamber. She has a hidden talent for magic, and may be able to help the adventurers if they rescue her. Lyra is a CR 3 NPC, who has the following abilities: vicious mockery, dissonant whispers, charm person, and bardic inspiration.

**Conclusion**

The conclusion of the adventure depends on the outcome of the final confrontation with Malak, and the choices made by the adventurers. The following are some possible scenarios, along with their rewards and consequences. The DM can use these scenarios as a guide, and add more details or modify them as they see fit.

**The Artifact is Sealed**: The adventurers manage to steal the artifact from the vault, and use it to seal the ancient evil. They sacrifice either Zane or Lyra, who wears Lord Blackwood’s crest, to activate the green button. The artifact emits a bright light, and a wave of positive energy washes over the mansion. The evil is banished, and the undead are destroyed. The mansion is restored to its original state, and Lord Blackwood’s spirit thanks the adventurers for their deed. The adventurers can then escape from the mansion with the artifact, which is now a powerful magic item that can cast banishment once per day. They can also rescue Lyra (if they sacrificed Zane) or Zane (if they sacrificed Lyra), and return them to their father or Eliana, respectively. They can also betray or cooperate with Remy, who may want to keep the artifact for himself or sell it to someone else. They can also loot the mansion for treasure and secrets, or uncover more details about Lord Blackwood’s tragic past and his connection to the cult.

**The Evil is Unleashed**: The adventurers fail to steal the artifact from the vault, or use it to unleash the ancient evil. They sacrifice either Zane or Lyra, who wears Lord Blackwood’s crest, to activate the red button. The artifact emits a dark smoke, and a wave of negative energy washes over the mansion. The evil is freed, and a portal opens in the ritual chamber. A monstrous creature emerges from the portal, and roars in triumph. The creature is a CR 10 NPC, who has the following abilities: multiattack, bite, claw, tail, frightful presence, and ancient wrath. The creature attacks everyone in sight, including Malak and his cultists. The adventurers must either fight or flee from the creature, while trying to survive its attacks and its minions. The mansion is corrupted and collapsed by the evil’s power, and Lord Blackwood’s spirit curses the adventurers for their folly. The adventurers can then try to escape from the mansion with their lives, or die in the process. They can also try to save Lyra (if they sacrificed Zane) or Zane (if they sacrificed Lyra), or leave them behind. They can also betray or cooperate with Remy, who may try to steal the artifact or flee from it.

**The Status Quo is Maintained**: The adventurers neither steal nor use the artifact from the vault, and leave it where it is. They either fail to find it, decide not to take it, or are unable to activate it. The artifact remains dormant in the vault, and neither seals nor unleashes the ancient evil. The mansion remains haunted by the undead and the cultists, and Lord Blackwood’s spirit remains restless. The adventurers can then either fight or negotiate with Malak, who may try to stop them from leaving or let them go. They can also rescue Lyra from Malak’s clutches, or leave her to her fate. They can also betray or cooperate with Remy, who may be angry or disappointed with them for not getting the artifact. They can also loot the mansion for treasure and secrets, or uncover more details about Lord Blackwood’s tragic past and his connection to the cult.

**Rewards**

The rewards for completing the adventure depend on the scenario that occurs in the conclusion, and the choices made by the adventurers. The following are some possible rewards that the DM can give to the adventurers:

* **The Artifact**: If the adventurers manage to steal and seal the artifact, they gain a powerful magic item that can cast banishment once per day. If they fail to steal or unleash the artifact, they lose this opportunity.
* **The Noble’s Reward**: If the adventurers rescue Lyra and return her to her father, they gain a generous reward of 500 gp each, as well as his gratitude and friendship. If they fail to rescue Lyra or leave her behind, they lose this reward.
* **The Cleric’s Reward**: If the adventurers rescue Zane (who is actually a traitor) and return him to Eliana (who is unaware of his deception), they gain a modest reward of 100 gp each, as well as her trust and respect. If they fail to rescue Zane or leave him behind, they lose this reward.
* **The Thief’s Reward**: If the adventurers cooperate with Remy and help him get the artifact (or at least try to), they gain a fair share of 250 gp each (or half of that if they only try), as well as his loyalty and friendship. If they betray Remy or fail to help him, they lose this reward.
* **The Treasure**: The adventurers can loot the mansion for treasure and secrets, which can include gold, gems, jewelry, magic items, books, scrolls, maps, and more. The DM can decide what treasure and secrets are available, and how much they are worth.
* **The Secrets**: The adventurers can uncover more details about Lord Blackwood’s tragic past and his connection to the cult, which can include his motives, his research, his family, his enemies, and more. The DM can decide what secrets are available, and how they affect the story.

**Consequences**

The consequences for completing the adventure depend on the scenario that occurs in the conclusion, and the choices made by the adventurers. The following are some possible consequences that the DM can impose on the adventurers:

**The Evil**: If the adventurers unleash the ancient evil, they unleash a terrible threat upon the world, which may have dire repercussions for them and others. The DM can decide what the evil does, and how it affects the story.

**The Cult**: If the adventurers fail to stop Malak and his cult, they allow them to continue their nefarious plans, which may involve more sacrifices, more rituals, and more attempts to summon the ancient evil. The DM can decide what the cult does, and how it affects the story.

**The Ghost**: If the adventurers seal the ancient evil, they free Lord Blackwood’s spirit from his torment, and he may reward them with some information or assistance. If they fail to seal or unleash the evil, they anger Lord Blackwood’s spirit, and he may haunt them with some curses or threats. The DM can decide what the ghost does, and how it affects the story.

**The Traitor**: If the adventurers rescue Zane (who is actually a traitor) and return him to Eliana (who is unaware of his deception), they unknowingly help Malak and his cult, who may use Zane to spy on or sabotage them or others. The DM can decide what Zane does, and how it affects the story.

**The Thief**: If the adventurers betray Remy or fail to help him get the artifact (or at least try to), they make an enemy of him, who may seek revenge on them or others. The DM can decide what Remy does, and how it affects the story.

**Appendix**

The appendix contains the stat blocks and descriptions of the NPCs, monsters, and magic items that appear in the adventure. The DM can use these stat blocks and descriptions as a reference, and modify them as they see fit.

**NPCs**

**Remy (CR 3 700 XP)**: Remy is a human rogue who is charming, cunning, and greedy. He has a knack for finding and stealing valuable items, and a habit of getting into trouble. He hired the adventurers to help him steal the artifact from the mansion, but he may have other plans for it.

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral   
AC 14 (leather armor) HP 44 (8d8 + 8) Speed 30 ft. STR 10 (+0) DEX 18 (+4) CON 12 (+1)  
INT 14 (+2) WIS 10 (+0) CHA 16 (+3)   
Skills Deception +5, Insight +2, Perception +2, Stealth +6, Passive Perception 12   
Languages Common, Thieves’ Cant

**Cunning Action.** On each of his turns, Remy can use a bonus action to Dash, Disengage, or Hide.

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Remy deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Remy that isn’t incapacitated and Remy doesn’t have disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Dagger.** Melee or Ranged: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d4 + 4) piercing.

**Shortbow.** Ranged: +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 4) piercing.

**Lyra (CR 2 450 XP)**: Lyra is a half-elf bard who is adventurous, curious, and rebellious. She was kidnapped by the cult while exploring the mansion, and is now held captive in the basement. She has a hidden talent for magic, and may be able to help the adventurers if they rescue her.

Lyra Medium humanoid (half-elf), chaotic good  
AC 15 (studded leather) HP 27 (5d8 + 5) Speed 30 ft.  
STR 10 (+0) DEX 16 (+3) CON 12 (+1)  
INT 14 (+2) WIS 10 (+0) CHA 18 (+4)  
Skills Acrobatics +5, Insight +2, Performance +6, Persuasion +6 Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

**Bardic Inspiration (3/Day).** As a bonus action on her turn, Lyra can choose one creature other than herself within 60 feet of her who can hear her. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d6. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the DM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. Once the Bardic Inspiration die is rolled, it is lost. A creature can have only one Bardic Inspiration die at a time.

**Spellcasting.** Lyra is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Lyra has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): dancing lights, mage hand, vicious mockery

1st level (4 slots): charm person, dissonant whispers, healing word

2nd level (2 slots): invisibility, shatter

**Dagger.** Melee or Ranged: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing.

**Malak**: Malak is a human necromancer who is ruthless, ambitious, and fanatical. He leads a group of cultists who worship the ancient evil, and plans to sacrifice Lyra to complete the ritual. He has a personal vendetta against Lord Blackwood, who was his former mentor and rival.

Malak Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor) Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12) Speed 30 ft. STR 10 (+0) DEX 14 (+2) CON 12 (+1) INT 18 (+4) WIS 14 (+2) CHA 16 (+3) Skills Arcana +7, Deception +6, Religion +7 Senses passive Perception 12 Languages Common, Draconic, Infernal Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

**Dark Magic.** Malak has the following flaw: “I am obsessed with the ancient evil, and will do anything to summon it.” Whenever Malak casts a spell that deals necrotic damage, he can choose to deal an extra 10 (3d6) necrotic damage to one target of the spell. If he does so, he must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or suffer a short-term madness effect (see the Dungeon Master’s Guide for details).

**Spellcasting.** Malak is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Malak has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): chill touch, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation

1st level (4 slots): mage armor, magic missile, ray of sickness

2nd level (3 slots): blindness/deafness, misty step, ray of enfeeblement

3rd level (3 slots): animate dead, counterspell, fireball

4th level (3 slots): blight, dimension door

5th level (1 slot): cloudkill

**Actions**

**Dagger.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Necrotic Blast.** Ranged Spell Attack: +7 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

**Raise Dead.** Malak targets one corpse of a Medium or Small humanoid within 60 feet of him. The corpse becomes a zombie under Malak’s control. The zombie acts immediately after Malak in the initiative order. Malak can have up to four zombies under his control at a time.

**Life Drain.** Malak targets one creature within 30 feet of him that he can see. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 21 (6d6) necrotic damage and have its hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. Malak regains hit points equal to half the amount of necrotic damage dealt.

* **Zane**: Zane is a human cleric who is Malak’s brother and loyal follower. He pretends to be a member of the Order of the Dawn, but he actually works for Malak and helps him with the ritual.

Zane Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield) Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16) Speed 30 ft. STR 16 (+3) DEX 10 (+0) CON 14 (+2) INT 10 (+0) WIS 16 (+3) CHA 12 (+1) Skills Deception +3, Insight +5, Religion +2 Senses passive Perception 13 Languages Common Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

**Divine Eminence.** As a bonus action, Zane can expend a spell slot to cause his melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of his turn.

**Spellcasting.** Zane is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Zane has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): guidance, light, sacred flame

1st level (4 slots): cure wounds, guiding bolt, inflict wounds

2nd level (3 slots): hold person, spiritual weapon

3rd level (2 slots): dispel magic, spirit guardians

**Actions**

**Mace.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

* **Lyra’s Father**: Lyra’s father is a wealthy noble who is desperate to find his daughter. He contacted the adventurers and offered them a generous reward for finding her alive or bringing back proof of her fate.

Lyra’s Father Medium humanoid (human), any alignment Armor Class 10 Hit Points 9

**Monsters**

**Zombie**: A zombie is a reanimated corpse that mindlessly follows the commands of its creator. Zombies are often used by necromancers and cultists as servants or soldiers.

Zombie Medium undead, neutral evil Armor Class 8 Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9) Speed 20 ft. STR 13 (+1) DEX 6 (-2) CON 16 (+3) INT 3 (-4) WIS 6 (-2) CHA 5 (-3) Saving Throws Wis +0 Damage Immunities poison Condition Immunities poisoned Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8 Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can’t speak Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

**Actions**

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

**Rat**: A rat is a small rodent that scavenges for food and lives in dark and dirty places. Rats are often found in sewers, dungeons, and abandoned buildings.

Rat Tiny beast, unaligned Armor Class 10 Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1) Speed 20 ft. STR 2 (-4) DEX 11 (+0) CON 9 (-1) INT 2 (-4) WIS 10 (+0) CHA 4 (-3) Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages – Challenge 0 (10 XP)

**Keen Smell.** The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Actions**

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 piercing damage.

**Bat**: A bat is a flying mammal that uses echolocation to navigate and hunt. Bats are often found in caves, forests, and dark places.

Bat Tiny beast, unaligned Armor Class 12 Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1) Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft. STR 2 (-4) DEX 15 (+2) CON 8 (-1) INT 2 (-4) WIS 12 (+1) CHA 4 (-3) Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 11 Languages – Challenge 0 (10 XP)

**Echolocation.** The bat can’t use its blindsight while deafened.

**Keen Hearing.** The bat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

**Actions**

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 piercing damage.

**Aria**

Aria is a bard who loves to explore haunted places and collect stories of the supernatural. She has always been fascinated by the legend of Lord Blackwood, a wizard and scholar who was killed by a cult that sought to summon an ancient evil. She has read many books and heard many rumors about his mansion and his collection of artifacts, and she has always wanted to see them for herself. When she heard that a thief named Remy was looking for adventurers to help him break into the mansion and steal a valuable artifact, she jumped at the opportunity. She hopes to find not only treasure, but also secrets and mysteries that will inspire her songs and stories.

Human bard (College of Lore), chaotic good

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 24 (3d8 + 6) Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) DEX 16 (+3) CON 14 (+2) INT 12 (+1) WIS 10 (+0) CHA 18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +3, History +3, Insight +2, Investigation +3, Performance +6, Persuasion +6

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Elvish, Infernal

Spellcasting. Aria is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Aria knows the following bard spells:

Cantrips (at will): dancing lights, mage hand, vicious mockery

1st level (4 slots): charm person, cure wounds, disguise self, faerie fire

2nd level (2 slots): invisibility, shatter

Bardic Inspiration (d6). Aria can inspire others through stirring words or music. To do so, she uses a bonus action on her turn to choose one creature other than herself within 60 feet of her who can hear her. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d6. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the DM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. Once the Bardic Inspiration die is rolled, it is lost. A creature can have only one Bardic Inspiration die at a time. Aria can use this feature a number of times equal to her Charisma modifier (4). She regains any expended uses when she finishes a long rest.

Cutting Words. Aria can use her wit to distract, confuse, and otherwise sap the confidence and competence of others. When a creature that she can see within 60 feet of her makes an attack roll, an ability check, or a damage roll, she can use her reaction to expend one of her uses of Bardic Inspiration, rolling a Bardic Inspiration die and subtracting the number rolled from the creature's roll. She can choose to use this feature after the creature makes its roll, but before the DM determines whether the attack roll or ability check succeeds or fails, or before the creature deals its damage. The creature is immune if it can't hear her or if it's immune to being charmed.

Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus Sneak Attack if applicable.

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage plus Sneak Attack if applicable.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Aria deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Aria that isn't incapacitated and Aria doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Bryn**

Bryn is a rogue who specializes in breaking into and escaping from haunted mansions. He has been hired by Remy, a notorious thief who has learned of a valuable artifact hidden in the abandoned mansion of Lord Blackwood. Bryn does not care much about the history or the hauntings of the mansion, he only cares about the money. He agrees to help Remy steal the artifact, as long as he gets his fair share of the loot. He also plans to loot the mansion for anything else that might be worth something, and he does not mind betraying or abandoning his companions if things get too dangerous.

Half-elf rogue (Arcane Trickster), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 27 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) DEX 18 (+4) CON 16 (+3) INT 14 (+2) WIS 12 (+1) CHA 10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +4

Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +2, Investigation +4,

Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spellcasting. Bryn is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12,

+4 to hit with spell attacks). Bryn knows the following wizard spells:

Cantrips (at will): mage hand (invisible), minor illusion,

prestidigitation

1st level (2 slots): charm person, disguise self, sleep

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Bryn can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Bryn deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Bryn that isn't incapacitated and Bryn doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus Sneak Attack if applicable.

Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus Sneak Attack if applicable.

Cora

Cora is a fighter who serves as a bodyguard and a muscle for hire. She was once a soldier in the army, but she left after she witnessed the corruption and cruelty of her superiors. She now works as a mercenary, taking jobs that pay well and do not conflict with her sense of honor. She was hired by Remy, a thief who needs adventurers to help him break into the mansion of Lord Blackwood and steal an artifact. Cora does not know much about Lord Blackwood or his mansion, but she knows that they are both dangerous. She agrees to take the job, as long as Remy pays her well and does not ask her to do anything dishonorable. She also feels a sense of duty to protect her companions from harm.

Half-orc fighter (Champion), lawful neutral

Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield)

Hit Points 33 (3d10 + 9)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4) DEX 12 (+1) CON 16 (+3) INT 8 (-1) WIS 10 (+0) CHA 8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +1

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Action Surge (1/Short or Long Rest). On her turn, Cora can take one additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Improved Critical. Cora's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Relentless Endurance. When Cora is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, she can drop to 1 hit point instead. She can't use this feature again until she finishes a long rest.

Second Wind (1/Short or Long Rest). On her turn, Cora can use a bonus action to regain 1d10 + 3 hit points.

Actions

Battleaxe. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 10 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Handaxe. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Dara

Dara is a cleric who worships the god of light and life. She is a kind and compassionate person, who uses her magic and skills to heal and help others. She was sent by her temple to investigate the mansion of Lord Blackwood, which is rumored to be haunted by the restless spirits of Lord Blackwood and his family, who were killed by a cult that sought to summon an ancient evil. Dara believes that the mansion is a source of darkness and evil, and that she must cleanse it with her holy power. She joins forces with Remy, a thief who claims to know the way into the mansion and wants to steal an artifact. Dara does not trust or like Remy, but she sees him as a means to an end. She also hopes to save any innocent souls that might be trapped or tormented in the mansion.

Tiefling cleric (Light Domain), neutral good

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points 24 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 14 (+2) DEX 10 (+0) CON 14 (+2) INT 10 (+0) WIS

16 (+3) CHA 12 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +3

Skills Insight +5, Medicine +5, Religion +2

Damage Resistances fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spellcasting. Dara is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC

13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Dara has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy

1st level (4 slots): burning hands\*, cure wounds,

guiding bolt, sanctuary

2nd level (2 slots): flaming sphere\*, lesser restoration,

prayer of healing

\*Domain spell

Light Domain. Dara has the following domain features:

Bonus Cantrip. Dara knows the light cantrip and can cast it without using a spell slot.

Warding Flare. When Dara is attacked by a creature within

30 feet of her that she can see, she can use her reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll,

causing light to flare before the attacker before it hits or misses. Dara can use this feature a number of times equal to her Wisdom modifier (3). She regains all expended uses when she finishes a long rest.

Actions

Mace. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 +2) bludgeoning damage.

Evan

Human wizard (School of Evocation), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 18 (3d6 +6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR8(-1) DEX14(+2) CON14(+2) INT18

Evan

Evan is a wizard who studies evocation magic, the school of magic that deals with fire, lightning, and other destructive forces. He is a curious and reckless person, who loves to experiment with his spells and test his limits. He is also a fan of Lord Blackwood, a wizard and scholar who was killed by a cult that sought to summon an ancient evil. Evan admires Lord Blackwood’s knowledge and power, and he wants to learn more about his research and experiments. He joins Remy, a thief who offers to split the loot with him if he helps him break into the mansion of Lord Blackwood and steal an artifact. Evan agrees, hoping to find not only treasure, but also secrets and discoveries that will advance his own magic.

Human wizard (School of Evocation), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 18 (3d6 +6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR8(-1) DEX14(+2) CON14(+2) INT18(+4) WIS12(+1) CHA10(+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +3

Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Investigation +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish, Gnomish

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spellcasting. Evan is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Evan has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): fire bolt, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation

1st level (4 slots): burning hands, mage armor, magic missile, shield

2nd level (2 slots): misty step, scorching ray

School of Evocation. Evan has the following school features:

Evocation Savant. The gold and time Evan must spend to copy an evocation spell into his spellbook is halved.

Sculpt Spells. When Evan casts an evocation spell that affects other creatures that he can see, he can choose a number of them equal to 1 + the spell's level. The chosen creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell, and they take no damage if they would normally take half damage on a successful save.

Actions

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Fira

Fira is a ranger who lives in the woods near the town where Lord Blackwood’s mansion is located. She is a fierce and independent person, who prefers the company of animals over people. She has a pet wolf named Luna, who is her loyal companion and friend. She has been hunting down the cultists who killed Lord Blackwood and his family, and who have been kidnapping people from the town for their rituals. She has tracked them down to the mansion, where they are trying to summon an ancient evil. She joins Remy, a thief who wants to break into the mansion and steal an artifact. Fira does not care about the artifact or the money, she only cares about stopping the cultists and saving their victims.

Human ranger (Hunter), neutral

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 30 (3d10 + 9)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 14 (+2) DEX 16 (+3) CON 16 (+3) INT 10 (+0) WIS 14 (+2) CHA 8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5

Skills Animal Handling +4, Nature +2, Perception +4,

Stealth +5, Survival +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish

Favored Enemy. Fira has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track undead, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Natural Explorer. Fira ignores difficult terrain, has advantage on initiative rolls, and can't be surprised while she is conscious when she is in a forest.

Spellcasting. Fira is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Fira has the following ranger spells prepared:

1st level (3 slots): cure wounds, hunter's mark, speak with animals

Hunter's Prey. Fira has the following hunter feature:

Colossus Slayer. Once per turn when Fira hits a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an extra 8 (1d8) damage if it's below its hit point maximum.

Actions

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus Colossus Slayer if applicable.

Bonus Actions

Luna. Fira can command her pet wolf Luna to take one of the following actions: Bite, Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help.

Luna

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft.

STR 12 (+1) DEX 15 (+2) CON 12 (+1) INT 3 (-4) WIS 12 (+1) CHA 6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages understands Common but can't speak it

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

Pack Tactics. Luna has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of Luna's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.