

MISSION 3: THE DEAD AT HIGHSUN

A priest from Valhingen Graveyard comes to the characters with a disturbing problem.

You were told that Madame Freona's Tea Kettle was the place where adventurers could find work and avoid the hassle associated with other places in Phlan. So far, that has been true. Madame Freona, a stout and officious halfling who runs the establishment with her five daughters, has proven an excellent hostess.

The crowd at the Tea Kettle is sparse for the Highsun meal. The youngest of Madame Freona's daughters, Grelinda, is clearing away your table setting after a pleasant meal. Grelinda's short hair is tinted an odd shade of coppery green, and she treats the flatware roughly as she stacks it on a tray. "Stupid boring work," she mutters under her breath.

Before you can comment, the door of the Tea Kettle opens, and a cool draft plays through the room. A tall, dour-looking human glances around, and his sallow expression finally settles on you.

He removes his tall black hat to reveal a balding pate. "I apologize for disturbing you," he says in a deep, monotone voice. "I assume you are adventurers for hire, and I seek your expertise for a small matter."

THE KEEPER OF THE DEAD

The man introduces himself as Brother Keefe, priest of Kelemvor and "Keeper of the Dead" of Valhingen Graveyard in Phlan. Use the bullet points below to guide the conversation. Remember to keep this brief to finish the mission in time:

- As Keeper of the Dead, Brother Keefe is charged with seeing to the interment of bodies and keeping records. He calls himself "the overseer of all permanent residents of the Valhingen Graveyard."
- He is also in charge of disinterment at the graveyard, and that is why he is looking for assistance this afternoon.
- Evidence has been brought forth to the clerics of Kelemvor that one of the long-standing residents of the cemetery, Xandria Welltran, was not in fact human, but a polymorphed green dragon.
- Brother Keefe must now enter the crypt and inspect the body to confirm or disprove these claims. He fears that there may be more to this than meets the eye, but the other priests of Kelemvor laughed at his

concern. Therefore Brother Keefe is looking for some adventurers to accompany him into the crypt.

- He offers the characters 100 gp to accompany him, and if there's trouble, he'll throw in a *scroll of protection from evil and good*.

If the characters are satisfied with the explanation and the terms of their employment, Brother Keefe leads them to the Welltran Crypt in the Valhingen Graveyard.

When they arrive, they might be surprised to learn that the graveyard is actually quite well maintained, if somber. Brother Keefe tells the characters that Doomguide Yovir Glandon, his superior and the senior member of the Most Solemn Order of the Silent Shroud, personally sees to the maintenance of the grounds.

XANDRIA'S CRYPT

Ceilings. In the rooms below the crypt, all ceilings are ten feet high.

Light. None of the areas below the crypt are lit.

Secret Doors. Three **secret doors** are held within the spiral wall. They can be noticed with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The undead creatures automatically sense their presence. Living creatures who pass through them take 2 (1d4) necrotic damage. Undead creatures passing through them regain 2 (1d4) hit points.

The crypt of Xandria is a nicely appointed stone and marble building, roughly 20 feet square. Brother Keefe produces a key to unlock it.

The interior is equally fine. The walls are carved and painted with various scenes showing a lovely human woman in different locales: looking toward a snow-covered peak, standing in the rain of a thunderstorm, sitting in a comfortable room by a roaring fire, holding a venomous snake in a garden, working with bubbling vials in a laboratory, and many others. The lid of the marble sarcophagus in the center is carved with the likeness of the same beautiful human woman in the prime of her life.

Brother Keefe pries open the lid of the sarcophagus, revealing a jumbled pile of bones. A quick investigation shows that these are definitely not human bones—many of them are draconic in nature. It is also readily apparent that at least half the bones that should be there are missing.

Also resting among the bones are 5 tiny gems: a red ruby, a green emerald, a black opal, a white diamond, and a blue sapphire.

THE TRAP AND SECRET PASSAGE

Soon after the remains are disturbed, read:

A few moments after the lid is removed and the sarcophagus's contents examined, a scraping sound echoes through the crypt. The door closes and seals, and a hissing sound makes you aware that some kind of gas is entering the crypt. It does not smell pleasant.

Let the characters panic for a moment if they choose. Smashing the door or walls does no good. The only way out is to find the secret passage beneath the sarcophagus, and that requires some quick thinking. You can roll initiative and give the characters two rounds before the gas hits them, or let them work it through without using initiative.

If the characters take even a moment to look closely at the walls, floor, or sarcophagus, they notice a few oddities.

- There are scrape marks on the floor around the sarcophagus, showing it can move. However, pushing does nothing.
- The tiny gems are all the same size and shape, and they are cut in a way that makes it look like they might slide into something.
- Five of the carvings on the walls have a place in them where a tiny gem could be inserted.

Each gem matches the color of one of the chromatic dragons, and each spot in a carving matches one of the elements associated with the corresponding colored dragon.

- The white diamond fits into the indentation on the top of the snow-covered mountain.
- The blue sapphire fits into the indentation at the point of a lightning strike in the thunderstorm.
- The red ruby fits into the indentation in the roaring fire of the comfortable room.
- The green emerald fits into the indentation on the fang of the poisonous snake.
- The black opal fits into the indentation on the bubbling vial of acid.

If the characters fail to see this connection between the gems in the indentations in the wall carvings within two rounds, the **gas** deals 3 (1d6) points of poison damage. A successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw halves this damage. After that, Brother Keefe points out how it looks like the gems might fit into those indentations.

Do not force the characters to make another saving

throw unless they put the wrong gems in the wrong places. Even if they do, they should only have to make one more set of saving throws before Brother Keefe provides enough hints to get the puzzle correctly solved.

When the gems are inserted correctly, the gas dissipates, the crypt door opens, and the sarcophagus slides away, revealing a stairway down into the darkness. Tracks in the dust shows it has been used recently by at least two human-sized creatures. The gems cannot be pried free from their housings once inserted.

Brother Keefe refuses to enter the lower chambers. He is a simple priest and has no magical or martial powers. However, he begs the characters to investigate.

3A. HONOR GUARD

The stairs descend steeply, and then the passage continues, curving to the left and slightly downward in a spiral. The curving passage continues to the south and curves west, but also opens into a chamber.

The passage opens into a chamber. Three odd humanoid skeletons, topped with draconic skulls, stand at attention, holding swords. At the back of the chamber is a large throne-like chair, currently empty, on a mahogany dais.

These three **skeletons** are currently not animated but might become so if the characters perform certain actions: in this room, if any creature sits on the throne, magic is released to animate the skeletons. In the next room, the party might also animate the skeletons.

If the characters sit on the throne, or search the throne with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they notice a hinged panel in the bottom of the throne. It is trapped with a **poison needle trap**, which is noticed with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check and disabled with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check, provided the character attempting this check has a set of thieves' tools. If someone opens the panel without disarming the trap, they are stuck with a needle. They must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 4 (1d8) poison damage. Within the secret compartment is a small tourmaline worth 50 gp and a *scroll of comprehend languages*.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Weak party:** remove one skeleton
- **Strong party:** add two skeletons
- **Very strong party:** add four skeletons

3B. REANIMATION CHAMBER

The spiral passage continues until it reaches another chamber.

This chamber has been set up as a small laboratory. Tables around the room are covered with beakers, vials, tomes, cauldrons, and pots full of alchemical agents.

In the middle of the central table is a note next to a blue clay pot. The note, written in Common, says, "Raaxil, I have figured out how to complete the process. When you are ready, simply pour the contents of this blue pot into the cauldron and stir. The effects should be instantaneous, but **DO NOT DRINK THE RESULTING POTION.**"

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the books and alchemical agents are all tied to necromantic magic, specifically targeted toward dragons. It is extremely advanced magic, though—well beyond the expertise of the characters at this level.

If the characters complete the process, this causes a thick vapor to spread quickly throughout the chambers, animating the skeletons in the previous room. If the characters already fought them, the skeletons reanimate. The creatures move through the chambers (using the secret doors if appropriate) to surround the characters and attack.

A character is foolish enough a drink the potion must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or take 21 (6d6) poison damage.

All of this equipment has been cursed with magic. If it is taken out of the underground complex, it dissolves into nothingness.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Weak party:** one of the glyphs is already marred; remove one zombie
- **Strong party:** each round, each active glyph pulses and heals 2 (1d4) damage to a zombie
- **Very strong party:** all zombies have 5 additional hit points; unless all glyphs are deactivated, a zombie reanimates with half hit points the round after it is killed

3C. TELEPORTATION CIRCLE

The spiral passage continues until it reaches a final chamber.

This chamber's walls are painted to look like the inside of a dragon's lair: the scenes depict piles of treasure, robed acolytes bowing in supplication, bound prisoners being served up as a meal, etc. All the paintings focus toward the alcove in the south wall, where a pile of gold coins form a nest perfect for a large dragon!

In addition to the paintings, there are four large glyphs: one each on the north, south, east and west walls. The southern glyph is within the alcove. These glyphs glow slightly in the dark of the rooms.

In the northwest corner of the room, a teleportation circle has been etched into the floor. The lack of wear on the etchings implies that the circle was created very recently. A thick metal rod, inscribed with sigils stands in the middle of the circle.

Lying on the floor in different parts of the room are 4 dead bodies. Although the bodies look roughly humanoid, they are stitched together from various parts, including some that appear to be draconic in nature.

As soon as the characters interact with anything in the room in a significant way (touching, examining, etc.), two things happen: the four large glyphs glow brightly, and the four bodies spring up and animate, becoming four **zombies**. Each one has some semblance of draconic features, such as small wings, tails, and elongated necks.

During combat, describe how the glyphs flare when the zombies attack or take damage. If the characters use an action to mar a glyph with an attack (AC 10, 5 hp) or disable it with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check, a zombie is blinded until the end of its next turn. If all the glyphs are deactivated in this way, the zombies cease their movement and fall to the ground, inanimate.

If a character enters the southern alcove, that character triggers an invisible force field across the alcove opening. The force field is impenetrable but can be brought down with a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check or 5 points of force damage. It also disappears if all of the glyphs are deactivated.

The gold coins in the southern alcove are worthless wooden disks painted gold. There is nothing else of value in the room.

The teleportation circle can be easily defaced to make it unusable. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check shows that the teleportation circle is probably linked to a similar circle elsewhere, and strong magic is needed to make use of the circles.

INFORMING BROTHER KEEFE

Assuming the characters clear out the dangers from the chambers beneath the crypt, Brother Keefe asks them to show him what they found. If the characters have not yet made the connection between the necromantic magic and the dragon motifs, he informs them that it is possible someone is trying to create a dracolich.

At this point, Brother Keefe reveals that he is a member of the Lord's Alliance, a group looking to maintain stability in Phlan, but not at the cost of lawlessness. He admits that the rumors about the draconic nature of Xandria Welltran came from a source within the Lord's Alliance, who also told him that the Welcomers, the thieves' guild of Phlan, have been investigating various dragon-themed leads in the last month. The Welcomers may be involved in this as well.

REWARDS

Make sure the players note their rewards on their adventure logsheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards listed are per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Skeleton	50
Zombie	50

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Solving the gem puzzle without help	25
Clearing out the crypt	50

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **75 experience points**. The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **100 experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided up according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Payment from Brother Keefe	100
Small tourmaline gem	50

SPELL SCROLL: PROTECTION FROM EVIL AND GOOD

This *spell scroll* contains a single *protection from evil and good* spell. A description of *spell scrolls* can be found in the basic rules or *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

SPELL SCROLL: COMPREHEND LANGUAGES

This *spell scroll* contains a single *comprehend languages* spell. A description of *spell scrolls* can be found in the basic rules or *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

RENOWN

Lords' Alliance characters only receive **one renown point** for informing Brother Keefe.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **five downtime days** at the conclusion of this mini-adventure.

DM REWARDS

You receive **100 XP** and **five downtime days** for each session you run of this mini-adventure.