

# OVERVIEW



Players discover an ancient graveyard hidden deep in a dense forest, uncovering a decrepit mausoleum that leads down into a forgotten family crypt. They must combat ghouls, giant spiders, and solve an ancestral puzzle involving a brazier to claim hidden treasures.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

- » **Hook One:** Players are hired by historians to explore rumored ancient burial grounds.
- » **Hook Two:** A local villager begs the players to investigate disappearances near an old forest graveyard.

## ADVENTURE LOCATION

An overgrown and forgotten graveyard deep in a wild forest, once belonging to a lost noble lineage.

## NPCS & BAD GUYS

- » **Ghouls (2-3):** Classic flesh-eating undead humanoids.
- » **Giant Spiders (2-3):** Large spiders that dwell underground.
- » **Ghast Leader:** A corrupted grave robber turned undead who haunts the crypt.
- » **Family Patriarch (Spirit/Remains):** Ancient noble whose tomb holds ancestral treasures and secrets.

## LOOT

- » **Wand of the Tombkeeper:** User may Turn Undead once per day.
- » **Ornate Silvered Longsword:** Ornamental weapon of value to historians and collectors.
- » **+1 Greataxe**
- » **Moldy Journal**

## GENERAL SKILL CHECKS

- » **INT/WIS (DC 13):** Uncover signs of desecration and clues left by grave robbers.
- » **INT (DC 14):** Interpret ancient burial rites and symbolism.
- » **WIS (DC 15):** Notice hidden threats and the hidden stairwell.

## GM GUIDE

- » Build a mood of mystery and dread.
- » Encourage exploration and caution when players find the ruined mausoleum.
- » Emphasize the mausoleum is hundreds of years old.
- » Crypt encounters reference room names/numbers - use the map legend to find locations on the full size map. (See Appendix)

## SCALING

This adventure is designed for a party of adventurers from levels 1-2.

To increase the *difficulty level of encounters* to **hard**: add one additional creature per encounter.

Use the **hard encounter** for parties that:

- Are larger than 4 PCs.
- Have an Average Party Level (APL) of 3.
- Include strong PCs and experienced players.
- Party is not challenged by normal encounters (be cautious!).

## ENCOUNTER 2: ACT I – THE SPIDER'S DEN

"A chill seeps into your bones as you step into this dark, dank chamber, heavy with the scent of decay and mold. Scattered bones litter the floor amidst broken and toppled sarcophagi, their stone lids shattered and contents spilled out long ago. At the heart of the room, an enormous brazier sits cold and empty, dust-covered and long unused.

To the south, a weathered wooden door hangs ajar, creaking slightly in the stillness. Above, thick cobwebs drape heavily from the ceiling down to the floor."

After players enter the chamber and begin searching it, or if they light a torch (*or the brazier*) read the following:

"From webs and shadows above large arachnid shapes silently descend, their legs twitching and eyes gleaming faintly in the darkness."

### LOCATION

The crypt's main chamber (Crypt Room 1).

### PARTY OBJECTIVES

- » Defeat the giant spiders.
- » Explore and secure the chamber.

### BAD GUYS

- » **Giant Spider (1):** Large spiders that dwell underground.

### LOOT

A search of the room (*no check required*) will reveal the cocooned remains of grave robbers and the **Moldy Journal**.

- » **Moldy journal** in a cocoon of webbing.
- » **Minor grave goods:** 50 GP, ID4 items from the Loot Table (pg5).

### SKILL CHECKS

- » **WIS (DC 16):** Detect the spiders before they attack.
- » **INT/WIS (DC 13):** Determine the remains have been desecrated by grave robbers.
- » **INT/WIS (DC 15):** Determine the remains have also been eaten by ghouls - gnawed & scattered bones, etc.

### GM GUIDE

- » Spiders attack from their hiding place in the webs ambushing players **surprising** any players - *unless detected before combat*.
- » Spiders start with a **web attack** then attack any unrestrained players.
- » The first room has **four torches** and a **brazier** - none of which are lit.
- » All of the **wooden doors** in the crypt have been left *partially open* from grave robbers and the ghouls that still reside within. Players must still open the doors to be able to see the entirety of the rooms beyond.



### TRANSITION TO ACT 2 OF ENCOUNTER

*After defeating the Spider and exploring the main chamber the party should be encouraged to proceed.*

## ENCOUNTER 2: ACT 3 – CRYPT GUARDIANS

"The old wooden door creaks loudly as you push it open, the sound echoing through the quiet crypt like a mournful groan. A wave of nauseating stench pours forth, sickly sweet with the unmistakable odor of rotting flesh assaults your nostrils. Beyond the doorway, dim shadows shift and stir within the darkness."

*After players open the door read the following:*

"You hear the sound of crunching bones as several shambling forms emerge from the gloom, their hollow eyes glowing with malevolent hunger. One figure looms larger, its grotesque flesh glistening with decay—the source of the putrid aroma that now chokes the air around you."



### LOCATION

Crypt sub-chamber (Crypt Room 5).

### PARTY OBJECTIVES

- » Defeat the ghast and its ghoul minion.
- » Discover the **gold family crest ring** and **greataxe +1**.

### BAD GUYS

- » **Ghast Leader:** A corrupted grave robber turned undead who haunts the crypt.
- » **Ghouls (2):** Classic flesh-eating undead humanoids.

### LOOT

- » **25 GP**
- » **Greataxe +1 200**
- » **Gold family crest ring 100**

### SKILL CHECKS

- » **WIS (DC 13):** Identify the signet ring as belonging to a once noble house long forgotten..
- » **WIS (DC 15):** Find a golden ring (see loot) in the debris scattered about the chamber
- » **INT (DC 14):** Identify the crest ring as a once noble house long forgotten.

### GM GUIDE

- » **Ghouls** will *immediately* attack when the door is opened.
- » Any living creatures the first time within **near** of Ghast make DC 12 CON ability check or suffer **DISADV** on **attacks and spellcasting for 5 rounds**.
- » All creatures will fight to the death!

### TRANSITION TO NEXT ENCOUNTER

*Once players have defeated the ghast and ghouls they can access the iron gate that leads to Chapter 3: Patriarch's Tomb.*

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# RESOLUTION

## CONSEQUENCES

If players ignore the riddle, or fail to solve it and open the sarcophagus and/or iron chest regardless, they will be subject to the *curse of the patriarch*, resulting in one of the following:

- Objects looted from the tomb are *cursed* and will have some negative effect on the players who bear them until the curse is removed.
- The patriarch's *revenant* will arise at a later date to reacquire the stolen objects and dole out punishment to the players.

If players solve the puzzle and respectfully unseal the tomb by lighting the two torches by the sarcophagus using a torch (*or similar item*) lit with the brazier, they will be able to safely keep the items they have discovered. (*No negative consequences.*)

## AWARDING EXPERIENCE

XP awards are based on the quality of the treasure and boons you gain during a session.

Not including any random loot the players may have found, players should earn upwards of at least 8-9 experience points if they have obtained all the loot listed in this adventure.

Feel free to increase the value of the loot found, or add loot, to round it up to 10 XP - especially for level 1 characters.

## FUTURE ADVENTURE HOOKS

- » Encountering a descendant of the house.
- » Encountering an ancient foe of the house.
- » Searching for more clues about the noble house and perhaps a lost castle or artifact belonging to the house.

## APPENDIX BAD GUYS

### GHOUL

AL	C
LV	2
AC	II
HP	II
MV	NEAR

<b>STR</b>	<b>+2</b>
<b>DEX</b>	<b>+1</b>
<b>CON</b>	<b>+2</b>
<b>INT</b>	<b>-3</b>
<b>WIS</b>	<b>-1</b>
<b>CHA</b>	<b>0</b>

**ATTACKS** 1 CLAW: +2 TO HIT; (1D6 + PARALYZE)

### TRAITS

**UNDEAD:** IMMUNE TO MORALE CHECKS

**PARALYZE:** DC 12 CON OR PARALYZED 1D4 ROUNDS

### DESCRIPTION

A HORRIFYING, GRAY-SKINNED, FLESH-EATING UNDEAD CREATURE RESEMBLING AN EMACIATED, FLAT-FACED HUMANOID DRIVEN BY A CONSTANT HUNGER FOR CARRION AND THE FLESH OF THE LIVING. GHOULS ROAM THE NIGHT HUNTING WITH THEIR RAZOR-SHARP TEETH AND JAGGED CLAWS.



# HILLTOP RUINS

oneshuttle

