



THE SEVENTH SON

A Shadow of the Weird Wizard Quest for Expert Heroes



Does anyone in the borderlands have it easy? Berryton joins the many other communities contending with weird monsters, strange phenomena, and problems that defy explanation. The trouble started in Berryton about a week ago. Livestock went missing. People started hearing voices. Then, some villagers found someone had been at the graveyard, digging up graves and dragging off bodies. Before the locals could get help, young Cadmus, a seventh son, vanished. His disappearance pushed the people to the brink of panic. Has some fiend targeted their community for evil and mischief? The good people of Berryton need help; luckily, a band of adventurers just happens along and might have the right mix of talent to lend a hand.

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TROUBLE FOR POOR CADMUS

On the northern side of the Veridian, an ancient forest, hunters discovered a pack of crocottas, killed a few, and routed the rest. Five of the monsters fled south until they came through the other side of the woods, upon the outskirts of Berryton. The crocottas hungered, but they were not about to turn against each other. Instead, they opted for cooperation. They would feast on the helpless villagers. As is common for them, the crocottas snuck around the settlements and stole livestock. They dug up and ate dead bodies. They terrorized the locals. After they grew sick of eating rotten meat, one snatched young Cadmus, brought him back to the others, and they all raced off into the Veridian.

Before they got very far, though, a leshy found them. It killed the crocotta holding the boy and scattered the rest. In a blind panic, Cadmus ran off, heading deeper into the woods until he finally came upon the entrance to an old tomb. Cadmus thought to shelter there and crawled inside only to run afoul of the skeletal denizens awaiting him. The skeletons carried him down to their master, Azakalaus, a death priest. Azakalaus recognized the boy's special powers—the boy is the seventh son of a seventh son. Having been waiting for the fulfilment of a prophecy which told of a seventh son who would host a god of darkness and suffering, Azakalaus wasted no time in preparing the boy for the ritual of joining.

THE SEVENTH SON OF A SEVENTH SON

Folklore claims seventh sons of seventh sons have some divinatory power, magical ability, or special purpose to fulfill. In keeping with expectation, Cadmus developed the gift of second sight, could talk to ordinary animals, and his touch could drive off sickness and speed healing. People might have feared him or been in awe of him, yet his easy manner and natural charisma won him friends of nearly all his neighbors and made many protective of him. The villagers see his disappearance as an ill omen. Without Cadmus to protect them, they fear a coming doom.

ENTER THE CHARACTERS

Happenstance might be the best way to hook the characters: They come to town and find it in trouble. The locals beg the group to find their missing lad. The village has little to offer as a reward, but they can scrape together 2 gp per character.

Another way to involve the group is to make the characters the ones responsible for driving the crocottas into the Veridian. A couple villages on the other side of the forest pooled their resources to hire the group to deal with the monsters. The group tracks the several monsters who escaped to Berryton, with results as described above.

Finally, you can have the characters find a treasure map showing the tomb's location. The place holds the Oracle Stone, a relic

with immense divinatory powers, if the tales can be believed. The characters search for the stone and come to Berryton for supplies. They find the village in disarray when they arrive.

WARNING SIGNS

Berryton has little to make it stand out from the many other communities in the borderlands. It has a dozen small wooden buildings arranged around a village green with a community well at the center. Also, the village has a small tavern and inn, though poor business leaves the establishment on the brink of ruin. A few farms stand to the southeast. The Veridian reaches around the village, as if embracing it. Characters in Berryton can explore the community and talk to the locals to gain additional information about the disappearance.

LOST CADMUS

The missing boy is Cadmus Gordery, the seventh son born to Gordon and Rene Gordery. His parents go on at length about his spooky abilities. Locals describe him as a charming, intelligent young man with a good heart and always willing to lend a hand. Some mention he has seemed concerned, distracted over the last few weeks. He never explained his upset.

DISTURBED GRAVEYARD

The villagers bury their dead in a small fenced-in plot of land at the edge of their community. The six most recent graves show signs of disturbance. People haven't righted the graves or cleaned up the mess, as they believe doing so might invite a curse.

A few bones and scraps of moldy cloth appear on the ground. Examining the fresh dirt reveals claw markings. More prints dot the ground in the fresh dirt. Tracks lead off to the woods. There, the characters smell rotting meat.

Any character with knowledge of tracking can identify the prints with a success on an Intellect roll with 2 banes. Rare knowledge of tracking grants an automatic success. The prints belong to a crocotta.



IDENTIFYING THE THREAT

Characters might identify the nature of the threat based on the clues they find, either by examining the prints or just putting the evidence together. A character with professional knowledge of nature can make an Intellect roll. On a success, the character suspects a crocotta is behind the troubles. On a critical success, the character knows also that these monsters tend to work alone, so if there are more than one, it could mean serious trouble. You can share details about these creatures to the players, referring to the monster's entry (*Secrets*, page 134)



MISSING LIVESTOCK

Alime Mysten raises goats for milk and meat. She noticed, a few days ago, her flock has shrunk by three. She searched for the missing animals with no luck. She has since locked the remaining goats up in the barn at night and set her son, Bung, to guard the place during the night, leaving him to sleep during the day. If the characters come back at night, he says he hasn't seen anything, though he has heard voices along with cries and whimpers coming from the woods. He admits he was too frightened to investigate.

VOICES IN THE NIGHT

Several villagers report hearing strange sounds at night, such as people talking just outside their windows, odd cries, and the occasional call for help. The people who went looking found nothing to explain the sounds. People keep their doors locked and try to ignore the noises, certain they come from angry ghosts. One local, Junior, swears he heard Cadmus calling to him. He went to look but the gleaming red eyes he saw sent him running home.

WEIRD SHEMP

Weird Shemp was a famous toymaker in the old country. After fleeing his homeland, he lost all interest in his trade. He helped the locals with building their homes until he hurt himself. After, he found comfort at the bottom of the bottle. Locals put up with him for now. They feed him and put up with his drunken ravings. Weird Shemp claims to have seen monsters creeping through town; the monsters looked a bit like lions but had funny teeth. He wants no part in these troubles.

INTO THE VERIDIAN

The forest covers twenty square miles of lumpy, uneven terrain. Trees grow close together to form a dense canopy overhead. Even on bright, sunny days, the forest appears dark and gloomy. The crocottas scared off the wildlife, which makes the place quiet and empty. The Veridian has several important locations, each of which is described below.

A. DEAD GOATS

The group can find signs that one or more sizeable creatures have come through this way right at the forest's edge. The air carries a strong odor of rotting meat and characters looking around find blood all over the ground. The odor comes from three goat heads left just inside the tree line. Blood and bits cover every surface. More clawed prints lead deeper into the woods until they reach Location B.

B. MONSTER CARCASS

The leschy who tried to rescue Cadmus killed the crocotta here. The characters find its broken body bent around the base of a tree. The crushed bones suggest something struck the monster with tremendous force. Anyone examining the body can find bits of bark lodged under the monster's hide.

Blood droplets dot the ground. A path of them leads to Location H. Crocotta tracks lead off to Location G. And strange prints left by the leschy head off to Location F.

C. WICKED FAERIES

Earlier this day, 5 **gremlins** came through a magical door in the base of a tree at this location. The faeries explore a little, eager to torment any mortals they encounter. When the group comes close, the faeries, hidden behind trees, use their magic against them. The gremlins fight until one or two fall; the rest flee through the door which closes behind them and vanishes.

THE DOOR IN THE TREE

If the characters manage to defeat the gremlins before they can escape, the group might spot the door. The door is large enough to permit the passage of a Size 1/4 creature. It remains in the tree until the last living gremlin passes through it or until nightfall. Once the door disappears, it does not open again.

A character with the means to fit through the opening that enters the door finds a sloping and winding passage that descends through rock for about 60 yards until it ends in a large cave of glittering crystals and multicolored mineral formations. A pool covers the floor and in it swim eyeless white fish. Numerous openings in the walls lead to passages that connect the cave to destinations of your own design.

A **giant lobster** lurks at the bottom of the pool. If any character disturbs the waters, it lurches up and out to attack. Characters searching the pool's bottom find 243 sp and an Enchanted Sword made from bone but with the hardness and durability of steel.

D. OAK FATHER

Poeden (**ordained priest**) lives here beneath a living shelter of woven tree branches. A priest of Grandfather Tree, he settled here to commune with his god. He has little to do with the people beyond the forest's edge and enjoys his isolation. Service to the forest god has had an effect on him; growths of bark appear

all over his body, he wears a beard of green moss, and he's spattered in mud and bird droppings.

The priest is unfriendly. The characters can win him over if they say good things about the woods, his god, or about how nature needs protecting. He becomes helpful if the characters have already encountered and befriended the leschy. He knows nothing of Cadmus, but, if he becomes friendly, he warns the characters about the crocotta prowling the woods. He also mentions an old evil lurks at the center of the forest. Despite his own efforts to purge the corruption, he has managed only to contain it. He fears the malevolent force will stir and plunge the world into shadow.

E. WOLF PACK

About 50 yards from this place, the characters hear wolf howls. At about 20 yards from this place, the characters hear a terrified scream. A pack of dire wolves roams the forest. When the characters find them, they are moving in to make a meal of a lost woodcutter. If the characters arrive within 2 rounds of the scream, they can stop the 6 **dire wolves** from killing the man.

If rescued, the woodcutter, Jon (**peasant**), explains he's thoroughly lost. He came into the woods to cut timber, but his axe broke. When he tried to go home, he couldn't find the path he took. No matter which direction he traveled, he just found more forest. He tells the characters that he lives in Briarburg. Any character with professional knowledge of geography can make an Intellect roll. On a success, the character knows this place is 100 miles away to the north.

The woodcutter ran afoul of faeries who objected to his work. They sent him through a faerie realm until he exited here. The woodcutter becomes a companion until the quest ends. If the characters escort Jon home, his apothecary spouse gifts each member of the group with one Elixir of Healing.

F. THE FOREST ANGEL

The **leschy**, Gorgathan, has watched over the forest for hundreds of years. Often, it passes its time in an inert state, in which it can commune with the other trees. The coming of the crocotta disturbed its most recent rest, so the angel went to investigate. When the leschy found the monsters had stolen a child, it tried to help. The child ran off during the fighting. With the monsters dispersed, the leschy now searches the forest for the missing young man.

The group finds a hostile leschy, but quick wits and words can spare them from an unnecessary battle. If the characters explain right off they have come to save Cadmus, the leschy relaxes and becomes indifferent. The leschy wishes the group luck and dismisses them. However, the characters can make the leschy friendly by mentioning they have encountered the Oak Father (Location D) or by a show of deference such as bowing, kneeling, or offering a token of respect.

Once friendly, the leschy explains what happened. He suspects the young man became ensnared by the magic from the tomb (Location H) and leads them to it. The leschy stops 10 yards away from it and goes no closer. The leschy explains the darkness there prevents him from entering. Indeed, the tomb has a powerful

magical ward that prevents angels from coming within 10 yards of it. The ward persists until the tomb has been cleared of undead.

G. MONSTER LAIR

The *crocottas* settled into a cave that burrows into the side of a hill. The cave entrance measures 3 yards across and extends 6 yards, narrowing to just 1 yard across.

The surviving 4 *crocottas* might be in the cave or in the woods nearby. If the characters make no attempt to cover their sounds, three *crocottas* sneak off and hide in the underbrush, while the fourth makes mewling sounds of a frightened child from within the cave. When the group enters the cave, the hidden *crocottas* spring out from hiding to attack the characters from behind.

KOBOLD MINES

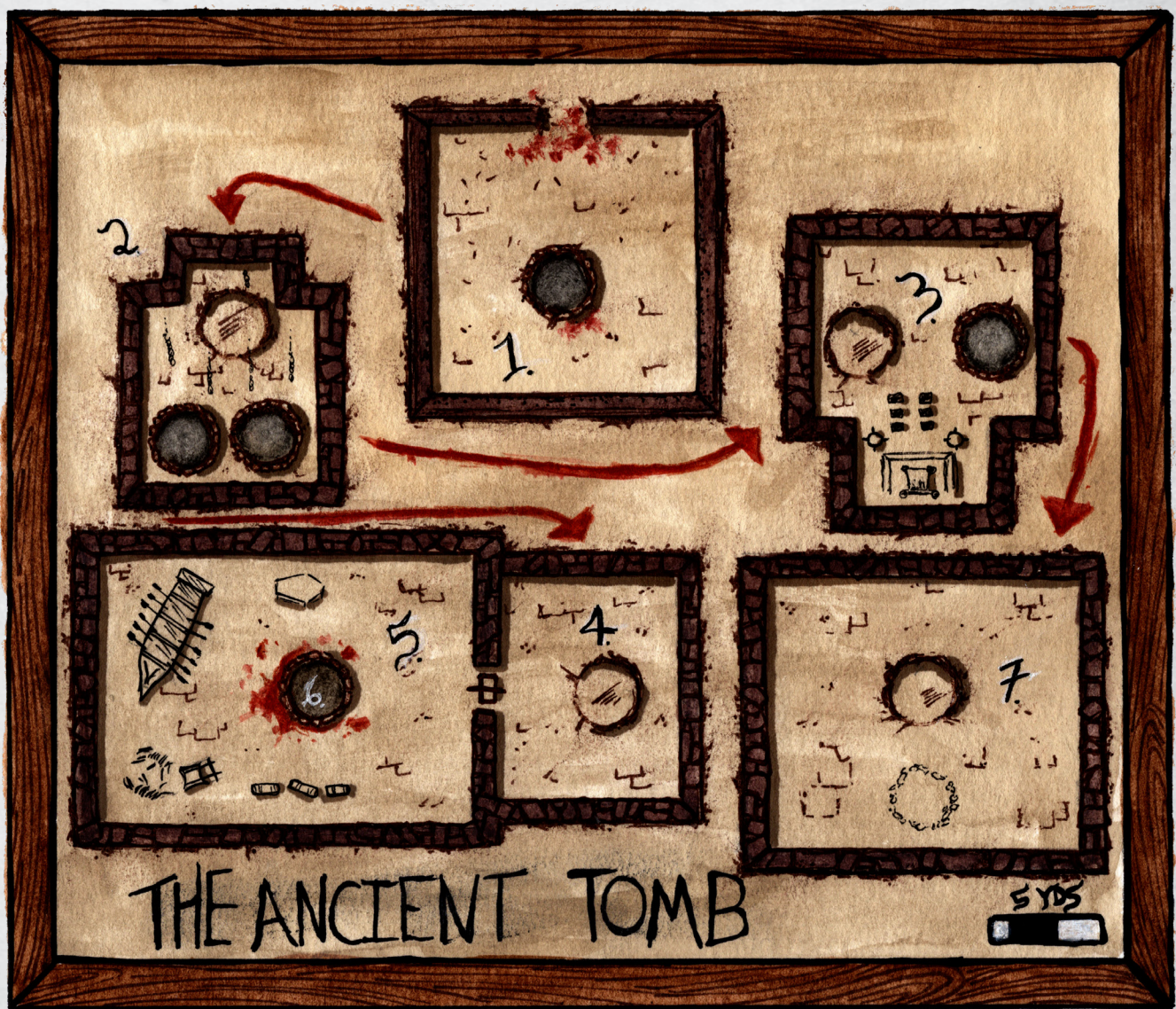
The cave doesn't terminate at the 6-yard mark, though. The ground drops away to form a passage that descends 10 yards before opening into a small cavity, with a floor made of stone slabs

stacked on top of one another. Gold and silver chunks, worth 50 gp in total, lay piled on the floor. From a side passage, the characters can hear sounds of someone chipping away at the stone. A team of 8 *kobolds* digs treasure out of the hill. The *kobolds* are hostile and attack intruders.

H. THE ANCIENT TOMB

Human followers of Shagrad the Ruiner—a demon once worshiped as a god of killing—built this tomb to hold the demon's physical remains. The tomb has a pyramidal shape, about 4 yards tall from base to point. Some blood appears near the entrance. Chilly air blows out from the tomb entrance.

Having waited years for the one foretold, the death priest sensed the seventh son and came up to investigate. The undead snatched the boy and spirited him to the Gate to the Void (location 7). Now, the death priest performs a ritual to open the gate and draw forth the demon so it can be installed in the young man's body. See below for more details.



1. ENTRANCE

A 2-yard-tall, 1-yard-wide hole opens into the tomb's interior. Hieroglyphics cover the walls, floor, and ceiling to show scenes of human sacrifice, war, and monstrous summoning. Above, at the center of the ceiling, there appears the image of a distorted face, mouth yawning wide, eyes slitted, all done in some ochre paint. Dried leaves and twigs cover much of the floor, except for a 2-yard-wide hole at the center.

The hole descends 10 yards through solid stone. Handholds and footholds dot the walls to ease climbing. Inspecting the pit's walls reveals scratch marks as if something had climbed them recently.

If the group spends 10 minutes or longer in this room, 10 **boneguard shield-bearers** start climbing up the wall (shields strapped to their backs), while 4 **boneguard archers** cover them from below, shooting up at the characters if they look down or try to descend.

2. HALL OF CHAINS

From the opening of the pit in the ceiling hang chains. Creatures can crawl up them and then scale the pit walls. More chains, all ending in sharp hooks, hang from the ceiling throughout this room. Two more pits appear in the floor.

Normally, 10 **boneguard shield-bearers** and 4 **boneguard archers** mill about the room. The **boneguard** attack any living creature that descends from above.

3. TOMB OF THE DEATH PRIEST

This chamber is richly appointed, with the skins of exotic animals hanging from the walls. A high-backed chair stands on a dais, flanked by two unlit braziers filled with sweet smelling incense. Six pedestals form two rows. A humanoid skull stands on five pedestals, while a white orb stands on the last. A pit descends to location 7. Stone slabs stick out from the walls to serve as stairs.

THE BRAZIER

Any character sifting through the incense in one of the braziers discovers an iron key. The key unlocks the door to Location 5.

SKULLS

The five skulls once belonged to humans. Each bears a blackened rune carved into the center of the forehead. One skull bears a terrible curse. Any creature that touches it becomes cursed until separated from the skull for at least 1 hour. While cursed in this way, the creature won't willingly part with the skull and regards all other creatures as enemies. However, the creature makes Intellect rolls with 1 boon while it holds the skull.

ORACLE STONE

The demon-god bestowed the Oracle Stone on its servants so they could spy on distant foes and gain wisdom of the future. The

stone is a perfect sphere, 9 inches in diameter, and made from white marble. A creature can become attuned to the Stone by performing a ritual; attunement lasts until someone else becomes attuned to it.

CURSED STONE: The Oracle Stone causes the creature attuned to it to become cursed. While cursed in this way, the creature cannot regain lost Health.

EYE OF THE VOID: A creature attuned to the Oracle Stone can use it to cast the Scry spell from the Divination tradition. The creature can cast this spell even if they cannot normally do so. When the spell ends, the creature makes a Will roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the creature loses 1d6 Health.

DEMONIC WHISPERS: A creature attuned to the Oracle Stone hears hideous whispers in their mind. The whispers offer warnings of danger. Enemies rolling to attack the wielder do so with 1 bane.

4. TOMB ANTECHAMBER

A **boneguard captain**, 4 **boneguard defenders**, and 4 **boneguard choppers** stand guard here. They attack living intruders.

The doors to Location 5 are locked and bear a magical trap. Any living flesh-and-blood creature that touches the doors while not in possession of the key loses 3d6 Health and makes a Strength roll. On a failure, the creature loses an additional 3d6 Health and becomes weakened for 1 hour. The trap immediately resets.

5. CHAMPION'S CHAMBER

A chariot, several horse skeletons, a longboat, some two dozen swords and spears in racks, three chests, and an opened sarcophagus clutter this enormous room. A dark pit ringed with runes occupies part of the floor.

A pair of **giant boneguards** stand behind the coffin. Resting in the coffin is the **boneguard champion**. The giants do not move unless the intruders touch any of the grave goods, at which point the undead take the next available turn to attack. The champion joins the fight at the end of the next round.

THE PIT

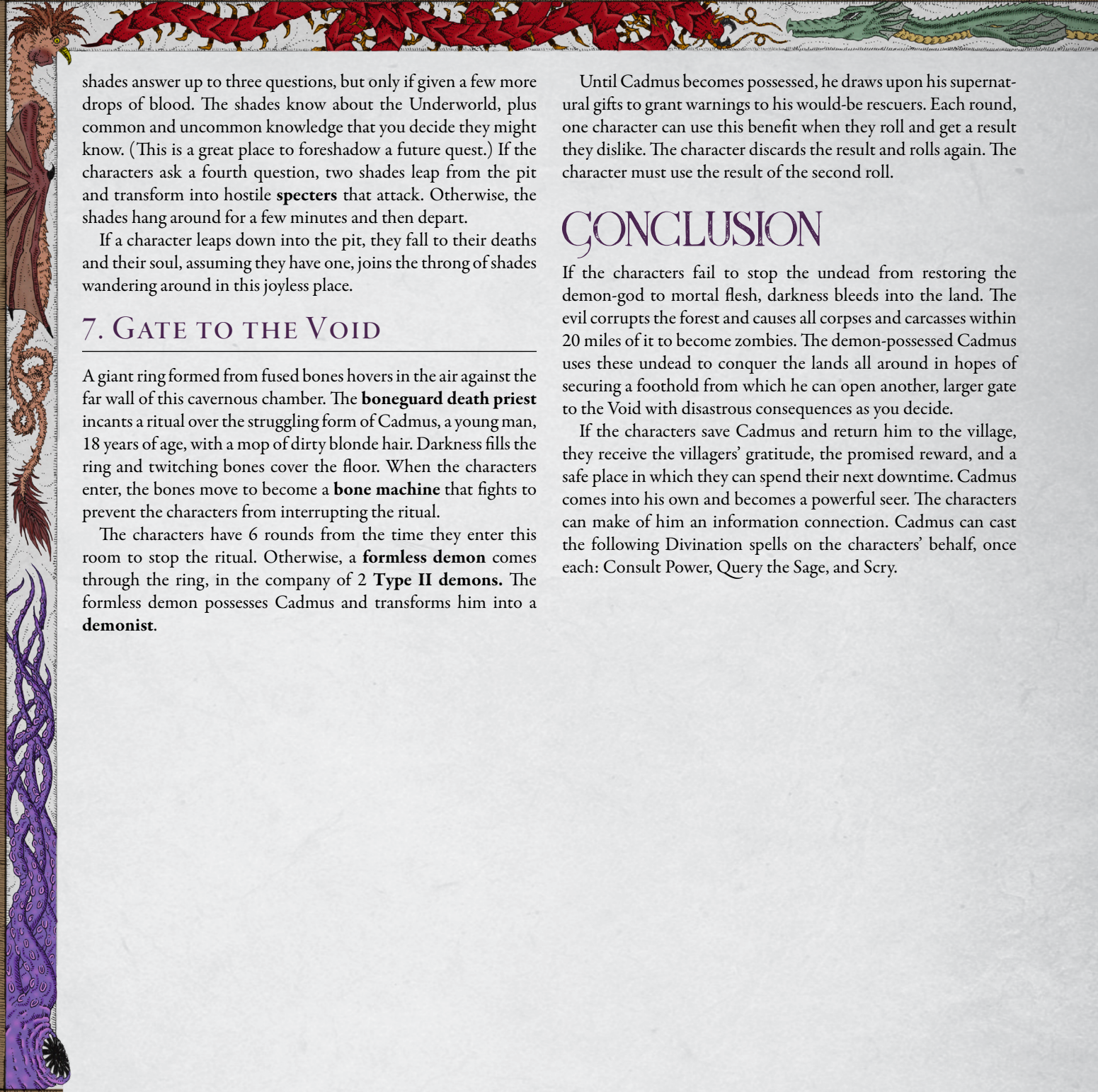
A hole in the floor drops to a bottomless pit. Runes ring the hole and flare with blue light if anyone moves to within 3 yards of them.

CHESTS

The chests hold a considerable amount of treasure. The first chest holds 1,000 sp. The second holds 50 gemstones, each worth 1 gp. The third holds 2,000 cp.

6. BOTTOMLESS PIT

This pit goes all the way down to the Underworld. If any living creature spills blood into the pit, the blood calls forth shades from the deathly realm. These shades scurry up the pit's walls, mewling, beseeching visitors for a taste of fresh blood. The



shades answer up to three questions, but only if given a few more drops of blood. The shades know about the Underworld, plus common and uncommon knowledge that you decide they might know. (This is a great place to foreshadow a future quest.) If the characters ask a fourth question, two shades leap from the pit and transform into hostile **specters** that attack. Otherwise, the shades hang around for a few minutes and then depart.

If a character leaps down into the pit, they fall to their deaths and their soul, assuming they have one, joins the throng of shades wandering around in this joyless place.

7. GATE TO THE VOID

A giant ring formed from fused bones hovers in the air against the far wall of this cavernous chamber. The **boneguard death priest** incants a ritual over the struggling form of Cadmus, a young man, 18 years of age, with a mop of dirty blonde hair. Darkness fills the ring and twitching bones cover the floor. When the characters enter, the bones move to become a **bone machine** that fights to prevent the characters from interrupting the ritual.

The characters have 6 rounds from the time they enter this room to stop the ritual. Otherwise, a **formless demon** comes through the ring, in the company of 2 **Type II demons**. The formless demon possesses Cadmus and transforms him into a **demonist**.

Until Cadmus becomes possessed, he draws upon his supernatural gifts to grant warnings to his would-be rescuers. Each round, one character can use this benefit when they roll and get a result they dislike. The character discards the result and rolls again. The character must use the result of the second roll.

CONCLUSION

If the characters fail to stop the undead from restoring the demon-god to mortal flesh, darkness bleeds into the land. The evil corrupts the forest and causes all corpses and carcasses within 20 miles of it to become zombies. The demon-possessed Cadmus uses these undead to conquer the lands all around in hopes of securing a foothold from which he can open another, larger gate to the Void with disastrous consequences as you decide.

If the characters save Cadmus and return him to the village, they receive the villagers' gratitude, the promised reward, and a safe place in which they can spend their next downtime. Cadmus comes into his own and becomes a powerful seer. The characters can make of him an information connection. Cadmus can cast the following Divination spells on the characters' behalf, once each: Consult Power, Query the Sage, and Scry.