



DREADFUL REALMS

Caverns of the
Wise
Minister

Stone Cold

AN ADVENTURE FOR LEVEL 0 CHARACTERS

Welcome to Sepulchre

In a set of caverns deep below the earth, on the shores of a glowing lake, is a city that should not be. Sepulchre is a piecemeal city, carved out from death's realm by a being older than the gods themselves and populated by the creatures it calls to itself.

Mood AND Themes

Sepulchre is a city based on grudges and lies. Stories set here deal with cycles, especially cycles of vengeance, and memory. The ancient being known as the Wise Minister remembers every offence committed against it, and plans to avenge them. The cave elves believe its lies — and create a false narrative about their place in the city.

Newcomers resent power structures they had no say in, and outsiders try to leave before they get tangled in the

city's web of traded favours and obligations.

Adventures here feel stifling: there are always constraints, be they physical and environmental — no sky or sun, or dangerous monsters that limit how far it's safe to range outside the city — or social. Specific themes include:

Power corrupts. This is morally, spiritually, and physically true. The cave elves gained power from the Wise Minister, and independence through the transgressions of their first leader. The elves bear their own curse, their elders transforming into batlike monstrosities, and the Wise Minister's borrowed power comes with the requirement of complete obedience.

We are all connected. The Wise Minister's telepathy. The cave elves' reverie. The nix's psychic records encoded in coral and the collective wisdom of the uizet. Connections and the community of a shared psychic space are a solace in a dark place. Those connections create in-groups and out-groups, and suspicion between different factions.

The lies we tell ourselves. Our leaders are not monsters. Our homeland is gone. This is our home now. We are happy here. None of these things are true, but life would be unbearable if any of these illusions were pierced. Storytelling in Sepulchre should play heavily on confronting, or finding ways to avoid, uncomfortable truths that could shake the whole realm.

Caught between life and death. Sepulchre and its surrounds are literally, physically, close to the realm of the God of Death. Death is close at hand, and final. For newcomers from the realms above, coming to Sepulchre feels like dying: they are ripped, suddenly and without warning, away from their loved ones and the world they knew. Grief and sorrow are everyday.

ADVENTURING IN SEPULCHRE

Sepulchre is a dangerous place. Numerous factions compete for power and resources. There are uncharted caves to explore, mysteries to unravel, and the malevolent schemes of a monster to thwart. Low level characters face challenges just trying to make a niche for themselves.

Whether characters are local to Sepulchre, from some other underworld civilisation, or from the blue-skied realms of the surface, the city-state of Sepulchre will offer secrets and mysteries as thick as its shadows.

PEOPLE OF SEPULCHRE

Nix. The aquatic nix colonies are the only indigenous residents of Sepulchre. They make their home in the lake and the network of subterranean rivers that it's connected to, travelling into the city to trade or for festivals. Tensions between the nix and the elves run high, with each group defensive about their status as the Wise Minister's most valued servants, but this tension doesn't stop individual elves and nix from building business or personal relationships.

Cave elves. The pale, bat-eared elves were the first outsiders to call Sepulchre home. They built the first city, were the most favoured of the Wise Minister's servants, and hold most of the power in the city-state. They set the tone for Sepulchral culture.

Goblins. Technically, all the goblins in Sepulchre are one family. They're a very large family, though. Most don't live in Sepulchre but amongst an increasing number of hollowed-out stalactites nearby but they're sought after as builders and architects so they're a constant presence in the city.

Uizet. These intelligent, many-eyed oozes are a recent arrival in Sepulchre. Those who have interacted with them declare that they come from another plane of existence. They are possessed of deep oceans of arcane knowledge and power, and often attach themselves to powerful mages as mentors and research partners. Don't call them familiars.

Rootless. The rootless are strange, featureless humanoids who pass through Sepulchre from... elsewhere. Sometimes they travel onwards, and sometimes they stay. They remember fragments of their past and identity, and those fragments degrade over time until they lose all sense of identity and slowly turn to stone.

LIFE IN SEPULCHRE

Life in Sepulchre is notably distinct from life on the surface in many ways, shaped by the environment and the dominant nix and elven cultures.

Currency. Sepulchre runs on barter. No currency is in use, and debts are recorded on tablets made of clay from the Torian Lake (for small debts) or inscribed in stone (for larger sums).

Languages. Elven and Aquan are the most commonly spoken languages in Sepulchre. Both use dialects that are different from the surface variants but comprehensible. Magic items called Tonguestones or Witchstones are common, and allow non-locals to speak and understand one or both of the most common tongues. Most people in Sepulchre speak at least a few phrases of goblin, but rarely enough to hold a conversation.

Calendar. With no seasons to track, the calendar accumulates in blocks of ten days, called phases, with thirty phases to a year. Each year is numbered from the founding of Sepulchre (using the notation 'ff'). When a year concludes, it is retrospectively given a name describing a significant event from that year.

Technology. Technology is limited by access to materials: metal is relatively uncommon, for instance, and only used where it matters. Stone and bone are plentiful, as is wood from the Alabaster Forest. Magic is extremely common and in many ways stands in for technology. Cantrips and low level spells contribute to industries from agriculture to entertainment.

Death. Sepulchre is a sidetrack on the way to the Underworld, a place between life and death. Most of those who live there don't know that, and believe they simply live underground. Dying is complicated, and without the correct help from the nix, souls don't always move on, instead loitering as ghosts in the shadows of the city and within the collective trance of the elves.

Stone Cold

An annual ceremony turns dark when someone goes missing and no one seems to notice. There are whispers of the missing person last seen with a dwarf made of living stone, but everyone knows stone creatures are a rumour too dangerous to even whisper of. Something is off in Sepulchre.

This introductory adventure for *Dreadful Realms: Caverns of the Wise Minister* is for 5-6 level 0 characters, and takes 3-4 hours to play through.

LEVEL ZERO CHARACTERS

Six playable, level zero characters are included with this adventure.

They use some of the races and features from the *Dreadful Realms: Caverns of the Wise Minister Setting Guide*, so are ideal for *Stone Cold*.

If your group prefers to make their own, guidelines are as follows. Characters without class levels lack class features, equipment,

or proficiencies granted by a character class. They determine ability scores just as 1st level characters do, have a proficiency bonus of +2, and have any equipment, proficiencies, and traits granted by their race and background. Characters start with 6+ their Constitution modifier hit points and can regain any lost hit points by finishing a long rest.

LONG RESTING AS AN ELF

Characters playing as elves receive visions during long rests as they join in the shared elven trance. Usually, these visions are peaceful communions with the others, living and dead, who are part of this network of elves. Sometimes visions are more akin to nightmares, and these include fluttering, shrill screams in the dark, the sound of grinding stone, and a voice calling "Do not trust --" before being overtaken by the echoes of dripping water.

BACKGROUND

The annual Festival of the Echelon is the most exciting event in northwestern Sepulchre's Rest district. This coming-of-age ceremony celebrates local youths attaining adulthood, and is also when they are assigned to careers that serve the district, keep it operating smoothly, and allow them to 'earn' the food and housing provided by the city. Alderman Salisbury assigns roles to each person "attaining the next echelon", supposedly at the behest of the city's elven Elders, but in fact simply because she finds this the most convenient way to ensure everyone contributes to Rest's wellbeing, and have every necessary position filled. In theory, every young person is assigned a career that best suits their personal talents and interests, but in practise this is muddled by

several factors: someone must do the undesirable jobs, and in Sepulchre people look out for their own. Those with the best connections and most influence get the jobs they desire; those with few or no friends get what's left.

Each race's definition of "youths" varies. Elves taking part in the ceremony are decades older than humans, who in turn are years older than goblins. Rootless, who arrive in Sepulchre as adults of indeterminate age, and age slowly if at all, take part a year after their arrival.

For generations, dwarves of living stone have appeared throughout Sepulchre. Whenever they appear, they take one of the Rootless, travellers who arrive in Sepulchre from elsewhere, away with them. No one knows where they go or why they take these people. The Rest district has a staunch policy of disbelieving in stone dwarves. It helps that, when the stone dwarves take someone, most of Sepulchre quickly forget that they ever existed.



NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

ALDERMAN SALISBURY, she/her, an middle aged halfling **noble** with tightly curled greying hair. She worked hard to become Alderman of her district and enforces the law vigorously. She encourages the happiness of her residents by assuring them the Elders have their best interests in mind. To Alderman Salisbury, the perfect resident is a productive, uninquisitive one. Everyone else is a problem to eliminate.

IZMELDA LLYTHWALEN, she/her, an older **cave elf** with long white braids, unseeing eyes, and nimble fingers. She loves sewing, priding herself on her weaving and embroidery. She is a kindly woman who has lived through more than most can remember. She aspires to being an Elder and trusts the Wise Minister and Alderman Salisbury implicitly.

SPARKITZZ, he/him, a young **goblin** with one ear covered and bandages covering his hands. His ragged clothes are covered with pouches and pockets stuffed with alchemical ingredients, potions, and concoctions. He loves learning, especially when it involves explosions.

ANQUELL, they/them, an athletic adult **nix** with muscular shoulders and gleaming opal scales. They love secrecy and mystery almost as much as they love competition. They hope to serve the Wise Minister by starting an all-open intramural swimming league to spread the good word through athletic achievement.

SNUG, they/them, a small pink **uizet** with specks of phosphorescent teal. They love history, philosophy, warm hugs, and a tasty snack of lichen on rose quartz. They love nothing more than cuddling with a friend over a snack and debating until they both fall asleep. Good conversation and knowledge are priceless to them.

STONE DWARF has no name, but uses he/him pronouns. He appears as a small but heavy dwarf made of living stone. He is focused on achieving his goal and has little time for chatter. He will not be dissuaded from his mission. Violence is never his first choice, but he is not afraid of using it on someone who interferes with his mission. He is stoic and single-minded.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure assumes characters are from the Rest district in northwest Sepulchre. The Festival of the Echelon is about to take place when a stone dwarf appears, abducting a friend or relative of the characters. It's up to the characters to discover where their friend was taken and, if possible, how to get them back.

Before play begins, have players answer the following questions about their characters:

- What is your favorite part of the Festival?
Suggest aspects such as craft stalls, entertainment, mingling with friends, or the joy of being recognised as an adult.
- What is your role in the community? How do you feel about it? How do you say you feel about it?
- How do you know the other party members?

If players prefer to play as someone new to Sepulchre, use one of the following alternative hooks:

- 1) Characters are a group of villagers who saw something shimmering and were suddenly transported to Sepulchre. Everything is strange and dark, and some townsfolk are bustling about a missing person. No one questions their arrival, and in fact, acts as if they were always part of the community.
- 2) The last thing the characters saw was a rampaging owlbear attacking their village. Now they're underground in a strange dark place where everyone acts like they belong. Is this a dream? (Note: In this hook, the characters are dead, but don't know it. Stone dwarves will be a significant threat in the following adventure.)

If using these alternative hooks, have players answer the following questions about their characters before play begins:

- How do you know the other party members?
- What first felt strange when you arrived here? How did you immediately brush it off?
- Who do you need to get back home to see? What part of them can't you remember?
- What most frightens you here? Why are you drawn toward it?

PART ONE FESTIVAL OF THE ECHELON

Characters attend the Festival of the Echelon and realize at least one friend they planned to sit with is missing. They learn their friend was last seen in the presence of a stone dwarf, though most residents fail to remember their friend at all.

NEWCOMERS TO SEPULCHRE

For characters who are newcomers to Rest, as in Hooks 1 and 2, utilise the following information:

- Everyone is welcoming and in fact acts as if they have always been there. "This is your home."
- Some residents express concern about a missing person, but cannot remember either their name or face. The idea that someone is absent is pervasive, but the details are gone.

A GLORIOUS MORNING

The morning of the festival is dark, chilly, and damp, as all mornings in Sepulchre always are. A shuffling of feet echoes through the caverns at a somewhat jauntier clip than usual as the residents of the Rest district make their way to the Hall of Knowledge. Characters who succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check overhear residents murmuring “the stone ones...they’ve come again” followed by “nonsense, you’re seeing things.” Asking who “they” are leads to the response of a large smile, a warding sign against ill omens, and the resident loudly expressing their desire to arrive on time for the festival. Characters succeeding on a **DC 14 Intelligence (History)** check remember rumours quickly suppressed of creatures appearing out of stone.

MISSING PERSON

If the characters are local to Sepulchre then the missing person, Lysette Montcrief, is the best friend of one of them. Roll to determine which. For example, If there are five players, assign each character a number from 1 through 5, then roll 1d6 to see whose friend is missing. On a 6, roll again.

Lysette is one of the Rootless, adopted by an older human couple who took her in when she arrived, confused and with no memory of the time before she reached Sepulchre.

The Festival entails feasting, games, and the main event: the Choosing. The Choosing takes place in the Hall of Knowledge and everyone in the district is required to attend. Feasting and games are optional, but attendance is highly encouraged in the interest of fostering communal spirit. This is an excellent place to utilise what players previously mentioned as their favorite parts of the festival. Integrate them and give characters a brief opportunity to enjoy what they love most. In addition, the following booths and game sites are set up along the streets and riverways en route to the Hall of Knowledge: Crafting Tables, Swim Races, and the Philosophical Salon.

Throughout their walk to the Hall of Knowledge, characters overhear district residents occasionally

wondering why the Montcrief family is walking without Lysette, hopes that Lysette is not ill, etc. Tell one of the characters that Lysette is their friend, and this is unlike her.

CRAFTING TABLES

Throughout the street are booths stocked with jewellery, woven goods, and mechanical trinkets staffed by cave elves and goblins. Everything on the stall is available for trade. Sepulchre doesn’t use currency but runs on a barter system, and these goods are exchangeable for items of similar value, a service, or a small future favour such as offering to cook a meal for the vendor.

Characters who wish to take part in a Craft Your Vision class with Izmelda Llythwalen must provide their own materials, or offer something in trade for clay, coral, and wooden supplies, and attempt a **DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to create an art object of their choice. On a failure, they create an item that only moderately resembles their vision.

Alternatively, characters who wish to play Name That Concoction with Sparkitzz can attempt a **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check** to identify a potion, bomb, or oil by sight and smell alone. On a success, they receive the identified item. On a failure, they make **Wisdom (Perception)** checks relying on smell at disadvantage for the rest of the day. Sample concoctions are potions or oils of any cantrip from the Wizard spell list. Most non-goblins assume this is a terribly dangerous game but Sparkitzz and any other goblins are well aware that Sparkitzz knows exactly what each concoction does and there will be no serious consequences.

SWIM RACES

Along the road is a dark, oily river where nix lounge on moss-covered rocks. Today, they put aside their typical duties and take part in celebratory swimming races open to all. To win the beginner’s race, a character must succeed on a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** or **Constitution check** which is made at advantage if the character has a swimming speed. The prize is a bracelet of shells and crystals. To win the advanced race against Anquell, a character must succeed on a **DC 16 Strength (Athletics)** or **Constitution check** which is made at disadvantage if the character does not have a swim speed. The prize is a glistening bead inscribed with the phrase *Journey through the Fades to Rest* in Aquan. Failure on either race results in one level of exhaustion.

PHILOSOPHICAL SALON

A battered silken awning extends from a damp stone building, covering tall plates of rich food. Inside, uizet burble contentedly and debate philosophy, specifically the purpose of magic and the greater meaning of portals. Characters are welcome to sit under the awning and share in the delicious meal.

Anyone who wishes to join the debate is welcomed to share their thoughts. Characters wishing to impress the uizet must succeed at either a **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check** to pick holes in another debater's argument or succeed at a **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to make their own case. Being disrespectful, negative, or mean can really distress the uizet, who don't regard such attitudes as conducive to healthy debate. Success results in learning of the most recent portal opening location into The Chosen Heights. It was only open for a moment, but a strange teleporting dog (a blink dog) wandered in and was adopted by a farmer. Failure results in a brain fog from the discussion. Wisdom (Insight) checks are made at disadvantage until the character completes a long rest.

HALL OF KNOWLEDGE

The Hall of Knowledge is the largest building in the northwestern section of Rest. The immense edifice of wood and stone is covered with vines, phosphorescent mushrooms, and is being constantly eroded by dripping water from above. The entrance is illuminated by a wrought iron chandelier and a center door with two large staircases on either side. The staircases lead upwards to offices for the district's representatives. The center door leads to the main hall, which is grand and dimly lit, and contains dozens of benches carved into the sloping floor, all facing a circular stone stage reserved for speakers.

Upon arrival, characters have space reserved for them in the front rows alongside their friends, with a conspicuously empty spot where Lysette should be. If using the alternative hooks, characters also have reserved seats, further back in the hall as they are observing rather than participating. A space at the front is conspicuously empty.

Alderman Salisbury takes the stage, clears her throat, and begins the Ceremony.

"Citizens of Rest! Welcome to this year's Ceremony of the Echelon! I see we have an empty seat. Odd. Please fill in and we'll begin."

Alderman Salisbury gives a short speech about the importance of "attaining the echelon" and affirms that the Elders have assured her that everyone is placed in the best job for their skills and for the community. After each name and position is announced, the crowd politely applauds.

"Annabeth Adrian...tactile crafts.
Grrzat Akkashan...arcane studies.
Lluthien Belial...water treatment..."

Characters wishing to determine if the professions assigned are actually appropriate or interesting to the assignee must succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check**. On a success, they ascertain satisfaction from Grrzat, shocked disappointment from Luthien, and relief from Annabeth. These reactions only last a moment before being replaced by a polite smile and nod of acceptance. Alderman Salisbury is implacable and difficult to read. Characters must succeed on a **DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check** to identify her lack of interest in each individual and their fate.

If at any point characters ask where their friend is, they are met with blank stares and responses that everyone in the district is present. If they ask the Montcrief family directly, Lysette's adoptive parents get a confused look on their faces before replying that they must have accidentally reserved too many seats by mistake.

Causing a disturbance, instigating a fight, or attempting to stop the ceremony results in 3 (1d6) **Guards** being summoned to escort characters from the hall.

Tactics: Guards do not fight to kill and use violence as a last resort. Their intent is to remove disturbances and rowdy citizens from the hall so the ceremony can continue in peace.

GUARD

Medium humanoid (cave elf), any alignment

ARMOR CLASS 16 (chain shirt, shield)

HIT POINTS 11 (2d8 + 2)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

SKILLS Perception +3

SENSES passive Perception 13, darkvision 60 ft.

LANGUAGES Sepulchre vernacular, Elven

CHALLENGE 1/8 (25 XP)

FEY ANCESTRY. Cannot be put to sleep by magical means. Advantage on saving throws to resist being Charmed.

KEEN HEARING. Advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

SEPULCHRAL EDUCATION. The guards know the *shocking grasp* cantrip.

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

DEVELOPMENT

Characters now know something is off in the district. Someone is missing and no one seems to notice or care. The next logical choice is to investigate.

PART TWO

A STUDY IN STONEMASONRY

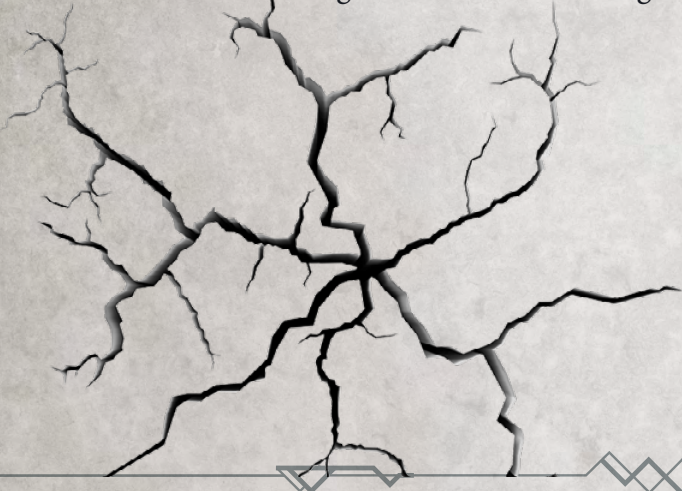
Characters investigate the whereabouts of the missing person and learn more about the dwarves of living stone.

INVESTIGATION

As the festival continues outside of the Hall of Knowledge, characters have the option to query anyone running an event. They may also choose to investigate Lysette's home.

Returning to an event a character has successfully completed automatically provides the following information, otherwise they must convince the person running the event to take them seriously. This can be achieved by succeeding on a **DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion)** check, by bribing the character with something that appeals to them, by demonstrating a talent that suits their interests, or by drawing on a character's social standing.

- Izmelda Llythwalen knows that whatever the Wise Minister says is correct and that if someone is missing, it must be a mistake made by the characters. She does vaguely recall a time when a dwarf made of living stone passed through the district and she thought several friends of hers vanished, but realised later she had only dreamt those friends existed in the first place.
- Sparkitzz recalls finding alchemical ingredients in The Fades and seeing a dwarf come to life from the stone and take a halfling by the hand before they both disappeared. Sparkitzz thought it was a neat trick and has sought to replicate it to no avail since then.
- Anquell cryptically states that "all rivers flow downstream." If pressed, they share an old and seemingly irrelevant story a nix keeper once told



them about nix who ferried lost passengers down the river, though they cannot imagine how such a role would be of any use to the Wise Minister. They reiterate the Alderman's words that all roles must be filled and muse as to who is filling the role now.

- Snug knows that while made of stone, the dwarves are not nutritious for uizet to eat. Those who have tried tell tales of rot, decay, and emptiness, similar to how stone in the Fades tastes.

The above information can also be garnered from any resident in the district of the same race of the characters above (e.g. any other nix knows the same information as Anquell) by succeeding on a **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion)** check. Residents of other races are unaware of the stone dwarves but recall times when they thought they had a friend or relative and realized later that it had just been a dream. They assure characters this must be what's happening with their missing friend and comfort them that with time, they'll forget the dream and move on.

Some characters may want to question Alderman Salisbury. She is always flanked by 2 (1d4) guards and quick to assuage fears that anything is wrong. No one is missing, for no one is ever lost or gone in her district. Stone dwarves are a myth, and a banned one at that. Becoming aggressive or hostile to Alderman Salisbury causes her guards to protect her.

Tactics: Guards do not want to kill citizens, but mercilessly put down any threats to the alderman. Alderman Salisbury attacks as a last resort, preferring to have her guards act for her and "make an example" of someone.

HOME OF THE MISSING

Allow characters to describe the appearance of their friend or ally's home. If using Hook 1 or 2, use the following description instead.

The Montcrief home is a small but well-appointed family home. A row of phosphorescent mushrooms line the entrance to create a ghoulishly lit entryway. Tiny frogs poke their heads out from the lichen, observing all who approach.

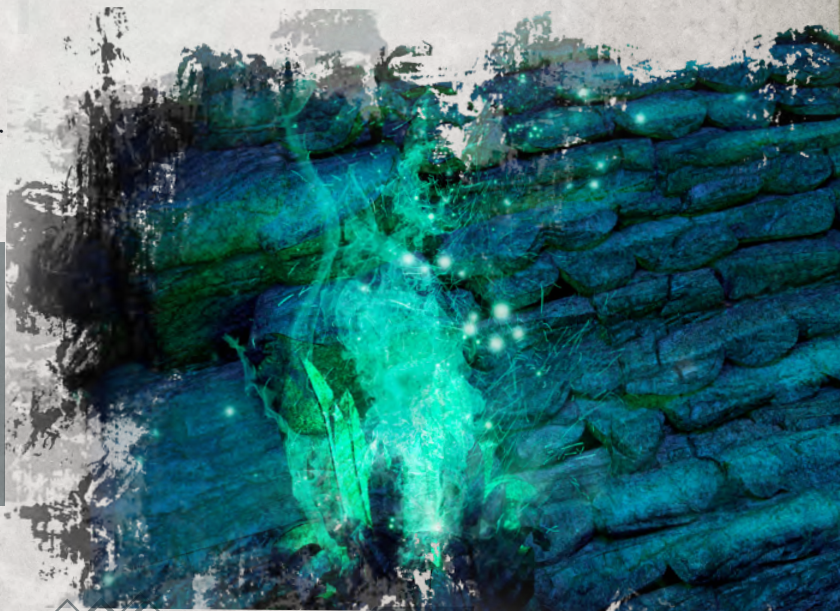
No family members are home, but the house and garden may be investigated. Characters who succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** check outside the home discover a set of small, deeply set footprints leading through the garden before vanishing. The plants surrounding the footprints are withered. Succeeding on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana)** check reveals they died as a result of necrotic energy.

The home is unlocked. Inside is a kitchen, one bedroom, a seating area with a bed made up in it, and a desk. Characters who enter and succeed on either a **DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception)** check realize the home has very little food for three people. Rootless characters understand that this is because the Rootless, including Lysette, eat less often than others. The hearth has been used recently.

The desk is locked, but can be picked by succeeding on a **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves Tools)** check. Inside are several half-completed maps of places above Sepulchre with places marked with question marks, balled up scraps of paper with the words *Remember!* and *Avoid the Fades* written on them, and a journal detailing recurrent dreams of dying in a fire. Scrawled in the margins of the journal are the words: *They are not your family.*

DEVELOPMENT

Characters are aware the stone dwarves are linked to death in some way and have been pointed by at least one source to the Fades.



PART THREE

ALL THINGS FADE

Characters witness a stone dwarf taking Lysette away and have a slim chance to save her.

A STONE-FACED AMBASSADOR

The Fades are a far bleaker district than Rest. Full of untended gardens and houses fallen into disrepair, the mostly Rootless inhabitants trudge through the streets, hardly taking notice of their surroundings. This is where the Rootless go when, after decades in Sepulchre, their identity begins to fade away. Statues line the streets, their faces blank as if eroded away. Succeeding on a **DC 12 Intelligence (History)** check on the stonework reveals the statues were never carved. This is the eventual fate of the Rootless.

Though characters stand out from the Rootless residents, no one takes any notice of them. Anyone they approach or speak to ignores them, as if looking past them. Inhabitants stand at shops and stalls, but make no motion to sell their wares. There is no food anywhere, either in homes, shops, or growing as plantlife.

After characters have attempted to speak to a resident, investigated a statue, or examined a shop, read the following.

The ground quakes and ahead, the stone pavement rises up and assumes the form of a dwarf made entirely of stone, holding one of the Rootless by the hand. Lysette. All eyes turn to him hungrily. "This is the way out?" she asks, and the dwarf nods. "Will it hurt?" He shakes his head and extends his hand to her.

Characters who watch the interaction see the pair take hands, walk several steps, and sink into the ground, vanishing into the stonework. No one gives any sign of recognition that anything strange has occurred and continues to ignore the characters as before. If choosing to stay in The Fades to investigate further, characters witness a similar interaction the following day. Characters using Hook 2 must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth)** check to avoid being spotted by any stone dwarves.

Characters choosing to interfere must do so quickly before the dwarf vanishes with Lysette. While attacking is unwise, characters have a few moments to speak with the dwarf. He doesn't answer in any way the characters understand, but he communicates with Lysette and she speaks for him:

- If asked where he is going or what he is doing, "We guide the lost."
- If asked why, "We serve." If asked to clarify this, "All things must have a purpose and all things must end; our purpose is to serve the Ending."
- If approached with anger or hostility, "We only take those who were already gone."
- If asked how to get someone back, "There is no continuing a game that has ended."
- If asked to accompany the dwarf and not using alternative Hook 2: "Your journey continues. We will see you at its end."
- Hook 2 only: "Do not leave this place. We will return for you. Fear not. Your journey has ended."

Lysette does not seem distressed or even particularly alert. She doesn't recognise her friends until reminded of their name, of times together, etc. Then she smiles and shakes her head. "It's a relief. I'm not pretending anymore."

The stone dwarf does not attack characters, but is focused on his job and does not entertain idle chatter. If characters are rude, repetitive, or aggressive, he and the person accompanying him vanish into the pavement using the dwarf's Stonewalk ability.

The dwarf is single-minded, but there are ways to deal with him. The characters might, together, be able to defeat him. He doesn't want to murder multiple living beings to get to Lysette, so if the characters obstruct him and show no signs of relenting, he leaves empty-handed. Alternatively, the characters might flee (dragging Lysette with them; she neither resists nor assists them) and hide, or fetch guards to deal with the dwarf.

CONCLUSION

If the characters save Lysette, by the next morning she has completely forgotten her experience, and those who knew her forget that she was ever gone. This does mean she has no assigned career, no prospects, and will survive on charity until next year's ceremony.

Otherwise, Lysette is gone where characters cannot or will not yet follow. Stone dwarves continue to appear and take people who are quickly forgotten, except by a certain few. There are no funerals, for no one is dead or missing. Everyone performs their assigned roles happily, for who could be unhappy when the Elders have a plan for them? All is as it should be in Sepulchre, just as it always has been and will be.

REWARDS

Characters advance to Level 1.

STONE DWARF

Medium construct, neutral

ARMOR CLASS 14 (natural armour)

HIT POINTS 45 (6d8 + 18)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

SKILLS Perception +3

SENSES passive Perception 13, blindsight 60 ft.

CONDITION IMMUNITIES Charmed, Exhausted, Frightened, Poisoned, Prone, Stunned

LANGUAGES Understands all but does not speak. Telepathy (with Stone Dwarves and Rootless only) 10 ft.

CHALLENGE 2 (450 XP)

STONEWALK. The Stone Dwarf can walk through rock and stone at its normal speed, taking with it one creature of up to Large size (which does not need to breathe for the duration of the stonewalk). While doing so, the Stone Dwarf does not disturb the material it moves through.

NO SLEEP. Cannot be put to sleep by any means.

THE FORGETTING. Those who encounter a Stone Dwarf forget them, and Rootless who answer Maelach's Call, unless they succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence saving throw.

MAELACH'S CALL. When in physical contact with one of the Rootless, the Stone Dwarf causes it to remember its nature: a dead soul, diverted from its journey to the Death God's garden. Most Restless are eager to resume their journey, but some may resist. When no longer in contact with the Stone Dwarf, the Rootless forgets Maelach's Call.

ACTIONS

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Choke. When the Stone Dwarf successfully grapples a creature, it may choke it as a bonus action. A choking creature makes a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. If it fails consecutive saving throws equal to its Constitution modifier +1 (minimum 1), it falls unconscious and is Incapacitated.

Pregenerated Characters

We've included six pregenerated level 0 characters that show off some of the playable races available to you in *Dreadful Realms: Caverns of the Wise Minister*.

You'll find they're almost complete. There are a few opportunities for players to customise them and (being painfully honest here) we've omitted Backgrounds because we're not allowed to print that text. You are, we're not!

Social Standing is a mechanic unique to Sepulchre. We've simplified it here, but you'll find more detailed rules in the Setting Guide. For now, just use it as a roleplaying guide for groups characters have interacted with before.

That's all! Print, play, and have fun!

PLAYER NAME

RACE Human

CHARACTER NAME

BACKGROUND

Craftsperson

CLASS LEVEL

N/A

SIZE M

30

MOVEMENT

PORTRAIT

SKILLS

PROFICIENCY BONUS

+2

+2

STRENGTH 14

+2

DEXTERITY 15

+3

CONSTITUTION 16

+0

INTELLIGENCE 11

-1

WISDOM 9

+1

CHARISMA 13

TOTAL 9

HP 9

AC

12

DEATH SAVES

INITIATIVE

+2

BONUS

HIT DICE 1d6+3

WEAPON

ATK BONUS

DAMAGE

DMG TYPE

Club

+4

1d6+2

B

SAVING THROWS

STR

DEX

CON

INT

WIS

CHA

RACIAL ABILITIES

Choose one additional skill.

ADDITIONAL PROFICIENCIES

LANGUAGES

Sepulchral Vernacular, Nix

SENSES

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☒ +1

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☒ +3

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ACROBATICS (DEX)

ANIMAL HANDLING (WIS)

ARCANA (INT)

ATHLETICS (STR)

DECEPTION (CHA)

HISTORY (INT)

INSIGHT (WIS)

INTIMIDATION (CHA)

INVESTIGATION (INT)

MEDICINE (WIS)

NATURE (INT)

PERCEPTION (WIS)

PERFORMANCE (CHA)

PERSUASION (CHA)

RELIGION (INT)

SLEIGHT OF HAND (DEX)

STEALTH (DEX)

SURVIVAL (WIS)

ACTIVE ABILITIES

PASSIVE ABILITIES

SOCIAL STANDING
Craftspersons of Rest
(positive - you can expect a warm reception from this group)
Local government of Rest
(negative - you can expect a cold reception from this group)

COMBAT

SPELL SLOTS

SPELL ATTACK

FIRST LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

SECOND LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

THIRD LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

FOURTH LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

FIFTH LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

SIXTH LEVEL
◆ ◆

SEVENTH LEVEL
◆ ◆

EIGHTH LEVEL
◆

NINTH LEVEL
◆

SAVE DC

PLAYER NAME

RACE Human

CHARACTER NAME

BACKGROUND

Acolyte

CLASS LEVEL

N/A

SIZE M

30

MOVEMENT

PORTRAIT
SKILLS

PROFICIENCY
BONUS

+2

+0

STRENGTH

11

+1

DEXTERITY

13

INSPIRATION

-1

+1

CONSTITUTION

9

INTELLIGENCE

13

+3

WISDOM

16

+2

CHARISMA

15

PASSIVE
INSIGHT

13

15

HP

5

AC

11

DEATH SAVES

INITIATIVE

+1

BONUS

HIT

DICE

1d6-1

WEAPON

ATK BONUS

DAMAGE

DMG TYPE

Staff

+2

1d6

B

ACTIVE ABILITIES

PASSIVE ABILITIES

COMBAT

SPELL SLOTS

SPELL
ATTACK

FIRST LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

SECOND LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

THIRD LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

FOURTH LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

FIFTH LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

SIXTH LEVEL
◆ ◆

SEVENTH LEVEL
◆ ◆

EIGHTH LEVEL
◆

NINTH LEVEL
◆

SAVE
DC

SOCIAL STANDING:

Clergy of the Wise
Minister in Rest (positive
- you can expect a warm
reception from this
group)

Clergy of other deities in
Rest (negative - you can
expect a cold reception
from this group)

SAVING THROWS

STR

DEX

CON

INT

WIS

CHA

RACIAL ABILITIES

Choose one additional skill.

ADDITIONAL PROFICIENCIES

LANGUAGES

Sepulchre vernacular, Goblin

SENSES

P E

ACROBATICS (DEX)

ANIMAL HANDLING (WIS)

ARCANA (INT)

ATHLETICS (STR)

DECEPTION (CHA)

HISTORY (INT)

INSIGHT (WIS)

INTIMIDATION (CHA)

INVESTIGATION (INT)

MEDICINE (WIS)

NATURE (INT)

PERCEPTION (WIS)

PERFORMANCE (CHA)

PERSUASION (CHA)

RELIGION (INT)

SLEIGHT OF HAND (DEX)

STEALTH (DEX)

SURVIVAL (WIS)

PLAYER NAME

RACE Riftside Goblin

CHARACTER NAME

BACKGROUND

Apprentice Engineer

CLASS LEVEL

N/A

SIZE S

30

MOVEMENT

PORTRAIT
SKILLS

PROFICIENCY
BONUS

+2

-1

STRENGTH

8

+3

DEXTERITY

16

INSPIRATION

+1

+3

CONSTITUTION

13

INTELLIGENCE

16

+0

+1

WISDOM

10

CHARISMA

12

PASSIVE
INSIGHT

10

10

HP
7

AC

13

DEATH SAVES

INITIATIVE

+3

BONUS

HIT

DICE

1d6+1

WEAPON

Sling (30/120)

ATK BONUS

+3

DAMAGE

1d4+3

DMG TYPE

B

SAVING THROWS

STR

DEX

CON

INT

WIS

CHA

RACIAL ABILITIES

Arcane Sense. You have an intuitive ability to recognise magical effects or items. You can cast detect magic twice per day, without the need for material components.

Nimble. You can take the Disengage action as a bonus action, and you have advantage on all attempts to escape being grappled.

ADDITIONAL PROFICIENCIES

LANGUAGES

Sepulchre vernacular, Elven, Goblin

SENSES

Darkvision 60 ft.

ACTIVE ABILITIES

PASSIVE ABILITIES

SOCIAL STANDING:
Goblins of Rest (positive - you can expect a warm reception from this group)
Clergy of the Wise Minister (negative - you can expect a cold reception from this group)

COMBAT

SPELL SLOTS

SPELL
ATTACK

FIRST LEVEL
◇ ◇ ◇ ◇

SECOND LEVEL
◇ ◇ ◇

THIRD LEVEL
◇ ◇ ◇

FOURTH LEVEL
◇ ◇ ◇

FIFTH LEVEL
◇ ◇ ◇

SIXTH LEVEL
◇ ◇

SEVENTH LEVEL
◇ ◇

EIGHTH LEVEL
◇

NINTH LEVEL
◇

SAVE
DC

[illegible]

PLAYER NAME

RACE Rootless

CHARACTER NAME

BACKGROUND

Explorer

CLASS LEVEL

N/A

SIZE M

30

MOVEMENT

PORTRAIT

SKILLS

PROFICIENCY BONUS

+2

+3

STRENGTH

17

+2

DEXTERITY

15

+1

CONSTITUTION

13

+0

INTELLIGENCE

10

+1

WISDOM

12

-1

CHARISMA

8

11

PASSIVE PERCEPTION

11

PASSIVE INSIGHT

TOTAL

7

HP

7

AC

12

DEATH SAVES

INITIATIVE

+2

BONUS

HIT

DICE

1d6+1

WEAPON

ATK BONUS

DAMAGE

DMG TYPE

Handaxe

+4

1d6+2

S

ACTIVE ABILITIES

PASSIVE ABILITIES

COMBAT

SPELL SLOTS

SPELL ATTACK

FIRST LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

SECOND LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

THIRD LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

FOURTH LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

FIFTH LEVEL
◆ ◆ ◆

SIXTH LEVEL
◆ ◆

SEVENTH LEVEL
◆ ◆

EIGHTH LEVEL
◆

NINTH LEVEL
◆

SAVE DC

ADDITIONAL PROFICIENCIES

LANGUAGES

Sepulchre vernacular, Infernal

SENSES

SAVING THROWS

STR

DEX

CON

INT

WIS

CHA

RACIAL ABILITIES

Breathless. You breathe, but rarely. You can hold your breath for 10 minutes + your Constitution modifier. You have advantage on saving throws made against harmful gases and vapors, and inhaled poisons.
Tireless. You barely need to sleep, although you do so out of habit. You take no penalties for your first level of Exhaustion, but all subsequent levels affect you normally. You cannot die of Exhaustion.
Dreamless. You do not dream, cannot be put to sleep by magical means, and are not affected by any magic that affects dreams (e.g. a Night Hag's Nightmare Haunting).

P E

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ACROBATICS (DEX)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ANIMAL HANDLING (WIS)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ARCANA (INT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ATHLETICS (STR)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DECEPTION (CHA)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HISTORY (INT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	INSIGHT (WIS)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	INTIMIDATION (CHA)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	INVESTIGATION (INT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MEDICINE (WIS)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NATURE (INT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PERCEPTION (WIS)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PERFORMANCE (CHA)
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	RELIGION (INT)
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	+4 STEALTH (DEX)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	+3 SURVIVAL (WIS)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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SOCIAL STANDING:
Hunters of Rest (positive - you can expect a warm reception from this group)
Nix of Rest (negative - you can expect a cold reception from this group)

PLAYER NAME

RACE Cave Elf

CHARACTER NAME

BACKGROUND

Professional Singer

CLASS LEVEL N/A

SIZE M MOVEMENT 30

PORTRAIT
SKILLS

PROFICIENCY BONUS

+2

-1

STRENGTH 8

+2

DEXTERITY 14

+0

+1

CONSTITUTION 10

INTELLIGENCE 13

+2

+3

WISDOM 14

CHARISMA 16

PASSIVE PERCEPTION 12

PASSIVE INSIGHT 12

TOTAL 6

HP 6

TEMP 6

AC 12

DEATH SAVES 12

INITIATIVE BONUS +2

HIT DICE 1d6

WEAPON

ATK BONUS

DAMAGE

DMG TYPE

Dagger

+4

1d4+2

P

SAVING THROWS

STR DEX
CON INT
WIS CHA

RACIAL ABILITIES

Keen Senses (proficient in Perception)
Keen Hearing (advantage on Perception checks based on hearing)
Fey Ancestry: magic can't put you to sleep; advantage on rolls to resist being charmed
Trance. When you meditate for 4 hours you gain the benefits of a long rest.
Educated. You have proficiency in one set of tools or one additional weapon.
Sunlight Sensitivity. Disadvantage on attack rolls and Perception checks in direct sunlight.

ADDITIONAL PROFICIENCIES

1 set of tools/weapon (player's choice)

LANGUAGES

Sepulchre Vernacular, Elven

SENSES

Darkvision 60 ft.

ACTIVE ABILITIES

PASSIVE ABILITIES

SOCIAL STANDING:
Performers of Rest
(positive - you can expect a warm reception from this group)
Craftspersons of Rest
(negative - you can expect a cold reception from this group)

COMBAT

SPELL SLOTS

SPELL ATTACK

FIRST LEVEL
SECOND LEVEL
THIRD LEVEL
FOURTH LEVEL
FIFTH LEVEL
SIXTH LEVEL
SEVENTH LEVEL
EIGHTH LEVEL
NINTH LEVEL

SAVE DC

P	E	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ACROBATICS (DEX)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ANIMAL HANDLING (WIS)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ARCANA (INT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ATHLETICS (STR)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	+5 DECEPTION (CHA)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HISTORY (INT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	INSIGHT (WIS)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	INTIMIDATION (CHA)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	INVESTIGATION (INT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MEDICINE (WIS)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NATURE (INT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PERCEPTION (WIS)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	+5 PERFORMANCE (CHA)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PERSUASION (CHA)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	RELIGION (INT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SLEIGHT OF HAND (DEX)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	STEALTH (DEX)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURVIVAL (WIS)

THANK YOU FOR READING!

If you enjoyed this journey into Sepulchre, and want to learn more of the city's secrets and frailties, we hope you'll consider backing the *Dreadful Realms: Caverns of the Wise Minister* Kickstarter. For our core funding goal, we've created a 40,000+ word setting guide full of lore, locations, plot hooks, and player options. One of our stretch goals is a full, levels 1-11 adventure path by some of the best RPG writers out there, in which players will plumb the depths of Sepulchre's dangers, and attempt to claw back some victories from the darkness.

[MAKE YOUR PLEDGE](#)

CREDITS

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Special thanks to everyone who has followed the Kickstarter campaign, expressed interest and support, and made us brave enough to even attempt this.

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