

The Hidden Shrine

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Introduction

A TTRPG adventure compatible with Dungeons and Dragons 5e adventure for a party of level 7 characters.

Rumours have flitted around the city of Hark for many years of magic, sorcery and wealth hoarded by some of the noble families of the city. Some had been investigated but nothing had ever come from such rumours.

Some investigators quickly rose through the ranks and were granted manors and a life of privilege of which they hadn't been entitled to before as a result of their investigation. This only spurred the rumours on more.

However, the city of Hark is a mercantile city where religion, wealth and politics blend into a miasma of discord and discontent. The Party find themselves in a busy chaotic city where your station seems to be judged by the size of your purse.

The Temple of Selune

The Sharites



The party wanders around the city, perhaps resting after a long week of travel and adventuring. There are many places here that offer the party a good price for items, goods and more because of recent deeds in neighbouring cities and towns.

However when they stumble past the temple of Selune they are greeted with a different type of fame.



The adventurers were beginning to get used to their new found fame. After many successful adventures they had earned a name for themselves and were now reaping the benefits. Many store owners granted them discounts and it was becoming rarer where they had to pay for lodgings, food and drink. Frequently people are more than willing to shout at them their lodgings and food.

However their fame could not prepare them for what greeted them at the steps of a temple to Selune, the goddess of the moon.

“Behold, the children of prophecy walk amongst us! The Mistress of the night has blessed us all with the presence of her champions! Those who would cast down the false gods of light and bring upon the true power of darkness. The scroll of the goddess of darkness and night, The Shard of Shar itself has revealed to us these adventurers, these heroes of darkness as our saviours from the tyranny of light!” the near crazed hooded man preached as he pointed towards the party. In his hand was a scroll where the edges of the paper were as dark as night.

Leaning closer to look at the scroll a scene depicted warriors of Shar beating, slaughtering several holy champions of Pelor, Selune and Mystra. But something caught the eye of the party. The warriors of Shar, clad in the light drinking plate and cloth of the deity of night, were none other than themselves.

Several others in the city looked between the parchment and the heroes they were praising and a murmur rippled through the crowd.



As the party stared at the person before them several figures dressed in full body lengthy dark robes appeared. Some had a hood to cover most of their face but a few had ornate horrific masks. Each mask depicted the artwork found upon the scroll in front of them. As they pushed through the crowd they stopped a respectful dozen feet away or so and dropped to their knees and began to openly praise Shar. Moments later priests, clerics and holy people from Selune appeared from the temple itself to investigate the gathering just as the light began to dim.

The congregation of these dark prophets was beginning to dim the light of the sun. A reverberation of energy whirled around the gathering as the combined energy muffled even noise itself. Soon guards appeared and began to try and break up the gathering as the common folk and merchants alike fled from the party and the robed figures. But as soon as one of them was grabbed by a guard each of them vanished in a cloud of darkness.

Soon normality crept back in with the sun pushing away the darkness. The priests and clerics of Selune chanted a few prayers as they ran down the steps and surrounded the party. The residual dark energy lifted and both light and sound returned as normal.

"You lot. You better come with us. You have some explaining to do" the Guards said to them, hands on weapons as they looked at the scroll that lay on the ground. "Sisters and brothers of Selune. Can you attend us as well? This looks beyond us."

NPC's:

- Sharites
- Guards (assorted)
- Sister Sally

Encounter: Interrogation from the guards.

Creature: N/A (a dozen at a time and then taken to the garrison.

Map - N/A

The party are taken to the barracks in this part of the city. Here they are questioned by the guards around their involvement with the masked figures. If the party mention their guild, travelling party of names one of the guards recognise them and unless the party has done something to attract further suspicion they are quickly dismissed as being the source of the problems.

The sister that came with them, Sally, speaks openly about the problems they are having with these people who are preaching Shar's word in the city. More people are turning the teachings of her and ceasing to worship the good deities. Sally believes that there is a hidden cult somewhere in the city and that the arrival of the party could be just what they are needing. As the cult believe them to be some form of herald she believes that they may be able to find what others can not.

Both Sister Sally and the guards ask the party to look into it and then alert the guard the moment they find anything as these people could be dangerous and, if their suspicions are correct (based on the rumours running around the city) they will be wealthy enough to be well guarded or defended.

Seeking the Cult Finding Clues

The party had looked around most of the markets, shops and taverns in the lower district during the day and as the sun set they found themselves in front of the "Pickled Dill", a tavern of some kind. A young barmaid smiled at them and urged them into the tavern to have a drink listing off a few

specials as she walked towards the front door. As she walked with them she explained how this was her first night working and that the clients here tipped well. Considering most of them were lords, ladies or those aspiring to meet those of connections she was excited to work here.

Sitting down at the table, the party gets some good food and drinks and watches the people around them. Many people here in this tavern are in good if not fine clothes. However, despite the better clothing they still act as many of the other patrons in other lower districts.

NPC's:

- William Pilsburn

Encounter: William

Creature: William

Map - N/A

On a successful DC12 perception check (active or passive) anyone sitting down at their table would hear a rather loud and obnoxious gentleman begin to speak loudly.

"I don't know if I can do it any more Geoff. I have tried to do everything she says but I just don't know if I love her that much. I mean all this nonsense about Champions and prophecies. I just wanted to show her what I could do. Prove here I could be more."

A further successful DC14 intelligence or perception check would recognise the voice as the hooded person who was talking at the steps of Selune. However, if the party isn't trying to conceal their eavesdropping then he will notice and (or contest with perception) and try to run from the room. He is very easy to catch as he is very drunk.

"Oh please don't. You are the champions of the night. Shars chosen. Don't tell lady Ruesford what I said. I am happy to serve really."

Ruesford Manor

Either William or someone else could easily show the party to Ruseford manor. It's a large building, two story, that has a small wall and metal gate that separates it from the other manors in the area.

Despite the time it is quiet and no one seems to be around.

NPC's:

- N/A

Encounter: Finding the Entrance

Creature: N/A

Map - 327ThRuMa

The house is unlocked and no one is within. Entering the party they find themselves in a wealthy person's home that has rugs, paintings and furniture everywhere.

However they can sense something is off about the house. It mostly looks unlivd in.

The secret door is triggered by the statue, in this version, in the same room (top left of the map). There is obvious discoloration where the bookcase on the wall (next to stairs) swings to meet the vertical aligned bookcase to reveal stairs down.

The main entrance has a larger sitting room on the left with chairs and a fireplace. Opposite is a guest quarters with a bookcase, wardrobe, bed and a sitting desk. The kitchen is central to the house with a bedroom for a servant or maid. And a kids room nearby. Stairs lead to the main bedroom above the servants quarters too.

The kids room is accessible by the centre of the house but the door is locked. Toys and kids clothes populate this room but little else. The dining room leads to the study where the secret room can be found.

The Basement

They can hear whimpers and pleading from a male down the stairs as they open the secret door. If the party wishes to get the guard they can (and we can finish the adventure) however if the party descends the steps they are greeted with a moderately well lit cellar room that is about 30 feet by 40 feet. At the centre of the room is a young man who is bound and laying on an altar. Dedications and imagery to Shar are everywhere around the room and they see several people in robes and masks around the

person. A female chants at the shrine to Shar and one performs magic at the altar on the captive. (The magic is divine if someone wants to try and check it with a DC14 arcana or dc12 religion check).

There are another four people in the room who are robed and chanting.

NPC's:

- Lady Ruseford

Encounter: Confronting the cultists

Creature: 1 Mage (Lady Ruesford), 1 Cult fanatic, 4 cultists.

Map - N/A

The mage wont use area of affect spells unless it all looks helpless, at which point she will try and take down as many people with her.

There are a few pillars are braziers every 10 feet (so 6 pillars 10 feet apart and braziers near the pillars) that could provide partial cover but the room is otherwise quite open.

Lore & NPCs

Lady Ruseford



Lady Ruesford is a mage of some power. Born into a family that worshipped Shar she was exposed to the Mistress of the Nights blessings from an early age. But as her family slowly left her she realised that somethings you just need to do yourself.

Getting married was difficult for her due to her devoutness to Shar. However she needed to keep up the pretence of being a lady of the city and an arrangement was made. While the arrangement suited them both she was still uncomfortable with the level of devotion to Shar she was able to give. So an ambitious project was undertaken and the result was a place of worship, a shrine to the goddess of darkness and night under her house.

Not long after construction finished she started to receive visions and urgent impulses to create a series of scrolls and documents that announced a prophecy.

Lore:

The feather quill made from a hippogriff feather scratched noisily away at the parchment scroll in front of her. As the ink flowed from the feather quill the same images appeared in her mind. Faces of now familiar people, certain clothing in a certain pose but this time the surrounding elements were different. The last scroll she was bid to create had them fighting against holy warriors of Selune but this one was a stark contrast. In fact this one had those same warriors healing and showing mercy to those warriors as they welcomed them into Shar's fold.

The images flew unbidden and with an urgency that she could nearly taste. The level of detail and the need to have this created exactly as the image was in her mind nearly caused physical pain. But as she scribed down, coloured in the scroll with different inks the image came to life.

Relief and the unmistakable sense of reward and pleasure rushed through her nerves and she was rewarded by her goddess. It had been a long time since she had questioned the will of Shar but the rewards she was given, the power she felt coursing through her veins was enough to even hide her guilt at misleading her followers. They didn't need to know that the prophecy was the work of her and a quill. Shar had a plan and she was her instrument.

Maps

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Monsters

Adventure Encounters

Cultist

CULTIST

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Cult Fanatic

CULT FANATIC

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dark Devotion. The fanatic has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. The fanatic is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spell casting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

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

1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

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

Mage

MAGE

Medium Humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any four languages

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, ice storm*

5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

ACTIONS

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