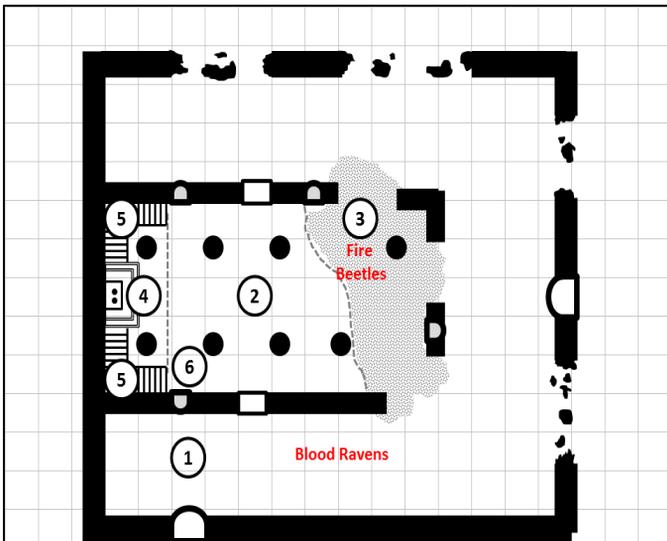


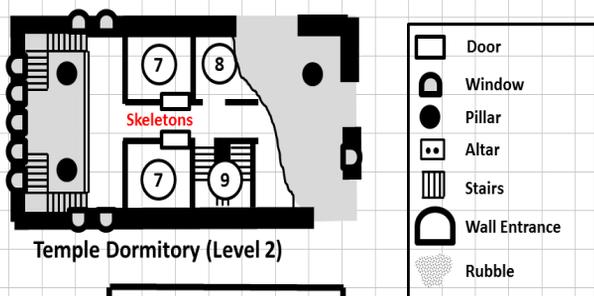
The House of Eternal Mercy

By Shane Siebert



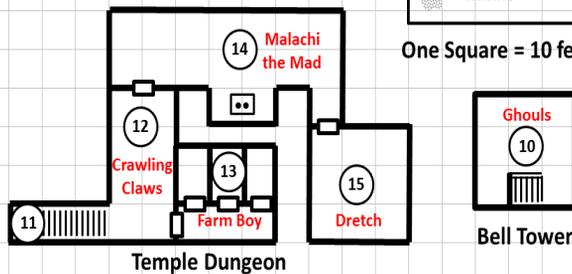
Temple Exterior and First Floor (Level 1)

One Square = 10 feet



Temple Dormitory (Level 2)

One Square = 10 feet



Temple Dungeon

Bell Tower

Adventure Overview: Several local villagers have gone missing, one of which is a local lord's trusted farmhand. Unbeknownst to all, an evil monk has returned from the grave and is terrorizing the countryside. Caravans traveling at night along the road have spotted lone individuals matching the description of the missing, wandering near an old ruined temple. The player characters (PCs) are hired to investigate these strange sightings and perhaps find the missing parties. This adventure is suitable for low-level adventuring parties of four to six PCs.

Adventure Background: A long time ago, a temple devoted to a God of Mercy was located along a busy trade route and offered shelter to passing caravans. But, the temple's patriarch, Malachi, held a dark secret: he had fallen under the sway of a succubus. Under the demon's influence, Malachi committed unspeakable deeds in the dungeons beneath his temple. Lone travelers would often check in, but never leave. Eventually, the truth about the temple spread across the land and the temple was sacked by paladins. Malachi was slain, his reign of terror ended. Or so people thought. In fact, Malachi recently returned from the grave, as a Heucuva, an intelligent variety of undead which is able to appear as any victim it has slain and uses this ability to lure more victims to its lair. Heucuva are very difficult for clerics to turn and they are only wounded by silver or magic weapons.

Adventure Hooks: The PCs may have been hired by a local lord to find the farmhand. The PCs might have also heard rumors of the temple while passing through a local village. Or, maybe they are traveling and spot a lovely woman on the side of the road...

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1. Temple Exterior. A high stone wall surrounds the forsaken temple, though several sections of the wall are destroyed. The stone temple is in poor condition as well, its entire east wing collapsed, yet a bell tower is still intact and rises to a height of 50 ft. Broken masonry, thorny weeds and brambles choke the courtyard.

Three blood ravens are perched atop the temple's roof and will attack any PC they see entering the courtyard.

2. Temple Interior. The inside of the temple is in no better shape than the outside. The nave's eastern third has been reduced to a pile of rubble and broken beams, though seven sturdy marble pillars hold the majority of the second floor aloft. A high altar dominates the temple's west end, with stairs leading up to the dormitories located on the second floor.

3. Rotting Carcass. A not-so-recently deceased adventurer is sprawled atop a large pile of debris near the temple's east wing. The cadaver is outfitted in a chain shirt and possesses a long sword, shield, dagger, short bow and 12 silver arrows.

Two fire beetles lurk nearby and will take exception to any PC approaching their tasty larder.

4. Profaned High Altar. Human entrails and wet blood are spread over the altar, indicating a recent sacrifice. If PCs attempt to cleanse or purify the altar, they will gain a magic boon of +1 to hit against Malachi the Mad. Observant PCs may also notice a blood trail leading to the **Hidden Trapdoor** (Area 6).

5. Stairs to Dormitories. Stone stairs on either side of the altar lead up to the **Dormitory Rooms** (Area 7). Sections of the banister are prone to collapse and pose a **falling hazard** (d6 damage) to unsuspecting PCs.

6. Hidden Trapdoor. An unlocked trapdoor leads to the **Dungeon** (Area 11).

7. Dormitory Rooms. These rooms were once used to house visiting travelers, though each room is now occupied by **two skeletons**. The skeletons are lying on ratty straw mattresses beneath moldering blankets. The skeletons will rise from their repose when the door is opened. None of the skeletons will leave the dormitory area to pursue fleeing PCs.

8. Blood Raven's Nest. This dilapidated dormitory room is home to the blood ravens' nests (from Area 1). If not previously alerted to the PCs' presence, the birds will be found here. The floor is compromised and any PC weighing over 100 pounds will cause the floor to collapse, resulting in a nasty spill (d6 damage). The ravens have collected and lined the inside of their nest with several shiny trinkets, gems, and coins. All told, 75 gp of items are hidden within the nests.

9. Stairs Up to Bell Tower. A set of stairs leads up to the **Bell Tower** (Area 10).

10. Bell Tower. The bell tower is littered with human bones, thanks to its occupants, **two ghouls (AC 14, HP: 9)** whom are busy feasting on flesh when the PCs arrive. A leather pouch containing 50 gp is located among the charnel. One of the victims, a halfling, has a +1 **dagger** stored in a nice sheath still at his side.

11. Stairwell to Dungeons. A narrow stairwell leads down to the **Malachi's Madhouse** (Area 12). The smell of death is thick here.

12. Entrance to Malachi's Madhouse. The PCs might hear cries of "help" coming from beyond the sturdy, reinforced locked door leading to the **prison cells** (Area 13), but they will most certainly notice skeletal figures posed in prayer along the room's walls. The door lock is of exceptional quality, but may be picked. The key for this door is worn on a chain around Malachi's neck. If the PCs try to unlock or break down the door, **two crawling claws**, animated skeletal hands, will emerge from a nearby pile of bones and attack any PC attempting to open the door.

13. Prison Cells. Three small prison cells are located here. A local farmhand is held captive in one of the cells, and though still alive, he shares his cell with numerous cadavers in varying states of decay. The farmhand is understandably shaken-up but will eventually relate that he was led to the temple for what he hoped might be a romantic tryst with a local girl. Once the couple arrived at the temple, the girl transformed into a skeletal, robed monster and the farmhand was locked into a cell. He has been in the prison for several days. The farmhand is quite strong and willing to help defeat Malachi if the PCs provide a weapon for him to use.

14. Torture Shrine. A variety of torture devices line the room's north wall. A shrine dominates the south alcove, in front of which are several corpses in posed supplication. **Malachi the Mad** is here. Depending on what tactics are most advantageous, Malachi might assume the guise of the farmhand's lover, or some other creature to gain surprise. PCs with infravision will see through the illusion, seeing him for what he is: a skeletal figure outfitted in tattered clerical vestments. He is unable to speak and can only moan or howl. Malachi will flee, perhaps in the form of a rat, if unable to quickly defeat the PCs. Malachi is wearing a **ring of protection +1** and also has a key to open the prison cell door. The key is attached to a fine silver necklace worth 100 gp.

15. Summoning Circle. This is where Malachi's troubles began. Fortunately for the PCs, there is no succubus awaiting them, however a minor demon, a **Dretch** is! The dretch will not leave the temple to pursue the PCs, and will always return back to the summoning circle, perhaps hopeful it will be called back to the Abyss as a soldier in the Eternal Blood War. There are about 200 gp worth of rare material spell components and gems located in this room. Additionally, a **potion of healing** may be found here.