



# WELCOME TO FABLES!

You hold in your hands an episode of *Citadel of the Unseen Sun*, the first of many Fables which span worlds, genres, and the planes of existence. Each episode of this Fable contains four sessions of thrilling fifth edition adventure—enough to entertain a group of weekly roleplaying game (RPG) players until the next episode arrives a month later.

## You Are a Game Master

As the Game Master (GM) of a Fable, you are given the power of a storyteller, telling tales of heroism and adventure to a rapt audience. Imagine yourself wrapped in the clothes of a traveling bard, your face cast in glowing firelight, as you weave a tapestry of words. Your words draw those who sit around the fire with you into another world, where they are not the mere audience of a tale, but actors, storytellers themselves.

The GM's role is to establish the setting of each scene in this Fable, introduce and roleplay its non-player characters (NPCs), and play monsters and villains that long to bring a swift end to the heroes' adventures. The players at your table are storytellers in their own right. Though they only embody a single character each while you embody many, the players' actions have the power to change the world of Etharis forever. The best GMs are willing to improvise, even ignoring the text of a Fable when necessary, to ensure the characters' actions have consequences—for both good and ill.

**If you are not planning on running this Fable, stop reading now. What follows is for the Game Master's eyes only.**

## Running this Fable

Fables is an episodic adventure series using the fifth edition of the world's first roleplaying game. In order to play, you need the free fifth edition System Reference Document, or the books that make up the fifth edition core rules.

This Fable takes place in the world of Etharis, a realm of darkness described in *Grim Hollow: The Campaign Guide*. Access to this book makes running this Fable much easier. Players who want to lean into the darkness of Grim Hollow's dark fantasy setting benefit from a copy of *Grim Hollow: The Player's Guide*, as well.

Additionally, the following information will help you run this Fable as its GM:

## Episodes and Chapters

A Fable is a complete story, released in six monthly episodes. Each episode is an arc of this overall story that presents a mini-sandbox environment. An episode has a specific range of levels for which it's designed. As the Game Master, you are empowered to run an episode for characters of a higher or lower level than recommended for an episode—but be prepared for a more challenging or easier session unless you do work yourself to alter the challenges and monsters the characters face.

The characters can explore each episode's region at their leisure. An episode is further divided into three or four chapters. Each chapter describes a specific location within an episode's sandbox environment—or it could represent a linear series of encounters that drive the plot forward. An episode typically has three to four chapters, each of which contains enough game content to fill one or two game sessions.

## Monsters, Magic, and More

When you see text in **bold**, that's the Fable's way of telling you that a scene or location contains a monster or NPC ready to fight. New monsters and NPCs in Fables are usually found in appendix A: New Monsters of the episode in which they appear. If a monster's name appears in bold but isn't followed by "(see appendix A)" or a similar pointer, then that monster's game statistics are found in the fifth edition core rules.

When you see text in italics, that's the Fable's way of telling you that you're looking at the name of a spell (like *hideous laughter*) or a magic item (like *winged boots*). Most spells and magic items are found in the fifth edition core rules. New spells and magic items are described in an episode's appendices as well, as indicated by a "(see appendix B)" pointer.

When you see text in a box like this, the characters have likely entered a new area, or have triggered an event like an NPC entering the scene. This text is meant for the GM to read or paraphrase aloud to the players to set the scene.



## Running a Dark Fantasy Game

---

Grim Hollow is a setting of darkness, despair, and terrible evil. Heroes are rarely paragons of justice; they are mortals with their own foibles and flaws. In turn, villains are rarely avatars of pure evil hell-bent on destruction. The heroes and villains of this Fable are operating at cross purposes—they stand in direct opposition to one another's goals.

Because of this, dark fantasy stories rarely culminate in purely happy endings. Innocent and heroic lives are lost just as frequently as evil ones, and people must sacrifice things which they hold dear to achieve their ends. As a story involving death and the undead, there are also a great deal of gruesome scenarios in this story.

Before you run this adventure, talk with your players about their comfort level with dark fantasy, with dark themes, and with gore and gruesome events. This “session zero” check-in won't water down your game or spoil any surprises—it's an opportunity to get everyone to buy-in to your game. If everyone's excited for darkness, death, and despair, you can safely indulge in all the dark fantasy you want. If people have some reservations, you can make the informed choice to either avoid this Fable or tailor

it to your group. Each Fable will be different, so it's perfectly fine if one isn't suited to your preferred play style.

## This Fable's Story

This primer on Citadel of the Unseen Sun's story and backstory will help you tell a compelling and cohesive story.

## Overview

---

In this Fable, a group of mercenary adventurers residing in the Ostoyan Empire are hired by a mysterious benefactor to recover an artifact from a long-lost civilization. Upon finding this artifact, they are slain by the lich Kasimir Sundrinker. A strange power within each adventurer saves them from death, but they awaken within a twisted, false afterlife.

The characters learn over the course of this Fable that this afterlife is the creation of Kasimir Sundrinker, and that they are actually deep in the bowels of an ancient Necropolis beneath the lands of the Ostoyan Empire. They must reach the surface—and once there, gain the power to defeat Kasimir and end his plot to use the sun stolen from the skies of Ostoya to ascend to godhood.

## Backstory

The Ostoyan Empire is a grim and gothic land ruled by vampires who prey upon their subjects. The sun itself vanished from the sky many years ago in an event called the Darkfall.

### Darkfall and the Vampires

A fearsome earthquake rocked the lands of Ostoya, tearing massive fissures in the ground. Necrotic energy surged from the fissures, darkening the realm and plucking the sun from the sky. These fissures also unearthed ancient, long-buried ruins. Countless Ostoyan explorers ventured into the chasms in search of answers—few returned. That is, until a horde of vampires and their undead minions emerged. These vampires conquered Ostoya and transformed it into their own dark empire, untouched by the light of the sun.

### Necropolis of the Holy Sun

Untold centuries before the Darkfall brought Ostoya to its knees, a civilization lost to history existed in the region. This mighty civilization venerated death and the dead. Great art was made from the bones of the departed, and a common idiom was “All are equal in death.” The bones of a commoner are no different from the bones of a highborn. Both can be used as art—and both can be turned toward the art of reanimation, or necromantic science.

None were more venerated in this civilization than necromancers, for they could reanimate the bones of the dead and turn them to the betterment of the living. And of these necromancers, none held a higher position than Kasimir, the Royal Necromancer. Kasimir was not king—the ruler of this land was a diplomat, not a mage—but he was the power behind the throne. This most powerful of necromancers was a stern man, but one beloved by the people for his self-sacrificing generosity. He raised armies of undead to protect the realm, made pilgrimages to small villages across the land, and even performed miracles to return life to the dead if they were vital the fate of the realm.

### Emerging from the Shadows

The lost civilization now known only as the Ostoyan Necropolis revered the sun. They saw it as the source of all life and power. Later civilizations on Etharis would agree, connecting it to the dead goddess Aurelia (see *Grim Hollow: The Campaign Guide*). Sigils of the sun adorned every surface in this ancient realm, often carved into stone or formed of magically preserved bone.

But this society dedicated to light became eclipsed by shadow. Vampires, accidents of overambitious necromancers, lurked places untouched by the sun's grandeur. In time, their numbers grew so great that they swept through the Necropolis like a wave. The wave only grew, as the vampires turned unwitting people into their spawn. Kasimir and his fellow necromancers tried to halt the vampiric advance with their incorruptible reanimated warriors, but in time they too were overwhelmed. Their king was lost, and the realm fell into eternal darkness.

### Swallowed by the Earth

Kasimir survived the vampires' coup and retreated into his citadel. Using his magic, he sealed the citadel with rays of sunlight that would annihilate any vampire that sought entrance. Grieving the loss of his realm, he invoked a terrible rite that caused the earth itself to open its great maw and devour the Necropolis whole. By his design, the vampires would never again see the sky.

Kasimir toiled in his citadel to discover magic which would allow him to destroy his foes and resurrect his realm once and for all. At the same time, he delved into profane secrets of necromancy to grant himself eternal life—as a lich. Then, after countless centuries of study, he found it—the sun itself, if he could harness its power in full, would give him magical might sufficient enough to annihilate his enemies, and perhaps even restore everything he had lost.

He enacted a second dread ritual. An earthquake rocked the lands above, which had since become populated by humanoid peoples calling themselves Ostoyans. Necrotic power surged from below, darkening the realm and plucking the very sun from the sky. The sun appeared within Kasimir's citadel as a blazing inferno: his Unseen Sun.

### Light Hunters and the Sparks

Kasimir's scheme was not without its flaws. He unleashed the vampires he sealed away into the world once more. Now unhindered by the light of the sun, they quickly conquered the surface-lands of Ostoya and became more powerful than ever before. Worse, Kasimir's ritual to claim the sun was imperfect. The sun resisted command by a single will, containing still a fragment of the divine mind of the goddess Aurelia, and this consciousness fractured portions of the sun's power and delivered them into the souls of mortal beings.

These fragments were dubbed “sparks of sunlight” by Kasimir. These sparks linger, usually dormant, within the hearts of mortal people. Sometimes, they permit a person whose life is in mortal danger to manifest magical powers—it is one of the vanishingly rare sources of divine magic in mortal hands on the face of Etharis.

Ever since realizing his error following the Darkfall, Kasimir has sought these sparks and their wielders. He has no idea how many there are, or how far across the lands of Etharis they have spread. Once he gained his first, through divination and personal effort, he used his magical power, amplified by the Unseen Sun, to infuse a human skeleton with the blazing might of the sun. This warrior arose, and he dubbed it his first Light Hunter—a tireless stalker who can sense other sparks of sunlight in the souls of others.

Kasimir now has six Light Hunters, and he has spread them across the world in search of sparks of sunlight, so that he might unify the full power of the Unseen Sun and fulfil his ambitions.

## Kasimir’s False Afterlife

While waiting for his hunters to recover the prodigal sparks, Kasimir needed to survive. His phylactery hungered for souls to prolong his undead life. He devised another plan—and this one would be without flaw.

Aurelia’s divine power once drew souls to their afterlife. Kasimir used the Unseen Sun to divert the souls of all who lived under the shadow of the Darkfall into a false afterlife. He fashioned this metaphysical realm within the ruins of his old homeland. It would be a place where he could prey upon the souls of the dead. Though he denies these souls their eternal rest, Kasimir feels no guilt—they serve a greater purpose now: the resurrection of his lost homeland. It is from this fertile ground that this Fable begins.

## Skade, the Nightseer Sage

This Fable begins *in medias res*. The characters have been given a task by an old man who calls himself the Nightseer Sage. This sage is the guise of an Arch Daemon of shadow, shapeshifting, and deception named Skade—one which has long been content to watch the unfolding drama of the Necropolis and Ostoya as an entertaining opera.

However, Kasimir’s recent success with the Light Hunters has worried Skade. It longs for chaos and conflict in the world, and it has enjoyed seeing Kasimir sow the seeds of chaos across Ostoya. However, it has begun to worry that if Kasimir is successful, the lawful rule of the Ostoyan Empire—

evil as it may be—will merely be replaced by another society of law and order.

In the hopes of preventing this, Skade has assembled a group of adventurers who, by the daemon’s design, possess within their souls a Spark of Sunlight. These adventurers are the player characters; unbeknownst to them, powers greater than them have conspired to plunge them into a world of death and despair.

## Citadel of the Unseen Sun

This is a brief summary of the six episodes of this Fable.

### Episode 1: Death is Not the End

In this episode, the characters are hired by the Nightseer Sage to recover a relic of a long-lost civilization. In doing so, they are found and killed by Kasimir Sundrinker, but the Spark of Sunlight within their souls allows them to remain in their mortal bodies, even as their spirits are whisked away into Kasimir’s false afterlife.

After waking in the deepest, darkest bowels of the Necropolis, they must ally themselves with fellow survivors if they are to escape from this realm of undeath and horror.

### Episode 2: Dreams of the World Beyond

In this episode, the characters discover a realm within the Necropolis where ghostly spirits are trapped in an eternal, placid existence of dreams. Here they are preserved as food for Kasimir’s phylactery. When they enter, the characters are stripped of their bodies and must find a way to return to their physical forms, if they are to continue their ascent.

### Episode 3: A Masque of Life

In this episode, the characters enter a realm of Deep Rivers, where souls flow from the world above into the Necropolis. A group of powerful, ostentatious undead who call themselves the Doges have formed a society of endless revelry. The characters must find a way to navigate the politics of this endless fete in order to reach the surface world once again.

### Episode 4: Land of Despair

In this episode, the characters breathe the fresh air of Ostoya once again. They must navigate the infamous Labyrinth to reach the surface, and once there, they are faced with a decision: travel to Nov Ostoya to learn the secrets of defeating Kasimir once and for all or abandon their quest and seek solace elsewhere in the world.

## Episode 5: City of Decadence

In this episode, the characters travel to Nov Ostoya in search of the Nightseer Sage, who apparently holds the key to destroying Kasimir Sundrinker. They must work arm-in-arm with the gangs of Nov Ostoya to reach the city's bloody heights and find their mysterious benefactor.

## Episode 6: Master of the Unseen Sun

In this episode, the characters are pursued by Kasimir's deadly minions: the Light Hunters. They must cross the lands of Ostoya to reach their final destination: the Citadel of the Unseen Sun. Once there, their task is laid bare before them: Kasimir must fall.

## Prelude

This story begins *in medias res* as the characters look upon the gothic walls of a stone mausoleum in the northern reaches of the Ostoyan Empire. They journeyed to this tomb to retrieve an item from within, promised a handsome reward for its recovery.

Unbeknownst to the characters, the quest is one from which the characters will soon be violently sidetracked. Fate has brought the characters together, for within their souls lies a miniscule fragment of

divine power, a spark of sunlight—a power sought by a lich who wishes to command the full might of the sun itself.

At the end of this chapter, the characters die—and are saved from death by this power. This cinematic opening chapter gives this episode a dramatic beginning, and then opens up to a more character-driven, exploration-focused adventure in later chapters.

## Character Advancement

In this episode, the characters must undergo a variety of dungeon-based challenges. This episode begins with a straightforward first chapter, and then provides a more open-ended and exploratory dungeon experience in the later chapters.

Characters gain a level each time they complete one of the following objectives. They can't rise to higher than 3rd level before the start of the next episode in this Fable.

- The characters are killed by Kasimir Sundrinker at the end of chapter 1 of this episode.
- Starting in chapter 2, the characters resolve the unmet needs of at least two of the Dredgers (see appendix B).
- The characters escape the Ditches through the Gates of the Sun (see area D13 in chapter 3).







# CHAPTER 1: FALL FROM GRACE

**FOR 1ST-LEVEL CHARACTERS**

This story begins at the gates of the Penumbra Vestibule, upon a field of black glass in a petrified forest. The northern wilds of Soma are a treacherous place, prowled by beasts and haunted by shadows that slither through the night. Such are the dangers faced by adventurers in Etharis – but no mere woodland terrors can prepare them for the dangers that wait them within the vestibule.

They came here to find a relic of a long-forgotten necropolis. Little do they know that they are about to meet that lost realm's most fearsome necromancer.





ONE GUISE OF THE NIGHTSEER SAGE

## Starting In Medias Res

A Latin phrase meaning “in the midst of things,” a story that begins *in medias res* starts with the action already underway. This adventure sees the characters begin outside a dungeon, leaving the gathering of a quest and the journey to this dungeon as backstory.

When starting a session in medias res, be prepared to answer questions about what happened before the “cameras started rolling.”

The introductory read-aloud text in the “Arrival at the Vestibule” section later in this chapter describes the minimum information necessary to get the adventure started. If the players are curious about this quest, use the following information to answer any questions.

## So, What Happened?

Use the following background information to fill-in players curious about how the characters arrived outside this mausoleum, as well as the nature of their quest.

**You Met in a Tavern.** About a week prior, each member of this adventuring party gathered in the Tithewater Tavern in a backwater Ostoyan town called Lusk.

**An Old Man Gave You a Quest.** While drinking at the Tithewater, an old man with a well-trimmed white beard and an expensive-looking tunic beneath opulent robes approached and offered you a mercenary job. He called himself the Nightseer Sage, speaking with an unplaceable foreign accent. He offered a sum of 2,000 gold pieces to the party, contingent on their recovery of an ancient circlet. He revealed the circlet’s past life as a lich’s phylactery – now, though, it is apparently just a historical artifact the Nightseer Sage longs to possess.

**You Journeyed to the Mausoleum.** The Nightseer Sage said that the circlet lies in a long-forgotten mausoleum called the Penumbra Vestibule. Legend has it this mausoleum was once a part of the mysterious civilization sprawling beneath the Ostoyan Empire – and that it grants entrance to the subterranean Necropolis from the surface.

**Now, Find the Phylactery.** The Nightseer Sage had no idea where within the Penumbra Vestibule this valuable former phylactery lies, and he knew nothing of the mausoleum’s layout. He coolly quipped, “You’re the adventurers, after all. If I knew these things, I would get the circlet myself!”

**Who Are You?** The Nightseer Sage evaded questions about his background, simply supplying his identity as a wealthy socialite from a foreign land. He claimed to be operating under an assumed name, “like most people of interest in the Ostoyan Empire,” and that revealing his true identity would put him and his family at risk. The truth is that the Nightseer Sage is a shapeshifting Arch Daemon named Skade – a truth that might become known in episode 5 of this Fable.

## Arrival at the Vestibule

The characters’ quest brings them to the gates of the Penumbra Vestibule, an ancient mausoleum of unknown origin. It is sheltered by the eerie pines bordering the Black Mire in the northern Ostoyan Empire.

Begin this adventure by reading or paraphrasing the following boxed text. This text briefly explains what happened to the characters before arriving here, then describes the dungeon’s imposing entrance.

You find yourselves sweaty and covered in muck after enduring a week of grueling travel. The sky above you looms black, lit only with the silvery glow of the moon—a common sight in the Ostoyan Empire, where the sun has vanished forever from the sky.

A week ago, you accepted a quest from an old man in the backwater town of Lusk: Recover a tarnished old circlet from a mausoleum somewhere in the eastern woods of the empire. All around you stand skeletal, petrified trees—and through a gap in the branches, you see your destination.

Pushing forward, you find a small clearing. Before you towers the gothic façade of the Penumbra Vestibule. A plain of black glass sprawls beyond, shrouding the floor of this petrified forest as far as the eye can see. The steeply pitched roof of the moss-covered stone mausoleum is festooned with eerily realistic skeletal grotesques. Its stone doors are closed shut, decorated with an intricate sigil of a sun.

## Penumbra Vestibule Features

The subterranean interior rooms of the mausoleum have the following general features:

**Ceilings.** The mausoleum's ornate vaulted ceilings are 10 feet high.

**Doors.** Crafted from the same stone as the walls and ceiling, the mausoleum's doors are unlocked unless otherwise noted. However, they are heavy, and can only be opened if characters with a combined Strength score of 20 or higher use their actions in the same round to push them open.

**Light.** Unless otherwise noted, the interior rooms of the mausoleum are unlit and pitch-black.

**Walls.** The walls of the mausoleum are made of the same stone as the rest of the structure.

Artistically inlaid into the walls are murals of bleached, polished human bones and skulls.

Any one of these bones can be easily pried from the wall as an action with a tool like a crowbar or a dagger.

## Areas of the Penumbra Vestibule

Like a stone iceberg, the surface-level mausoleum presents only a fraction of the Penumbra Vestibule's true size.

## V1. Plain of Black Glass

Read or paraphrase the following if the characters explore the black glass surrounding the mausoleum:

A flat plain of perfectly smooth black glass with an almost mirror-like reflectiveness extends out beyond the mausoleum. It stretches to the edges of your vision, faintly reflecting the dim light of the moon above.

Characters who try to crack this glass can make an attack roll against it. Each 5-foot-square area of black glass has an AC of 21, 100 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A creature that reduces an area of black glass to 0 hit points must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 27 (5d10) radiant damage as sunlight explodes from the shards.

**Power of the Black Glass.** Unbeknownst to the characters, this field of black glass is a key component of the spell darkening the Ostoyan skies. The glassy plain sprawls a total area of nearly 150 square miles throughout the petrified forest between the plains of Soma and the Black Mire.

## V2. Stone Doors of Darkness

The sigil adorning this door is one encountered frequently throughout this Fable—heraldry of a realm so long-forgotten that only the most well-read scholars have heard of it. A character examining this symbol can make a DC 21 Intelligence (History) check to recognize it as a royal crest found on a few scattered artifacts of a nameless dominion predating the Ostoyan Empire.

**Opening the Doors.** The doors of this mausoleum are shut, but unlocked. They can only be opened if characters with a combined Strength score of 24 or higher use their actions in the same round to push them open.

**Mausoleum Interior.** The aboveground portion of the mausoleum stands empty, save for dusty floors, smashed funerary urns, and a stone staircase leading into darkness below.

## V3. Stair of Wrathful Sun Sigils

A stairway descends into the earth. At the far end of this hall of stairs is a single stone door. Pristine murals of humanoid bones adorn each wall, arranged into artistic images of the sun—similar to the sigil emblazoned upon the main door of the mausoleum. These sigils adorn the walls of each of the three landings in this hallway.



Each of the landings between staircases in this hallway displays symbols of the sun decorated on both walls. A character who casts *detect magic* in this room detects auras of evocation magic from the sun sigils on the walls.

**Activating the Sigils.** When a living creature enters a landing, the surrounding sun sigils activate. They glow a radiant gold, then emit a beam of magical energy at the creature. The creature must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) radiant damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. Once a landing's sigils have been activated, they can't do so again for 1 minute.

**Destroying the Sigils.** The sigils are made of ancient human bones, treated to withstand the ages. Nevertheless, they are brittle, and have an AC of 9, 5 hit points, and are immune to poison and psychic damage. If one sigil is destroyed, a landing's trap deals only 5 (1d10) radiant damage. If both sigils are destroyed, the trap no longer activates.

#### V4. Nexus of the Watchful Crystal

Each character must roll initiative when entering this room. The crystalline eye floating over the plinth is an arcane sentry placed by Kasimir Sundrinker to watch for intruders.

If the eye spots a creature (see "Crystal Gaze" below), it sends a mental alert to Kasimir, who departs his citadel many thousands of feet below (described in episode 6 of this Fable) to intercept intruders. See the "Kasimir's Arrival" section at the end of this chapter for more information.

A crystal orb floats above a stone plinth in the center of this chamber. It rotates slowly, glowing a faint blue; its carved surface evokes the shape of a lidless eye. A secluded alcove stands at each corner of the room, with doors to the north and south. To the east stands a massive stone door inscribed with detailed carvings of humanoid figures, skeletons, and a radiant sun disc.

**Crystal Gaze.** A creature that succeeds on a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check can move through the room without attracting notice. On initiative count 20, a creature standing outside an alcove is automatically spotted by the crystal. A Medium or smaller creature can also avoid detection by lying prone within 5 feet of the crystal.

**Crystal Attack.** When the crystal spots a creature, it emits a beam of energy at the intruder. This beam has a +4 bonus to hit and deals 5 (1d10) radiant damage on a hit. The crystal can only fire one beam per turn.

**Tricking the Crystal.** A creature can cover the arcane sentry with a cloth or similar object to block the crystal's vision.

**Destroying the Crystal.** The crystal eye has an AC of 13, 20 hit points, vulnerability to bludgeoning damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If it is destroyed, Kasimir senses its destruction and comes to investigate (see "Kasimir's Arrival," at the end of this chapter).

**Grand Doors.** A massive stone door dominates the chamber's eastern wall. It displays a grand mural with two spherical indentations; the orbs found in areas V6 and V7 are required to open it. See "Opening the Grand Doors," later in this chapter.

**Secret Doors.** The walls of the northern alcoves rotate on a central column. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 or higher notices this if they are within 5 feet of the false wall. It takes no effort to push the wall open into area V5.

## V5. Ossuary of the Honored Dead

You enter a vast hall lined with pillars, each decorated with parallel lines of femurs. The spaces between these bones are filled with skulls, all leering emptily as you approach. A stone door stands at the east end of the room, and several funerary alcoves filled with glinting metal line the west wall.

When the characters enter, they hear a clattering sound from the west end of the room. Characters who succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check notice humanoid figures rising from the ground to the west. If they succeed on this check by 5 or more, they identify that the clattering noise was clearly the sound of falling bones.

Bones enough to craft five **skeletons** toppled out of the pillars to the west, and they quickly assemble themselves and rise. They gather bows and swords from alcoves in the west wall, and then attack intruders from afar. They fight until they are destroyed and pursue characters anywhere within the dungeon.

**Treasure.** The alcoves along the west wall contain heaps of silver coins emblazoned with the face of an unknown king on the obverse side and a sun sigil on the reverse. The coins total 529 sp.

## V6. Monument to the Noble Archer

A life-size, skeletal statue stands vigil over this small sanctuary. In one hand it holds a bow, in another, raised high, it holds a crystal orb gleaming with golden light. The statue appears as if made from an actual human skeleton. Its bones gleam like silver in the light of a crystal orb. The skeleton's bones are covered with magical runes.

This monument to a heroic royal archer has survived long after the name of the civilization they served has been forgotten. The glowing crystal orb it holds to the sky is one of the keys required to open the door in area V4 (see "Opening the Grand Doors," later in this chapter).

**Taking the Orb.** The skeletal statue is 6 feet tall. A humanoid creature at least that height can pluck the orb from the statue's hands without issue. A shorter creature must make a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or use a tool (like a thrown knife or the *mage hand* spell) to remove the orb. A creature that fails this check or otherwise touches the skeleton must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## V7. Altar to the Unseen Sun

This oddly shaped hall contains a humble stone altar against its back wall. The altar is heralded by stone pillars adorned with humanoid bones artistically arranged in spiraling patterns. Upon the altar gleams a tarnished gold circlet bearing a cracked peridot. Beside the circlet sits a sphere of black crystal, glowing with internal light.

The circlet upon the altar is the object of the characters' quest: the crown of the princess of a forgotten civilization. It was once the phylactery of a lich named Kasimir Sundrinker, but that lich survived the destruction of this phylactery and created a new one, which he keeps in his citadel far beneath this mausoleum (described in episode 6 of this Fable). This circlet is merely a keepsake for the lich now.

When the characters see the circlet, read or paraphrase the following boxed text. This is a flashback to their first meeting with the Nightseer Sage, who supplied the quest to recover this phylactery. Even though this adventure began *in medias res*, this flashback provides some clarity to their quest.



You recall huddling around a dimly candlelit table in the Tithewater Tavern in Lusk, one week ago. A well-dressed old man with a well-trimmed white beard and a greedy glint in his eye spoke to you in a hushed tone. He called himself the Nightseer Sage. “It’s truly an item of tremendous importance,” the sage said. “Historical importance, that is. And to me, personally. It is a circlet. Gold, likely tarnished, and rumor has it, with a cracked peridot gemstone set into it from when it was briefly used as a lich’s phylactery. It’s from a civilization that predates our own empire. I am desperately fascinated in ancient civilizations. All a part of getting old, I suppose.”

The thing sitting on the altar before you is unmistakably the circlet of which the sage spoke, exactly as he described it: golden, tarnished, and set with a cracked peridot.

**Taking the Phylactery.** Once the characters take the circlet from the altar, the door separating areas V3 and V4 slams loudly shut. From this point on, that door courses with magical force. Any living creature that touches the door must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (4d10) force damage and be hurled 20 feet backward.

**Taking the Orb.** Despite its sinister appearance, the orb of black crystal harbors no malevolent power.

It is one of the keys required to open the door in area V4 (see “Opening the Grand Doors,” below).

## Opening the Grand Doors

Read or paraphrase the following if characters examine the massive stone double doors in the Nexus of the Watchful Crystal (area V4):

Carved upon these doors sprawls a mighty scene of conquest. An army of the living dead—ghouls led by vampire generals—charge up a mountainside toward a somber citadel carved out of the rock. Before the gates of the citadel stands a smaller army—this one made of walking skeletons, some armored, some not—led by a skeleton in a flowing robe. The leader of the vampires and the robed skeleton both hold their hands into the air as if conjuring a spell, and two circular cavities about the size of a human’s fist rest in between their outstretched hands.

With a DC 16 Intelligence (History) check, a character identifies the vampires in this mural as the those now controlling the Ostoyan Empire. This mural is clearly a much more recent creation—though still easily centuries old.

## Inserting the Keys

The door has two hemispherical indentations, one above the vampire with arms raised aloft, and the other above the robed skeleton with hands likewise raised above its head. The two cavities are of slightly varied sizes; the golden orb found in area V6 fits perfectly into the indent above the robed skeleton, while the black orb found in area V7 fits into the cavity above the vampire's head.

## Opening the Doors

The door swings open on its own once both keys are inserted. If Kasimir was alerted to the characters' presence by the arcane sentry in area V4, proceed to the "Kasimir Appears" section. If the characters weren't spotted, proceed to the "Descending the Citadel Stairs" section.

## Kasimir's Arrival

If the characters alerted Kasimir earlier, the lich waits for them behind the grand doors. His flair for the dramatic is truly unimpeachable. Read or paraphrase the following:

The stone doors grind open, sliding laterally into the walls. Beyond the threshold stands a tall, thin figure draped in a white robe. Flanking the figure tower two skeletons with bones coated in glimmering silver.

The figure raises its head and pulls back its hood with gaunt, decrepit fingertips, revealing a grinning skull with graying, withered flesh. The empty eye sockets flare with pinpricks of golden light as the withered being opens its mouth, and a resonant, churlish male voice emerges.

"Tell me, how ought a king of the dead react to grave robbers? Bone masons—restrain them."

With a flick of his wrist, the smaller doors to this chamber slam shut.

The rest of this encounter is described in the "Cast into Darkness" section later in this chapter.

## Descending the Citadel Stairs

When the characters pass the threshold of this door, they set off a permanent *alarm* spell that likewise alerts Kasimir—but not before they catch a glimpse of the exterior of his citadel, far below.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You emerge into a vast underground cavern. It must be miles long, and you stand at its far end. A faint golden glow fills the space, emanating from a grand stone façade on its far side. The cavern evokes a palace carved into the side of a mountain—the same palace carved into the stone door so many flights of stairs above you.

Suddenly, you are beset—the ring of steel as swords leave scabbards, a flash of silver at the corner of your vision, and intense heat as if standing beneath the blazing sun. Two skeletal warriors with bones coated in gleaming silver appear behind you. Appearing just as suddenly before you stands a tall, slender figure in robes of pure white.

Necrotic flesh clings to the figure's skeletal visage. He chuckles resonantly as he laces his bony fingers, causing the golden pinpricks of light in his empty sockets to bounce with eerie mirth.

"My bone masons have you. Tell me—is it beautiful? My citadel, that is. You are the first living beings to set eyes on it in a long time."

The rest of this encounter is described in the "Cast into Darkness" section, below.

## Cast into Darkness

This lich, Kasimir Sundrinker, wields the full radiant power of the sun he stole from the skies of Ostoya. Or near enough to it. Kasimir grants the characters time to quip, struggle, or squirm before his might as he sends his loyal minions to restrain them.

The game statistics for both **Kasimir Sundrinker** are presented below, and stats for his two **bone mason sentinels** are presented in appendix A at the end of this episode. Needless to say, however, these foes are insurmountable at this point of the Fable. The characters have little hope of besting them in battle—not until episode 6, when they have the chance to face them again, more powerful and better prepared.

## A Villainous Monologue

Kasimir Sundrinker is delighted to have guests, after so many years alone with no one for company but his undead servitors. He is happy to listen to the characters speak or struggle, and chortles along with their feeble attempts at escape or derision—confident in his knowledge that he possesses ultimate power.

When the characters run out of things to say to the lich, he interjects with a monologue of his own. Read or paraphrase the following:



The lich's smile never falters as he speaks. "For all your bravado, little mortals, I am afraid that your time on this earth has come to an end. It pains me to send brave explorers to their doom in my little afterlife. But, such is the way of the world. To think that once, you would have gone to Aurelia's side in the heavens, and yet my Unseen Sun will draw your souls to its side instead."

He chuckles to himself, as if perverting the natural order of life and death is a casual diversion for him. "It truly is a rarity to come face-to-face with the living, these days. I think, to commemorate the specialness of your collective demise, I will feed your souls to my phylactery personally, as well. I have so many souls in stasis, ready to be fed to my own soul, yet—yes, you deserve a special end. Do you have any last squeaking words, my little mice?"

Kasimir grants them an opportunity to speak with overbearing mock politeness. Then, ignoring any pleas for mercy, he says:

"That was charming. I'm truly touched. Well, I suppose we have nothing more to say to each other. Farewell, little mice."

## Death is Not the End

Kasimir casts *sunburst*, which invariably reduces all characters to 0 hit points. Read or paraphrase the following:

Blinding light envelopes you, searing your skin. You feel your body unraveling at the seams as your flesh burns, bubbles, then peels away in ragged strips. The pain is beyond words, the heat so intense it boils your insides. The light grows hotter and brighter still, until suddenly, just as the agony reaches its apex—darkness. Nothing remains but blackness. There is no heat, no cold, just the gentle sensation of nothingness.

Time passes—you cannot fathom how long, whether seconds or centuries. There is a vague notion of falling. You drift in blackness, painlessness, and silence for time without measure. Then, something pierces the darkness. It emerges from your chest—or what would be your chest if you had physical form. A tiny mote of light, no larger than a marble. It is warm, comfortingly so. Where before there was a sensation of total numbness, the light has awakened a tingling in your fingertips, then your hands, and arms, through your chest and down your legs.

You exist. You plummet through darkness, and you exist. You hear the wind rushing past, and the tiny golden mote slowly drifts back into your chest. Then, just before you strike the invisible ground beneath you, you feel hands cradling your fall, and a gentle, sacred voice in your ear: “Death is not the end.”

Your eyes flutter open. You are covered in mud, lying on your back in a dirty cavern. You ache, your head swims, but you are alive—and your fellow adventurers are all scattered about in the muck around you.

This story continues in chapter 2: Meet the Dredgers, as the characters awaken—preserved by the mysterious sparks of sunlight within their souls—in the Ditches, the lowest level of Kasimir Sundrinker’s false afterlife.

## KASIMIR SUNDRINKER

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +11, Int +13, Wis +9

Skills Arcana +20, History +13, Insight +9, Perception +9

Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic

Damage Immunities fire, poison, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages all

Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +7

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Kasimir fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Rejuvenation.** Unless his phylactery is destroyed, when Kasimir is destroyed he gains a new body in 1d10 days, regaining all his hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of his phylactery.

**Turn Resistance.** Kasimir has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

**Solar Absorption.** Whenever the Kasimir Sundrinker is subjected to fire or radiant damage, he takes no damage and regains a number of hit points equal to half the fire or radiant damage dealt.

**Radiant Scourge.** When Kasimir casts a spell or uses an ability which deals necrotic damage, he can change the damage type of that spell or ability to radiant damage.

**Spellcasting.** Kasimir Sundrinker is a 20th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*  
1st level (4 slots): *guiding bolt*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *dimension door*, *resilient sphere*, *wall of fire*

5th level (3 slots): *arcane hand*, *scrying*

6th level (2 slots): *globe of invulnerability*, *sunbeam*

7th level (2 slots): *forcecage*, *teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *sunburst*

9th level (1 slot): *time stop*

### ACTIONS

**Searing Touch. Melee Spell Attack:** +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage, and the target ignites in flame. Until the target or another creature spends an action to extinguish the flames, it takes 10 (3d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns and has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the start of its next turn.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Kasimir takes 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature’s turn. Kasimir regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Cantrip.** Kasimir casts a cantrip.

**Searing Touch.** Kasimir uses his Searing Touch.

**Frightening Gaze (Costs 2 Actions).** Kasimir gazes at a creature it can see within 10 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target’s saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Kasimir’s gaze for 24 hours.

**Disrupt Life (Costs 3 Actions).** Each non-undead creature within 20 feet of Kasimir must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.