

Village of Althorp



Village of Wonderment

High in the mountains rests the small community of Allthrop. Situated in a forested valley, it rarely sees visitors from the outside save for a few merchants who make it a point to stop here. But within the heart of the city is rumored to lay a great weapon for one who is true to the world.

The entrance to the gauntlet is within the city's well. Brief forays into the well over the years have revealed the existence of two doors. Only the uppermost door has been able to be opened; the lower door has resisted all attempts—magical and mundane—to open it. Likewise, spells that have been used in an attempt to breach the halls below the city (such as *dimension door*) have failed.

Player's Map

PCs that spend some time in the city researching the *sword of wonder* have the opportunity to purchase a partial map of the area. This information has been collected by a scribe named Pelias over the years. He charges what he thinks adventurers can afford.

Well Entrance

The door that guards the great sword is magically trapped with a *glyph of warding* (electrical). It is also locked (DC 25).

Entry Chamber

After swimming through the channel, characters emerge on a stone platform. This door is also trapped (poison gas) and locked (DC 30).

As characters swim up into the chamber, they can make a Spot check (DC 30) to notice the key.

Trap Hall

The time and tinkering required to open the door alerts the Undead Warlord as to the pending presence of intruders in its domain. Stats for the warlord are at the end of this adventure.

The undead warlord turns to face any who approach, but he's aware of the trap in the floor and moves right up next to it to stand his guard. Characters who step on the floor fall for 40 feet and strike 1d4 spikes.

At the bottom of the pit trap, hidden near the center spike, is another key. Characters that fall into the pit can spot the key with a successful Spot check (DC 15), while those at the floor level must make a Spot check with DC 30.

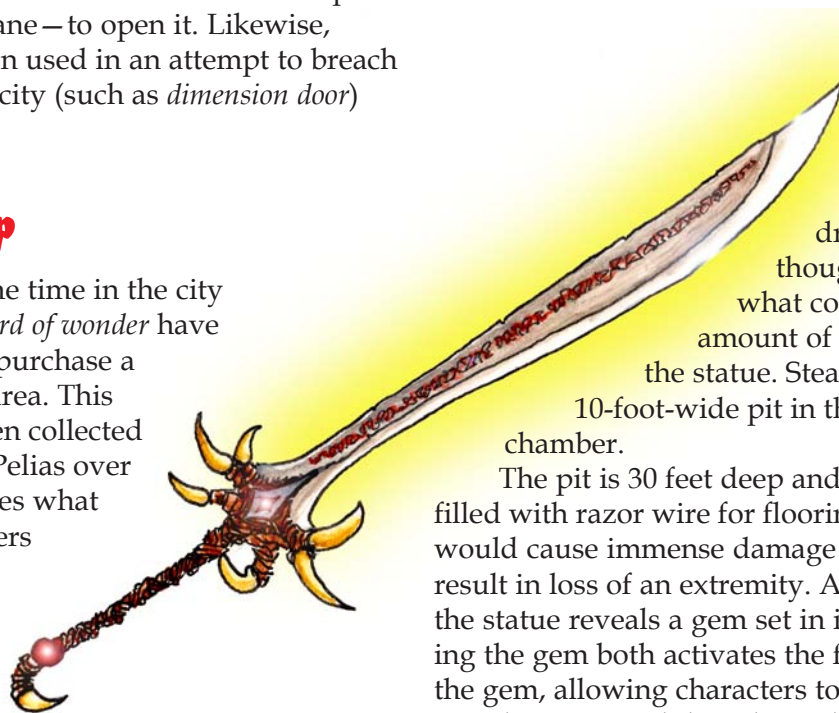
Dragon Hall

The statue of a dragon resides here, though it's hard to tell what color due to the amount of mold that covers the statue. Steam billows from the 10-foot-wide pit in the center of the chamber.

The pit is 30 feet deep and ends in a room filled with razor wire for flooring. Jumping down would cause immense damage and possibly result in loss of an extremity. A careful search of the statue reveals a gem set in its forehead. Pressing the gem both activates the fan and releases the gem, allowing characters to *wind walk* down into the room and then through one of the two exits. This effect ends once characters enter one of the two halls. The gem conceals a cache within the dragon's head that holds the third key.

Circle of Doubt

Taking the hall to the circular room reveals a chamber that glimmers with illumination from the floors. Set in the center of the floor is a gleaming silver sword (a fake) set with a great gemstone in its pommel. Approaching the sword seals the doors to the room and causes plates to open in the floor and begin to spin. After being dam-



aged by the trap, characters are then spun down into the whirlpool below.

This gem is the third required for releasing the *sword of wonder*. The sword set into the floor here is a +2 longsword with no other special properties. The gemstone can be easily removed, but finding the weapon in the whirlpool could be a much greater challenge.

Wonderment Room

The stairs lead down to a brass-bound oaken door that is locked and trapped (DC40 for the lock). The trap is in the form of a small engraving right above the lock that is empowered with a *Sepia snake sigil* spell.

The room itself contains a marble pedestal upon which the sword resides. Four locks set in the walls each require one of the gemstones located elsewhere in this complex.

The final guardian of the weapon is a water elemental, which attacks the moment the four gems are in place.

Sword of Wonder

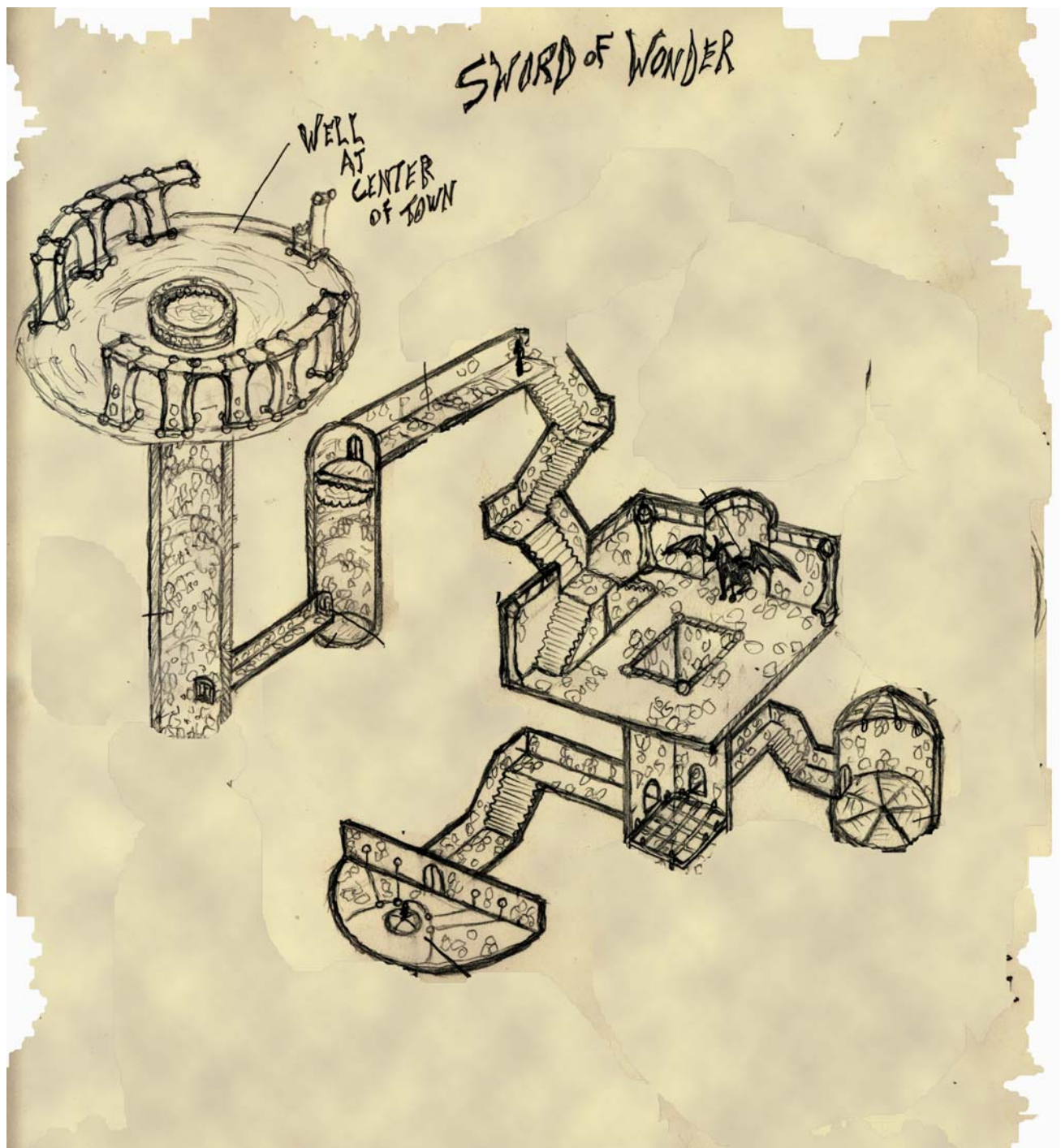
This blade is of +3 enchantment and glows with an intense silver light (equivalent to a *light* spell) each time it is drawn from its sheath. It possesses the following special qualities:

- *Neutrality*: The powers of neutrality have imbued this weapon with powerful enchantments, which inflict an additional +2d6 points of damage whenever it strikes a non-neutral creature (LE, CE, LG, and CG). It bestows one negative level upon any non-neutral creature that attempts to wield it.
- *Wonder*: While this weapon is always a sword of some sort, its true form is always that of the weapon most favored by its wielder.

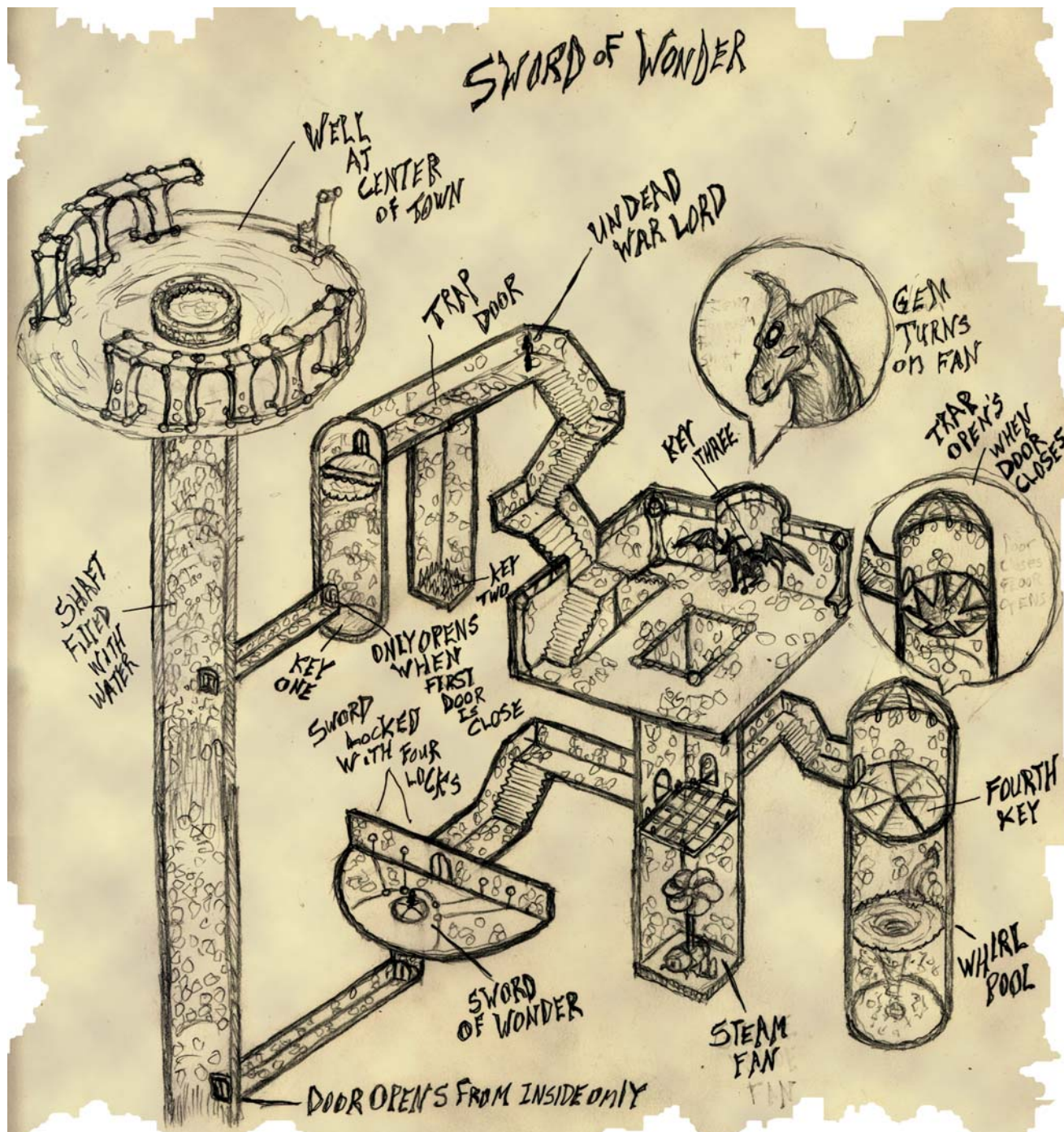
- *Neutralize poison*, once per day.
- *Cure serious wounds*, once per day.

Caster Level: 12th; *Prerequisites*: Craft Magic Arms & Armor, *neutralize poison*, *reincarnation*, neutral-aligned caster; *Market Value*: 135,000 gp.

Player's Map



DM's Map



Undead Warlord

Medium-Size Undead

Hit Dice: 12d12 (78 hp)

Initiative: 8 (Dex, improved initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 26 (+12 spectral armor, +4 Dex)

Attacks: Spectral Greatsword +21/+16/+11 Melee

Damage: Greatsword 2d6+10

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Frightful Presence, Poison

Special Qualities: Darkvision, SR 25, Undead

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +12, Will +5

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 18, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 15

Skills: Climb +10, Intimidate +12, Jump +10, Listen +8, Sense Motive +9, Spot +8, Swim +10, Tumble +9

Feats: Expertise, Improved Critical, Power Attack, Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: Double Standard

Alignment: Always Lawful, Usually Evil

Advancement: Increase HD and attack bonus as Fighter.

This creature is the spirit of a powerful ancient warlord who long ago lost his life through betrayal. He now wanders the world restless, looking to be bested in one final and fair fight, to once and for all lay his soul at peace. The undead warlord appears as a skeletal humanoid, wearing antiquated and exquisite armor, and wielding a powerful greatsword. Its eye sockets glow with an unearthly light, and it moves with a supernatural grace and silence.

When the warlord encounters a party, it looks them over, and decides which of the members would be the best match for him in honorable, single-combat. Once decided, he offers the hero a challenge. He explains that the only way he can find peace is for a foe of the same approximate power to defeat him in honorable combat (so finding the most powerful warrior on the world to defeat him won't free him from his misery). If the hero accepts his challenge and can defeat him, he promises to reward him with great power and wealth. If the challenge is accepted, the duel begins. If the challenge is declined, the warlord immediately attacks the entire party in a fit of rage.

If the warlord is killed in a fair combat against a single opponent, he turns to dust and fades permanently, leaving behind his greatsword and a number of magical items, gems, and platinum. If anyone helps during the duel, or if the hero defeats him dishonorably, the warlord and all of his equipment turns into smoke and fades away, reforming in one day's time to again find a hero to end his misery.

Combat

If engaged in single combat, the undead warlord fights honorably, attacking with his greatsword (a +3 *keen* magical weapon). He uses his feats to his advantage, adjusting his swing with expertise and power attack to adjust to his opponent's ability (if needed). The improved critical feat gives him a critical range of 15-20 with his greatsword.

As the undead warlord was brought to this stage of unlife through betrayal, the powers that have transformed him have also made defeating him much more difficult. The warlord's weapon is always coated in giant wasp poison (DC 18), resulting in a loss of 1d6 points of Dexterity on a failed save (primary and secondary). An opponent reduced to 0 Dex in this manner is defeated, and the warlord wanders away.

Anyone attempting to interfere in the duel is subject to the warlord's frightful presence (see below). If the warlord brings his opponent to zero or fewer hit points, it stops fighting and wanders away, leaving the warrior in the hands of his party for ministrations, last rites, or whatever aid they can give.

If not engaged in single-combat, the warlord attacks the strongest warrior first, and works his way through the party to the weakest. He still uses all of his abilities as specified above.

Frightful Presence (Su): During a duel, all those not involved with the fight are subject to the frightful presence of the warlord if they attempt to interfere in any way. Creatures attempting to intervene must make a successful Will save (DC 18). Anyone failing this roll is helpless with fear, unable to act for 8 rounds (1 round per Hit Dice of the warlord).

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Campaign

The undead warlord can be placed into nearly any campaign simply as a sidebar. It may appear in a party's path at any given point of time and issue its challenge.

You may find it more interesting to hype up the encounter of the warlord, giving the players rumors of a powerful figure that haunts some location, challenging and defeating all warriors that come near, with the

promise of some unknown power.

Depending on the treachery that reduced the warlord to this state, he may be used as the guardian of something more, perhaps a great weapon or the key to some powerful magical item or artifact. Defeating the warlord may open a rift into a minor pocket plane, allowing some great item to be revealed.



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