

## BLOODBANE KEEP

by Dru Pagliassotti

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**ABSTRACT:** Strategic adventure. The adventurers must decide how to rescue a group of kidnapped children from a remote and well-protected castle, and what to do with them afterwards. Suggested level 7-9, although the problems are mostly strategic.

**NOTES:** I wrote this adventure as a years-later sequel to "The School of Nekros" from Dungeon #27, p. 54, written by Lisa Smedman. This adventure assumes that adventure was run and ended in the twins' death, and that since then much time has passed (as indeed it has, if you ran that adventure when it was first published in 1991). If you haven't used that adventure, the easiest tie-in is to have the operatives working for Fellis finally slip up and kidnap a noble's child. The players can then be hired by the noble to find the child, find the kidnapers and the child in some hide-out, and upon questioning the kidnapers discover that this kidnapping is not a solitary incident. Note that some information on Anseis, and the NPC writeups, are listed at the bottom of this adventure. The DM should feel free to embellish with the Necromancer's HB, which I didn't use much when writing this, and/or with information from TSR's several publications about drow and their special spells or magic items. I haven't listed NPC spells because each DM is most likely to know how to best arm the necromancers against the player characters, and should do so. However, I do provide a sample set of spellbooks from which spells can be chosen, if the DM doesn't want to do all the work. I keyed this dungeon to the map from the TSR UK module "The Gauntlet," but these rooms can be rearranged to fit most castle maps with a little bit of work.

**DM's BACKGROUND:** Fellis, a drow expatriate, is a necromancer like his two children, Morphas and Mephista (in Dungeon #27). However, he had been pursuing his own studies for quite some time before word of his children's deaths reached him on his remote island. Although hardly a sentimental man, Fellis had a drow's deep value for his children. After giving their deaths much thought, he came to two conclusions. First, that it was irrational surface-dweller prejudice against necromancy that had led to his children's deaths, he decided, and that was wrong. Second, that as a skilled necromancer himself, it was his obligation to correct this wrong. Being drow (that is to say, somewhat heartless and possessed of a great deal of time), his solution was to take others' children and raise them as necromancers. Raising others' children into the art that had led to his own children's death appealed to both his sense of irony and duty. However, being a lawful man, he decided to address the problems systematically. He spent quite some time building up a trustworthy group of operatives, including one median-level mage in each group, who would look for magically talented children with the "Wizard Sight" spell (Tome, 3rd level), kidnap them, and bring them to Bloodbane Keep to be raised and taught necromancy. Fellis insisted that only poor and neglected children be kidnapped, knowing that wealthy or beloved children's parents would raise a hue and cry and cause an investigation. He assumed (more or less correctly) that nobody would look into the loss of a few street urchins. Besides, Fellis thought, lawfully content, he'd really be doing the children a favor by giving them a better life and training them in a valuable trade. This, perhaps, was the one argument that won his own grandson Armand over to his side - that the children would be better off with them than on the street. This is also the problem that the adventurers will eventually have to address.

The students at Bloodbane Keep have been selected as being in the top tenth percentile of magic capability, and under 10 years of age (preferably). They are usually members of the lower classes. All of the students have been mentally tampered with through use of a "Memory" spell (see Oriental Adventures). Fellis' operatives usually scour a particular area thoroughly to make their collection - thus, in each cohort there will tend to be a grouping of children from the same area.

The "Memory" spell replaces the child's memories with a preset story. The actual story varies, depending on who is casting the spell, but in general it is one in which the child was unloved by his or her parents, but met a wonderful person who has been a friend and mentor for years - the kidnapper, of course. This "mentor" tells the child that s/he has a great destiny ahead, and fills the child's head with stories of magic and adventure. The child, then, is usually quite happy to be at Bloodbane Keep, learning forbidden magical arts and preparing for a great destiny as an adventuring necromancer. This means that the children will not willingly leave the Keep, and will fight to protect their mentor.

All students are Wizardmarked on their foreheads by Fellis, who renews this each month during the full moon. This Wizardmark protects them from the keep's defenses, and they know that, so they all show up for the little ceremony. Thus, the children (and all the other regulars in the keep) can run around with abandon, whereas the player characters are likely to trip off dozens of protective spells.

The children are given warm clothing of simple fabric and cut, that they tend to wear in layers to protect themselves from the cold. They get up to eat at 6 a.m., attend lessons from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., (with one stop at noon for a quick lunch of bread, cheese and water), and are free until 6 p.m., dinnertime. After that they are free, but must be in bed by 9 p.m. Many of the children are encouraged to paint, carve, or weave - anything to keep them quiet and interested. Armand is a good ink artist and helps the kids out if they ask. Every once in a while Armand takes the children out for sailing or riding lessons, to teach them something about the world outside. About once a week, Fellis has a mercenary come in to teach the children basic self-defense with a dagger or staff. The mercenary doesn't know that there's anything unusual about this mage's school; for him it's business as usual.

Bloodbane Keep, on the remote island of Anseis, is owned by the drow necromancer Fellis Wythe Klesa, and overlooks the ocean. The keep is placed on an acute cliff spur, and can only be effectively attacked from the main trackway running beneath its walls. It is comprised of two parts; the main defensive structure of the Tower, and the underground chambers and passages, the Undercroft. The roof of the tower is made of slate and is inaccessible from the interior of the tower. The turrets on top of the tower are small, conical, and their arrow slits allow for effective cross-fire over the flat areas of the roof. I suggest running this adventure in midwinter, when the ocean is cold and the keep walls covered with snow and ice to prevent them from being easily climbed. Fighting on the icy surfaces should be dangerous and subject to combat penalties.

Anseis itself is a small and evil-aligned island run by a Conclave of powerful ex-adventurers, of which Fellis is one. The Conclave headquarters is in the capital city of Anseis, a day and a half's ride away from the Keep.

Fellis uses very little of Bloodbane Keep. The spells of protection on the keep vary in caster level because he only goes through every few years to renew them at his new level, and sometimes he forgets certain areas or decides they don't really need to be re-cast there.

Fellis sends one of the students to check the Sphere of Warning in Chamber 5 every evening, getting at least 2 days' notice of any invasion. The DM should decide how cruel s/he wants to be. The worst-case scenario is that Fellis has had plenty of warning due to the sphere's magic, and is prepared for the adventurers' attack. The DM should really beef up the keep's defenses if this is the case. The best-case scenario is that the young student whose duty it has been this week, Tok, has forgotten to check the Sphere - thus Fellis has no warning of the invasion.

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#### TACTICS:

The keep is magically trapped but not otherwise heavily defended (the DM may need to throw in more monsters if the party is particularly tough). However, the goal - to save the children - is a difficult one to fulfill because the children don't want to be saved, and because the castle is so very remote and well-guarded. Wise players will recon the area before beginning a frontal assault. The easiest way to gain entrance may be to wait for another delivery of children to the keep, and to enter then.

Fellis hates getting into physical fights, so once he knows the group has arrived (either through the Sphere or via Watchwares, Skullwatches, or exploding Fire Traps), he will proceed to act defensively. He'll race to his lab (Chamber 27) and grab his scrolls. If there is time, he'll set Skullwatch on the stairs from 18 to Floor 4 and on 26, using two scrolls to cast the spells. Then he'll hole up in his lab and cast two spells - first, Proof Against Teleport from a scroll, and second, Von Gasik's Refusal, also from a scroll (note that used scrolls should be marked off) - this last spell especially if he learns or suspects the name of one or more of the spellcasters in the party (perhaps from characters shouting to each other through the castle). He will wait for his enemies to get killed by traps or monsters, or - if all else fails - take himself and his valuables out the teleportation chamber to the Conclave Headquarters in the capital of Anseis, where he'll roust up the Black Guard and send them out to kill the intruders in his keep. This would be slightly embarrassing in front of the other Conclave members, so he'll wait as long as he can before resorting to this measure. However, should he leave, the adventurers then only have a day and a half before a commando group of the Black Guard will arrive.

Armand, on the other hand, will rush to defend the children, moving them into a defensible room if possible. He will use his scrolls to defend himself, the children and the keep as best as he can. He will also command the various skeletons to attack if necessary. If the player characters seem likely to want to negotiate, Armand is cautious but willing to talk. He will do his best to dissuade the characters from continuing, arguing (1) that this invasion is illegal - which it probably is, unless the DM has set up the players with a warrant (but remember that in this scenario, Fellis is a respected member of the governing body) - and (2) that the children were neglected before and now have a better life and future - which is also true. If cornered about the brainwashing, Armand will squirm but argue that it was necessary to keep the children's concentration on their studies (he isn't entirely happy about the brainwashing

part of the plan, but it seemed expedient at the time). Armand cannot be convinced to betray Fellis, and he will not hand over the children unless he's convinced beyond a doubt that it's the best thing to do for them.

The children think the whole thing is exciting, and the elder children will probably grab items near at hand (pokery, pots and pans, torches, etc.) and try to attack the player characters. Younger children might scream and run away, or plan "Home Alone"-style ambushes. Remember that they're protected from the spells, and that they're very familiar with the territory. Armand will try to keep the kids back, but he won't have much success, so the whole place should be something of a madhouse! Harming one of the children will make Armand furious, and he'll do his best to take care of the wounded student and kill the character who hurt the child. The most efficient tactic for dealing with Armand may be to take a child hostage and threaten to kill him or her, but this is dangerous (for if Armand gets a chance to attack, he will) and morally disreputable (not to mention that the rescued children will eventually tell the tale of how the Great and Mighty So-and-So took a child hostage!). If the player characters kill Armand, the children will lose all morale and burst into tears or hysterics, and swear their hatred for the characters with an intensity that only children can muster. They'll never go with the characters willingly, and even if their memories are restored, they'll grieve over the loss of their friend and protector. Five, ten years down the line, the players may be in for a surprise as the children band together to hunt them down in revenge!

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#### POSSIBLE ENDINGS:

If the players attack by force, they'll almost have to kill Armand before being able to control the children. Fellis is likely to have escaped, and the players will be harried by the Black Guard. If they escape, Fellis will waste no time seeking revenge, preferably something nasty and unexpected (he's a drow, he's got time to work up something really unpleasant). He's just lost his grandson, too, so he's likely to slip back into chaotic evil from the shock and grief.

If the players try to negotiate, they just might be able to convince Armand that the kidnapping is wrong, if they can offer a reasonable alternative (taking the kids back to their poor parents isn't reasonable, as far as Armand is concerned, and the DM should feel free to play up the problems of poverty and too many mouths to feed should the players go back to the families with the children - certainly at least some of the kids really are better off with Fellis!). However, if they do convince Armand, he will then have to convince Fellis, and that's unlikely to occur.

If the players try to take the kids away, either after killing or capturing Armand and/or Fellis, or without Armand and/or Fellis' permission, then the kids are going to be recalcitrant and noisy, and perpetually try to escape. Although a Dispel Magic can eventually dispel the Memory spell (remember that it's cast at 11th level and there are many children), it's unlikely that the characters will be able to do so quickly. Curing one child will only convince the others that the student has been brainwashed by the player character! And then, of course, the players have to figure out what to do with the children....

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#### THE KEEP:

3 Pathway: This path leads into the Keep, but is seldom used since Fellis periodically places magical and mundane traps along it. He prefers visitors to enter through the Lower Gates (4), if they must enter at all.

The pathway, therefore, is blocked by a Wall of Stone and 20' behind that by a Wall of Iron (both permanent spells cast at 10th level). Each wall has a Wizardmark (at 10th level) placed on it with Fellis' name and warning ("Fellis Klesa, Necromancer"), and also a Watchware (permanent until activated, at 10th level) to notify him if they are dispelled or otherwise tampered with.

4 Lower Gates: The gates (west and south) consist of round-topped arches inset with heavy black stone doors with no handles, locks or hinges. Fellis has enchanted them to open when certain people speak their name and a personal password. They also have Leomund's Trap (permanant) on them to fool thieves. Fellis' operatives know the code word - "Retribution." They will shout "Hail Bloodbane" as they come near the castle to avoid being shot by the skeletons on the walls (see area 10), then bring their waggon up to these gates and use their name and the code word, whereupon they are met by Armand, who heard their hail on the path (which protects them from attack from area 10).

5 Bloodbane Gate: This chamber connects the west and south path, and any visitors' mounts are kept here. The kidnapers' waggon is usually pulled in here, and the cages unloaded by Ju-Ju Zombies. The drugged children will be carried upstairs by zombies and laid on beds in room 20. Everything will be supervised by Armand.

There are doors on the east and north sides of the chamber made of solid oak banded in studded iron. The east and north doors are Fire Trapped at 9th level (1d4+9), code word "Watchful" and "Warning." All of the students know the code words. There are 5 zombies here (Zombie, Ju-ju), the ones that unload the cart when it comes in.

6 The Chamber of Warning: Placed in the center of the ceiling is a great gemstone (the Sphere of Warning, see Encyclopedia of Magic, v. 4, p. 1270), which, if the place is going to be invaded within the next 3 days, glows red and hums. A student is usually assigned to "Sphere Duty" each week, checking it every two days or so.

7 Access Hall: A/B/C is a storage room, doors on the east and south walls. There is a drainage hole in the floor, two Skeletons standing in the middle of the room, and a door on the east side. Fellis uses this room as a larder, to store perishables. There are a variety of cheeses and sausages in here, some haunches of meat, barrels of flour, etc. Food is kept here, as well as random body parts and corpses that Fellis hadn't gotten around to dealing with yet. The cooks in room 18 tell Fellis when they need new supplies or when the Giant Rats become too ubiquitous. Fellis periodically turns the rats into zombies to keep them from eating the grain. The girls can tell Zombie Rats from live rats, and keep the zombies as pets.

The drainage hole in this hall is protected by 3 stacked and Wizardlocked (6th level) grates, spaced 10 feet apart in the drainage tunnel. The top grill covering the hole is Firetrapped (9th level, 1d4+9). The hole is only about 2' wide, and leaves the castle, exiting in the cliffside overlooking the ocean about 100 feet above the high-tide water level and 200 feet below the top of the cliff. The hole is also protected by a Firetrapped (9th level, 1d4+9) grate that is obscured within the juts and crags of stone, and very difficult to detect.

The skeletal guards of the hall are two magically animated and augmented Strahd Skeletons with orders to attack anyone but those who wear Fellis' wizardmark, or are escorted by Fellis or Armand. Their skulls have Skulltrap on them (at 12th, 12d4). Each time the skeleton is hit, there is a 25% chance it explodes. If the Skulltrap hasn't exploded by the time they're killed, it explodes when the skeletons fall. It also explodes if they are destroyed by a turning cleric (the disruption of turning to dust activates the magic).

8 Wine Cellar: A door leads from the stairs to this room, and from this room to Passage 7. A secret door leads to chamber 9, Wizardlocked at 10th level. Fellis keeps wine stored in this room; there are large racks filled with wine bottles, all varieties of reds with one small rack near the door filled with whites, ports, sherries, and several bottles of grain alcohols, for guests.

9 Protected Chamber: This small room has been enchanted so that it cannot be scried upon. Fellis uses it for very sensitive meetings, but otherwise it is empty. Armand may use this small room to hide the youngest children in, if possible and necessary.

10 Battlemented Platform: The platform extends outward from the base of the main fortress on the south and west sides, with a crenellated parapet five feet high, pierced by arrow slits. There are 20 Archer Skeletons (Skeleton, Archer, in the Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium) stationed along the arrow slits with crossbows to fire upon trespassers. The skull of each one has been Skulltrapped (at 9th, 11d4, see 7 for description of effects). The crossbows are siege crossbows (25 lbs, L, speed factor 12, 1 shot/3rds, S=9/M=18/L=27 range, quarrels 1d10/1d12, see Dragon June 92), permanently set against the walls to fire down on the Undercroft path to the Lower Gate. These crossbows act as archer skeletons' usual bow and arrows with regard to growing skeletons. Each skeleton is armed with an extra 5 bolts slung in holsters built inside of its ribcage, but each crossbow can only be fired once per 3 rounds, so the DM may wish to have the skeletons firing in 3 squads. Their orders are to fire at anyone who travels down the path without shouting "Hail, Bloodbane" as they approach.

11 Guardroom: This room has racks of siege quarrels for the crossbows outside, all covered with dust, and oiled canvas bags of crossbow strings and spare parts, for when the crossbows need to be repaired (if characters decide to repair and take one of the crossbows, note that its draw is 1,200 lbs and is cocked using a windlass, so can be fired only once per 3 rounds - in the other 2 rounds, the character is winding back the string and setting in the new quarrel. Any character not bracing against a wall or ledge before firing suffers a -1 to hit/range level in addition to normal range penalties. It weighs 25 lbs and is very cumbersome. Quarrels weigh .5 lb.).

Fellis keeps one of his favorite creations here, a skeletal tiger (Skeleton, Monster) whose bones he painstakingly cast in iron. The tiger moves rather loudly, but is very difficult to damage. It saves as hard metal (DMG 2nd ed p. 39) against spells and effects. Against weapons it is AC 3 and takes 1/2 damage. It can be turned and affected by holy water, etc. normally. There is a Watchware on its skull that will warn Fellis if trespassers destroy the tiger.

12 Trap Room: This room is a trap, operated from Room 14 above. The barred gates on either end can be dropped to keep attackers out (or in), and burning oil can be dropped through holes in the ceiling upon anyone trapped inside the room. If Fellis is aware that he's going to be invaded, he will lower and Wizardlock the gates (11th level) and give the skeletons above commands to pour the boiling oil down if anybody passes below. There is a 30% chance, however, that the skeletons

will react tardily (missing the first few people, pouring it down after they've passed through, etc).

The stairs up to room 14 are Firetrapped (11th level, 12d4), code word "Doom."

13 Laboratory: The door from the stairwell to this room is Firetrapped (11th, 12d4), keyword "Macar." The windows are shuttered and Wizardlocked (10th) with Glassteel panes (bought by Fellis in the city). The grate in the fireplace and the door on the western wall are also Wizardlocked at 10th level.

This is the training laboratory, used by the students. It is filled with tables and equipment, and bookshelves on the walls are filled with texts about magic. Students sit here for the magical part of their training, to learn.

The room is haunted by a Poltergeist that will attack intruders out of general orneriness, throwing knives and scalpels (1d4/1d2) and other random objects (1d2 for glassware). It is the spirit of one of Fellis' victims from his earlier and more evil days, and cannot leave this room. Armand or Fellis can command it to stop, but the students are afraid of it and leave the room alone when their instructors aren't around - the student on Spherewatch duty has to sprint across the room to the stairs. Thus, the spirit serves a purpose.

14 Defense Room: The fireplace grate is Wizardlocked (at 10th), as is the grate in the fireplace. The door in the north wall (to 15) is Wizardlocked (at 10th) and Firetrapped (at 11th, 12d4), code word "Home." The door to the stairs up is Firetrapped (at 11th, 12d4), code word "Home" and the stairs down are also Firetrapped (at 11th, 12d4), code word "Doom." There are Walls of Iron all along the interior of the chamber, effectively blocking off the arrow slits from any gaseous intrusion.

This room contains the mechanism to operate Room 12. The gates are lowered. Fellis has five Strahd Skeletons (Skeleton, Strahd, see Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium) stationed here to keep the fires under the oil constantly hot (unfortunately, the skeletons often end up burning themselves, so he has to replace them regularly). They have orders to dump the oil on room 12 if anyone enters it (see room 12). The skull of each skeleton is Skulltrapped at 11th (13d4). If there is general melee with the skeletons, there will be a 10% chance per round that the oil is accidentally dumped (someone bumps into it), splashing anyone within radius for hot oil damage. If the Skulltraps go off, there is a 5% chance per skull trap that it damages and breaks one of the supports to the oil, flooding the room and burning all occupants before it drains down to the room below (Room 12)

This room is used as a study room by the students, because it is one of the warmest in the castle, with all the fires burning.

15 Gate Watchroom: This room was once used to check the identity of people along the pathway (3) before admitting them. It is now empty. The door to the pathway 3 has been blocked with a Wall of Iron (on the outside), and is Wizardlocked at 10th level. The door to 16 is also Wizardlocked (9th level).

16 Stable: This room was once a stable for visitors' mounts. There are 3 skeletal horses (Skeleton, Monster) here that Fellis tinkers with from time to time. He has added razor-sharp iron to their hooves and teeth (kick/bite for 1d4), and unicorn-like iron horns to their heads (gore 1d6). He has also bound their joints together with iron wire to strengthen them, so that these skeletons have twice normal hit points (they don't fall apart so easily). They can be

turned, affected by holy water, etc. as normal. He may loose them to attack any intruders, if he has time.

17 Tackroom: Once a tackroom, now empty. Fellis grows yellow musk (Plant, Dangerous, Yellow Musk) in here to make yellow musk zombies (see Plant, Dangerous, Yellow Musk), which he sells to people in town (this is, after all, a rather evil island). Adventurers peering into this room must avoid being attacked by the yellow musk.

18 Kitchen: The door to this room from the stairs has been Wizardlocked (9th). The windows are as windows in 13.

This is a kitchen, containing tables, racks of utensils, pots and pans, etc. After an aborted attempt at using skeletons and zombies as cooks, Fellis now keeps three elven slaves. They are young women (unnamed by their masters, named by each other as Rosemary, Saffron and Marjoram from jars in the spice cabinet) - born and raised as slaves in the Anseis slave markets - collared and manacled in welded iron, and Fellis' mark is branded on their cheeks (a skull). They each eat from his plate before he eats, as a precaution. They are less ill-used than one would expect, because Fellis is often too wrapped up in his work to remember them - as a result, they eat and sleep regularly, are hardly ever whipped (they obey, and Fellis doesn't believe in expending unnecessary effort - he'd kill a disobediant slave and buy a new one rather than try to rehabilitate one), and never molested (nobody would be brave enough to suggest that one of Fellis' dark experiments or pacts may have stolen his virility at some point in the past, but it does seem probable). They would jump at the chance to win their freedom, but they'd also be frightened of the big strange world out there and have few if any marketable skills. They are limited to this floor; each day they prepare meals and set them out in the hall, and if Fellis doesn't come down in a few hours, they eat them themselves. They are illiterate and uneducated, amusing each other with stories remembered from their childhood in the slave pens, and with their pet zombie rats. They have no fear of undead and are unbothered by blood, body parts, etc, which are a part of their life.

Armand tends to watch over the girls as well as he's able, and they all have secret crushes on him. Sometimes he sits in the kitchen and reads to them, or tells them stories, although Fellis disapproves of this show of weakness.

19 Fuel Store: Wood and bones to feed the fires are kept here. Poisonous snakes and spiders were often found in the woodpiles, posing a danger to the cooks, who are very careful to wear gloves and look before they pick up a branch.

20 Dorm: This is where the students sleep, in wooden bunks that line the walls. It is crowded, and Armand has recently moved the more advanced students into Room 22, as well. There are currently 13 students who live here, and only a 15-student capacity.

21 Hall/School: The door to the stairs is Wizardlocked at 9th level. This large room is Fellis' dining room, filled with long tables, chairs, china cabinets, etc. The tables have ink spills and carved names &c on them. The slave girls keep the hall very neat and often sit by the western wall looking out the windows at the ocean. When classes are in session, the girls sit in the doorway to the kitchen, listening. Zombie Rats move listlessly through the hall, often decorated with bedraggled strips of cloth or paper that the kitchen slaves and several students have salvaged.



The students use this room as a school as well as a dining hall - Armand has them sit along the long tables and learn how to read and write, and do basic arithmetic. This is where he lectures them on history and other subjects.

(If Fellis has time after the player characters attack the keep, there will be a skull floating in midair in the stairwell from here to the fourth floor; it is a Skullwatch spell, cast at 11th level.)

22 Gatehouse: The gate to 3 is raised and lowered from here, arrow slits overlook the path and murder holes lead down to the passage below. Fellis used to keep slaves here manning the winch before giving up and having his visitors visit from the Lower Gates. When he decided to make the change, he forgot to feed the prisoners, who died of starvation. Their spirits still haunt the gatehouse, and chains on the walls show where their bodies once hung (Armand moved the skeletons when he moved the students into this room). This room is haunted by 3 spirits - not really ghosts, just disembodied souls. They can manifest and talk, but are mostly mad, know nothing about the keep, and have 125-year-old information about Fellis and the world. The slave girls sometimes go in here to talk to the ghosts, who become slightly saner when they are there. The spirits are Tommaso, from Saldon; and Walsh and Moll, from Ankham.

Armand recently put some bunks in here for the advanced students. There is room for 10 students, although only 5 are here right now.

23 East Turret: Walls are pierced by arrow slits. There are 6 skeletons stationed up here with siege crossbows, as area 10 for stats, spells, orders, etc. The students and cooks can sit up here if they want, and often do so when they need to get away to do some thinking.

24 Fellis' Room: The door is Wizardlocked at 11th level and has a Watchware (11th) on it. The arrow-slits have been covered by a Wall of Iron (10th) to prevent gaseous intrusion. There is a narrow bed in this room along the northwest wall, covered with blankets and unmade. Against the southwest wall is a wardrobe with Fellis' ornate, very fancy clothes, including his Conclave uniform (a hooded red robe and a black iron mask). In a false bottom of this wardrobe are bags of money and gems - 60,000 gp worth of random gemstones, and 30,000 gp of Anseis currency (the Diabolic currency, see Dragon March 1991 - Hoofs of copper, Tails of bronze, Talons of silver, Fangs of electrum and Horns of gold). Along the walls bracketing the south door are racks filled with 6 potion vials (southwest) and a crystal ball (southeast). Set in the eastern wall is a large mirror (the Mirror of Travel). The southern door to 27 is Wizardlocked (11th). There is a heavy chest in here that contains his spellbooks (see list at bottom of adventure). The chest containing his books is Firetrapped (11d4) and bound with steel bands that are Wizardlocked (11th level).

25 Armand's Room: The door to this room has been Firetrapped (12d4). The grate to the fireplace has been Wizardlocked (9th level). Armand has furnished this place comfortably, although nobody comes into it except him. The furnishings include a model ship and a variety of bird skulls, bones and feathers that he has collected. A number of sketches are pinned to the walls, studies of animals, including anatomical studies that must have been done from dissected creatures. His clothing is much more mundane than Fellis', including warm riding gear. A wooden box on his desk contains a simple tin ring and a quartz carving of a bird, both gifts from Tamerel. On his door he has a number of children's paintings - gifts from students. Inside the desk are letters from the journey students, filled with information about the outside world but also with gossip and well-wishing that indicates that the writers were fond of him. There is also

a drawer filled with his own magical scrolls (see list). His spellbooks are stacked on the mantelpiece over the fire (not provided; a subset of Fellis' would suffice).

26 Northwest Turret: This is a turret room, also provided with 4 Archer Skeletons equipped to fire through the arrow slits. See 23. (If Fellis has time once the keep is attacked, there will be a skull floating in midair here - a Skullwatch spell at 11th level.) Only Fellis can access this tower, which he does sometimes to think.

27 Fellis' Study/Lab: The door from 24 is Wizardlocked (11th). The arrow slits and windows are covered by a Wall of Iron. The room is lit by a continual light lamp.

This room is Fellis' laboratory. There are long tables covered with skeletons both whole and in parts, writing materials, scroll parchment and inks, material components for his spells, etc. A shelf along the western wall is filled with scrolls (see scroll list at bottom of adventure - each scroll protected by Explosive Runes for 6d4+6). A shelf along the southwestern wall is filled with vials, 10 of which are full (poisons). Set in the southeastern alcove is a 3x5x6' stone box on end, with a door so that it can be opened (although it would be a coffinlike chamber). The interior is lined with mirrored tiles. The exterior has a green sphere fastened near the door, and a similar sphere is fastened inside against the wall (Teleportation Chamber).

Note that there are no spellbooks here. Fellis has two sets of spellbooks; one is kept under lock, trap and guardian in the Conclave Headquarters, and the other in his room. (Fellis will hide here if attacked.)

28 South Turret: A turret room, also provided with 4 Archer Skeletons equipped to fire through arrow slits. See 23.

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NONPLAYER CHARACTERS:

FELLIS WHYTH KLESA

Drow necromancer 11 hp 47 (w/ con) AC 3, -1 w/dex, 1 in 8 to be surprised lawful evil (originally chaotic evil, but has "mellowed" with time)

SPELLS UP: stonesskin

MR: 72%, all saves +2

INNATES: dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness. 1/day=detect magic, know alignment, levitate

S: 14/ muscle 12, stamina 16

I: 18/ reason 18, knowledge 18

W: 13/ intuition 15, willpower 11

D: 18/ aim 18, balance 18

C: 14/ health 12, fitness 16

CH: 16/ leadership 16, appearance 16

Non-Weapon Proficiencies:

\* Ancient History (17)

- \* Astrology (18)
- \* Religion (13)
- \* Spellcraft (16)
- \* Artistic Ability (bone sculpture) (13)
- \* Etiquette (16)
- \* Riding, Airborne (11)
- \* Riding, Land (16)
- \* Interrogation (12/15 torture)
- \* Elven (drow)
- \* Port argot

Magic Items:

- \* Bracers, Defense AC 3 (black drow leather)
- \* Wings, Flying (old black cloak, wyvern leather)
- \* Ring, Free Action (mohain/moondark black metal, blue highlights-left)
- \* Ring, Regeneration (gold w/six small rubies inset along band-right)
- \* Wand of Polymorphing (black wood w/iron tips, wrist holster)
- \* small statuette of a chest (component to Leomund's Secure Chest spell)
  - o Chest: drow clothing, hand crossbow w/poison darts, iron rations, waterskin, backpack w/ bedroll & supplies, 100 gp in silver Empyrian coins.
- \* large red ruby, highly carved (receptacle for a Magic Jar spell)
- \* Scrolls: in lab, see list below
- \* Potions of extra-healing, X6: 2 in pouchbelt, 4 in room
- \* Elixer of youth, elven (3d4+3), X2: in room
- \* Elixer of restoration, X2 (restores drained life levels, hps, etc)
- \* Poisons X10: in lab, DM's choice
- \* Crystal Ball: in room
- \* Mirror of Travel: in room
- \* Teleportation Chamber 3x5x6 box: in lab
- \* Sphere of Warning: over Lower Gates (4)

Fellis wears magical bracers and carries a wand. He enjoys personal decoration, wearing 5 rings on his fingers, a jeweled circlet to bind back his hair and a ruby pendant on a chain. His clothes are embroidered or jewel-encrusted, and he wears a simple black leather cloak decorated with jeweled paints in arcane designs.

Fellis Whyth Klesa is a drow of the Family Klesa, an old and respected aseku family that traces its lineage back to Azaer Jalil, the first aseku city. Family Klesa became involved in inter-Familial strife when it turned against the worship of Lloth, the Spider Queen, and began to worship the kevalin Tocaera. This occurred around BD 300. In BD 173, the Klesa were driven deep into the Icewind Mountains as a result of a Duel Arcane between Tocaera and the kevalin Riddhi. Tocaera finally defeated Riddhi, but vanished himself, the door to his mountain laboratory magically sealed. The Family Klesa continued to worship him, regaining its former position among the other Families over the centuries. In DR 722 Tocaera (now Tocair) was released when the Heroes of Tharsis opened his laboratory and caused an explosion that gutted the mountain. The Klesa family suffered many deaths, and it was in the aftermath of this disaster that Fellis left, turning his back on the Family's patron and returning (it was rumored) to the worship of Lloth. A cloud of scandal surrounded him when he left, probably because of his return to the abandoned goddess, but records were lost after the Klesa Family's further troubles with the monsters freed during that explosion. Fellis vanished from records for several years, only to reappear in DR 726 in Anseis.

The real scandal was that Fellis had dallied with a human woman, who had given birth to twins, Morphias and Mephista [see Dungeon #27, p. 54, "The School of Nekros" by Lisa Smedman]. Half-drow are hated by drow, and thus the priestesses of Lloth cursed the woman's line, so that all blood of that line would be split, women to humans, men to drow. Fellis later had a liaison with the necromancer Mephista. The results of this liaison were two twins, a girl, Gabrielle, and a boy, Armand. These children apparently inherited the curse - Armand appeared drow, and Gabrielle, human. However, during the course of her adventuring, Gabrielle overcame the curse by marrying a human. All of her children are human. Armand still bears the curse, unless he marries a drow.

ARMAND SPURLOCK KLESA

drow necromancer 7 hp 16 neutral (with good tendencies)

SPELLS UP: stonewalk

S: 13/ muscle 13, stamina 13  
I: 17/ reason 18, knowledge 16  
W: 15/ intuition 17, willpower 13  
D: 17/ aim 17, balance 17  
C: 16/ health 16, fitness 16  
CH: 16/ leadership 16, appearance 16

Non-Weapon Proficiencies:

- \* Astrology (17)
- \* Spellcraft (15)
- \* Herbalism (15)
- \* Navigation (15)
- \* Swimming (13)
- \* Riding, Land (18)
- \* Seamanship (18)
- \* Fishing (14)
- \* Cooking (17)
- \* Port argot (17)

Magic Items:

- \* Heatsink, Chill Blade (EM 1): After 3 rds, chill power can be used for extra 1d4/strike, save vs. spell or attack at -1 for next hour, cumulative for each hit. Undead suffer 1 hp from a hit, but must save vs. spell or be forced to flee for 1d4+1 rds.
- \* Ring of Avian Control (EM 3): Silver feather curved around finger. Controls natural birds with int of 4 or less, up to 40HD. Complete concentration required to maintain control.

OTHER: Armand wears fairly simple, utilitarian clothes, often bulky to keep him warm in the chill keep. He keeps his white hair cut short, and a silver earring glistens in his left ear.

Armand is pleasant-natured, although able to draw on the cold mask of a Conclave member at a moment's notice, if need be. He studies necromancy out of curiosity and family tradition, giving it a naturalist slant of his own. He knows about the family curse, but since he doesn't intend to try to rejoin drow society, it doesn't bother him too much.

Armand is Fellis' son - and grandson, for that matter. He lived with Morphas and Mephista in the School of Nekros and avoided the great destruction brought down on the school by their rival Damion Childe [from running adventure in Dungeon #27, see Fellis for full reference]. Although at first he was angered by the destruction, as he learned more about its cause, he realized that Childe had reason to hate his mother and uncle, and finally Armand decided to let it go. He tried starting the school again, but had hardly begun before being contacted by his father, Fellis, who asked him to join him in Anseis. Armand agreed, but took three years to arrive in Anseis, spending that intermediate time as a sailor travelling around the different lands and learning more about the world outside the necromantic circle.

Armand has lived with Fellis for many years now, and has had a tempering effect on Fellis' natural cruelty. He enjoys the artistry of necromancy, but is too attracted to the outside world to completely succumb to its temptations. Once convinced that this plan was best for the children, Armand threw himself behind the movement and acts as the childrens' chief instructor, shielding them from Fellis' sometimes careless words and tempers. He believes that this force of necromancers may actually make a difference in perhaps a hundred years, making necromancy a reputable art of healing rather than a disparaged art of evil.

Armand has a lover who lives in a small hunting village, Ehroke, a few miles away from Castle Bloodbane. She is a half-elf, Tamerel, whom he met while he was out hunting. Although she was afraid of him at first, his kindness won her over, and in turn Armand was smitten by her beauty and charm. However, he knows his father would disapprove of him marrying a peasant. He is very devoted to her, even more so now that she is pregnant, and fiercely protects her from his father's knowledge for fear of what the Conclave might do to her to get him or Fellis through him. He has promised her that he'll marry her as soon as he is powerful enough to protect her and their children. (Note that since she's of elven blood, his curse will be transferred to any children they have.) He will be reluctant to leave the island if he can't take her with him. If Armand should be killed by the adventurers, Tamerel would make a good NPC to sic on the adventurers' trails for vengeance. However, I haven't written her up here.

STUDENTS: (NOTE: a "null" is completely immune to all magic, good or bad; an "arcus" is a mage with archmage capacity, i.e. one who learns spells more easily, casts spells at higher levels, and so forth. The DM should feel free to discard these campaign-specific labels. Also, the place names should be varied to fit the DM's campaign. Default race is human.)

JOURNEY-LEVEL: These 2nd-level students are graduates and travel around doing necromantic work. Eventine & Melangel travel together, and Coffin, Mews & Clover travel together. The DM may decide whether or not these journeymen & women are in the keep, or on the road. If they're on the road, they'll make excellent instruments of revenge for Fellis, or could be used to re-kidnap the children.

Clover (F 20), Empyrias  
Coffin (M 19) - arcus, Saldon  
Eventine (M 21, h/e), Saldon, brother to Melangel  
Melangel (F 19, h/e), Saldon, sister to Eventine  
Mews (M 18) - null, Ankham

ADVANCED: 1st level

Korad (M 15), Arquian, a bully

Parfail (M 13) - null, Travioch, favored  
Red (F 14), Bahr al'Raml, aloof  
Siravel (F 13, h/e), Arquian  
Tyria (F 14), Emphyrias, has a crush on Eventine

INTERMEDIATE: advanced apprentice

Alisander (M 12), Ankham, often teams up with Korad  
Cail (F 12), Ankham, has a crush on Armand  
Chaol (M 11), Jackscrag  
Hart (M 13), Roscarberry, defends kids from Korad

BEGINNERS: beginning apprentice

Javin (M 11), Ankham  
Peredur (M 10), Saldon, has a crush on Armand  
Pounce (M 9), Emphyrias, Tok's friend, but bolder  
Sarlons (M 12), Emphyrias  
Tok (M 8), Ankham, a scaredy-cat, hides behind Pounce

NEWCOMERS:

Bandor (M 8), Cislunar  
Bryn (F 9, h/e), Cislunar  
Layard (M 7), Jackscrag  
Malachi (M 9) - arcus, Cislunar, favored  
Olivar (M 7) - null, Cislunar, favored  
Orchid (F 6), Anseis/slave  
Quire (M 7), Cislunar  
Sharla (F 9), Cislunar

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FELLIS' SCROLLS:

EACH SCROLL PROTECTED BY EXPLOSIVE RUNES FOR 6D4+6

Level One:

Burning Hands X2  
Detect Magic X5  
Identify X5  
Magic Missile X3  
Spectral Ears (March 91) X2  
Spectral Eyes (March 91) X2  
Spectral Voice (March 91) X2  
Wizard Mark X5

Level Two:

Knock X5  
Leomund's Trap X2  
Spectral Hand X6  
Stinking Cloud X3  
Wizard Lock X3

Level Three:

Clairaudience X3  
Clairvoyance X3

Dispel Magic X2  
Fireball X2  
Hold Undead X1  
Proof Against Teleport (Handbook) X1  
Prot. Normal Missiles X1  
Skulltrap (March 91) X2  
Skullwatch (Realms) X2  
Watery Double (Tome) X1

Level Four:

Charm Monster X2  
Detect Scrying X2  
Evard's Black Tentacles X1  
Magic Mirror X2  
Mirror Globe X2  
Stoneskin X3

Level Five:

Animate Dead X5  
Cloudkill X1  
Dismissal X1  
Magic Jar X1  
Sending X3  
Von Gasik's Refusal (Tome) X2  
Wall of Bones (Handbook) X3

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ARMAND'S SCROLLS:

Level One:

Burning Hands X2  
Detect Magic X5  
Identify X3

Level Three:

Dispel Magic X4  
Fireball X2  
Prot. Normal Missiles X2

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FELLIS' SPELLBOOKS:

(All of these spellbooks are bound in human skin. There is a normally locked iron band around each that has been Fire Trapped (11th level, 12d4). They are protected by the following spells, cast at 11th level of ability: Wizardlock, Explosive Runes (6d4+6). They are marked with Fellis' Wizardmark.)

Book One:

Animate Dead Animals (March 91)  
Burning Hands  
Chill Touch  
Detect Magic  
Detect Undead  
Identify  
Magic Missile

Spectral Ears (March 91)  
Spectral Eyes (March 91)  
Spectral Voice (March 91)  
Wizard Mark

Book Two:

Cloak Undead (Realms)  
Knock  
Leomund's Trap  
Spectral Hand  
Stinking Cloud  
Wizard Lock

Book Three:

Bone Knit (March 91)  
Clairaudience  
Clairvoyance  
Dispel Magic  
Explosive Runes  
Fireball  
Hold Undead  
Lightning Bolt  
Proof Against Teleport (Handbook)  
Prot. Normal Missiles  
Skulltrap (March 91)  
Skullwatch (Realms)  
Vampiric Touch  
Watery Double (Tome)

Book Four:

Beltyn's Burning Blood (Realms)  
Charm Monster  
Detect Scrying  
Dimension Door  
Enervation  
Evard's Black Tentacles  
Fire Trap  
Magic Mirror  
Mirror Globe  
Polymorph Other  
Polymorph Self  
Stoneskin  
Watchware (Realms)

Book Five:

Animate Dead  
Cloudkill  
Disguise Undead (Realms)  
Dismissal  
Improved Skullwatch (Handbook)  
Leomund's Secret Chest  
Magic Jar  
Sending  
Summon Shadow  
Throbbing Bones (Handbook)  
Von Gasik's Refusal (Tome)  
Wall of Bones (Handbook)



Wall of Force  
Wall of Iron  
Wall of Stone

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A FEW NOTES ABOUT ANSEIS (in case the characters travel around a little):

Anseis is a rich and decadent island, thoroughly steeped in evil. It is divided into 9 domains, and each ruler can teleport to the port city to meet as members of the Conclave, the ruling body of the island. The domains tend to be divided by lots of empty wilderness and a few huddled villages whose peasants live in abject fear of their leaders. The only big settlement on the island is the port, and roads run from the port to the various fortresses in which the domain rulers dwell. These domains and their rulers are:

Bloodbane: Fellis Whyth Klesa, drow necromancer, 11, male  
Danglerot: Enoch Renegade, half-elven fighter, 13, male  
Dreadeye: Shibboleth Coronach, human diviner, 9, female  
Fleshslaker: Adeptus Grey, kenku air elemental, 10, female  
Reapfury: Cenobite Amanita, weredragon fighter 20, female (also the leader of the Black Guards)  
Sinslake: Lumis Translucence, human abjurer 11, male  
Skullscaper: Haruspex Mantle, half-elven oracle, 9, male (note that between the oracle and the diviner, the Conclave is often warned ahead of time of dangers to its island or rule)  
Toadcrusher: Ordo Mllum, human fighter, 9, male  
Venomtaint: Shikari Advent, drow assassin, 10, female

TYPICAL ANSEIS ARISTOCRAT (in the port city only):

s: 12 I: 14 w: 10 d: 12 c: 12 ch: 16 perception: 12 AC 6  
Fighter 3/Mage 2 HP 16  
Dueling sabre (1d8/1d12), stiletto (1d4/1d2)

TYPICAL BLACK GUARD (think Nazi SS; in the port city only, or sometimes patrolling the roads):

s: 17 (+1/+1) I: 15 w: 10 d: 17 (AC -3) c: 18 ch: 16 perception 15  
Fighter 7 (3 atk/2 rds) HP 80 AC 5/2 (black scalemail with shield)  
Iron guard's horn, hand crossbow with poison darts (1d3/1d3 + 5d6 poison)  
High black bladeboots (from Aurora's, 1d6/1d6+1)  
Cinquedeas with poison (1d6/1d4 + 5d6 poison)  
Footman's mace, specialist weapon (1d6+1, 1d6)  
Scourge (1d4/1d2)  
Maiden's yoke shackles: hand shackles with spikes on inside of cuff (1d4).

NOTE: The guards patrol the streets regularly and question any who look suspicious or out of place, or who the guards simply feel like having some fun with. A special contingent of guards travels with the tamed Chimeras owned by the palace - there are 10 altogether on the island, trained to attack on command. See Monstrous Compendium for details.

TYPICAL ANSEIS PEASANT (downtrodden and shiftless): hp 4 AC 8

RANDOM ANSEIS ENCOUNTERS (2d8). The DM may want to embellish these for each domain according to the domain's ruler's personality and skills (thus, in

Fellis' domain there might be more undead wandering around, or a Zombie Fog, and so on.)

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