WOE TO THE WICKED / ALPHA v44

The Bleeding Grave

A GM adventure for Alpha v44.

Starter Scenario - The Bleeding Grave

Use current Player Book and the Techniques catalog. This scenario requires no specific learned Technique; ordinary actions and equipment remain usable. Judge danger from the actual party's methods and resources.

Rank 1 • Designed for a newly formed party. This scenario exercises investigation, positioning, combat, resource use, preparation, and consequences. It can be run directly from this packet.

Commission

The Adventurers' Guild has received reports of blue light, animal disappearances, and blood-red sap at an old farm graveyard. A farmhand who went to investigate has not returned. The party is hired to make the site safe, determine what awakened there, and return with a credible account.

Payment: 50 G per character on completion. In addition, each character receives one Common quest item and the party receives one Common bonus item under the Rank 1 loot procedure. State the commission before departure.

Travel and arrival

The graveyard is one travel day from the settlement by maintained road and farm track. Each character may make one normal travel-day resource search on the outward journey. The surrounding biome is Foothill unless the GM relocates the scenario. The party arrives with enough daylight for a careful approach unless it deliberately delays.

Visible from outside: old gravestones, a stone gravehouse, a blue-glowing ritual well, a leafless blood-red tree, hay bales near a campfire, one worried man, and two low shapes disturbing the mud among the graves.

Jorin Vale - campfire NPC

Jorin is the missing farmhand's older brother. He came looking for him, reached the graveyard, and lost his nerve after seeing the bog creatures. He is frightened, embarrassed, and willing to help a party that treats him like a person rather than bait.

• Jorin knows his brother entered after following blue light; the red tree was ordinary three days ago; the bog creatures avoid the brightest pulses from the well; and the healthier western berry bush is edible.

• He wants his brother recovered, or at least proof of what happened. He refuses an obviously suicidal charge.

• If reassured, he can identify farm paths, lend a lantern and shovel, and point out a drainage ditch that reaches the graveyard wall.

• If threatened, he leaves at the first safe opportunity. Ordinary persuasion cannot compel obvious lethal risk.

Site layout

• Farm edge: campfire, hay bales, drainage ditch, and two berry bushes; the western bush is healthier.

• Graveyard: broken stones and soft ground create cover and difficult terrain where the fiction supports it.

• Ritual well: a waist-high stone basin emitting blue pulses; three ritual anchors feed it.

• Bleeding tree: a leafless red tree opposite the gravehouse; dark sap runs from deliberate cuts in its bark.

• Gravehouse: a chained throne and a black hanging parabolic focus above it.

• Bog creatures: two Oozes / Sludges from Monsters begin separated among the graves.

The three ritual anchors

The ritual persists while any anchor remains active. The party may disable, cleanse, redirect, cover, separate, or destroy an anchor if the method fits the fiction. A solved anchor remains solved unless the party itself reactivates it.

Anchor	Find / understand	Valid approaches	Pressure on failed consequential attempt
Blue Well	Perception or Attune TN 4; no roll after careful examination with a clearly appropriate magical method.	Disrupt etched channels; Ward/Attune magic; foul the flow with a plausible counter-material; crack the feed-stone with a capable tool.	The well pulses. Composure or Ward Test against TN 4; on failure become Exposed until the end of your next turn.
Bleeding Tree	Perception TN 4 identifies the deliberate cuts.	Bind or seal cuts; remove marked bark; cleanse with fitting magic; redirect sap away from the well.	Caustic sap sprays. Bodily Withstand TN 4 or lose 1d4 Resolve.
Hanging Black Focus	Visible inside; Attune or Cunning TN 4 identifies it as a receiver/focus.	Lower it with the chains; cover or turn it; break supports; counter its magic.	A pressure wave hits. Composure TN 4 or lose 5 feet of voluntary Movement and become Exposed until end of next turn.

Gravehouse and the missing farmhand

Jorin's brother, Emric, is alive but Unconscious behind the throne. The ritual has been drawing warmth and spirit from him. Removing him from the gravehouse ends the immediate drain. Remove him from the active drain, transport him to safety and apply any printed treatment or healing as appropriate. Follow the cause of his Unconscious condition; there is no generic stabilization Action.

The golden chains are mundane but sturdy. A character who studies the mechanism for one minute can operate it without a Test when unpressured. During active danger, operating it calls for Crafting TN 4.

Bog creatures

Use two Oozes / Sludges from Monsters. They defend the well and try to separate intruders. They withdraw into the mud if two ritual anchors are disabled or if both have lost at least half their Resolve. They do not pursue beyond the graveyard unless attacked after retreat.

For two or fewer player-characters, begin with one Ooze / Sludge and introduce the second only if the first is handled easily. For six or more, add one Ghoul after the party understands the situation. These are usability adjustments, not guarantees of exact balance.

Berry bushes and discovery

A character examining the two bushes can tell the western bush is healthier without a roll. Deliberately harvesting it yields 1 Common Foothill resource unit appropriate to the plant. This scenario harvest is separate from the normal travel-day discovery check. Eating an unidentified resource never grants an assumed mechanical effect.

Escalation

Use Escalation only when play stalls or the characters create new danger. Good options: a Ooze / Sludge blocks a route; the well pulse changes safe footing; Emric visibly weakens; rain begins filling the drainage ditch. Never retroactively undo a solved anchor or a resolved success.

Success, failure, and return

Primary success: Emric is recovered or his fate is conclusively established, and the ritual can no longer threaten the farm. Combat is not mandatory. Investigation, destruction, magical intervention, redirection, rescue, or a combination may solve the site.

If the party retreats, the ritual remains active and worsens in a visible way; they may return with preparation. Consequences already established persist. On return, pay the commission, assign Rank 1 loot, allow settlement recovery, and record persistent changes on the Party Sheet.

Encounter reference

These existing Tier-1 profiles replace the retired benchmark names. Use their printed abilities and the behavior above; two opponents are a preparation suggestion, not a balance guarantee.

Low Resolve: at half maximum Resolve or less, Presence, Composure and Influence have Disadvantage on their Skill dice; normal cancellation applies. Ends above half. Odd maximum 9: threshold 4.

Ooze / Sludge - Tier 1 · cost 1 - Monster

Vitality	Might	Agility	Intellect	Tact	Spirit
d4	d4	d4	d4	d4	d4

Skill overrides:. Unlisted Skills use their governing Affinity.

Resolve 4; Stamina 3; Mana 2. Movement 30 feet unless overridden below. Hope absent. Medium unless described otherwise. Block requires a usable intercepting implement or explicitly usable anatomy.

Player Book idea: Slow amorphous scavenger inspired by corrosive ooze depictions.

Use: Basic attack · Pseudopod: Might + supplemental d4 Wound (bludgeoning).

Effect - Signature: Move 10 feet; after a Damaging Hit, 1 Mana and Invoke versus Withstand + Vitality inflicts Distract from caustic contact. Can pass through a 2-inch gap, but takes an Action to squeeze through.

Counterplay/relationship: Distance and barriers create escape routes. Equipment corrosion needs time and visible exposure outside combat, not surprise permanent loss.

Ghoul - Tier 1 · cost 1 - Monster

Vitality	Might	Agility	Intellect	Tact	Spirit
d4	d4	d4	d4	d4	d4

Skill overrides:. Unlisted Skills use their governing Affinity.

Resolve 4; Stamina 3; Mana 2. Movement 30 feet unless overridden below. Hope absent. Medium unless described otherwise. Block requires a usable intercepting implement or explicitly usable anatomy.

Player Book idea: Silent corpse-eating ambush predator.

Use: Basic attack · Claws: Might + supplemental d4 Wound (slashing).

Effect - Signature: After a Damaging Hit, 1 Mana and Invoke versus Withstand + Vitality inflicts Hinder. This replaces minute-long paralysis.

Counterplay: Keep watch around remains; its single-target hindrance is broken by distance.

Relationship: No default companion assumption.

Using the profiles

Read Name - Category, then Requires / Use / Effect. Requires gives eligibility; Use lists timing, targets, reach, cost and frequency; Effect gives resolution and consequences. Omitted fields follow Player Book. Italic text is flavor only; profile statistics stay separate.

Creature and monster profiles use the Alpha 43 engine. Costs are preparation estimates, not tested danger ratings. Creatures can be candidates for taming; monsters are a separate category. No profile grants automatic ownership, obedience, a learned spell or a harvestable item. Use Player Book: Companions and Contact Slots for companionship; profile changes require explicit permission.

A basic attack costs an Action; a projected magical basic also costs 1 Mana. Physical melee assigns Might; physical ranged and the listed projected damaging basics assign Agility. Roll that Affinity plus the printed supplemental die. Only the Affinity crits. Physical attacks allow one legal Evade, Block or Withstand defense; direct magical harm uses Ward + Spirit, deception Perception + Intellect and influence Composure + Tact. Specific biological effects use Withstand + Vitality. No passive second defense or paid base defense exists.

Default basic melee reach is 5 feet; default ranged reach is 40 feet unless the profile specifies another distance. Fallback: Action, Might + supplemental d4 Wound (bludgeoning) at 5 feet, no Mana. Unlisted Skills use the printed parent Affinity. Unlisted resistances, immunities and spells are absent. Printed supernatural abilities are bounded profile exceptions; they grant no general spell repertoire. A printed Movement or size override supersedes the default.

Existing converted profiles retain their printed Affinities, Skills and resources. Restored creature profiles marked Draft use provisional current-engine values and need calibration. Only Affinity dice critically succeed. Unlisted Skills use their governing Affinity; unlisted immunities and spells are absent.

Shared profile abilities

Hinder - Profile Ability

Effect: until the start of the attacker’s next turn, halve the target’s Move distance, rounding down. Multiple Hinders do not stack.

Unsettle - Profile Ability

Effect: until the start of the attacker’s next turn, the target has Disadvantage on its next attack against that attacker only. This never dictates the PC’s beliefs or choices.

Distract - Profile Ability

Effect: Disadvantage on the target’s next attack before the start of the attacker’s next turn. Multiple instances do not stack.

Seize (hold a creature) - Profile Ability

Use: Action · One target within reach

Effect: physically suitable grip, jaws, coils or hooked limbs against one target within reach. Resolve Force + Might versus the target's Force + Might or Maneuver + Agility. On success it cannot move away; the holder cannot Move while maintaining the grip. The target or an adjacent helper can spend an Action on an appropriate Force, Labor or Maneuver Test against the holder's Might die maximum to release it; the holder rolls no second defense. Suitable leverage may remove uncertainty. Leaving reach, releasing the grip or the holder reaching 0 Resolve ends it. One held target; holding does not imply swallowing, crushing or drowning.

Shove - Profile Ability

Use: On a Damaging Hit · 1 Stamina

Effect: Push the target 5 feet along the same surface. No additional Contest. Do not move it through a wall; at an exposed edge it stops there. This positions the target without an automatic lethal fall.

Venom - Profile Ability

Use: On a Damaging Hit · 1 Mana

Effect: Inflict Distract until the start of the attacker's next turn. No additional Contest, ongoing damage or permanent paralysis.

Dread - Profile Ability

Use: Action · One visible target within 30 feet · 1 Mana

Effect: Invoke + Spirit versus Composure + Tact. Success inflicts Unsettle; no damage. Use its stated endpoint, not repeated recovery rolls.

Glamour - Profile Ability

Use: Action · One visible target within 30 feet · 1 Mana

Effect: Invoke + Spirit versus Perception + Intellect. Success inflicts Distract; no damage or compelled harmful action.

Burst - Profile Ability

Use: Action · Visible area within 30 feet; up to two creatures within 10 feet of each other, declared before rolling · 2 Mana

Effect: visible area within 30 feet and up to two creatures within 10 feet of each other, declared before rolling. Roll Agility + the printed supplemental damage die + one non-exploding supplementary die of the same size as the supplemental damage die. Apply the completed shared pool separately to each declared target, with its own defenses; do not reroll the attack or damage per target. Magic uses Ward + Spirit; physical fragments use normal physical defenses. No kill overflow outside these targets. This follows the Player Book’s shared-pool/per-target-defense procedure; the target cap and Mana cost bound its output.

Line - Profile Ability

Use: Action · Up to three declared creatures in a straight 30-foot line · 3 Mana

Effect: As Burst, with two supplementary dice. Same shared-pool and per-target-defense procedure.

Mend - Profile Ability

Use: Action · Touch; living creature · 1 Mana

Effect: touch a living creature to restore a non-exploding d4 Resolve up to its maximum. Does not revive, restore Hope or remove Doom.

Protect - Profile Ability

Use: Action · One creature within 20 feet · 1 Mana

Effect: one creature within 20 feet receives a 3-point damage buffer until the caster’s next turn. It does not stack with itself; use the larger remaining buffer. Apply after defenses and before Resolve. Ward remains the defense Skill.

Phase - Profile Ability

Use: Bonus Action · Visible vacant space within 15 feet · 1 Mana

Effect: pass through at most 5 feet of nonmagical solid material and end in a visible vacant space within 15 feet. No ending inside objects, permanent invulnerability or attacking through an opaque wall.

Shade Step - Profile Ability

Use: Bonus Action · Two visible areas of dim light within 15 feet · 1 Mana

Effect: move up to 15 feet between two visible areas of dim light; blocked paths may be crossed, but not sealed opaque walls.

Feed - Profile Ability

Use: Action · Profile-specific accessible source · Maximum twice per encounter

Effect: consume a profile-specific accessible source to restore 2 Resolve, maximum twice per encounter and never above maximum Resolve. No permanent resource creation or automatic replenishment from every death.

Regrow - Profile Ability

Use: Bonus Action · Yourself · 1 Mana · Maximum twice per encounter

Effect: restore 2 Resolve, maximum twice per encounter. Burn or Holy-tagged Resolve damage since the creature’s preceding turn prevents that use. Cannot operate at 0 Resolve.

Only listed traits apply. No generic immunity package for "undead," "construct" or "spirit" is supplied here. No ability bypasses normal lethal/Hope resolution. Advantage/Disadvantage on a particular die follows the Player Book’s method for that die; no +2 shorthand is used. Unlisted resistances and immunities are absent. Feeding does not consume a PC’s metaphysical soul as an automatic hit rider.