

Grotto of the Grandfather

Below the scorched sands and bloody arena of the City of Blades lie the Thousand Sunless Temples. In one of these temples resides the Grandfather, a primordial being asleep for centuries. Cultists of this primordial, known the Grandchildren, conduct rituals to awaken and arm the Grandfather's Warspawn and unleash it against the city. As agents of the Guardians, you must enter the grotto and disrupt as many rituals as you can before the beast attacks the city! Should you defeat the beast itself, you would be mighty heroes indeed.

"Grotto of the Grandfather" is a single-session adventure for 1st level *Shadowdark* PCs using the *Shadowdark RPG Quickstart* books. This scenario fits into a single 3- to 4-hour session using the countdown timer described in "Darkness Descends". During this scenario, the PCs explore the Grotto and disrupt as many of the Grandchildren's rituals as they can before the Grandfather's Warspawn attacks.

Scenario Setup

Before the game print and hand out the pre-generated PCs from the *Shadowdark RPG Quickstart* guide. During your prep, figure out where the four rituals occur (see "Warspawn Rituals").

When you begin the scenario, read the intro to this scenario to your players. The players choose one of four entrances: the north-west stream (area 1), the lower caves (area 2), the north-east waterfall (area 3), or temple ruin entrance (area 4).

During the game, replace slain PCs with new ones after any current combat has concluded. New PCs join the group with the same intent to stop the rituals and defeat the Warspawn.

Secrets and Clues

Reveal the following secrets and clues as the PCs explore the Grotto. You choose where to reveal such secrets and you need not reveal them all. The PCs may learn such secrets from NPCs, friezes, paintings, or frescos on the walls, artifacts they acquire, or tattered scrolls.

- Hundreds of temples reside below the City of Blades in countless chambers known as the Thousand Sunless Temples.
- The Grandchildren, cultists of the Grandfather, claim to have heard the primordial's call in dreams for several months.
- The Grandfather, an **aboleth** who rests in area 32 of the Grotto, actually cares little for the dealings of mortals, but the Grandchildren claim he wishes to rule over the City of Blades.
- The Grandchildren learned how to summon a Warspawn (a **cave brute**) and use their rituals to empower the beast before sending him to the city.

- Dozens of primordials once ruled over the lands. Some died and many slumber. Many strange cults still worship the beasts.
- The Grandfather is a smaller primordial, one who still occasionally awakens.
- The Grandchildren interpret the dreams of the Grandfather and believe he wants them to summon a Warspawn to wage bloodshed in the city.
- The constructed halls and chambers of the grotto seem pulled from the Grandfather's aquatic world of Chrysthum.

Darkness Descends

45 minutes before the end of the session, or when the PCs disrupt the fourth ritual, the halls rumble, all light is extinguished, and the Warspawn (a **cave brute** armed with any remaining ritual bonuses) attacks the PCs. Roll on the Distance table on the inside cover of the *Shadowdark Game Master Quickstart Guide* to determine how close the Warspawn begins to the PCs.

Encounters

Adventuring in the Grotto is risky – a 1:6 chance for an encounter every two rounds. Use "distance", "activity", and "reaction" tables from the inner cover of the *Shadowdark Game Master's Quickstart Guide*.

1. 1d3 **cultists** run late to the nearest ritual
2. 1d2 alabaster **crocodiles** gnaw on a cultist.
3. 2d3 **beastmen** from a competing temple of the beast-god Karigulon hunt sacrilegious cultists.
4. A **cave creeper** lurks in the ceiling.
5. 1d6 **darkmantles** hunt the light.
6. A **gelatinous cube** stands still in a hallway.
7. 2d4 **deep gnomes** pry treasures out of the wall.
8. A **grick** hides in a natural crevasse.
9. A mind-warped **ogre** hunts infidels.
10. 1d6 **giant rats** gnaw on a forlorn **skeleton**.
11. 1d3 **scarab swarms** skitter in a sarcophagus.
12. A nest of **stingbats** flies through the shadows.

Traps and Hazards

Doors and passages have a 1:6 chance to contain a trap or hazard. Use the Traps and Hazard tables in the *Shadowdark Game Master's Quickstart Guide*.

Treasure

Each chamber has a 1:4 chance of containing a treasure. Roll on the Treasure table in the *Shadowdark Game Master Quickstart Guide*.



Warspawn Rituals

The Grandchildren conduct four rituals at different spots in the Grotto. Before the game begins, roll 1d10 using the following list to determine the location of each ritual. Reroll on duplicate locations.

1. Location 11
2. Location 12
3. Location 15
4. Location 17
5. Location 21
6. Location 24
7. Location 28
8. Location 29
9. Location 31
10. Location 32

1d3+1 **cultists** conduct each ritual at altars with skulls of cave brutes, crude paintings, and the artifact of power. PCs disrupt rituals by killing the cultists or with other creative ideas.

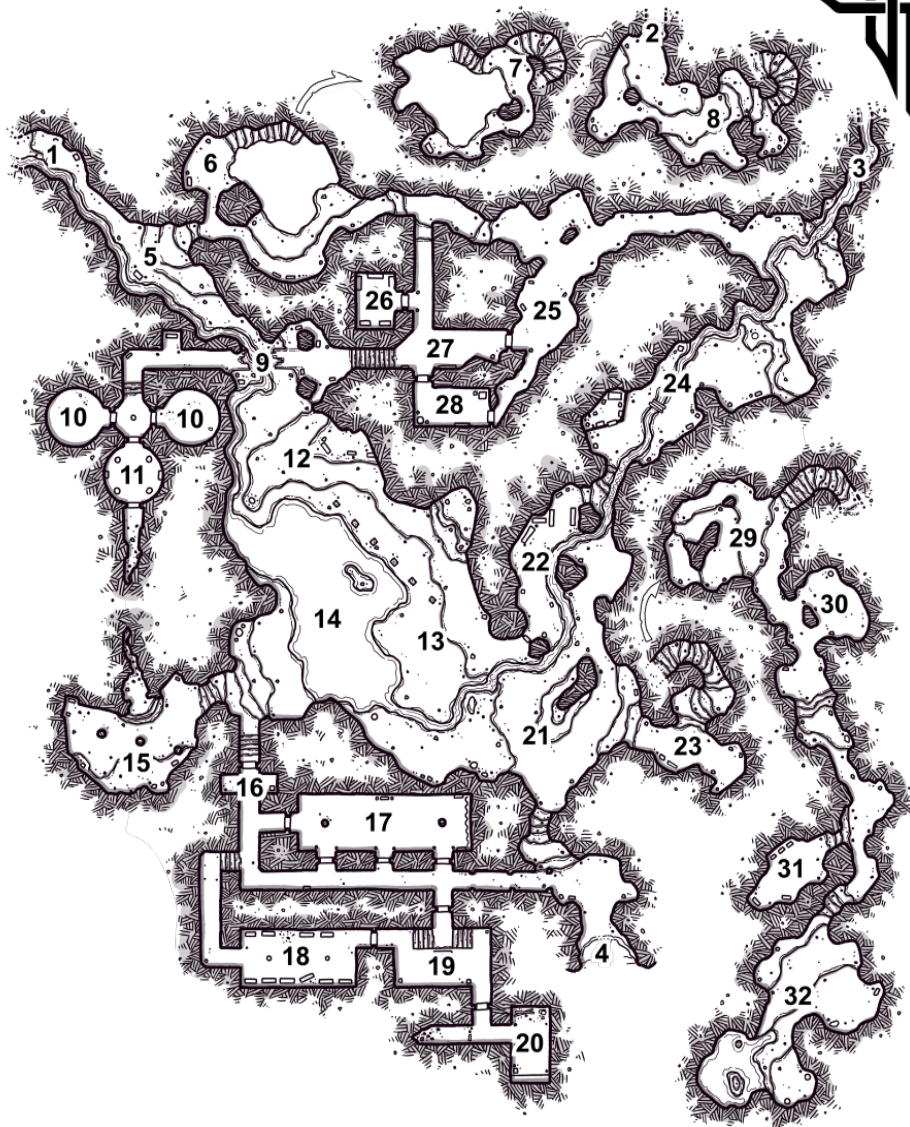
Each ritual gives power to the Grandfather's Warspawn. Each location also contains a magic item as listed. These include:

1. **The ritual of armor.** The warspawn has +3 to AC. *Bracers of defense.*
2. **The ritual of power.** The warspawn has +2 to attack rolls. *Gauntlets of might.*
3. **The ritual of violence.** The warspawn adds 1d6 damage to its mandible attack. *Pearl of power.*
4. **The ritual of health.** The warspawn has twice its normal hit points. *Staff of healing.*

Grotto Locations

The following section describes the Grotto's locations.

1. North-west entrance. Stream bank with small crude shrines.
2. Northern lower cave entrance with upper shaft.
3. Waterfall entrance with sharp rocks.
4. Southern ruin entrance. Sand-worn statues.
5. Defiled shrine of the primordial Vyxis the Hive; home to 1d6 **stirges**.
6. Upper bank to lower shaft. Small offerings.
7. Mid-level bank of shaft, shattered weapons.
8. Lower pit. Shattered bones of sacrifice victims.
9. Shattered upper bridge with 1d4 **goblin** snipers.
10. Sacrificial wells.
11. Carved pillars of twisted aquatic humanoids.
12. Sandy banks with raised bluff and altar.



13. Pillars carved into half-crab warriors.
14. Deep pool.
15. Ruined temple with decorated pillars.
16. Two guardian **animated armors** with crustation helms.
17. Shrine of the Grandfather. Carved pillars of humanoid priests.
18. Decrepit library.
19. Fresco of the Grandfather's sunken world.
20. Prisoner cells and manacles.
21. Beach of bones.
22. Sarcophagus of dead priests now 1d4 **skeletons**.
23. Small shrine of the Grandfather.
24. High priest's quarters, now a **wight**.
25. Bloody battleground with apprehensive **ghost**.
26. Treasure vault of relics.
27. Fresco halls of primordials.
28. Shrine of the Grandfather.
29. Bones of 1d4 guardian **skeletal** beasts.
30. Shells of dead cave brutes.
31. Shrine of the Grandfather.
32. Temple and lair of the Grandfather, the uncaring **aboleth**.

