Crypts of the Betrothed

"Crypts of the Betrothed" is an adventure scenario for 7th level 5e characters set in a buried primeval crypt taken over by a vampire couple and the artifact they're bound to protect. This scenario works with any 5e-based system including D&D 2014, D&D 2024, *Level Up Advanced 5e*, *Tales of the Valiant*, or others. It can also be modified to support other fantasy RPGs.

This scenario is part of a series following the Key of Worlds campaign arc in the *City of Arches* sourcebook. This series begins with the *Scroll of Akrave* scenario.

This scenario is the third of three scenarios leading to the Brazier of the Betrothed – one of three braziers locking the extradimensional vault of the Key of Worlds.

You can instead modify this scenario to run as a stand-alone adventure in any campaign or setting.

This Isn't a Typical Adventure

This scenario isn't laid out like a traditional adventure. Instead, it presents ingredients to use and a scaffold around which to build your own adventure for your own group, campaign, and story. This scenario gives you adventure hooks, histories, secrets and clues, notable NPCs, potential encounters, locations, and potential treasure.

Each section in this scenario suggests how to use these components.

Brazier of the Betrothed

This scenario is the third of three scenarios leading to the Brazier of the Betrothed. Two other three-scenario paths lead to the other two Blackfire Braziers – the Brazier of the Nameless King and the Brazier of Grayon.

At this point in the campaign, the characters possess one of the two Blackfire artifacts – the *Sword of Irixthius* or the *Staff of Servlyn* – each of which can ignite the Blackfire Braziers. The characters also learned the locations of the three braziers in the *Lake of Monoliths* scenario and traveled through the trap rooms of the *Theater of Whispers* and through the armories in *Vault of Infernal Machines*.

While the characters seek the Brazier of the Betrothed, another rival group, such as the Children of Ibraxus or the Knights of the Nameless King, might seek another brazier. Thus, the characters likely complete *two* of these Blackfire Brazier paths while skipping the third after their rivals light the remaining Brazier.

If this is the first brazier the characters seek, the characters are likely 7th level when they begin this scenario. If they've already found and ignited another brazier, they may be 10th level. In the latter case, you may want to beef up encounters with bigger monsters or more monsters. Alternatively, you can leave it as it is and give the characters an easier series of encounters. Decide what's right for you, your players, and the pacing of the game.

Scenario Summary

Having navigated through the haunted trap rooms of the Theater of Whispers and Brevit the imp's treachery in the Vault of Infernal Machines, the characters find an ancient staircase leading to primeval crypts taken over by a vampire couple – Vyctor and Evelynd LeStrange. The characters meet Calen, once Knight of Black Flame and now thrall for the LeStranges, who bound the LeStranges to protect the Blackfire Brazier.

Throughout the crypts, the characters face several threats including vampiric minotaurs known as the Bloodhorns. When they face the LeStranges, they must negotiate or fight for access to the Blackfire Brazier before using either the Sword of Ithrix or the Staff of Servlyn to light the brazier and unlock one of the three locks barring passage to the vault of the key.

Scenario History

Eons ago, when primordials ruled the land and humanoids hid in the shadows, minotaur worshippers of the primordial Tarryx built a sunken crypt to inter their dead. Over the centuries, minotaur descendants maintained the crypts and stayed below during the rise of the Nameless King. Minions of the Nameless King became aware of the crypts in the last days of his empire when a collapsed wall in their vault of infernal machines led to the ancient stair of the crypt.

After the Nameless King's fall, two vampires – Evylend and Vyctor LeStrange – took the crypts as their own lair, enthralling the few remaining minotaurs who protected the crypt. With their lair hidden below the surface, the two vampires feasted in the chaotic days after the fall of the Nameless King but before the rise of the Golden Order that now rules over the City of Arches.

Two centuries after their arrival in the crypt, Caladin Suntouched, a Knight of Black Flame, came to the vampires and made a pact with them. If they agreed to protect one of the three Black Flame braziers, he would give himself to them as their thrall. They agreed – not realizing this agreement bound them to never leave the Crypt of the Betrothed. Infuriated, they twisted the knight's mind, breaking him down into a near mindless thrall. To this day the vampires and their thrall lurk in the shadows of the Crypt of the Betrothed.

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Secrets of the Theater

Deliver the following secrets and clues as the characters delve into the Crypts of the Betrothed. Characters might discover these clues by speaking with Calen Duskborn; viewing mosaics, glyphs, and portraits on the walls; or reading ancient texts found in the crypts. The characters need not discover every secret – think of secrets like treasure uncovered as the characters explore the crypts.

- The crypt of the betrothed was once a primordial burial vault constructed by minotaur followers of the primordial Tarryx the World Sunderer.
- The LeStranges took over the crypt three hundred years ago, before the rise of the Golden Order. They turned the few remaining minotaurs into their vampire spawn, now known as the Bloodhorns.
- Vyctor and Evylend LeStrange have been together for several centuries but never married – giving them the nickname of the "Betrothed".
- A more powerful vampire named Morghest sired the LeStranges. His ancient crypt lies hidden deep in the cliffs of the dead.
- A Knight of the Black Flame named Sir Caladin Suntouched approached the two vampires, offering his own life to them in return for their protection of one of the three Blackfire Braziers. They agreed.
- Sir Caladin's pact with the two vampires bound them to the crypt. They were so angry they shattered his mind with layers of charms and illusions. They renamed him Calen Duskborn who now serves as their thrall in the crypt.
- While the LeStranges cannot leave their crypt, their Bloodhorn minotaur vampire spawn can. The minotaurs bring back victims and feed small amounts of blood to the two vampires who spend so much time on their thrones appearing as motionless statues.
- The LeStranges seek to leave the crypt by way of a key to an arch in their crypt known as the Arch of the Damned.
- Vyctor and Evylend LeStrange hate each other. Centuries trapped together ended any love they may have once had. Either will betray the other if given the chance.

Key NPCs

The following is a list of key NPCs for this adventure.

- **Calen Duskborn – Sir Caladan Suntouched.** Knight of the Black Flame now thrall to the LeStranges. Calen has lost his former memories, but they may return if he sees the Blade of Irixthius or the Staff of Servlyn.
- **Vyctor LeStrange.** Human **vampire** betrothed to Evelynd. Brutal but less tactical than Evelynd.
- **Evelynd Lestrange.** Human vampire betrothed to Vyctor. She's the smarter of the two and willing to sacrifice Vyctor if it helps her escape.
- **Thraxus the Impaler.** Lead minotaur **vampire spawn** of the Bloodhorns. The blood flowing through his veins reminds him of the minotaur's past worshipping Tarryx the World Sunderer.

Scenario Start

Use one of the following hooks to draw characters into this scenario:

- Having traveled through the Vault of Infernal Machines, the characters discover a collapsed wall with an ancient staircase leading to primeval crypts below offering untold treasures and deadly threats.
- Reading ancient tomes of the Knights of Black Flame, the characters learn of Sir Caladan Suntouched and his plans to face the LeStrange vampires long ago. He was never heard from again and the characters may seek the end of his tale in the Crypts of the Betrothed.
- Danvon of Duskwater, sage of Kartan, hires the characters to delve into the Crypts of the Betrothed and either negotiate with or slay the vampires within to get access to the Brazier of the Betrothed. If they don't have it, he gives them either the Blade of Irixthius or the Staff of Servlyn to ignite the brazier once they've discovered it.

Encounters in the Crypt

Remnants of the thralls of the LeStranges still linger in the Crypts of the Betrothed. Select from or roll randomly on the table below to add inhabitants to locations found throughout the crypt.

If the characters face this scenario at level 10 instead of level 7, you may want to add more monsters, choose bigger monsters, or both.

1. Exsanguinated corpses animate into **zombies**.
2. Ravenous **ghouls** and **ghasts**–failed vampire spawn known as the "lost children"–seek the blood of the living.
3. A large pool of blood animates into a **black pudding** inflicting necrotic damage.
4. A lost **scout** hides in the shadows having managed to not be killed by the crypt's denizens.
5. Bloodhorn **minotaur vampire spawn** stalk the characters**.**
6. Cursed **shambling mounds** built from rotted humanoid remains lumber forward filled with primordial hate.
7. Pet **phase spiders** of the vampires lurk in the shadows seeking living food.
8. A cowering **ghost** doesn't understand its own death.

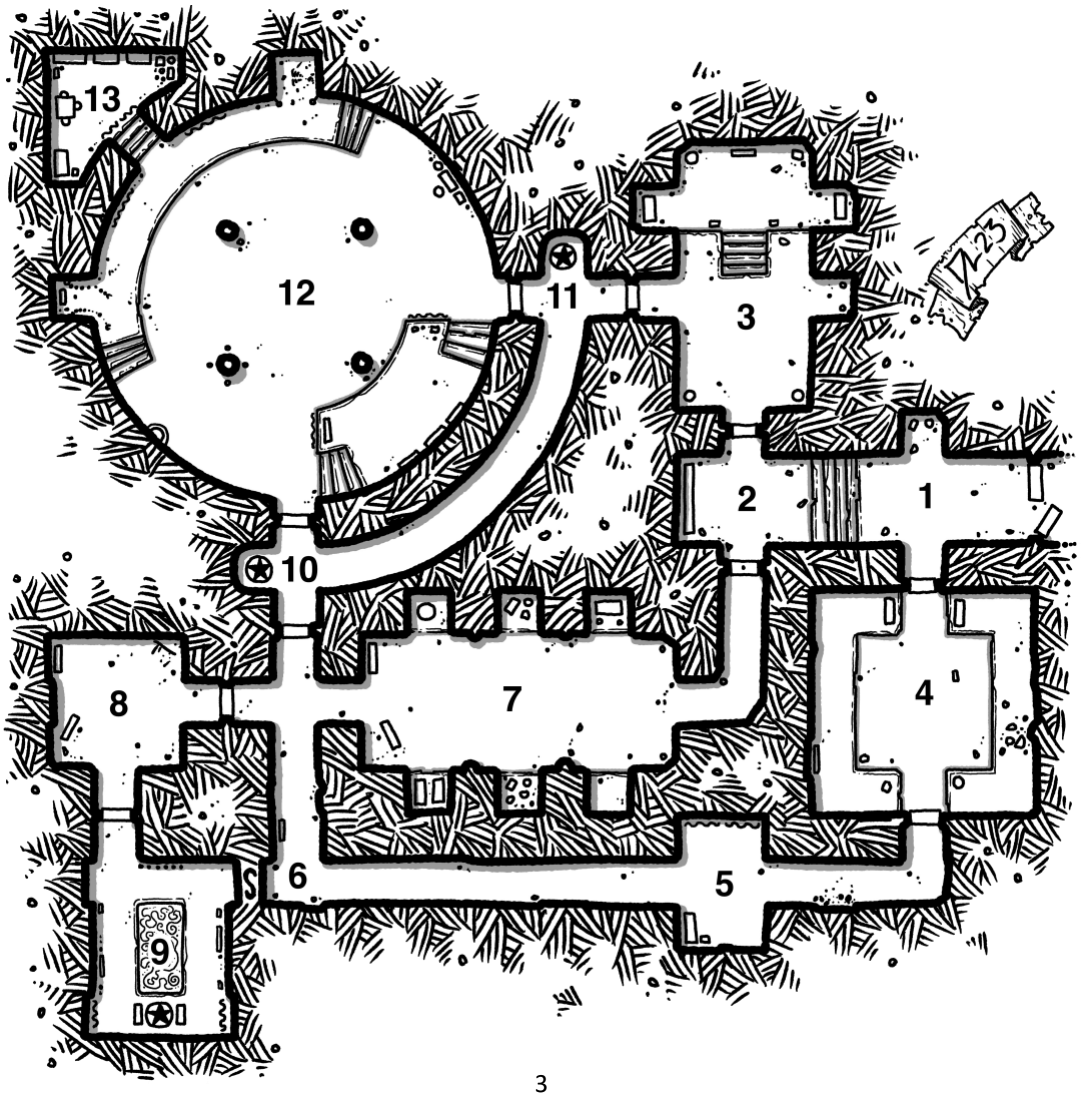
Locations

The crypt of the betrothed is built of ancient worked stone constructed from the days of the primordials and their mortal worshippers. The LeStranges and their thralls added to the initial construction with tapestries, busts, death masks, and other macabre artistry.

Hallways have ten-foot ceilings while larger chambers have 25-foot ceilings. The entire crypt is unlit.

The doorways in area 10 and 11 are locked with a powerful arcane lock. You can decide if a rogue is able to pick it or if *knock* or similar magic can open the doors. Otherwise, Calen Duskborn or Thraxus hold the glyph-fanged key able to open the doors to area 12.

1. Crypt entrance. Huge stone doors already opened. Half-devoured bodies of explorers.
2. Huge painting of the LeStranges looking confident and proud.
3. Chamber of the Arch of the Damned. Altars to fell gods of blood. (See "The LeStrange Crypt" for more information about the arch).
4. Chamber of lost children – a ghoul feasting hall. Raised balconies with fell altars.
5. Large tapestry of the LeStranges. Small bed where Calen Duskborn sleeps.
6. Ancient stone carving of the primordial Tarryx the World Ender, hiding a secret door to area 9.
7. Vaults of the Bloodhorns. Ancient sarcophagi, urns, and remnants of the long past.
8. Hall of conversion where vampire blood is given to mortals to see if they successfully become vampire spawn or fail and become ghouls.
9. Altar and statue of the Red Mother – goddess of vampires. Swirling pool of blood.
10. Statue of Vyctor LeStrange guarding the southern door to the central vaults.
11. Statue of Evelynd LeStrange guarding the northern door of the central vaults.
12. Central crypt of the LeStranges. Beautiful portraits on a raised platform. Thrones in alcoves for each of the LeStranges who appear as statues.
13. Chamber of the Brazier of the Betrothed, guarded with a deadly tapestry only the LeStranges, or their key, can bypass.



DCs, Damage, Traps, and Hazards

The Crypts of the Betrothed includes traps and hazards the characters may run into as they explore the haunted halls.

DCs for detecting or disarming these hazards are all DC 15. Damaging hazards inflict 21 (6d6) for single-target traps and 16 (3d10) for multi-target hazards.

1. Skulls embedded in the wall scream, causing psychic damage or stress effects.
2. Pools of necrotic blood soak the souls out of the living.
3. Grim portraits charm those who gaze upon them to attack their allies.
4. The floor collapses into a pit of poisonous spikes.
5. Beautiful tapestries threaten to swallow and suffocate those who touch them.
6. Blood-weeping statues exsanguinate blood from nearby living creatures.

Calen Duskborn

Former Knight of the Black Flame and thrall of the LeStranges, Calen Duskborn walks through the crypts, whispering to himself and conducting small chores as he eats insects off the walls. He carries a dim lamp he's careful not to shine on any of the denizens of the crypt. The horrific inhabitants of the crypts leave Calen alone, knowing he is thrall to the two masters of the crypt.

You decide when the characters run into Calen – perhaps in the front entrance after battling a hoard of ghouls and a pair of vampire minotaurs or later if you want the characters to explore the crypt on their own.

Calen and Thraxus are the only two able to get into the crypt of the LeStranges. The characters must meet one of the two of them before entering the crypt.

Calen has no memories of his time as a Knight of Black Flame but seeing the Sword of Irixthius or Staff of Servlyn reminds him. Seeing that the characters have come this far, Calin recognizes the need for them to light the Blackfire Brazier. He explains that the characters must defeat the LeStranges or release the vampires into the world with the use of a portal key to open the Arch of the Damned.

The LeStrange Crypt

The two vampires, Vyctor and Evelynd LeStrange, rest in their burial chamber as they have for centuries. They appear as statues seated on thrones – the thrones acting as their coffins. Their vampiric thralls feed them small amounts of blood to sate their appetites but otherwise leave them alone.

The LeStranges want to leave this crypt and seek an arch key able to open the Arch of the Damned in area 3. The characters may already possess a key able to open the arch, or the vampires might send them on a new quest to find one. Characters can negotiate with them or battle the vampires.

Evelynd LeStrange wears a *ring of x-ray vision* that acts as the key to get past the deadly tapestry protecting the brazier in area 13.

Treasures

Several areas in the Crypt of the Betrothed might contain treasure such as area 5, 7, and 13. Split up the treasure parcels however desired.

Monetary Treasure

- 109 SP, 2,316 GP, 101 PP
- 3 × 100 GP topaz gemstones
- 200 GP abyssal coral bead necklace

Consumable Magic Items

You can also include the following consumable magic items somewhere in the tower.

- 2 × Potions of Greater Healing
- Potion of Clairvoyance
- 9 × +1 bullets, bolts, or arrows

Permanent Magic Items

Choose one of the following permanent magic items to reward:

- *Pearl of Power*
- *Cloak of Protection*
- *Staff of the Python*

Further Adventures

Once the characters dealt with the LeStranges, they can ignite the Brazier of the Betrothed. Once lit, the characters choose which remaining brazier they wish to light if this is the first brazier they lit. Once the players make this decision, and if the characters are competing with another group to light the braziers, the character who lights the brazier becomes aware of their rivals igniting the third brazier they didn't choose. It now becomes a race to find the location of the third brazier and get to it before their rivals.

If this is the second brazier the characters lit and their rivals already lit the third, the characters become aware that the vault of the Key of Worlds has opened in a secret chamber beneath the Library of Vassa in the City of Arches. See scenario 15: *Vault of the Key of Worlds* to continue.