The Scroll of Akrave

The Scroll of Akrave is an adventure scenario for 1st level 5e characters set in the Cliffs of the Dead above the City of Arches. It's intended to work with any 5e-based system including D&D 2014, D&D 2024, *Level Up Advanced 5e*, *Tales of the Valiant*, or others. It can be easily modified to support other fantasy RPGs as well.

This scenario is the first in a series of scenarios following the Key of Worlds campaign arc included in the City of Arches sourcebook. If desired, you can modify it 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.

Use these components to build your own adventure during prep and play and customize them to best suit your campaign, the situation in the adventure, the interests of your players, and the pacing of the game.

Each section in this scenario suggests how to use these components during prep and play.

Adventure Summary

In this scenario the characters are given a quest to enter the tomb of Akrave, a historian who has a record of a powerful artifact known as the Key of Worlds. The undead and monsters haunting the tomb are not the only threats to the characters. A mysterious villain hired a band of cutthroats known as the Red Teeth to acquire Akrave's scroll.

Adventure History

Over a thousand years ago the Nameless King, the powerful and malevolent ruler of the City of Arches, possessed a key able to open the archways of the City of Arches to any world he wished. For centuries he used this key to invade other worlds – in some cases syphoning all life from them.

After his defeat, the Key went missing until it was found by a small band of knights known as the Order of the Black Flame. Realizing the potential danger of this artifact, they made it their life's quest to protect it and ensure it didn't fall into the wrong hands. They hid the key in an extraplanar vault that could only be opened after lighting three magical braziers hidden in the ruins above and below the City of Arches. Only two magical artifacts can light these braziers – artifacts likewise hidden by the Knights of the Black Flame. Once alight the braziers open the doorway to the vault containing the Key of Worlds.

The rabbitfolk sage, Akrave Silverhair, found himself obsessed with the tales of the Knights of the Black Flame and the legends of the Key of Worlds. He recorded information about the Key, the artifacts, and the braziers – but not their specific locations – in a scroll buried with him in his tomb upon his death.

Two powerful cults, the Children of Ibraxux and the Knights of the Nameless King seek the Key of Worlds themselves – each for their own twisted purposes.

Akrave's tormented spirit knows another secret – the boundaries of the vault of the Key of Worlds are cracking as otherworldly entities attempt to enter the vault trying to reach the key of worlds themselves.

Our heroes must recover the Key of Worlds before it falls into the wrong hands in this world or another.

Secrets of the Crypt of Akrave

Deliver the following secrets and clues as the characters explore the tomb of Akrave. Characters might discover these clues from mosaics on the walls, carvings on sarcophagi, scenes woven into rotted tapestries, or the whispering mouths of the restless dead. It's not critical the characters discover every secret – think of secrets like treasure uncovered as the characters explore the tomb.

- The Nameless King had a powerful artifact known as the Key of Worlds which enabled the King to open any archway to worlds beyond.
- After his banishment, the Key went missing until it fell into the hands of a small order of knights known as the Order of the Black Flame.
- The Knights of the Black Flame hid the key in an extraplanar vault and used three braziers hidden around the city to keep the vault locked.
- Only two artifacts in possession of the knights could light these braziers – the Staff of Servlyn and the Blade of Irixthius.
- The Knights hid the locations of these braziers and the artifacts able to light them, but Akrave's research showed him where to seek these answers.
- The locations of the braziers are contained within one of the three monoliths in the Lake of Monoliths found in the Outer Reaches of the City of Arches.
- The locations of the Staff of Servlyn and the Blade of Irixthius died with a Knight of the Black Flame known as Sir Titus Ironcowl. Sir Titus was tortured to death in a dungeon in the Lower Reaches called

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the Dungeon of the Hooded Inquisitor. Records of Ironcowl's confessions might still be found in the long-abandoned dungeon.
- The Children of Ibraxus seek the Key of Worlds to open a doorway to the abyssal world of Chuul and summon forth their demon price, Ibraxus, into the world.
- The Knights of the Nameless King hope to use the Key of Worlds to restore their lord to the throne.
- Knowing the danger of the information kept in his scrolls, Akrave instructed the builders of his tomb to outfit it with deadly traps, ensuring no casual tomb raider could acquire his knowledge.
- So powerful is the knowledge of the Key of Worlds and its potential dangers that fell magic leaked into Akrave's tomb, awakening the sage's spirit, animating dead tomb robbers, and drawing other monsters to the crypt.
- A masked benefactor hired Shella of the Red Teeth, a cutthroat band of brigands, to recover the scroll and hide it in the Sunset Grove at a particular tree. She was paid 300 gold pieces for the job up front.

Key NPCs

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

- **Akrave Silverhair** – Rabbitfolk sage, now a **ghost**, who sought information on the Knights of the Black Flame and the mysterious Key of Worlds.
- **Shella of the Red Teeth** – **Thug** leader of the Red Teeth bandits, a small group of **bandit** cutthroats hired to break into the Tomb of Akrave and acquire the scroll. Shella doesn't know who hired them, only that they were to recover the scroll and leave it at a particular tree in the Sunset Grove.

Adventure Hooks

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

- A sage of the Tower of Kartan named Danvon of Duskwater hires the characters to find the tomb of Akrave and acquire Akrave's scrolls. He doesen't realize his apprentice, Renault Bluewynd secretly hired the Red Teeth to acquire it first.
- Roselyn Zeshe, spymaster of the queen of the City of Arches, learns that either the Children of Ibraxus or the Knights of the Nameless King seek the scrolls of Akrave and hires the characters to acquire it before one of these cults gets it.
- One of the characters has a vision of a rabbitfolk sage begging the characters to come to his tomb and retrieve his scrolls before a great evil acquires them first. The rabbitfolk explains that the whole world is at stake. When the character awakes, a map to the tomb's location is etched onto a nearby surface.

Encounters in the Tomb

As the Key of Worlds came under threat, fell powers leaked into the chambers of Akrave's tomb. The skeletons of dead tomb-robbers, twisted spirits in service to the Nameless King, and other monsters seem drawn to the dangerous knowledge of the scroll kept in Akrave's tomb.

The following is a list of potential inhabitants the characters might run into while exploring Akrave's tomb. Choose the number of creatures as best fits the story and the pacing of your game.

1. Reanimated **skeletons** of dead tomb guardians.
2. Reanimated **zombies** of recent dead explorers.
3. A wounded **bandit** of the Red Teeth.
4. **Swarms of rats** burrowing through the walls.
5. **Gray oozes** seeping up through the floor.
6. **Giant rats** eyes blazing with eldritch energy.
7. **Bandit** scouts of the Red Teeth.
8. A **giant centipede** crawling through a corpse.
9. A lost explorer unable to find their way out or caught in a trap.
10. A confused **specter** who flees if attacked.
11. **Giant wolf spiders** cocooning a dying **bandit**.
12. **Cultists** of the Children of Ibraxus conducting a dark ritual.

DCs, Damage, and Traps

Several dangerous traps protect the Tomb of Akrave and steer away would-be tomb raiders from acquiring Akrave's knowledge.

The following list offers potential traps the characters might run into while exploring the tomb. Roll on or choose traps based on the pacing of the game.

DCs for detecting and disarming these traps are all 10. Traps inflict 5 (1d10) for single-target traps and 3 (1d6) for multi-target traps.

1. Crossbows firing from within a hollow, behind a painted canvas plastered to the wall.
2. A hinged floor plate leading to a spiked pit trap.
3. Swinging blades slicing out from cracks in the walls.
4. Poison gas blowing out of holes on the walls.
5. Jars filled with **swarms of insects**.
6. Incendiary gas lighting from a sparking floor tile.

Some of these traps reset after they're triggered while others only trigger once. The characters might discover traps already sprung by previous tomb robbers.

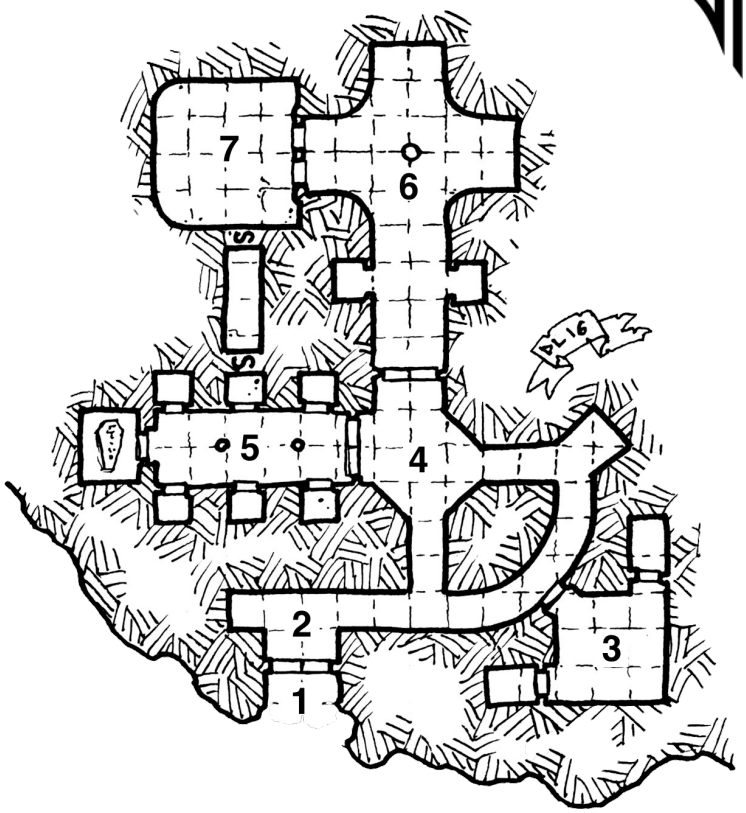
Tomb Locations

Akrave's tomb is built along a lesser-used pathway on the Cliffs of the Dead. Few travel this far and the strange way the mountain absorbs older tombs has drawn Akrave's tomb deeper into the mountain.

A character able to channel divine or arcane magic can feel an unease about the tomb, as though a foul energy flows through the tomb.

Add monsters, NPCs, secrets, and treasure to these chambers as best fits the pacing of your game.

1. Shattered doorway to the tombs. Dead tomb robber hit with a trap.
2. Hallways with mosaics depicting Akrave's life.
3. Library of Akrave's histories, mostly rotted. Artifact vaults to the north and west possibly contain traps, treasure, or both.
4. Well-protected tomb doors and dead bodies.
5. False tomb of Akrave with possible reanimated **skeleton** tomb guardians.
6. A large statue of Akrave with armor in alcoves.
7. Akrave's tomb containing the scroll of Akrave and other treasure.



Treasure

Several chambers of the Tomb of Akrave might contain treasure collected by Akrave throughout his exploration and journeys. Add treasure as you see fit to this dungeon, using the treasure below for inspiration.

Split monetary treasure into separate locations if desired. It's intended that you only include one permanent magic item from those listed below.

The total treasure in this dungeon includes 150 gold pieces worth of coin, gems, jewelry, and other artifacts.

Monetary Treasure

- 875 sp, 81 gp (169gp), 25 gp bronze torque, 50 gp carnelian

Consumable Magic Items

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

- *Potion of Greater Healing*
- *Restorative Ointment*

Permanent Magic Items

If desired, place one of the following permanent magic items somewhere in the dungeon.

- *Boots of Elvenkind*
- *Ring of Jumping*
- *Bag of Tricks*
- *+1 Glowing Elemental Longbow* called the Winds of Chaos. As a bonus action, the creature attuned to this bow can add +2d6 damage of fire, cold, lightning, or force damage. This ability resets at the next dawn.

Further Adventures

With the scroll of Akrave in hand, the characters learn of the vault of the Key of Worlds, the Blackfire Braziers, and the artifacts able to alight the braziers.

Should they choose to continue, they learn of two possible future paths. Each quest must be undertaken but can be done in any order.

- Discover the location of the Blackfire Braziers at the Lake of Monoliths.
- Uncover the location of the Blackfire Sword and Staff of Servlyn from the confessions of Sir Titus Ironcowl in the Dungeon of the Hooded Inquisitor.