

VISITING —— THE —— DREAMING SPIRES

A RAGING SWAN PRESS MINI-EVENTURE





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VISITING THE DREAMING SPIRES

Languard's Dreaming Spires—or sometimes simply “the Spires”—is the duchy's greatest seat of learning and its only university. Sprawling over Alina's Isle, the Dreaming Spires stands in splendid isolation from the city's stink and clamour. As well as the children of the high born and wealthy sent here to learn their letters, the Spires also hosts a steady trickle of adventurers come to seek hidden, lost or obscure knowledge. Many leave disappointed, while others find the answers to their questions hidden in the library's innumerable dusty tomes.

Even the smallest town has more locations than all but the most diligent and time-rich GM could ever hope to detail and design. To make matters even worse, when an adventuring party gets to a town or city, the characters often have the irritating habit of going off exploring. What's a GM to do? Designed specifically for you, the busy GM, this urban locale is designed to help you bring depth and flavour to your characters' next urban adventure. This Urban Locale is designed for use with City Backdrop: Languard, but is designed to be easily inserted into virtually any town or city.

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WHAT'S A MINI-EVENTURE?

A mini-eventure is akin to a normal encounter, but does not (normally) feature violence or physical challenges. Instead, a mini-eventure focuses on the use of social skills and role-play to resolve the challenges, or events, therein. Most mini-eventures take place in an urban locale. Mini-eventures are an excellent change of pace and can be used as filler between adventures or as situations in which characters who have invested in social skills can shine. They are also perfect for players who enjoy role-playing.

USING THIS MINI-EVENTURE

This supplement provides everything you need to run a short, flavoursome eventure. As well as presenting an in-depth look at a locale this supplement also present several tables for use during play. Roll on any or all of them as often as desired to create interesting, engaging situations.

You can either plan events ahead of time or just “wing” the whole mini-eventure using the tables herein to facilitate play. (These tables could form the basis of repeated visits to the featured location as long as you keep track of what results the characters have already experienced).

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VISITING THE DREAMING SPIRES

The Dreaming Spires is location H4 on the City of Languard map.

Languard's Dreaming Spires—or sometimes simply “the Spires”—is the duchy's greatest seat of learning and its only university. Sprawling over Alina's Isle, the Dreaming Spires stands in splendid isolation from the city's stink and clamour. It is here those desirous of learning come.

Merchants and nobles alike send their children to the Spires to learn their letters and numbers as well as many other scholarly subjects. Commoners are rarely found among the students, for their parents cannot afford the near-ruinous fees required to secure a place at the school.

The Dreaming Spires maintains an impressive library—the so-called Sequestered Hall—for use by its students and teachers. The Sagacious Masters of the Eldritch Nexus hold the only library of greater extent in Ashlar, behind the Black Tower's vitrified walls. The Sequestered Hall is a hard place for outsiders to reach. A gift of a rare book or handsome donation is, however, usually enough to secure a brief perusal of its stacks.

NOTABLE FOLK

Many of the folk encountered in the Dreaming Spires are nothing more than students, minor members of staff and so on. A few, however, are notable:

- **Master of Tomes** (LN old male human wizard 3) oversees the Sequestered Hall. He manages (in a crotchety fashion) a small staff and cares little for anything happening beyond his small empire. In truth, he resents letting anyone—including the students—into the Sequestered Hall.
- **Mistress of the Spires** (NG old female human wizard 6) dedicated her life to the pursuit of knowledge. A powerful wizard, she has not left the Dreaming Spires in years. In truth, she is tired—exhausted—but a near-fanatical devotion to her duty keeps her going.



OTHER VISITORS

When the characters arrive, they may not be the only visitors present at the Dreaming Spires. Roll as many times as desired on this list to determine who else is present:

1. **Klaus Jutikka** (LE male human wizard 7) knows of the rumour the Spire's mistress is actually a lich. He greatly desires to meet her; if the characters can manage an introduction he'll be grateful—as grateful as a man steeped in evil can be, at any rate. Klaus's (artificially coloured) hair is jet black and his face is set in a perpetual scowl. He is young for such a powerful wizard and physically vigorous.
2. **Hilppa Ano** (NG young female human noble) studies at the Dreaming Spires even though she is only eight-years-old. Ferociously intelligent, but somewhat naive having led a sheltered life, she accepts people at face value and lacks keen observational skills. Hilppa likes making new friends, and happily shows such folk around. She is short, has muddy blond hair and dresses in fine clothes.
3. **Ilja Kokko** (N male human rogue 3) needs to do some research in the Sequestered Hall regarding an old treasure map noting some sea caves near the dismal village of Coldwater, but doesn't want to pay to gain access. Would the characters do him a favour?
4. **Kultimo Minudain** (N young male human merchant) studies at the Dreaming Spires so he might join his father in running the family business—the Minudain Rope Emporium. Kultimo yet mourns the death of his older adventuring brother—Toliyrath Minudain—who perished under the ruined village of Greystone. The youngster is dead set against adventuring and adventurers and is rude to such folk. The boy wears fine, if a little worn, clothes and has inherited the family's quick wittedness and intelligence.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Use this list, to determine what is going on when the characters arrive. Remember, the characters' actions may render some of the entries moot.

1. **Arguing Students:** Two students stand about arguing about the recent exploits of a minor adventuring band—the Three Blades. If the characters are obviously adventurers, the students ask them to settle a question about how to fight wights. If the characters can settle the argument, they might gain a friend (and perhaps an enemy).
2. **The Mistress Comes:** An old woman, the Mistress of the Spires (see “Notable Folk”), totters toward the party. Aided by two students carrying armfuls of books she is tired and in a bad mood. She has little time for nagging adventurers and imperiously orders them to step aside.
3. **Lesson in Elven:** The characters literally bump into a teacher (Tahlys Firisond [LN female half-elf sage]) giving several of her students an impromptu language lesson. Elven is the language of Ashlar's court and the students are attempting to master the language's basics. Any speaker of Elven can tell

the student's command of the language is rudimentary. Tahlys is in a foul mood, and does not take kindly to intrusions.

4. **Fight:** The characters encounter two students fighting. Egged on by their raucous classmates the two brawl over some imagined slight. If the characters do not intervene, a teacher eventually arrives—drawn by the onlookers' shouts.

NOTABLE THINGS FOR SALE

Roll on this list, to determine what notable items or services are available for sale at the Dreaming Spires:

1. **Access to the Sequestered Hall (5 gp):** A rare, unusual or otherwise notable book, scroll or map, or a gift of 50 gp gains an outsider access to the Sequestered Hall for a day.
2. **Research Assistance (1 gp or more):** Several of the school's teachers—sages in their own right—will research various matters for outsiders (or, more accurately, get their students to do it which means news of particularly interesting research subjects spreads quickly). Prices can range from 1 gp for the answer to a relatively simple question to scores of gold pieces for harder to answer questions or more extensive research.
3. **Gloamhold Map (5 gp):** This map is neither comprehensive nor original; instead, it is a composite map created from hundreds of smaller maps. It shows—in broad strokes—the major areas of Gloamhold in a cross-section style. The map comes with a waterproof waxed leather scroll case.
4. **Fine Supplies (various):** This collection of fine, almost translucent paper and various inks and quills are of sufficient quality to be used in the scribing of a spell scroll.

OPPORTUNITIES & COMPLICATIONS

Canny adventurers can find opportunities almost anywhere. Unlucky adventurers can find complications almost anywhere. Roll once on this list, to determine which the characters find:

1. **Help Me:** Kanbrar Nuninrae (NE male half-elf rogue 3) approaches the characters. He has been hired to steal a certain book from the Sequestered Hall but knows he needs help. He lies to the characters, spinning a tale of forbidden love between himself and Eeva Laitnen—daughter of a wealthy merchant studying in the Spires. He begs the

characters to help him break into the Spires so he might steal some tender moments with his love.

2. **In Debt and Desperate:** The characters encounter the disgraced Sampi Tonnanan (LN middle-aged male human cleric [Conn] 2) who now works as a scribe at the Dreaming Spires. Laid low by drink and saddled with deep debts Sampi is desperate for funds (and redemption). He'll do research on the cheap for the characters or—maybe—even sneak a patron into the Sequestered Hall for some nighttime research. For Sampi, redemption is far off.
3. **Book Merchant:** An adventurer—Leena Ihalempi (N female human wizard 5)—has a small stock of books she want to sell to the Spires. If the characters ask to see what she is selling, she reveals a slew of titles include a copy of *Vilimzair Aralivar: His Amazing Life, Cults and their Doings* and a fragmentary copy of *Doom Among the Grey Spires*.
4. **Quiet Whisperings:** The characters hear the whisperings of two people meeting furtively. This could be nothing more than a hurried lovers' assignation, two students gossiping about classmates or something more sinister—perhaps the planning for a theft, kidnapping or worse.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Characters chatting with folk at the Dreaming Spires may learn some or all of the rumours (which may or may not be true) below:

1. **The Special Collection:** The Dreaming Spire's fabled library is a hard place to reach. However, there is another collection—the so-called Special Collection—which holds the kind of books the general public should never be able to read. The existence of the Special Collection has never been confirmed by the Master of Tomes, but is generally assumed to exist—hidden somewhere in the Spire's bowels.
2. **A Lich:** The Mistress of the Spires is unnaturally old. In fact, she isn't alive and hasn't been for some time. Some of her students whisper of strange sounds coming from her rooms and of odd smells detected in the dead of night. She is, in fact, a lich.
3. **Secret Societies:** Secret societies are a fact of life in Languard—many of the capital's nobles and elite belong to one. Most recruit new members from the Dreaming Spire's students. Deep cellars—abandoned or forgotten by the faculty—pierce the bedrock of Alina's Isle and several of these host secret society meetings. Most such societies are nothing more than glorified drinking clubs; others might have more sinister purposes and goals.
4. **Temple of the Archmage:** The Dreaming Spires is built over an ancient subterranean star-shaped temple dedicated to Morden (greater god of magic and knowledge). This nexus is particularly conducive to the casting of magic and is linked by a magic bridge of some sort to the Star Chamber—the temple at the heart of the Black Tower which is home of the Sagacious Matters of the Eldritch Nexus.

RUNNING THIS EVENTURE

As an adventurer, the Dreaming Spires is the perfect place to visit if you need to find some esoteric fact, consult a rare, old map or find someone who reads a certain language. Additionally, the Spire's Special Collection contains many restricted, special and esoteric tomes not meant for public reading—the kind of books adventurers normally need to read!

20 Things #42 Archives & Libraries is a handy resource to employ while running this eventure. It presents five pages of handy lists designed to breathe life into a library.

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