

THE BANSHEE'S TALE

by Annabeth Lennon

CREATURE: *Banshee* | **LEVEL(S):** 3-5

SYNOPSIS

The residents of Castle Gealladh have been visited by an ominous banshee with a warning: “Leave or die”. Your adventuring company finds themselves drafted by a wizard named Milo Tenpenny and tasked with investigating the castle and ridding it of undead. In your investigation, you will find that there is more to this warning than it seems — and that something far worse than spirits haunt this castle. *The Banshee's Tale* is intended for 3-5 characters of 5th level.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Castle Gealladh and the noble family who lives there are well-known and respected for being good and upstanding members of society. The party is hired to investigate the catacombs underneath the castle after a spirit appeared to the residents with a warning of imminent death.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The people of House Ó Cuinn are good natured and believe in helping the weak and protecting the innocent. The people of this county love and respect the people of House Ó Cuinn. In its 500 year history, House Ó Cuinn has known only success and prosperity — much to the chagrin of other noble families, who have tried many times over the years to slander and unseat them.

The true past of House Ó Cuinn is that the prosperity and success of the family can be attributed to a deal struck with the Demon Prince of Undeath, Orcus. Count Sloan, one of the founding members of the house, pledged all of the souls of his family line to the Demon Prince in exchange for success. Now, 500 years later, Orcus aims to collect the debt.

The ghost of Niamh, another founding member of House Ó Cuinn, has manifested herself in the form of a banshee in order to warn the residents to leave before the dead come for them. As the adventures fight their way through the risen dead of House Ó Cuinn, they will have to confront the terrible deed that led to the family's success.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- **COUNTESS AILEEN Ó CUINN:** Current head of House Ó Cuinn. Hardheaded and takes no nonsense, is very proud of her family and the good they've done for their county.
- **BRIDGET Ó CUINN:** Wife of Aileen Ó Cuinn. Warm hearted and welcoming counterpart to Aileen. Loves to meet adventurers and hear tales of their past travels.
- **MILO TENPENNY:** Wizard for Castle Gealladh, the only current resident who knows the mysterious past of the family.
- **NIAMH:** A banshee and founding member of House Ó Cuinn. Has come back to warn people of impending doom for the castle.
- **SLOAN:** A wraith and founding member of House Ó Cuinn. Leader of the cult of Orcus and bringer of the castles impending doom.

CHAPTER 1 — THE DESCENT OF THE DEAD

A cool breeze whips through the streets of the village on this calm autumn day. As you approach the tavern, you can see the long shadow of Castle Gealladh up on the hill behind town.

Entering the tavern, you are greeted by the sounds of laughter and music. Looking around, you can see the typical patrons of a tavern: farmers relaxing after a hard day's work, adventurers resting after a long day's travel. Looking over the tavern, one group does catch your eye: you see two women, one stern and one seemingly jovial, and a halfling wizard.

The stern women sitting in the corner gestures for your party to approach. *"Hello, you must be the adventurers Milo called for. My name is Countess Aileen Ó Cuinn and my home has come under siege."*

Countess Aileen Ó Cuinn (see *Dramatis Personae*) has desperate need for a group of adventurers. She is willing to pay top dollar to the adventurers for clearing out her castle, and even more if they can figure out why the spirits appeared. Here is what she knows:

- Two weeks ago a banshee appeared to Aileen and Bridget with a simple warning: "Leave or die!"
- Soon after that, strange noises and whispers could be heard through the castle halls at night.
- Then, tenday ago, the dead started to rise from the crypt below the castle — luckily the castle wizard, Milo, was able to seal off the crypt and evacuate the residents of the castle to the tavern, where they've been staying.
- Aileen agrees to pay the characters 5,000 gp total upon ridding the crypt of undead, and another 2,500 gp if they can figure out why the spirits are haunting her castle.
- None of the three of them know the truth of why the spirits have appeared, though a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that Milo knows more than he is telling.
- If Milo is pressed to reveal more information in front of Bridget and Aileen, he plays the part of the fool. If he is pressed alone, he reveals that he

knows that there is a dark secret in the past of House Ó Cuinn, and that something darker than a ghost lies at the bottom of the crypt.

CHAPTER 2 — THE CRYPT

After the party accepts Aileen's offer, Milo leads the adventurers up into the castle and to the doors of the crypt that lies underneath it. He unseals the doors of the crypt and wishes them luck as they descend the stairs.

ENTERING THE CRYPT

- **ROOMS:** A room's ceiling is at least as high as the room is wide, often higher. If a room's ceiling height isn't specified, assume it's the minimum height.
- **WALLS:** The walls of the crypt are littered with alcoves containing the corpses of members of house Ó Cuinn. If an alcove is searched, it contains ratty clothes and 2d6 gp.
- **ILLUMINATION:** Areas of the crypt are unlit unless otherwise stated.

ROOM 1: CRYPT ENTRY WAY

The staircase descends 30 feet before opening up into a burial chamber with four columns. The columns are covered with frescoes, which depict various good acts the family has committed over the years, including feeding the hungry and building shelters for the homeless.

- **BANSHEE:** The first time the players enter this chamber, the banshee appears to them. She appears angry and terrifying. She utters three words — "Leave or die" — before disappearing in a puff.
- **EXITS:** The hallway continues forward before turning west into room three. There is a doorway on the west wall that opens into Room 2.

ROOM 2: EMBALMING/PREPARATION CHAMBER

This small 15 foot chamber contains tools and equipment necessary for the process of embalming and preparing corpses.

- **RELIGION:** A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that the embalming method coincides with the God Kelemvor.

- **INVESTIGATION:** A successful DC14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that a few pieces of the embalming equipment are missing.

ROOM 3: LARGE CRYPT CHAMBER

This large chamber contains the majority of the ancestors of House Ó Cuinn. The room contains four floor-to-ceiling pillars. These pillars contain the remains of important members from House Ó Cuinn.

- **UNDEAD:** Six **zombies** and four **crawling hands** are wandering around this large chamber. They attack anyone who enters the chamber. The zombies are wielding the missing embalming equipment, and as a result they do slashing damage instead of bludgeoning damage.

ROOM 4: CROSSWAY

The first time the players come to this crossway, the banshee appears to the players again.

- **BANSHEE:** This time when the banshee appears, she does not seem as angry or terrifying, but instead seems concerned. She once again urges the characters to leave. If pressed for answers allow the characters to make a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If it is successful, she will reveal that a dark figure from the family's past has come back to collect a debt, and that everybody in the castle is in grave danger.

ROOM 5: WARRIORS CRYPT

This large chamber contains the bodies of the warriors of House Ó Cuinn. The three exits from this room lead to more chambers containing dead warriors.

- **UNDEAD:** One ghast and two ghouls are wandering around this large chamber. They attack anyone who enters the chamber. The ghast is the corpse of a great warrior from House Ó Cuinn's past.

ROOM 6 MORE CRYPTS

These small chambers contain more members of House Ó Cuinn. The people in these crypts were particularly wealthy and as such contain 4d6+5 gp instead of the normal 2d6.

ROOM 7: HIGH PRIESTESSES

These chambers contain some of the priests and priestesses of House Ó Cuinn.

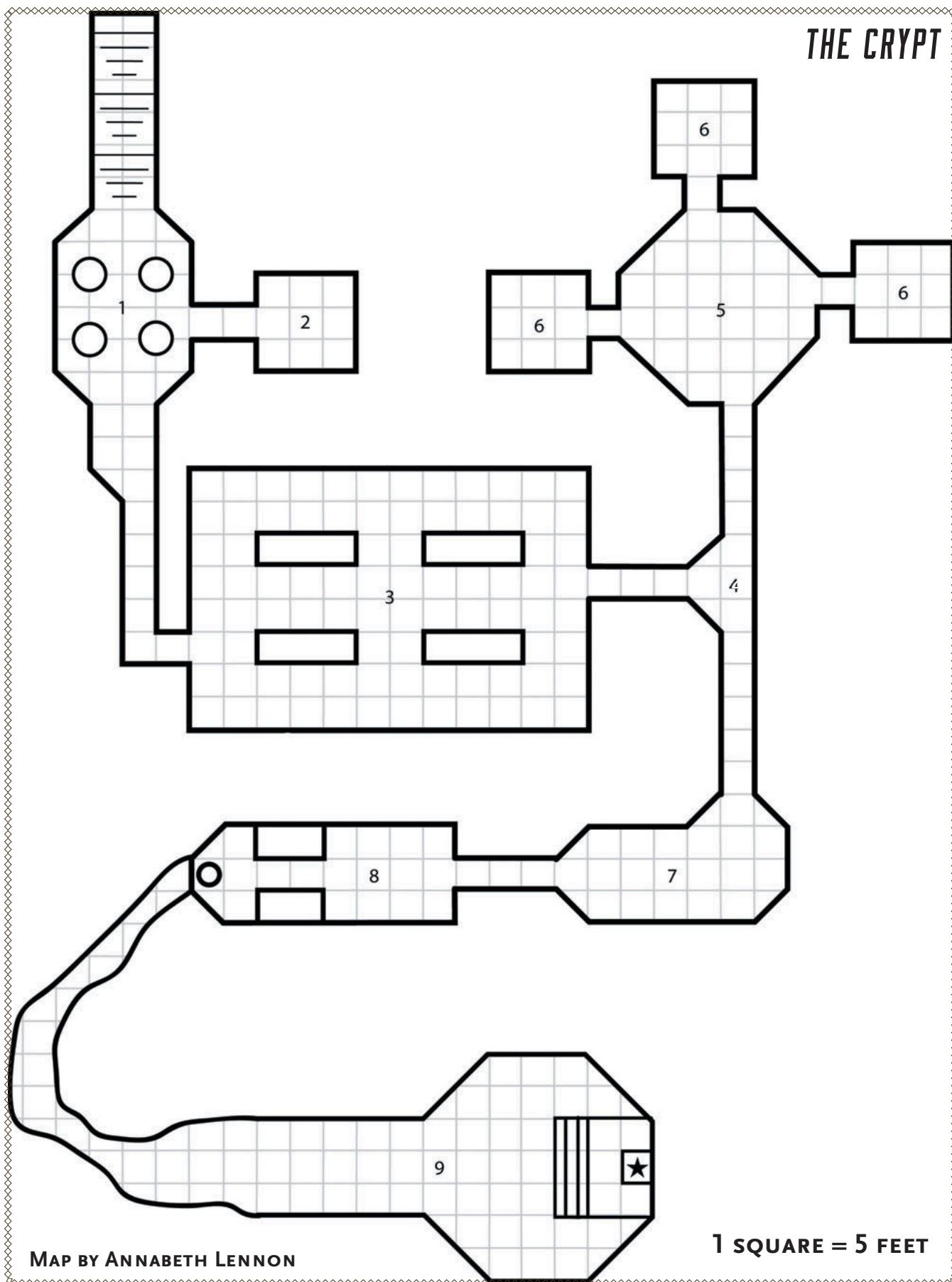
- **INVESTIGATION:** A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that two of these Priestesses were, in fact, worshipers of a Demon Prince. They are hiding holy symbols in their robes that read "Orcus The Prince of Undeath" in Abyssal.
- **UNDEAD:** Two **ghosts** are lying in wait in this room. When the party first enters, the ghosts attempt to surprise them, possess the strongest looking members of the party, and attack the weaker-looking members.

ROOM 8: FOUNDERS CHAMBER

This large ornate chamber contains two sarcophagi, one on the north wall and one on the south wall. The lids of these sarcophagi have bas relief carvings of a man on one and a woman on the other. The woman is the banshee that has appeared to the party several times at this point. The lid of the sarcophagi with the man is slightly ajar when the players enter the room. At the far end of the room there is a 5 foot wide hole in the floor, where it looks like something has dug down into the earth.

- **BANSHEE:** The banshee appears one final time to beg the party to leave. It is now that she reveals the whole truth of her family's past. She reveals that her name is Niamh and that her husband, Sloan, was a worshiper of Orcus. He made a deal that, in exchange for 500 years of wealth and success, he would lead an undead army for Orcus. Now, 500 years later, her husband has come back as a wraith and is raising all of the ancestors of House Ó Cuinn. Niamh is scared of her husband and does not want to help the adventurers face him. However, a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check will convince her that fighting her husband is the right thing to do. Regardless, she reveals that, if they are able to return Sloan's remains to his sarcophagus, that should lay his spirit to rest once and for all.

THE CRYPT



MAP BY ANNABETH LENNON

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

ROOM 9: ALTAR TO ORCUS

The party descends 20 feet down through the hole and into a natural cave formation. The cave snakes around and opens up into a chapel, containing an altar to Orcus at the far end of the room. Laying on the altar is the corpse of Sloan.

- **UNDEAD:** Floating in front of the altar is the spirit of Sloan, who is a **wraith**. He attacks intruders on sight and refuses to negotiate. If the party has convinced Niamh to help them, Sloan also has a **ghast** with him to guard him.

CONCLUSION

When the party returns to the Countess Aileen with news that the castle has been cleared of undead read the following:

When you break the news to Aileen and her wife Bridet, an obvious sigh of relief passes over their faces. Aileen steps forward and says, *"Thank you so much for the great work that you've done. My family owes you a great debt. Do not worry, you will get the 5,000 gold pieces I've promised you. Please tell me - were you able to figure out why the spirits showed up?"*

At this point, the party can choose whether they want to reveal the dark origin of House Ó Cuinn. If they choose to reveal the past to her, read the following:

A look of horror passes over the faces of Aileen and Bridget. *"Oh my gods. That's horrible. I'm so ashamed... we must tell the people. They need to know the truth. Hopefully, they will be able to forgive our past sins."* Aileen is deeply upset, but ultimately thankful that you revealed the truth to her. *"As promised you will receive your extra reward for revealing the truth. Thank you for your service."* She then takes her leave and heads up to her room with her wife Bridget.

If the party decides not to reveal the truth to Aileen, read the following:

"As long as the spirits are dealt with, that is what truly matters. As special thanks for all the good you have done, I would be happy to add an extra 1,000 gold pieces." Pleased with the outcome, Aileen invites the players to a feast in their honor.

If the party decides to make up a new reason for the spirits showing up, have them make a DC20 Charisma (Deception) check — on a success, read the following:

"Wow, I can't believe that! As promised, you will receive the extra gold we agreed upon." Pleased with the outcome, Aileen invites the players to a feast in their honor.

REWARDS

Characters who complete this adventure may earn the following rewards:

XP REWARDS:

OBSTACLE	XP
Six Zombies and Four Crawling Hands	340
One Ghast and Two Ghouls	850
Two Ghosts	2,200
Banshee	1,100
Wraith	1,800

TREASURE REWARDS:

ITEM	VALUE
Ridding Crypt of Undead	5,000 gold pieces
Telling Countess Aileen the truth (or convincing her of a lie)	2,500 gp

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Annabeth Lennon resides in Austin, Texas. A lifelong fan of *D&D*, this is the first adventure she has written for a DM other than herself. She can be reached at @SStrahd on Twitter and annasthetic92@gmail.com.