

THE FINALVEIL CABAL

A Races of Destiny Web Enhancement

A Short D&D Adventure for Four 7th-Level Characters

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Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and on the new edition of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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The newly released *Races of Destiny* offers players and DMs many new options for their games. One of the most exciting of these is the new race known as the illumians. Devoted to knowledge and intrigue, the illumians organize themselves into cabals with secret motives and hidden agendas. This short scenario pits the adventurers against a group of illumians who have devoted themselves to the dark arts of necromancy.

The Finalveil Cabal is a short D&D adventure for four 7th-level player characters (PCs). It takes place in and around a small crypt complex protected by an illumian cabal known as the Finalveil. As always, feel free to adapt the material presented here as you see fit to make it work with your campaign.

PREPARATION

You (the DM) need the D&D core rulebooks—the Player's Handbook, the Dungeon Master's Guide, and the Monster Manual—as well as Races of Destiny—to use this adventure. The information presented here utilizes the D&D v.3.5 rules.

To get started, print out the adventure, including the map. Read through the scenario at least once to familiarize yourself with the situation, threats, and major NPCs (particularly their motivations). Then review the information on the illumians in *Races of Destiny*. Text that appears in shaded boxes is player information that you can read aloud or paraphrase for the players at the proper times. Monster and NPC statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form or, where appropriate, the proper page in the *Monster Manual* is referenced.

BACKGROUND

Illumian cabals are hidden organizations that pursue their individual agendas in secret. These cabals are grouped into broad categories according to their goals and methods. Those that use undeath as a means of preserving knowledge are known as gravewhisper cabals.

One gravewhisper cabal, known as the Finalveil Cabal, has long held a tome of great power called the *Veiled Codex* in one of its crypts. The members of this group have been using the lore from this ancient volume to turn the eldest and most powerful members of the cabal into undead creatures, thus ensuring that death cannot rob the organization of talents and wisdom. The illumians of the Finalveil Cabal regard their use of necromantic magic and their association with undead creatures as pragmatic rather than evil—



nothing more than a tool for the preservation of important knowledge. They devote themselves to gathering the necessary materials for these transformations and to ensuring that the organization's existence remains a secret.

Despite their efforts to keep their activities hidden, however, the members of the Finalveil have attracted a number of powerful enemies over the centuries. Several good-aligned churches, having learned about the growing number of undead creatures the cabal is creating, have mounted efforts to destroy them. Furthermore, at least two other cabals of illumians oppose the use of necromancy as a tool, despite the convenience it provides in the preservation of important illumian scholars. Other groups too, whether knowingly or not, have worked to destroy the undead creatures within the Finalveil. Unbeknownst to the members of the cabal, these enemies have gathered important information about the group and the source of its knowledge.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The characters must penetrate the catacombs of the Finalveil Cabal and retrieve the powerful tome known as the *Veiled Codex*. Along the way, they must overcome both the living and the undead servants of the cabal. Whatever their reasons for acquiring the *Veiled Codex*, the characters earn themselves a powerful and subtle enemy when they interfere with the cabal's activities, and the adventure opens up the possibility of a long-term campaign against the secretive illumians.

<u>ADVENTURE HOOKS</u>

As DM, you know best how to involve your PCs in an adventure. You can use the following hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to fit your campaign or the characters.

• The Finalveil Cabal has many enemies, none of whom are more vehement or violent than the other illumian cabals. Most of these latter groups have more noble purposes and more humane methods than the sinister Finalveil, but a few are just as ruthless. Because the player characters have already achieved a small amount of fame for their exploits, one of these illumian cabals seeks them out and openly asks for their help in dealing with the Finalveil. This adventure hook is an excellent way to introduce the secretive illumians into your campaign. For a more intrigue-filled variant, you can have another cabal

with darker motives contact the PCs. This tactic makes the characters unwitting pawns in a struggle between two evil organizations.

- Not all of the Finalveil's enemies are illumians. Despite their efforts at secrecy, the members of the Finalveil have also attracted the enmity of several good-aligned churches, any one of which might commission the PCs to recover and/or destroy the *Veiled Codex*. Clerics proposing such a mission might serve a nature god such as Obad-Hai who abhors the unnatural presence of the undead that the cabal creates, or a fierce god of honorable confrontation such as St. Cuthbert. They might even be servants of Boccob (or some other god of learning) who simply want to add the lore of the *Veiled Codex* to their own stores of knowledge.
- The Veiled Codex is an ancient tome. Of those few scholars who have actually heard of it, even fewer know that it is currently in the possession of the Finalveil Cabal. Through other adventures or research, the characters might find references to the manuscript in other ancient tomes and unearth descriptions of the powerful lore that it contains. Once aware of its existence, the PCs might decide to seek it out on their own initiative. Depending on their nature and priorities, they might undertake such a mission for any number of reasons—perhaps to destroy the book, perhaps to claim its knowledge for their own use, or possibly to turn it over to a well-meaning organization or powerful individual.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The Finalveil Cabal is a site-based scenario in which the action occurs in and around the hidden catacomb complex that houses the *Veiled Codex* and its protectors. The adventure begins when the characters enter the catacombs (see Entry Points, below).

THE FINALVEIL ENCLAVE

The catacombs occupy a small underground complex beneath a pedestrian graveyard in a city of your choosing. On the surface above the catacombs is a mortuary that is open to the public and a small, nondescript building that serves as the cabal's safehouse. The surrounding community could be large or small, depending on the needs of your campaign and the ability of the characters to travel from place to place.

Although the *Veiled Codex* is often stored in these catacombs, few of the cabal's powerful undead masters ever come here. This minor enclave depends more on secrecy than the outright power of its guardians to protect the valuable tome.

INTERIOR FEATURES

The noteworthy features and conditions within the catacombs are described below.

Ceilings: The ceilings of the corridors and rooms within the catacombs are about 12 feet high. The ceiling in the grand room with the coffin-shaped dais is 20 feet high.

Floors: The floors throughout the complex are made of fairly even bedrock covered by worked stone. Moving over these floors is relatively easy compared to those found in many dungeon settings.

Light: Most of the complex is unlit and remains dark even during the day. A few areas have some illumination, which is noted in the appropriate area descriptions.

Spiral Staircase: A spiral staircase leads up from the catacombs to the safehouse, which is located in a nondescript aboveground building. Characters can walk up or down this staircase without making Climb checks, but doing so hampers movement. Each square moved on the staircase costs 10 feet of movement, and characters cannot run or charge while on the stairs. The staircase rises 40 feet from the floor of the dais chamber.

Staircase from Mortuary: The long, straight staircase leading down from the cabal's mortuary is the ideal route for the characters to use in penetrating the complex. Characters can walk up or down this staircase without making Climb checks, but doing so hampers movement. Each square moved on the staircase costs 10 feet of movement, and characters cannot run or charge while on the stairs. The staircase descends 40 feet from the mortuary to the floor of the catacombs.

ENTRY POINTS

The catacombs have two entrances, but only one—the staircase leading from the mortuary—is likely to be available to the characters during their initial foray against the cabal. This staircase may come to the characters' attention in any number of ways (see Adventure Hooks, above). Alternatively, you can allow the characters to discover information about the spiral staircase leading down from the cabal's safehouse.

After spending some time in the small catacomb complex, the characters should be aware of both

staircases. Thus, they can use either entrance for any subsequent forays they make against the cabal.

Mortuary Entrance (EL 4)

A few of the cabal's enemies have already located this entrance, so it is the easier of the two for PCs to find. The cabal trusts to the careful construction of the secret door at the back of the curator's office to prevent discovery of the catacombs beneath.

Creature: The curator is within the mortuary during daylight hours.

Curator: Male illumian sorcerer 4; hp 10.

Development: Anyone searching the curator's office may make a DC 30 Search check to locate the secret door, but foreknowledge of the existence of the catacombs can provide a hefty circumstance bonus on this check. Although the exact value of this bonus is left to your discretion, +6 is appropriate for a character who has been told the location and nature of the secret door.

Cabal Complex Entrance (EL 4)

The safehouse that sits above the catacomb complex is a lightly guarded, nondescript building. The doorway to the staircase that leads to the catacombs is concealed in the same manner as the door hidden in the mortuary.

Creatures: Unlike the mortuary entrance, however, this one is watched and guarded by cabal members from within the safehouse. Thus, PCs who try to force their way into the catacombs via this entrance are confronted by opponents who, though no match for the PCs, are determined to stop them.

Cabal Guards: Male and female illumian fighter 1/sorcerer 1; hp 8.

Development: Anyone searching the entry area of the safehouse may make a DC 30 Search check to locate the secret door, but foreknowledge of the existence of the catacombs can provide a hefty circumstance bonus on this check. Although the exact value of this bonus is left to your discretion, +6 is appropriate for a character who has been told the location and nature of the secret door.

INSIDE THE CATACOMBS

The following areas are keyed to the catacomb map.

1. EMBALMING CHAMBER

This room is devoted to preparing the corpses of lesser cabal members (those lacking the power necessary for conversion to vampirism or lichdom) for burial.



The acrid smell in the air of this small chamber is reminiscent of the alchemical ingredients used to preserve bodies for burial, and the room's furnishings bear out this impression. Empty jars line the walls, and three large workbenches fill much of the room's interior. Despite signs of regular use, the room is eerily still.

This room contains nothing of import to the characters, although lesser members of the cabal use it frequently.

2. EXCAVATION CHAMBER (EL 6)

Although this enclave is currently only a minor outpost of the Finalveil Cabal, the sinister organization plans an expansion of these facilities in the coming years. To that end, two undead creatures have been set to excavating more chambers to house the cabal's preserved dead. Because their plans for expansion won't come to fruition for some time, the cabal members have left the zombies here unsupervised, knowing that even slow labor will produce the necessary results given enough time.

This rough, square chamber is obviously the site of an ongoing excavation. Its walls, unlike those in the rest of the catacombs, are made of rough-hewn stone that appears to have been exposed quite recently. The rubble from this excavation has been pushed to the side of the room.

Two hulking gray corpses move about the chamber under their own power, hewing yet more stone from the walls with their powerful blows. Though the creatures stand nearly 8 feet tall, their bodies slump and sag, as though their frames can no longer hold the decaying flesh that drapes their bones.

Each of the squares on the outside of the room is filled with dense rubble that impedes movement. Entering such a square costs 2 squares of movement, and within it, the DC for a Balance or Tumble check increases by +5 and the DC for a Move Silently check increases by +2. For more information on dense rubble, see page 90 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Creatures: Two mindless minotaur zombies occupy this chamber, working tirelessly to excavate a new catacomb section. They attack any intruders that they detect.

Minotaur Zombies (2): hp 83 and 81; see Monster Manual, page 267.

3. SYMBOL CHAMBERS

These two long chambers house the bodies of long-dead, lesser members of the Finalveil Cabal. Most of the members who die before attaining the level of power that would merit induction into unlife are laid to rest in chambers such as this one. The cabal's traditional respect for departed members, however, demands that it protect their earthly remains with magic traps and undead guardians created for this purpose.

3a. Wraith Chamber (EL 8)

Shadowy illumination (see page 164 in the *Player's Handbook*) reaches this room from the dais chamber (area 4).

The artistry of the three coffins that occupy this chamber is a testament to the importance that their makers placed on the treatment of the dead. Faint illumination enters the room from the far end, causing the coffins to cast long shadows across the floor. From somewhere within these shadows, three sinister, spectral figures robed in darkness glide forward. They have no visible features or appendages save the glowing red pinpoints where their eyes should be.

The cabal has set both undead guardians and deadly traps to defend the bodies of its deceased members.

Creatures: Three wraiths loyal to the Finalveil Cabal guard this chamber at all times. Once minor members of the cabal, they were transformed into undead creatures as a reward for their exemplary service.

Wraiths: hp 35, 32, 32; see Monster Manual, page 258.

Traps: Each of the chamber's coffins is trapped with *symbol* spells that drain the strength of those who trigger them.

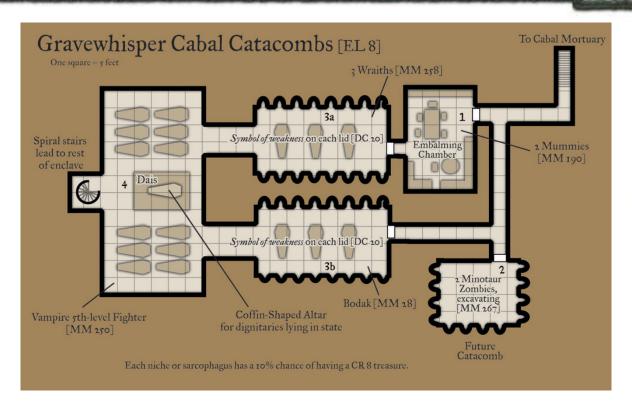
✓ Symbol of Weakness Trap: CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger; no reset; spell effect (symbol of weakness, 13th level cleric, 3d6 Strength damage, DC 20 Fortitude negates); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32. Market Price: 45,500 gp, 3,640 xp.

3b. Bodak Chamber (EL 8)

Shadowy illumination (see page 164 in the *Player's Handbook*) reaches this room from the dais chamber (area 4).

This chamber resembles area 3a in most ways, except that the undead guardian stationed here is a solitary bodak rather than a group of wraiths.

4



Faint illumination filters into this area from an entrance at its western end, revealing three large coffins. The room's only occupant is a gray-fleshed, hairless humanoid with an elongated, skull-like head and horrid, empty eyes.

The coffins house the remains of lesser cabal members who did not merit induction into unlife.

Creature: A bodak loyal to the Finalveil Cabal guards this area. Once a human scholar allied with the cult, the bodak was corrupted by the knowledge within the *Veiled Codex* and transformed into an undead monster.

Bodak: hp 58; see Monster Manual, page 28.

Traps: Each of the chamber's coffins is trapped with *symbol* spells that drain the strength of those who trigger them.

→ Symbol of Weakness Trap: CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger; no reset; spell effect (symbol of weakness, 13th level cleric, 3d6 Strength damage, DC 20 Fortitude negates); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32. Market Price: 45,500 gp, 3,640 xp.

4. DAIS CHAMBER

This grand chamber is the heart of the enclave. The ceiling here is higher than in other sections of the catacombs, and it reaches a height of 20 feet at the center. Three *continual flame* torches attached to the

walls provide normal illumination within the chamber and shed dim light along the passages and into areas 3a and 3b.

The chamber contains numerous coffins, plus a coffin-shaped dais that holds pride of place at the very center.

Light from three torches illuminates this large chamber, revealing dozens of coffins, one of which serves as a dais in the center of the room. A sinisterlooking warrior with pale skin and red, haunting eyes advances, whirling a deadly spiked chain. Glowing magical symbols encircle the creature's head, bathing its whole form in pale blue light.

The dais serves as the coffin for the guardian of the Veiled Codex.

Creature: An illumian vampire of moderate power lairs here and guards the *Veiled Codex*. This creature, whose name is Finalveil Iarmid, is a newly formed undead by the cabal's standards, but he is loyal and dangerous nonetheless.

Finalveil Iarmid: Male illumian vampire fighter 5/rogue 1; CR 8; Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 6d12; hp 39; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +5; Grp +11; Atk or Full Atk +11 melee (1d6+9 plus energy drain, slam) or +13 melee (2d4+12, +1 spiked chain) or +9 ranged

5)

(1d6/×3, masterwork shortbow); SA blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate, energy drain, final utterance, sneak attack +1d6; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, gaseous form, glyphic resonance, Illumian word, power sigils, resistances (cold 10, electricity 10), shadow heritage, spider climb, superior literacy, trapfinding, turn resistance +4, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +4 (+6 against shadow spells); Str 22, Dex 17, Con —, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +9, Climb +11, Hide +15, Listen +17, Move Silently +12, Ride +1, Search +9, Sense Motive +11, Spot +17; Alertness^B, Blind-Fight^B, Combat Reflexes^B, Dodge^B, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain)^B, Improved Initiative^B, Lightning Reflexes^B, Mobility^B, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (spiked chain), Weapon Specialization (spiked chain).

Blood Drain (Ex): Iarmid can suck blood from a living victim with his fangs by making a successful grapple check. If he pins the foe, he drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, Iarmid gains 5 temporary hit points.

Children of the Night (Su): Once per day, Iarmid can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve him for up to 1 hour.

Dominate (Su): Iarmid can crush an opponent's will just by looking into his or her eyes. This effect is similar to a gaze attack, except that Iarmid must use a standard action, and those merely looking at him are not affected. Anyone he targets must succeed on a DC 14 Will save or fall instantly under Iarmid's influence as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet.

Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by Iarmid's energy drain rises as a vampire spawn (see Monster Manual, page 253) 1d4 days after burial. If Iarmid instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or lower, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or fewer HD and as a vampire if it had 5 or more HD. In either case, the new vampire or spawn is under Iarmid's command and remains enslaved until his destruction. At any given time, Iarmid may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than 12 Hit Dice; any spawn he creates that would exceed this limit are created as free-willed vampires or vampire spawn. A vampire that is enslaved may create and enslave spawn of its own, so Iarmid can control a number of lesser vampires in this fashion. He may voluntarily free an enslaved spawn in

order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

Energy Drain (Su): Any living creature hit by Iarmid's slam attack gains two negative levels (DC 14 Fortitude save to remove). For each negative level bestowed, he gains 5 temporary hit points. Iarmid can use his energy drain ability once per round.

Final Utterance (Ex): When Iarmid dies, everyone within earshot of him hears ululating Illumian syllables for 6 rounds. The words may be gibberish, or they may pronounce a prophetic phrase or a final curse on his enemies.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Iarmid deals 1d6 extra points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Iarmid may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with his sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Alternate Form (Su): Iarmid can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. This ability is similar to a polymorph spell (caster level 12th), except that Iarmid does not regain hit points for changing form and must choose from among the forms mentioned here. While in his alternate form, Iarmid loses his natural slam attack and dominate ability, but he gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of his new form. He can remain in that form until he assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Fast Healing (Ex): Iarmid heals 5 points of damage each round so long as he has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points in combat, he automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. He must reach his coffin home within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. (He can travel up to 9 miles in 2 hours.) Any additional damage dealt to Iarmid while he is in gaseous form has no effect. Once at rest in his coffin, Iarmid is helpless. He regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round.

Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, Iarmid can assume gaseous form at will as the spell (caster level 5th), but he can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): Iarmid is immune to symbol-based magic of caster level 6th or below.

He takes a -4 racial penalty on his saving throws against symbol-based magic of caster level 7th or higher.

Illumian Word (Su): Iarmid's power sigils combine to form the word aeshuur. When he deals damage to a target with a sneak attack or critical hit, he gains a +2 dodge bonus to his AC against that target until the beginning of his next turn. Iarmid may use this ability twice per day.

Power Sigils (Su): Iarmid has the power sigils aesh (vigor) and uur (grace). Aesh grants him a +2 bonus on Strength checks and Strength-based skill checks, and uur grants him the same bonus on Dexterity checks and Dexterity-based skill checks.

Shadow Heritage (Ex): Iarmid has a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells with the shadow descriptor.

Spider Climb (Ex): Iarmid can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

Superior Literacy (Ex): Speak Language is a class skill for both of Iarmid's classes.

Trapfinding (Ex): Iarmid can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. He can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If his Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, he discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Turn Resistance (Ex): Iarmid is treated as a 10-HD undead for the purpose of resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt.

Undead Traits: Iarmid is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects or is harmless. He is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage to his physical ability scores, ability drain, energy drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or death from massive damage. He cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if he is willing. He has darkvision out to 60 feet.

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, +1 spiked chain, masterwork shortbow with 10 arrows, potion of inflict minor wounds.

Tactics: Iarmid attacks a flat-footed creature if possible so as to take advantage of his sneak attack ability. If he manages to deal sneak attack damage, he triggers the power of the mystical symbols that surround him. Unlike most vampires, Iarmid does not try to flee if the battle goes against him. Not only does he know that the leaders of the Finalveil would

enact swift and final vengeance against him should he allow the book to be taken, but he has little to gain by retreating, since his coffin lies within this chamber.

Treasure: Within Iarmid's coffin lies the Veiled Codex.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Upon retrieving the *Veiled Codex*, the characters have successfully completed the adventure. Although the catacombs contain relatively little treasure, the PCs can sell the *Veiled Codex* if they choose.

The safehouse above the catacombs houses two low-level illumian guards who pose no threat to characters as powerful as the PCs (See Cabal Complex Entrance, above). If captured, however, these two might divulge information that could lead to further conflicts with the Finalveil Cabal. In particular, the PCs might be able to learn the location of another cabal outpost from the guards. By making repeated attacks on the cabal's enclaves, the party could become a persistent thorn in the side of the Finalveil.

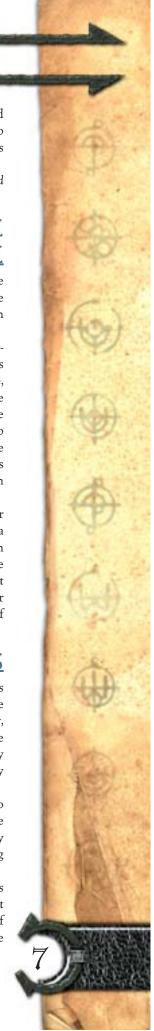
The *Veiled Codex* contains detailed instructions for conducting the magic rituals necessary to become a lich. As treasure, it can be sold for at least 15,000 gp. On the other hand, if someone sent the PCs to retrieve the book, they could expect a reward equal to its market value when they turn it over to their employer or offer proof of its destruction, depending upon the terms of their agreement.

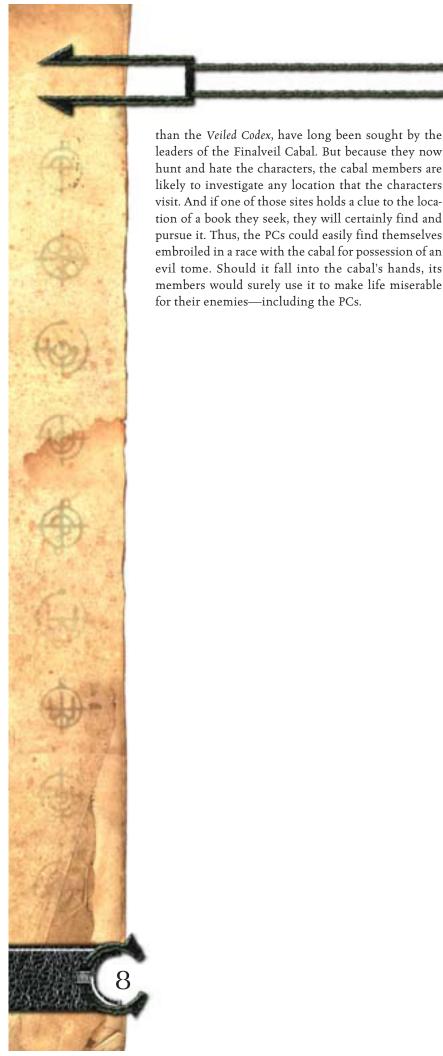
FURTHER ADVENTURES

As noted at the beginning of the adventure, characters who successfully complete their mission earn the enduring enmity of the Finalveil Cabal. However, because months of game time could pass before the cabal is ready to strike back, the characters could easily fail to understand that they've made a powerful foe by recovering the *Veiled Codex*.

This adventure can also serve as a gateway to interactions with other illumian cabals. Once the PCs are aware of the illumians and their cabals, they might be forced to turn to them again when seeking other lore.

The Veiled Codex can lead to additional adventures as well. Certain cryptic passages within the tome hint at other manuscripts that can unlock the powers of undeath. These tomes, even more ancient and terrible





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jesse Decker spends his days (and nights and weekends) as the development manager for Dungeons & Dragons miniatures and roleplaying products. Prior to that, he spent two years as the editor-in-chief of *Dragon Magazine*, and lots of time working with nefarious groups such as the Wizards of the Coast web team. Jesse has participated in numerous design projects, including *Unearthed Arcana* and the upcoming *Races of Eberron*. If he's not shooting his mouth off about some aspect of the Dungeons & Dragons game, Jesse is likely asleep.