



THE SHRINE OF FLESH AND OOZE

The Shrine of Flesh and Ooze is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for three to five 2nd to 4th level characters and is optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. The party must clear a psionic shrine of people warped by a ritual gone awry while trying to find out what happened. This adventure takes place a few hours away from the town of Woodpine but can easily be placed in any campaign setting.

BACKSTORY

The Shrine of Memory is rich in Memmite, a mineral that absorbs and stores psionic energy. The temple typically used this to relive memories and dreams. However, when the monk's leader died, they tried to draw his persona out of the rock and turn it into an immortal spirit. It went poorly. The Memmite throughout the shrine cracked from overexertion. The temple flooded with magical energy, and thousands of personas escaped. These identities poured into every monk's body even as they warped into piles of flesh and goo. One of the monk's leaders, Strelben, managed to control their new form and seeks to feed the horrors he has created until there is an immortal body for each of his brethren. The creatures still vaguely recognize him as their leader, and he will soon command them to attack the wider world.

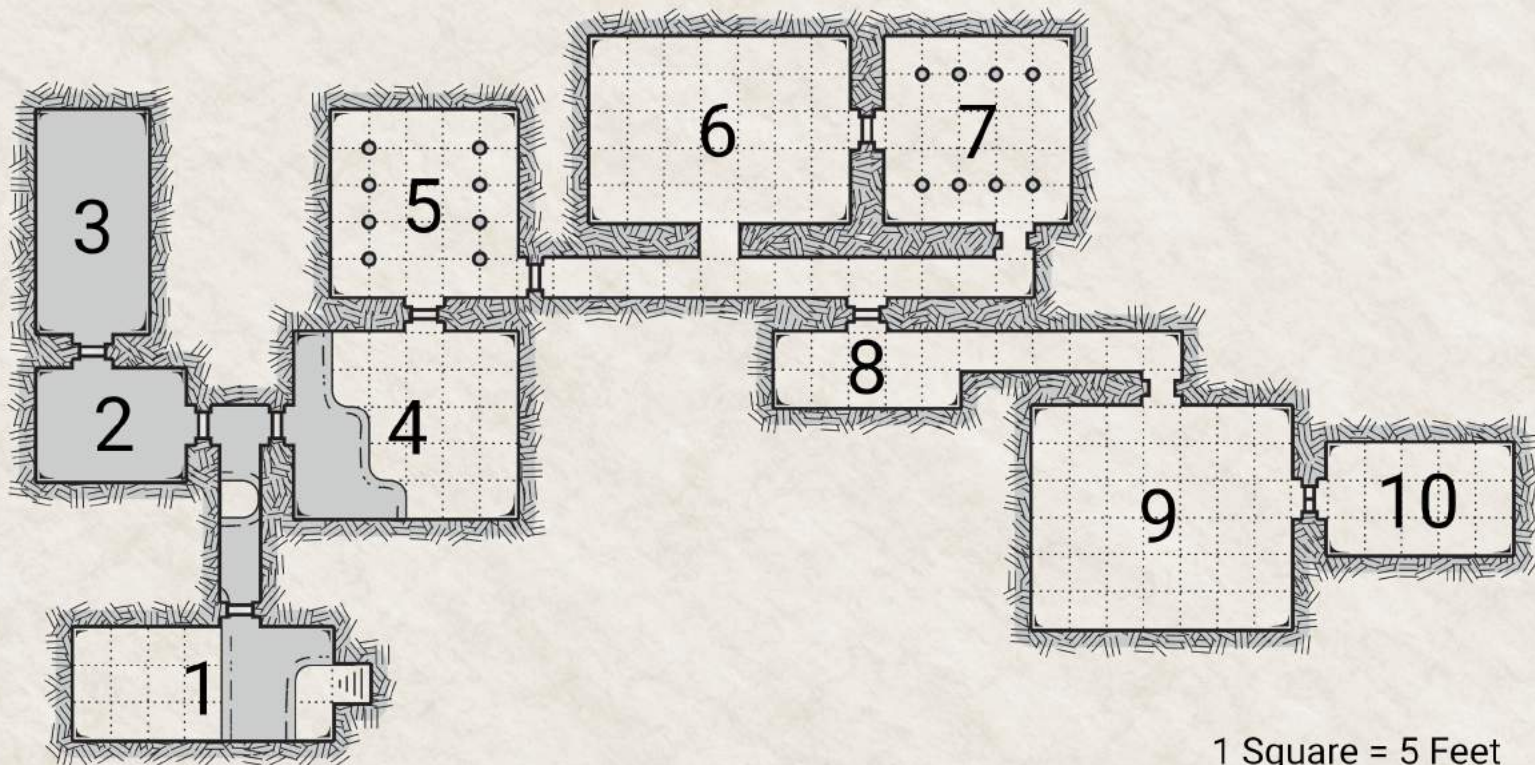
ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The characters begin in Woodpine, where an NPC hires them to travel to The Shrine of Memory. Upon arrival, they find that the compound is full of creatures made of human flesh and clear it out while receiving visions of what happened. The characters eventually face Strelben, who offers them immortal bodies in exchange for helping him collect flesh to feed his brethren. If they refuse, the adventure climaxes with the party slaying a black pudding cleansing the shrine once and for all.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following plot hooks provide some possible ways for the characters to get involved in the adventure. Each provides an NPC intended to die gruesomely whenever you see fit.

Seeking Enlightenment. Lathai (LG human female **noble**) is fascinated by the monk's ability to witness other people's memories and wants to see if they can experience it herself. They have offered each of the characters 25 gp to escort them to The Shrine of Memory. When Lathai realizes the shrine is in danger, she asks the party to help her investigate.



1 Square = 5 Feet

Looting Gig. A shadowy figure named Talbor (NE human male **bandit**) approaches the characters and tells them that something appears to have killed the inhabitants of The Shrine of Memory. He also knows the monks are rich and states that there is a great deal of treasure inside. He knows that taking on whatever slaughtered the guards by himself would be extremely dangerous and offers to pay each of the party members 25 gp and a cut of the treasure for their help.

A Friend in Need. Crana (LN human male **guard**) approaches the characters in a panic. They intended to visit Vogen, a friend who lives in the shrine. When Crana arrived, they saw that something had reduced the guards to blood-red skeletons. Crana is desperate and offers the party 25 gp to help rescue their friend.

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The characters and their companion travel three hours up a mountain path to reach the shrine from Woodpine. The entrance is a stone gate that is ajar, and a skeletal arm soaked in blood lies on the ground. The air reeks of death.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless stated otherwise, the shrine has the following features.

Ceilings. The ceilings throughout the shrine are 15 feet tall. They are carved from the rock and supported by stone beams.

Floors and Walls. The shrine has colorful tiled floors. Stone columns decorate and support stone walls marbled with Memmite.

Doors. The shrine has oak doors with iron hinges. Memmite gems carved into dreamscapes decorate the doors. The doors have AC 15, 20 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. All the doors are unlocked.

Illumination. Skylights illuminate the shrine during the day. At night the structure is dimly lit by the green glow of Memmite.

Echoes of The Past. The ritual has made it easier to relive memories. Characters may receive visions of anyone who has visited the shrine's past while within the structure. This might be helpful if you want to have the party witness part of another member's life, provide a hook for another adventure, etc.

Trapped Personae. Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 or better notice that rough outlines of screaming faces appear sporadically on oozes.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Shrine of Flesh and Ooze.

1 - BARRACKS

When the characters enter the shrine, read or paraphrase the following:

The smell of death intensifies as the gates open. Within lies a barracks containing the blood-red skeletal remains of three humanoids in guard uniforms lying in puddles of their flesh. The skeletons' jaws lay wide open as if to scream. A rat merrily gnaws away at this feast. Bloody water is seeping in from the door to the right.

These piles of flesh were not animated because they are too far away from the Memmite deposits. The bodies are undisturbed because the disaster only happened a few hours ago, and the dungeon's inhabitants have not found them yet.

Treasure: Guard's Belongings. Each corpse is wearing a chain shirt and shield. There are three spears on a weapon rack to the east. Searching their clothing and belongings yields 5 sp and 50 cp.

2 – KITCHEN/CAFETERIA

Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 10 or better hears the incoherent babbling in this area as they approach the door.

When the characters open the door, read the following:

A counter unevenly splits this chamber. The east is a dining area for the shrine's residents, and the west is a kitchen. The floor has become coated in a thin layer of water flowing from the north door. Human bones litter the room, but they are free of blood and clothing. Something appears to be blocking the central skylight, and a creature is babbling incoherently to the south just out of sight.

An ochre jelly is what's blocking the skylight.

Encounter: Hell's Kitchen. The **gibbering moulder** and **ochre jelly** wait for one round to see if anyone walks into the room. If no one enters, they begin attacking. The gibbering moulder attempts to blind a target with its Blinding Spittle before biting. If any ochre jellies drop below a quarter of their maximum hit points, they try to flee up the skylight. The gibbering moulder fights to the death.

Treasure: Goopy Goodness. The ochre jelly's body contains 76 sp and 100 cp

3 – STORAGE

The door is bowing out and water leaks from all sides up to 3 feet from the floor.

Hazard: Flesh Wave. As the party opens the door, a wave of bloody water and scraps of flesh rushes out. Have any characters within 5 feet of the door make a DC 12 Strength check or be knocked prone. Anyone who failed must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until they finish a short or long rest.

The chamber contains numerous crates of general supplies and cages containing livestock's melted remains. Pieces of animate flesh swim in the water but do not attack. There is a shattered basin carved from Memmite attached to the north wall. A silver decanter embellished with a waterfall engraving is held over it by a clamp. It is spewing a torrent of water into the basin.

Treasure: Decanter of Endless Water. The decanter of endless water is enchanted to refill the basin as needed without using a command word. Once removed from the clamp, it functions as normal. The rest of the room's contents have either been eaten by the flesh creatures or ruined by putrid water and are of negligible value.

4 – AUDIENCE CHAMBER

As the characters enter the room, they receive a vision. Monks clad in green robes welcome them solemnly. Several peasants and monks are gathered around a casket at the chamber's east end. Some leave prayers, and donations in an ornate offering box by the south wall.

The vision fades, and the greeter's skeletons are now lying on the floor red with blood. Their robes are undisturbed. Bloody streaks lead out of the western door.

Treasure: Offering Box. The box contains 50 cp, and an ornate prayer card worth 5 sp.

5 – MEDITATION CHAMBER

The columns in this room are made of Memmite and have large cracks running through them. Even during the day, their glow gives the room a greenish hue. Tapestries adorn the walls with depictions of fantastic worlds. A chest rests at the north end of the chamber with a hole where its lock should be.

Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 or better notices the two grey oozes on the ceiling.

Encounter: Sticky Situation. Four **grey oozes** are in the room. One is in the chest, two are on the ceiling, and one is in a cracked column. They wait for one round to see if a character walks within 10 feet of the chest before attacking. If not, they dropdown. A grey ooze will attempt to flee up a skylight when reduced to a quarter of its hit points.

Treasure: Meditation Chest. The chest contains various sculptures made from Memmite and a book that details what statuettes are best for relieving different memories and dreams. The sculptures are worth 50 gp, and the book is worth 25 gp to a scholar.

6 – DREAMSCAPE

As the characters pass by this area, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the archway lies an unnaturally clean chamber containing various marble statues dressed in finery exploring a stone dreamscape. One of them holds a golden sculpture of a lotus with a stem made from amber, and another plays chess with a Memmite dragon. Several silver thrumming birds float just out of reach on the other side of the arch. The room's only imperfection is a large pile of bones laying in the archway.

Encounter: Invisible Death. There is a **gelatinous cube** waiting on the archway's other side. When the characters arrive, it sits still for one round, hoping that its Transparent feature catches the characters off guard. If no one walks through the arch, the cube attempts to use its Engulf feature on as many characters as possible. The gelatinous cube attempts to flee with whatever it has engulfed when it drops below one-quarter of its maximum hit points.

Treasure: Bounty of Dreams. The lotus will sell for 100 gp, the finery is worth 50 gp, and the birds are 60 gp in total.



7 – DORMITORY FOR LESSER MONKS

As the characters enter the chamber, they receive a vision of the monks writhing in agony on cots as flesh peels off their bones as if they were fruit. The gore pulls together to create gibbering mouthers, and bodily fluids coalesce into various oozes which devour their former skeletons.

The vision ends, the cots are gone, and the room is unnaturally clean except for a blood trail by the southern door which leads to area 8.

8 – LATRINE AND WASHROOM

This room contains four stalls and two tubs. There is a blood trail from one of the toilets leading to area 7.

Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 or better notices the grey ooze on the ceiling.

Encounter: Toilet Trouble. When a character walks into the room, a **gibbering moulder** emerges from the bloody stall's toilet covered in refuse, and the **gray ooze** comes down from the ceiling. The gibbering moulder fights to the death, and the grey ooze attempts to flee up a skylight when it drops below a quarter of its maximum hit points.

9 – LIBRARY

This room is filled with densely packed dusty bookshelves that extend 30 feet up to the ceiling. A short older man followed by a carpet of flesh and goo mutters to himself deep in thought. There is a 15-foot tall steel door on the room's east side. However, something has melted a massive hole through it.

Encounter: Path to Immortality. The man described above is Strelben (NE male half-elf **veteran**). He has managed to suppress the other personas trapped in this body except for Croxeor (NG Human female), whose orifices are hidden until she speaks. Their views of the situation are as follows.

- Strelben has been driven mad by the ritual and shows no remorse for what he has done. He tells the party what is stated in this adventure's background section if asked what happened. Strelben asks the characters to help him find more sacrifices to feed the oozes and offers them "transcendence" as a reward. He sees no issue with eating the townsfolk as the monks can eventually sculpt new bodies for them.
- Croxeor has been reduced to a crooked mouth full of mismatched teeth and eyes located on Strelben's neck. When she speaks Strelben's tongue lowers to her maw and bloody spittle flies everywhere. She is disgusted by the results of the ritual and tells the party that there is no good way of rectifying the situation. They beg the characters to kill everything in the shrine. She also points out that the Memmite does not store people's souls, so the ritual does not bring anyone back from the dead. Also, the Memmite is constantly making copies of people in the cavern, so there may be a near-infinite number of personas seeking hosts.

If the characters attack, Strelben becomes hostile. When reduced to half his hit points, he has difficulty suppressing the other personas. His body's flesh begins to sunder, revealing several dozen mouths, which unleash a cacophony of cries for help. In addition, he begins to sprout bloody masses of fingers, toes, teeth, and eyes at random. Strelben fights to the death to protect the black pudding in area 10. The ritual requires a host of monks, so losing the last ooze would be devastating.

10 – CONJURING ROOM

This room appears empty except for a magic circle carved into the floor and runes engraved into sheets of Memmite on the walls. Looking up reveals a large black mass on the ceiling, and it extends tendrils towards the party. As it does so, faces appear on the tendrils which try to scream and bite the characters. The characters can see this regardless of their passive perception.

Encounter: The Black Death. The **black pudding** attacks as soon as a character enters the room. If any black puddings drop below a quarter of their maximum hit points, they attempt to flee up the skylight.

Treasure: Hidden Compartment. Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 or better sees that one of the floor panels is removable. Underneath is an *elixir of health* and a collection of manuscripts worth 100 gp to a collector.

AFTERMATH

- If the characters succeed and the NPC lived, each party member receives 25 gp as agreed. Otherwise, the money is on the NPC's corpse.
- If the characters fail, Strelben will have oozes, and mouthers begin to look outside the shrine for food. The monstrosities will multiply and slowly become more intelligent as the number of host bodies increases. They will become a threat to Woodpine in a week.
- If the characters decide to help Strelben, he asks them to provide ever-increasing amounts of flesh. If you choose to make his goal possible, the sacrifices eventually give birth to a new sentient ooze race, and the characters receive new bodies.
- If any of the oozes escaped, they will roam the wilderness and multiply. The smaller the ooze, the fewer bodies it will need to create to house all its personas. If the characters return to the shrine they may find that sentient oozes have reclaimed their home.



CREDITS

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