THE WOUND BELOW

NOTPRESENT STUDIO

INSTRUCTION MANUAL

A tactical descent into the wound beneath the world.



A PIXEL-ART, 3D-DIORAMA TACTICAL DUNGEON CRAWLER

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Brother Aldric's fire, at the lip of the wound.

Your Charge

Nine days ago the ground at Carrow's Ford split open and began to bleed. The river ran red, and then the wells. On the third night the villagers rose from their beds and walked into the wound, singing, and did not come back.

The Crown sent two hundred souls to close it. They called themselves the Expedition. They went down in good order, by companies, with banners and bells. What came back up the stairs was three of them, and a smell of copper and smoke.

You are those three. Above the wound, on a shelf of broken stone, an old monk named Brother Aldric keeps a fire and a book. He feeds whoever climbs out, and he writes down everyone who goes in. He has written down a great many people.

Your purpose is simple to say. Go down. Find the seven wardens who were set to hold the wound shut, learn what has become of them, and lay them to rest one seal at a time. Bring back what you can. Remember the names of the dead, because the dark is trying very hard to forget them. And at the bottom of everything, face the thing they were holding.



The Expedition goes down into the wound.

What you must do

Descend

Twenty depths across five realms, each floor a maze of platforms, bridges and old stone. Find the Bloodwake Rift on each floor and slay its guardians to open the way down.

Remember

Notices, remains, echoes and oaths lie scattered through the depths. Read them. Say the names aloud. The dead give blessings to those who remember them.

End it

At depth 20 waits Asmodar, the First Wound. Every seal has led here.

Lay the wardens to rest

Six wardens wait at depths 3, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 18. They were heroes once. Now they are the worst things in the dark.

Grow stronger

Level your party, spend skill points, forge and find gear, and build the camp above the wound into something worth coming home to.

A History of the Land

What follows is gathered from the carvings of the crypts, the oaths of the wardens, the ledgers of the Crown and the patient memory of Brother Aldric, who has read more of the old books than anyone living. Where the sources disagree, as they often do, the disagreement is noted.

I. The Wound Beneath the World



Brother Aldric, keeper of the fire and the record.

Before the kingdoms, before the river had a name, there was a wound. The oldest carvings do not show it opening. They show it already there, a dark mouth under everything, and the world growing over it the way skin grows over a cut that was never cleaned.

The scholars of Sahr called it the Bloodwake, because whatever falls into it leaves a trail that never closes, and because on certain nights the ground above it is warm to the touch and faintly wet. The thing at its bottom they did not name at all. Later ages would call it Asmodar, and later still, simply, the First Wound.

It is not a demon, though it wears demons. It is not a god, though it has been prayed to. It is hunger with a memory: it eats what falls into it, and keeps every name it has eaten, and it is very, very patient.

II. Sahr, the City of Gallows

The first people to build above the wound were the lawgivers of Sahr. Their city stood in a hot country of red stone and white sand, and its laws were famous across the world for having no mercy in them at all. Every square had a gallows. Every debt was written down. Sahr believed that anything could be held in place if the right words were set over it, and for a long time it was right.

It was in Sahr that the Hall of Seven Wounds was raised: a round chamber of seven seats around a sunken floor, where the city's judges would sit in council over the darkness below. The hall still stands, far beneath the sand. The seats are still there. You will see them.



The streets of Sahr, beneath the sand.

III. Saint Ilvane and the Seven



Saint Ilvane, as the drowned choir remembers her.

Three hundred years ago the wound woke. The ground beneath Sahr split, the sands began to pour inward, and the dead of a hundred years stood up from their graves and walked toward it. Sahr's law could not hold it. Sahr's gallows could not hang it.

Help came from Ennor, the city of falls in the far north, where a choir-saint named Ilvane had learned to sing stone into place. Ilvane went down into the wound with her choir and sang until the bleeding slowed. Then she did something no one had dared before. She chose seven, and to each she gave a seal, and each of the seven swore to stay below and hold their seal for as long as it needed holding.

She chose them carefully. A gaoler, to keep the outer door. A priestess of fire, to keep a flame banked against the dark. Herself, to keep the song. A physician, so that the wound would never spread. An executioner, to carry the warrant of the seals and punish any warden who broke faith. An angel of the Last Fire, sent down from above to burn the deepest part shut.

And a seventh, whom the carvings call the Witness. The Witness's work was to keep the record: to write the names of the wardens and read them aloud, so that the six below would never forget who they were. On the walls of Sahr there is a gap in the carvings where the Witness should be. Someone chiselled it clean a long time ago. The seat of the Witness, in the Hall of Seven Wounds, is the only one that is not worn hollow.



The seven, as the walls of Sahr show them: six, and a gap where the stone has been chiselled clean.

IV. The Long Quiet

The wound closed, or seemed to. Sahr was lost beneath the sand. Ennor's falls ran dark and then clear again. Above the old crypts a fishing village grew up at the ford of a slow brown river, and its people buried their dead in the ossuary their great-grandparents had found already waiting under the hill. They called the place Carrow's Ford.

The world above went on. The Crown rose and grew comfortable. The oaths were kept, after a fashion, by the people who had inherited them without being told why. The Frozen Order sent its knights down to relieve the gaoler of the outer seal every winter, until the Crown stopped paying for it. A family of women carried a coal that had never gone out. An order of headsmen at the ruin of Sahr kept a warrant's rules long after anyone remembered whose warrant it was. A little girl stole a thunderstorm from a falling angel and kept it in a jar.

Below, the six wardens held. Without the Witness to read their names to them, they slowly began to forget what they were holding, and why, and who they had been.



Carrow's Ford, three centuries later: the camp above the wound.

V. The Bleeding at Carrow's Ford

Nine days ago, the outer seal failed. The floor of the old ossuary split, the river ran red, and the villagers of Carrow's Ford walked into the dark in their nightclothes, singing a hymn none of them had ever learned. A girl with a blue ribbon in her hair was among them.

The Crown answered with two hundred soldiers, scholars and volunteers under a captain named Dunmere. The Expedition marched to the wound in good order. Its companies went down one after another. The ledgers of the Crown, if anyone thinks to check them, record that this was the twelfth expedition to be sent into the hill at Carrow's Ford in three hundred years. No one has thought to check them.

That is where the story finds you: three survivors at a fire on the lip of the wound, with an old monk writing your names in a book, and twenty depths of dark below.

The Seven Seals

Saint Ilvane chose seven to hold the wound. Six of them still wait below, changed past recognition. The seventh's name has been chiselled from every wall.



Gorgoth, the Seeping Maw

The Outer Seal · depth 3



Uthra, Mother of Cinders

The Second Seal · depth 6



The Hollow Saint

The Third Seal · depth 9



Vexmora the Unhealed

The Fourth Seal · depth 12



Kharn of the Seventh Wound

The Warrant of the Fifth Seal · depth 15



Morrigal, the Ashen Seraph

The Last Fire · depth 18



Asmodar, the First Wound

The First Wound · depth 20

?

The Witness

The seventh seal · whereabouts unknown

Each warden's oath lies somewhere on the floors above their lair. Find it, and you can read it to them when the fight begins.

The Realms Below

Twenty depths, six realms, each with monsters of its own. Each floor is generated fresh: platforms, bridges, steps and cover, with the Rift somewhere on it.



The Ossuary Crypts

Depths 1 to 4 · weather: ice, fire

The ossuary beneath Carrow's Ford, split open by the wound. Halls heaped with skulls, coffins in the corners, candles no one lit, and the husks of the village still wearing their own clothes. Blue ribbons, tied double, mark the way down. The gaoler Gorgoth paces somewhere below.



The Sundered Chasm

Depths 5 to 6 · weather: rain, lightning

The earth torn in half. Bridges of rock hang over a river far below, harpies nest in the cliffs and rain hammers the ledges. Uthra's nest burns in the chasm wall.



The Falls of Ennor

Depths 7 to 9 · weather: rain, ice

Ennor of the Falls, the choir-saint's city, drowned under its own waterfalls. Wet slate and moss, mist that never lifts, and under the roar of the water, singing. The drowned choir still keeps time, and Saint Ilvane waits at the foot of the falls, counting her wardens.



The Mycelial Deep

Depths 10 to 12 · weather: rain, ice

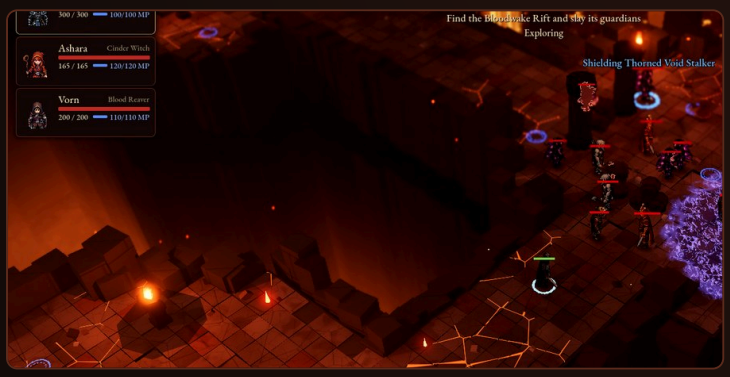
A grove beneath the river, where mushrooms grow taller than houses and the ground glows with threads of fungus. The pilgrims came for the healing. Vexmora tends a garden in which nothing is allowed to die.



The Buried City of Sahr

Depths 13 to 16 · weather: fire, lightning

Sahr, the city of gallows, swallowed whole. Sand pours from the ceiling into silent streets. The carvings here show six wardens and a chiselled gap, and in the Hall of Seven Wounds six seats are worn hollow and one is not. The executioner Kharn waits in the sunken square.



The Bloodwake

Depths 17 to 20 · weather: fire, lightning

The bottom of the world: rivers of blood and fire, stone that glows red, the feathers of a fallen angel in a line a mile long. The roll of eleven companies is cut into the rock. The tunnels beat like a heart, and round the last Rift, seven seats stand in a ring.

The Company

You begin with three heroes: Kaelen, Ashara and Vorn. Three more are met in the depths first, Sable on Depth 2, Halvard on Depth 4 and Morwen on Depth 6, and only then can be recruited at the camp's Wanderers' Fire. Any three can go down together. Each hero has a school of magic, seven spells and a tree of skills. The finer their gear, the finer they look: some are shown here in Epic weapons and armor.



Kaelen
Rime Warden
Frost tank · melee



Ashara
Cinder Witch
Fire caster · ranged



Vorn
Blood Reaver
Blood healer · ranged



Sable
Grave Huntress
Archer · long range



Halvard
Iron Penitent
Holy guardian · melee



Morwen
Tempest Hag
Storm caster · ranged



The party in the Ossuary Crypts, among the bones.



FROST · FROST TANK · MELEE

Kaelen

Rime Warden

LIFE	MANA	ARMOR
300	100	45
DAMAGE	**MOVE**	**REACH**
17	5 tiles	2.1 tiles (melee)

Kaelen wears the frost-mark of the Frozen Order, an order of knights sworn three centuries ago to relieve the warden of the outer seal every winter. He took the mark at fifteen and is now the last of them. He has never known what the order was relieving the warden from, and nobody alive can tell him. Patient, stubborn and quietly funny, he stands at the front of every fight and expects the dark to come to him.

In battle. The party's wall. Kaelen has the life and armor to stand in the middle of a pack, Rime Cleave chills everything in an arc, and his frost locks monsters in place while the others work. Keep him between the enemy and your casters.

Spells



Rime Cleave known from the start
25 mana · recharge 2 turns · up to rank 3
Sweep a frost-edged blade the way you point, hitting the foes in that arc for 205–295% damage, chilling them for 2 turns.



Glacial Bulwark
36 mana · recharge 4 turns · up to rank 3
Encase in ice: nearby monsters must attack Kaelen for 2 turns, and he takes 45–65% less damage for 2 turns.



Frozen Charge
30 mana · recharge 3 turns · up to rank 3
Charge to a spot, smashing foes there for 155–225% damage and freezing them. Rank 3 freezes for 2 turns.



Winter's Maw
48 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
A howling ring of ice deals 360–460% damage and freezes every foe around Kaelen for 2 turns.



Hoarfrost Javelin
25 mana · recharge 2 turns · up to rank 3
Hurl a spear of ice for 165–235% damage. The target is frozen for 1 turn. Rank 2 also chills for 2 more.



Iceguard Ward
36 mana · recharge 4 turns · up to rank 3
Wrap a hero in living ice: they take 50–70% less damage for 2 turns.



Ice Storm ultimate
58 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
Call a storm of hail over an area for 3 rounds. Each round it hits every foe inside for 115–145% damage and chills them. Foes still in it on the last round freeze solid.

Skills



Hoarfrost Plate tier 1 · 3 ranks
+12/24/36% max life and +12/24/36 armor for Kaelen.



Shatter tier 3 · 2 ranks
Frozen or chilled foes take +15/30% damage from the whole party.



Bitter Cold tier 2 · 3 ranks
+12/24/36% frost damage. Kaelen's attacks chill foes.



Permafrost tier 4 · 2 ranks
Kaelen's skills recharge 10/20% faster. At rank 2, freezes last 1 turn longer.



FIRE · FIRE CASTER · RANGED

Ashara

Cinder Witch

LIFE	MANA	ARMOR
165	120	12
DAMAGE	**MOVE**	**REACH**
19	5 tiles	10.5 tiles (ranged)

Ashara carries a coal that has burned in her family for three hundred years without once going out. Her mother told her it was lit from Uthra's own fire to close the wound, and also told her never to ask what it was for. She is asking now. Brilliant, reckless and very fond of explosions, Ashara has never met a barrel she did not want to set on fire.

In battle. Raw fire damage from range. Cinder Bolt burns single targets, Brimstone Field and Hellfire set whole packs alight, and Cataclysm drops stars from the sky. Fragile: keep her behind a tank and out of the red.

Spells



Cinder Bolt known from the start
25 mana · recharge 2 turns · up to rank 3
Hurl a bolt of hellfire for 240–340% damage that bursts, splashing nearby foes.



Brimstone Field
30 mana · recharge 3 turns · up to rank 3
Ignite the ground for 3 turns. Foes standing in it burn for 135–205% damage each turn.



Ember Step
30 mana · recharge 3 turns · up to rank 3
Vanish in flame and reappear at a spot. Both ends erupt for 140–220% damage.



Cataclysm
48 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
Call a burning star from above. It crashes for 700–900% damage and leaves the ground aflame for 2 turns.



Combust
30 mana · recharge 3 turns · up to rank 3
Every burning foe near Ashara explodes for 160–240% damage plus all the burning they had left.



Fervor
42 mana · recharge 5 turns · up to rank 2
Set an ally's blood alight: they may act again this turn. Rank 2 lets them move again too.



Hellfire ultimate
58 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
Rain fire from the wound for 3 rounds. Each round every foe inside takes 145–185% damage and burns for 2 turns.

Skills



Kindling tier 1 · 3 ranks
+12/24/36% fire damage.



Pyroclasm tier 3 · 2 ranks
Ashara's skills recharge 15/30% faster and her attacks hit 10/20% harder.



Ignite tier 2 · 3 ranks
Ashara's attacks set foes burning for 12/24/36% of the hit each turn, for 3 turns.



Soul of Cinder tier 4 · 2 ranks
Cinder Bolt splits, hurling 1/2 extra bolts at nearby foes.



BLOOD · BLOOD HEALER · RANGED

Vorn

Blood Reaver

LIFE	MANA	ARMOR
200	110	20
DAMAGE	**MOVE**	**REACH**
15	5.2 tiles	8.5 tiles (ranged)

Vorn was a plague-surgeon at Harrow who saved nobody, until he found a way to pull life out of one body and put it into another, and stopped asking whose. All of it came out of one book: Vexmora's Surgical Remedies, chapter nine. He has come down to see what the author became, and to find out how long he has left.

In battle. Healer and drainer. Hemorrhage bleeds a foe and feeds the life to Vorn, Blood Pact and Crimson Tide mend the party, and Blood Rite can raise a fallen friend. Weak alone, essential in a long fight.

Spells



Hemorrhage known from the start
25 mana · recharge 2 turns · up to rank 3
A lance of blood for 215–305% damage that makes the target bleed for 3 turns. Heals Vorn for 30% of the damage.



Blood Pact
25 mana · recharge 2 turns · up to rank 3
Sacrifice 10% of Vorn's life to heal an ally for 33–49% of their max life. Free when healing himself.



Crimson Tide
30 mana · recharge 3 turns · up to rank 3
Rip the blood from foes around Vorn for 180–260% damage. 40% of it heals the whole party.



Exsanguinate
48 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
Tear open a wound in the world: foes inside take 550–700% damage and bleed, and the party drinks 30% of it as life.



Hex of Weeping
30 mana · recharge 3 turns · up to rank 3
Curse a foe for 80–120% damage. For 2 turns it takes 35–55% more damage from everything.



Blood Rite
48 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
Pour 20% of Vorn's life into a fallen hero, raising them with 35–45% life. They can act next turn.



Crimson Rain ultimate
58 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
Blood falls for 3 rounds. Each round foes inside take 110–140% damage and bleed, and heroes inside heal 5–7% of their life.

Skills



Thick Blood tier 1 · 3 ranks
+15/30/45% max life and +10/20/30% blood damage for Vorn.



Blood Frenzy tier 3 · 2 ranks
While below half life, Vorn deals +30/60% damage.



Leech tier 2 · 3 ranks
Vorn heals for 5/10/15% of all damage he deals.



Sanguine Covenant tier 4 · 2 ranks
While Vorn is in the party, the whole party heals for 3/6% of the damage it deals.



BOW · ARCHER · LONG RANGE

Sable

Grave Huntress

LIFE	MANA	ARMOR
175	100	16
DAMAGE	**MOVE**	**REACH**
19	5.4 tiles	12 tiles (ranged)

Sable tracks the dead roads and finds dead men for money. She was on the road the night Carrow's Ford walked into the wound, and her niece Wren walked with them: eleven years old, a voice you could hear across the valley, and a habit of tying everything in double bows. Sable is not here to close any wound. She is here for Wren.

In battle. The longest reach in the party. Piercing Shot runs through whole lines of foes, Snare Trap pins them in place, and Arrow Storm and Hail of Arrows rain on packs. Shoot from high ground and from behind for big bonuses.

Spells



Piercing Shot known from the start
25 mana · recharge 2 turns · up to rank 3
An arrow for 225–315% damage that flies on through, hitting every foe in a line behind the target for 150–210%.



Volley
30 mana · recharge 3 turns · up to rank 3
Loose a fan of arrows on an area: 155–225% damage to every foe there, crippling them for 2 turns.



Snare Trap
36 mana · recharge 4 turns · up to rank 3
Throw a spiked snare: foes caught take 120–180% damage, bleed for 2 turns and lose their next turn. Bosses are only slowed.



Arrow Storm
48 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
Darken the sky with arrows. After a moment they fall for 500–640% damage on every foe in a wide area, leaving them bleeding.



Evasive Leap
36 mana · recharge 4 turns · up to rank 2
Vault to a nearby spot. The leap does not use Sable's action. Rank 2 lets her move again afterwards.



Deadeye
42 mana · recharge 5 turns · up to rank 2
Steady your breath: every attack and skill Sable lands is a critical hit for 2 turns (3 at rank 2). Using it does not end her action.



Hail of Arrows ultimate
58 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
Keep an area under a rain of arrows for 3 rounds. Each round every foe inside takes 127–159% damage and bleeds for 2 turns.

Skills



Keen Eyes tier 1 · 3 ranks
+4/8/12% critical chance and +10/20/30% physical damage for Sable.



Hawkeye tier 3 · 2 ranks
Sable's shots ignore cover and deal +15/30% damage to foes more than 6 tiles away.



Barbed Arrows tier 2 · 3 ranks
Sable's attacks make foes bleed for 12/24/36% of the hit each turn, for 3 turns.



Thousand Cuts tier 4 · 2 ranks
Each critical hit Sable lands takes 1 turn off her slowest skill recharge. At rank 2, off all of them.



FAITH · HOLY GUARDIAN · MELEE

Halvard

Iron Penitent

LIFE	MANA	ARMOR
330	100	48
DAMAGE	**MOVE**	**REACH**
16	4.6 tiles	2.2 tiles (melee)

Halvard was a headsman of the old order at the Hall of Sahr, which kept the executioner Kharn's rule long after anyone remembered who Kharn was. Every name he ever took is hammered onto the iron links he wears. He wants to see the place where those chains were forged, and he will not say why.

In battle. The holy guardian. Even more life and armor than Kaelen, with stuns and a chain that drags monsters to him. Consecrate turns the ground beneath the party into a place of healing. Slow, but very hard to move.

Spells



Penitent Smash known from the start
25 mana · recharge 2 turns · up to rank 3
A crushing blow for 250–350% damage that stuns the foe for 1 turn (bosses are slowed instead). Rank 3 also knocks back foes beside it.



Chains of Atonement
30 mana · recharge 3 turns · up to rank 3
Hurl a chain that drags a foe to Halvard for 110–170% damage. It must attack him for 2 turns. Bosses are too heavy to drag.



Consecrate
36 mana · recharge 4 turns · up to rank 3
Bless the ground around Halvard: heroes nearby heal 20–30% of their life and foes nearby take 130–190% damage.



Judgement
48 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
A hammer of light falls from above for 550–700% damage, stunning every foe it hits for 1 turn. Bosses are slowed.



Martyr's Vow
30 mana · recharge 3 turns · up to rank 3
Heal a hero for 27–41% of their life and cleanse burning, bleeding, slows and stuns from them.



Battle Hymn
48 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
Every hero heals 10% of their life and deals 30–40% more damage for 2 turns.



Purging Rain ultimate
58 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
Holy rain for 3 rounds. Each round foes inside take 110–140% damage; heroes inside heal 6–8% of their life and are cleansed of burning, bleeding and chill.

Skills



Iron Faith tier 1 · 3 ranks
+12/24/36% max life and +10/20/30 armor for Halvard.



Retribution tier 2 · 3 ranks
Monsters that strike Halvard in melee take 20/40/60% of the damage back.



Sanctified tier 3 · 2 ranks
While Halvard stands, every hero heals 3/6% of their life at the start of each of your turns.



Last Stand tier 4 · 2 ranks
Once per fight, a blow that would fell Halvard leaves him at 1 life. At rank 2, it also heals him for 30%.



STORM · STORM CASTER · RANGED

Morwen

Tempest Hag

LIFE	MANA	ARMOR
160	120	12
DAMAGE	**MOVE**	**REACH**
18	5 tiles	10.5 tiles (ranged)

Morwen is older than she looks, and she looks very old. When she was nine years old she stole a thunderstorm off an angel on the worst day of the angel's life, and has carried it in a jar for three hundred years. It is the angel's last breath. Morwen means to give it back, and would like to get on with it, because her knees hurt.

In battle. Storm caster. Chain Lightning leaps from foe to foe, Static Field and Thunderclap stun, and Tempest calls the sky down. Lightning hits wet foes harder, and stunned, frozen or chilled foes take more from her storm.

Spells



Chain Lightning known from the start
25 mana · recharge 2 turns · up to rank 3
Lightning strikes a foe for 200–280% damage, then leaps to 2 more foes nearby for 70% each (3 at rank 3).



Static Field
30 mana · recharge 3 turns · up to rank 3
Charge the ground for 3 turns. Foes standing in it are shocked for 120–180% damage each turn and slowed.



Thunderclap
30 mana · recharge 3 turns · up to rank 3
A crack of thunder around Morwen: 155–225% damage to foes nearby, hurling them away from her. Rank 3 also stuns them for 1 turn.



Tempest
48 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
Call down the storm: a bolt strikes every foe in a wide area for 470–600% damage and stuns it for 1 turn. Bosses are slowed.



Galvanize
36 mana · recharge 4 turns · up to rank 2
Jolt a hero: they may move again this turn and deal 35–45% more damage for 2 turns.



Static Shroud
36 mana · recharge 4 turns · up to rank 2
Wrap a hero in crackling storm for 2 turns: monsters that strike them in melee are shocked for 140–180% of Morwen's damage and stunned.



Thunder Rain ultimate
58 mana · recharge 6 turns · up to rank 2
A downpour soaks every foe in the area for 3 rounds, and each round 3 bolts strike the foes inside for 175–220% damage (Wet foes take +50%). Rank 2 adds a bolt and stuns them.

Skills



Conduit tier 1 · 3 ranks
+12/24/36% storm damage.



Overload tier 3 · 2 ranks
Morwen's skills recharge 12/24% faster and Chain Lightning leaps to 1/2 more foes.



Static Charge tier 2 · 3 ranks
Morwen's attacks have a 12/24/36% chance to stun a foe for 1 turn (not bosses).



Eye of the Storm tier 4 · 2 ranks
Morwen's storm damage is +25/50% against stunned, frozen or slowed foes.

Playing the Game

Everything can be done with a mouse, a keyboard alone, or a controller (Steam Deck included). Every key can be changed in Settings.

To	Keyboard & mouse	Controller
Move / attack / talk	Left click a tile, foe or person	A
Move the cursor	Arrow keys	Left stick
Basic attack	A, or click a foe	A on a foe
Defend	D, or the shield left of the attack	Menu, then Defend
Cast a spell	Q W E R T Y U	X (triggers choose)
Use a belt item	Shift + 1–4, or click it	Start menu
End the party's turn	Space	Back
Next hero	Tab, or 1–3	Y
Cancel	Right click	B
Zoom	Mouse wheel, + and –	Bumpers
Turn the view	, and .	D-pad up / down
Look around	Right-drag, or Shift + arrows	Right stick
Centre the view	Home	R3
Gear · Skills · Stats	I · K · C	L3 · Start menu
Portal home · Walk to the Rift	B · G	Start menu
Equip · salvage (Gear)	Right click or drag · Ctrl + right click	A · X
Move gear in the bag	Drag	—
Take back a skill point	Right click (just spent)	X
Help · Music · Pause	H · M · Esc	Start
Quit	The Quit button	Start menu

Exploring

Click the floor to walk; the party follows the hero you've chosen. The first floor is gentle, and guide cards explain each thing the first time it matters. Point at anything that can be used and a **gold ring** appears under it. Walk over loot to take it; each piece lies on the floor as its own icon. Click a chest, shrine or person to see what they offer. Spells break urns, crates and jars; click one while exploring to break it by hand.

Nowhere is quite safe. Monsters wake when they see you or come close, and a few **roam** from room to room, so a cleared floor doesn't stay quiet for long: each one slain is in time replaced by another. A fight is heard: sleeping packs on the same platform count down (**! 2**, **! 1**) and join, and a blast or a storm wakes them at once. Packs on other platforms never come.

The portal home (B) takes three seconds and can't be opened while anything hunts you; a roamer that finds you breaks it. It stays open at camp, and leads back to the very spot you left, with the floor as you left it.

The notices, the dead, the oaths and the pages you find are **read aloud** by the narrator.

Turning the view. The camera turns a quarter round at a time, so you can always see past a wall or a pillar. The minimap turns with it. Heroes and monsters behind things show through as an outline.

Battle

The round

When monsters see you, a fight begins. Each round every hero may **move** across the lit tiles and **act once**: an attack, a spell, or a potion or scroll from the belt. Choose heroes in any order and press **End Party's Turn** when done. The first slot on the bar is each hero's **basic attack** (Kaelen's Slash, Sable's Shoot and so on): no mana, no cooldown, and it goes for the foe under the cursor or the nearest one. Then the monsters move.

Defend, the shield just left of the attack, is the other choice when a blow isn't worth it: the hero braces, using their action, and takes **20% less damage** until their next turn. It counts on top of armor and every other protection (wards, Iron Skin), and the hero can still move first.

The acting hero has a **gold arrow** over their head and a bright card. Ending the turn while someone hasn't attacked asks first. Tags over the monsters show what each means to do next, and red marks on the floor are blows about to land. Step out of them. Statuses show as small icons on each hero's portrait, with the turns left.



A fight: the acting hero's arrow and card, and how far she may move.



A pack across the platform hears the fight: it comes in two rounds.



Aiming Rime Cleave: the arc shows who it will hit.

Where you stand

- **Backstab**: a blow in close from more than 135° behind a foe does +30%.
- **Flank**: from its side, 60° to 135° off, +12%.
- **High ground**: +25% damage. **Shooting uphill**: −20%.
- **Cover** stops 35% of a shot from a distance. Low things like wells and barrels block neither sight nor shots.
- Monsters face whoever they last moved toward or struck, and a hero struck turns to face the attacker once the monsters' turn is over.
- Area spells ignore cover, backstab and flank, but count the high ground.
- **Mind your friends.** Damage is damage. Splash and blasts hurt any hero they catch at full strength (never the caster), and burning ground burns whoever stands in it, the caster too. While you aim, a red line says who would be caught. Monsters are no different: their slams, bursts and death eruptions hurt the monsters beside them, so draw a crowd into them.
- A **powder keg** is a target: strike or shoot it, and it blasts everyone near it, friend or foe.

The numbers

- Armor takes away **1 − 100 / (100 + armor)** of each blow: 100 armor halves it.

Conditions

What can be done to a body in the depths, for good or ill. Each shows as a small icon on a hero's portrait with the turns it has left, counts down a turn at a time, and ends when the fight does.

Burn	Fire damage at the start of every turn. Fire spells and burning blows set it.
Bleed	Damage every turn from an open wound. Blood magic and cruel blades.
Poison	Damage every turn, melee blows 20% weaker, and movement 30% shorter.
Chill	Movement halved. A wet target that is chilled freezes solid instead.
Frozen	Locked in ice: cannot move or act until it thaws.
Stun / Rooted	A stunned foe loses its turn; a rooted hero cannot move.
Wet	Rain and water soak. Wet foes take more lightning and less fire, and freeze when chilled.
Hexed	Takes extra damage from every source for a few turns.
Taunted	Has to attack whoever taunted it.
Warded	A good one: takes less damage.
Empowered	A good one: deals more damage.
Shrouded	A good one: lightning lashes anyone who strikes them in close.
Deadeye	A good one: every attack is a critical hit.



Burning, chilled and empowered on Kaelen; poisoned on Ashara.

Magic, Skills & Levels

The schools

- **Frost** slows, chills and freezes.
- **Fire** burns and melts; it hits wet foes softer.
- **Blood** heals its caster and the party, and raises the fallen.
- **Storm** lightning jumps between foes and stuns; wet foes take more.
- **Faith** stuns, drags and blesses the ground.
- **Bow** pierces lines, snares and rains arrows.

Mana and recharge

A spell costs **13 + 5.8 × its recharge** in mana, so slow, mighty spells cost more. Ultimates cost 58. After casting, a spell recharges for its listed number of turns. Each hero knows one spell from the start; the rest are learned in the skill tree.

The skill tree

Every level gives the party **two skill points**. Spend them in Skills on spells (up to three ranks each, with bigger numbers every rank) or on passive skills. Deeper tiers open as you invest in a hero's tree:

Tier 1	0 points spent in the tree
Tier 2	2 points spent in the tree
Tier 3	4 points spent in the tree
Tier 4	7 points spent in the tree
Tier 5	10 points spent in the tree

Changed your mind? Right click a skill to take back a point put in since the screen opened. The Altar at camp (from Depth 5) unlearns everything, to spend again. The Skills button glows while points wait.



The skill tree.

Experience

The whole party shares one level. Experience comes from slain monsters (more from elites and wardens) and grows 34% harder each level (the first few levels cost a little extra, so they aren't over in a floor). Every level gives each hero 10% more life, 8% more damage, 2 more armor and 6% more mana, and restores 25% of their life and mana. The stats in this book are each hero's at level 1.

Level	XP needed	Total
1 → 2	162	162
2 → 3	193	355
3 → 4	226	581
4 → 5	271	852
5 → 6	319	1,171
6 → 7	389	1,560
7 → 8	521	2,081
8 → 9	698	2,779
9 → 10	936	3,715
10 → 11	1,254	4,969
11 → 12	1,680	6,649
12 → 13	2,251	8,900
13 → 14	3,016	11,916
14 → 15	4,042	15,958
15 → 16	5,416	21,374
16 → 17	7,258	28,632
17 → 18	9,726	38,358
18 → 19	13,032	51,390
19 → 20	17,463	68,853
20 → 21	23,401	92,254

Gear & Loot

Monsters, chests and caches drop gear. Each hero wears a weapon of their own kind, armor, a helm, gloves, boots and a trinket, and what they wear shows on their figure in the depths.



Rarity

Rarity	Extra powers	Strength
Common	0–1	×1
Magic	1–2	×1.15
Rare	3–3	×1.3
Epic	4–4	×1.5
Legendary	4–5	×1.75
Bloodforged	5–6	×2.1

School bonuses

A piece can raise one school's damage, spells and basic attacks alike. A **weapon** only ever raises its own hero's school; armor, helms, gloves, boots and trinkets raise the school of someone in your company: **Frost** for Kaelen, **Fire** for Ashara, **Blood** for Vorn, **Physical** for Sable, **Physical** for Halvard, **Storm** for Morwen.

Legendary and Bloodforged pieces may carry a **unique power**: a slain foe that explodes, blows that freeze, a third critical multiplier. Matching pieces of a **set** grant bonuses together, and **gems** can be set into gear at the Forge.

The Gear screen

Right click an item, or drag it onto a hero, to put it on; Ctrl + right click salvages it. Every item keeps its own cell: one put on leaves its cell empty, new finds fill the first gap, and only **Sort** packs the bag again.

Drag to arrange: to another cell (two items swap), from a hero into the bag to take it off, onto a matching piece in the bag to exchange them, or from one hero to another to hand it over. A weapon is for its own hero only, and loot only brings weapons for heroes in your company.



The Gear screen: three heroes, their worn gear and the bag.



Loot on the floor, each as its own icon, glowing in its rarity's colour.

Embers and the bag

Salvage what you won't wear for **embers**, the coin of the camp: spend them at the peddler, the Bone Smith, the Forge and the Idol. The bag holds 45 pieces and the storage chest at camp 60 more.

Whatever you found on a descent is lost if the party falls before getting it home. Open a portal, or take the Rift, to bring it home.

Potions & Scrolls

The belt holds 4 kinds of potion or scroll, and in a fight only those can be reached; using one is the hero's action for the round. Everything else waits in the bag, where anything can be used outside a fight. Click an item in the Belt & Bag to use it; click the arrow on its corner, press X or drag it to move it between belt and bag.



Healing Draught Potion · 30 embers
The hero who drinks it recovers 40% of their life.



Restoration Flask Potion · 75 embers
Every hero recovers 25% life and is cleansed of burns, bleeding, poison and chill.



Potion of Cure Potion · 45 embers
The hero who drinks it is cured of every ailment: burning, bleeding, poison, chill, ice, stun, soaking and hexes.



Ironskin Tonic Elixir · 60 embers
One hero takes 30% less damage for their next 4 combat rounds.



Scroll of Fireball Scroll · 90 embers
A one-time cast: a fireball bursts at a spot within 14 paces, burning every foe in the blast.



Scroll of Mass Heal Scroll · 130 embers
A one-time cast: every living hero recovers 50% of their life.



Scroll of Resurrection Scroll · 220 embers
A one-time cast on a fallen hero, chosen: they rise with all their life.



Scroll of Mass Fire Scroll · 110 embers
A one-time cast: a firestorm bursts over a spot within 14 paces, striking every foe in it and setting them burning for 3 rounds. Read before a fight, it opens one by surprise.



Mana Draught Potion · 35 embers
The hero lowest on mana recovers 50% of their mana.



Flask of Clarity Potion · 80 embers
Every hero recovers 30% of their mana.



Elixir of Might Elixir · 60 embers
One hero deals 30% more damage for their next 4 combat rounds.



Scroll of Mending Scroll · 120 embers
A one-time cast on one hero, chosen: they recover 70% of their life and are cleansed, or rise at 50% if fallen.



Scroll of Chain Lightning Scroll · 90 embers
A one-time cast: lightning strikes a foe within 16 paces and arcs to up to 3 more.



Scroll of Mass Cure Scroll · 90 embers
A one-time cast: every hero is cured of every ailment.



Scroll of Mass Poison Scroll · 100 embers
A one-time cast: a poison cloud rolls over a spot within 14 paces, poisoning every foe in it for 3 rounds. Read before a fight, it opens one by surprise.



Scroll of Mass Ice Scroll · 100 embers
A one-time cast: a blizzard bursts over a spot within 14 paces, striking every foe in it and chilling them for 3 rounds (soaked foes freeze). Read before a fight, it opens one by surprise.



The Belt & Bag.

The Rift Camp

Between descents the party rests at the Rift Camp on the lip of the wound. Returning there restores everyone, and everything you carried home is safe. Brother Aldric keeps the fire, tells what he knows and writes down the names of the dead.

The camp grows as you go deeper: a supplies peddler with potions and scrolls, the Bone Smith with weapons and armor, the Forge, an Altar for unlearning skills, an Idol of blessings, a Hall where new heroes wait to join you, a storage chest, a Quest Board with work and bounties, and Pacts that add danger for greater reward. Strays found in the depths come to live here, and one at a time can come down with you as a companion.

The camp takes on the look of the deepest place you've reached, and the wound at its edge shrinks a little with every warden laid to rest. The **Quest Board** posts as many bounties as you have room for, three at most; a finished one's Collect button turns green. A portal home left open stands at the fire, the way back down to where you left off.



The Rift Camp at Depth 9, in the Mycelial Deep's colours, with a portal home open.

What waits in the depths

People came down before you, and left things behind. **Notices** pinned to the walls, the **remains** of the fallen whose names you can say aloud for a blessing (or whose packs you can search), **echoes** of the dead who ask questions only the Chronicle can answer, and the **oaths** of the wardens. Everything you read is kept in the Chronicle at camp.



Remains of the Expedition.



A warden's oath.

Bestiary

Life, damage and armor are as each creature first appears; everything grows stronger the deeper it is met. Elites carry extra powers and a coloured name.



Bone Archer

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 1–9

Life 48 · Dmg 10 · Armor 6 · Ranged

Shoots from afar and backs away from melee.

Keeps its distance



Carrion Rat

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 1–6

Life 22 · Dmg 5 · Armor 2 · Melee

Weak alone, but they come in swarms.

Comes in swarms



Cinder Hound

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 1–7

Life 45 · Dmg 7 · Armor 5 · Melee

Fast and fragile — it closes the distance in a single turn.



Flayed Husk

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 1–8

Life 70 · Dmg 10 · Armor 10 · Melee

Shambling flesh that claws at whatever is closest.



Grave Wisp

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 1–4

Life 38 · Dmg 9 · Armor 3 · Ranged

A drifting candle-flame of the restless dead. Its cold touch slows your heroes.

Chilling blows, Keeps its distance



Blood Cultist

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 2–10

Life 60 · Dmg 14 · Armor 8 · Ranged

Hurls blood and mends wounded monsters. Kill it first.

Heals allies



Bone Lancer

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 2–10

Life 55 · Dmg 13 · Armor 10 · Melee

Its long spear strikes from two tiles away.



Chained Penitent

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 2–10

Life 120 · Dmg 12 · Armor 20 · Melee

Wrapped in iron chains — weapons glance off. Use spells.

Plated (resists blows)



Cinder Imp

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 2–9

Life 32 · Dmg 9 · Armor 4 · Ranged

A cackling little demon whose fire sets heroes burning.

Burning blows



Gorged Brute

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 2–20

Life 300 | Dmg 32 | Armor 30 | Melee

Marks the ground in red and smashes it next turn. Move out, or freeze it.

Ground slam



Tomb Sentinel

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 2–4

Life 90 | Dmg 11 | Armor 18 | Melee

A stone knight set to guard the dead. Blades barely scratch it, so break it with spells.

Plated (resists blows)



Flame Acolyte

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 3–12

Life 58 | Dmg 15 | Armor 8 | Ranged

Rains fire from range, setting heroes burning.

Burning blows



Ghoul Ravager

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 3–12

Life 70 | Dmg 12 | Armor 8 | Melee

Its filthy claws leave heroes bleeding.

Bleeding blows



Hellhound Alpha

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 3–12

Life 75 | Dmg 12 | Armor 10 | Melee

Leader of the pack. Its bite burns.

Burning blows



Spiderling

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 3–12

Life 26 | Dmg 6 | Armor 4 | Melee

Skittering, venomous and never alone.

Comes in swarms, Bleeding blows



Wailing Wraith

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 3–20

Life 60 | Dmg 13 | Armor 5 | Melee

Weapons pass through it — spells do not. Its touch chills, slowing a hero.

Chilling blows, Ethereal



Blood Priest

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 4–20

Life 70 | Dmg 12 | Armor 10 | Ranged

Heals its allies every other turn. A top priority target.

Heals allies, Great heals



Flesh Golem

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 4–20

Life 340 | Dmg 26 | Armor 25 | Melee

Stitched from the dead. It knits its wounds every turn.

Regenerates



Plague Bearer

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 4–20

Life 95 | Dmg 11 | Armor 6 | Melee

Bursts in a spray of rot when slain — keep heroes away.

Bursts on death



Shadow Stalker

The Ossuary Crypts · depths 4–20

Life 60 | Dmg 15 | Armor 8 | Melee

Vanishes into shadow and reappears beside its prey.

Blinks about, Bleeding blows



Bone Weaver

The Sundered Chasm · depths 5–20

Life 70 | Dmg 11 | Armor 8 | Ranged

Raises the dead to fight for it every few turns.

Summons



Broodmother

The Sundered Chasm · depths 5–20

Life 170 | Dmg 16 | Armor 15 | Melee

Spiderlings pour out of her when she dies.

Splits when slain, Bleeding blows



Chasm Harpy

The Sundered Chasm · depths 5–6

Life 64 | Dmg 14 | Armor 6 | Melee

Nests in the cliff walls and dives on whoever strays from the group.

Blinks about, Bleeding blows



Cragback Crawler

The Sundered Chasm · depths 5–6

Life 120 | Dmg 15 | Armor 24 | Melee

Its back is a slab of living rock. Find the soft underside with magic.

Plated (resists blows)



Grave Marksman

The Sundered Chasm · depths 5–20

Life 55 | Dmg 20 | Armor 8 | Ranged

A deadly long-range shot. Close in fast.

Keeps its distance



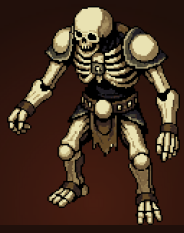
Magma Crawler

The Sundered Chasm · depths 5–20

Life 140 | Dmg 16 | Armor 40 | Melee

Armored in cooling rock. It erupts when it dies.

Burning blows, Bursts on death



Bone Colossus

The Sundered Chasm · depths 6–20

Life 420 | Dmg 34 | Armor 45 | Melee

A giant of fused bone. Its wide smash chills everyone it hits.

Ground slam, Chilling blows



Frost-Dead Archer

The Sundered Chasm · depths 6–20

Life 55 | Dmg 14 | Armor 8 | Ranged

Its icy arrows chill heroes, cutting their movement.

Chilling blows, Keeps its distance



Hex Witch

The Sundered Chasm · depths 6–20

Life 62 | Dmg 13 | Armor 6 | Ranged

Her curse makes a hero take more damage from everything.

Cursing blows



Drowned Chorister

The Falls of Ennor · depths 7–9

Life 95 | Dmg 17 | Armor 8 | Ranged

Sings the drowned hymn from afar. Blades pass half through it, so use spells.

Ethereal, Chilling blows



Pit Fiend

The Falls of Ennor · depths 7–20

Life 180 | Dmg 24 | Armor 25 | Melee

A winged horror that crosses the room in one leap.

Burning blows



Ash Revenant

The Falls of Ennor · depths 8–16

Life 115 | Dmg 16 | Armor 14 | Melee

Charred dead that set whatever they claw alight, and burst into embers when they fall.

Burning blows, Bursts on death



Infernal Butcher

The Falls of Ennor · depths 8–20

Life 380 | Dmg 38 | Armor 35 | Melee

Its flaming cleaver leaves the ground — and heroes — burning.

Ground slam, Burning blows



Thornback Hound

The Falls of Ennor · depths 9–18

Life 95 | Dmg 15 | Armor 12 | Melee

Its barbed hide tears whatever it bites. The wounds keep bleeding after it lets go.

Bleeding blows



Bloomfang Stalker

The Mycelial Deep · depths 10–12

Life 95 | Dmg 17 | Armor 10 | Melee

A hunting beast overgrown with glowing fungus. Its wounds close as the fungus feeds.

Bleeding blows, Regenerates



Grave Lich

The Mycelial Deep · depths 10–20

Life 100 | Dmg 18 | Armor 10 | Ranged

Raises the dead around it and chills the blood. Kill it before its servants bury you.

Summons, Chilling blows



Mycelid Shaman

The Mycelial Deep · depths 10–12

Life 78 · Dmg 13 · Armor 8 · Ranged

Breathes healing spores over its kin. Kill it first or the grove never stops growing.

Heals allies



Obsidian Golem

The Mycelial Deep · depths 11–20

Life 420 · Dmg 34 · Armor 45 · Melee

Volcanic glass turns blades aside. It marks the floor in red before it smashes: step out.

Ground slam, Plated (resists blows)



Void Stalker

The Mycelial Deep · depths 12–20

Life 90 · Dmg 20 · Armor 10 · Melee

Steps out of nothing beside your heroes. Its bite leaves a hex that makes every wound deeper.

Blinks about, Cursing blows



Gilded Scarab

The Buried City of Sahr · depths 13–16

Life 40 · Dmg 12 · Armor 16 · Melee

Gold-shelled beetles that boil up out of the sand in swarms.

Comes in swarms



Sand-Wrapped Dead

The Buried City of Sahr · depths 13–16

Life 150 · Dmg 20 · Armor 18 · Melee

Embalmed nobles of the buried city. Their curse makes every wound cut deeper.

Cursing blows



Abyssal Spawn

The Bloodwake · depths 17–20

Life 42 · Dmg 11 · Armor 6 · Melee

They pour out of the walls in swarms.

Comes in swarms



Bone Titan

The Bloodwake · depths 17–20

Life 620 · Dmg 44 · Armor 50 · Melee

The deepest guardians, stitched from a hundred dead. It knits itself back together: burst it down.

Ground slam, Regenerates



Flayed Seraph

The Bloodwake · depths 17–20

Life 140 · Dmg 22 · Armor 12 · Ranged

A fallen messenger. It darts between your heroes and marks them for death.

Blinks about, Cursing blows



Hellforge Arbalest

The Bloodwake · depths 17–20

Life 90 · Dmg 22 · Armor 12 · Ranged

Fires burning bolts from long range and backs away from blades.

Keeps its distance, Burning blows

THE OUTER SEAL · DEPTH 3

Gorgoth, the Seeping Maw

Lord of the First Wound



LIFE	DAMAGE	ARMOR	ATTACKS
1,600	40	40	Melee

"Who goes there? Halt. HALT. State your... state..."

The legend

Gorgoth was the gaoler of Sahr, a vast patient man who had kept the city's worst prisoners for forty years and never lost one. Ilvane gave him the outer seal: the door between the world and the wound. He locked himself in with it and swallowed the key, so that no one could ever ask him to leave. He was promised relief at first light. For three hundred years he has been waiting for morning, and the wound has grown into him the way rust grows into a hinge. He no longer remembers whether he is keeping something in or out. He only knows that no one passes.

> *THE OATH OF THE OUTER SEAL*
>
> *I, Gorgoth, gaoler, take the outer seal. I will keep the door. I will not ask what's behind it. I will not leave until I am relieved, and I know that I'll be relieved at first light, and I know that someone will come.*

The fight

His slams split the ground in long red lines and he rings himself in hellfire. He calls husks and hounds to his side. Watch the red marks on the floor and step out of them before his blows land.

Its slams split the ground and it calls the brood. Stay out of the red.

"Is it morning? Have you come to relieve me? They said someone would come. They said it would not be long."

"I don't... there was a door. I was keeping something in. Or out. Do you know which? Please. Nobody will tell me which."



THE SECOND SEAL · DEPTH 6

Uthra, Mother of Cinders

Queen of the Burning Brood



LIFE	DAMAGE	ARMOR	ATTACKS
1,500	38	30	Melee

"Hush now. Hush, my little sparks. Mother is here. Mother will keep you warm."

The legend

Uthra was a priestess of the banked fire, sworn to keep a flame low against the wound: not to warm anyone, not to light anyone's way, only to burn the dark. It was a lonely oath and she kept it badly. She loved the fire. Over three centuries it became her children, and the children became a brood, and the flame that was lit to burn the wound shut forgot which side it was on. She makes her nest in the chasm wall now and sings lullabies to imps.

> THE OATH OF THE BANKED FIRE
>
> *I, Uthra, take the second seal. I will keep the fire. It's to be kept low. It's only for the wound. It isn't to warm anyone, and it isn't to light anyone's way, and I will not love it.*

The fight

She rains meteors that leave the ground burning, leaps onto far-off heroes and hatches cinder imps. Spread out, keep moving, and do not stand in the fire she leaves behind.

Meteors fall where your heroes stand and leave the ground burning. Keep moving!

"Come into the fire, all of you. It's so cold outside. I was told to keep something burning. I've burned everything, to be sure."

"A daughter! A daughter come home. Come in, little spark. Come in and burn with your sisters."





THE THIRD SEAL · DEPTH 9

The Hollow Saint

Choirmaster of the Drowned

LIFE	DAMAGE	ARMOR	ATTACKS
1,350	34	20	Ranged

"Sing with us. Sing with us. Sing with us. Sing."

The legend

Saint Ilvane made the seals, chose the seven and kept the third seal herself with her choir's song. When the waters rose she would not let her singers stop, and so she drowned them where they stood, and they are still singing. Nine days ago, new voices joined them. Of all the wardens she remembers the most, and it does her no good: she keeps counting the seven and losing count, and asking for someone who was supposed to be there.

> THE OATH OF THE THIRD SEAL
>
> *I, Ilvane, take the third seal and I give the other six. I'll choose them well and I will answer for it. Let the song hold what cannot be held. I will count them every night, and they will all be there.*

The fight

She freezes everything close to her, drains the life of your heroes and calls wailing wraiths. Fight her from range where you can, and keep a cure handy for the chill.

Its requiem freezes everyone close to it. When the ice ring appears, run.

"The song holds the seal. The seal holds the wound. If we stop, it will remember itself. So we do not stop. We have not stopped. I drowned them so that they would never have to stop."

"There were seven of us. I chose them so carefully. Why are there only... count them for me. I keep losing count. Where is my witness?"





THE FOURTH SEAL · DEPTH 12

Vexmora the Unhealed

Witch of the Open Vein

LIFE	DAMAGE	ARMOR	ATTACKS
1,500	36	25	Ranged

"Patient, patient, lie still. Let me see. Oh, that's nasty. We'll have that closed in no time."

The legend

Vexmora was the finest physician of her age and the author of Surgical Remedies, a book still used by every healer in the kingdom. She swore that the wound would never spread while she lived to tend it, and that she would do no more harm. Down in the dark she grew a garden of fungus that heals anything it touches, and never lets go of what it has healed. Nothing dies in her garden. She is very proud of that. She would like some advice about the screaming.

> THE OATH OF THE FOURTH SEAL
>
> *I, Vexmora, physician, take the fourth seal. The wound will not spread while I tend it. I'll do no more harm. And when it's time, I will know when it's time, and I'll let them go.*

The fight

She sends crimson tides across the floor, curses the whole party and sacrifices her servants to heal herself. Her own notes give the only advice that matters: kill the healer first.

She feeds on her own servants to heal. Kill her minions before she can.

"Nothing dies in my garden. I promised. I promised and I kept my promise and look, look how many are still breathing. Look at them all."

"A colleague! Then you see it. You see how well they're doing. Only they won't stop screaming. Have you any ideas about the screaming?"



THE WARRANT OF THE FIFTH SEAL · DEPTH 15

Kharn of the Seventh Wound

The Executioner Below



LIFE	DAMAGE	ARMOR	ATTACKS
2,000	50	55	Melee

"You come bearing a warrant. I can smell the ink. Whose hand signed it?"

The legend

Kharn was the executioner of Sahr, given the warrant of the seals: if any warden ever deserted their post, Kharn was to find them and bring them back. One did. Kharn went after the deserter with the great axe of Sahr and cut through everything that lay between them, including the seventh seal itself. He never caught them. Three hundred years later he still waits in the sunken square, and swears he can smell the deserter's ink.

> THE WARRANT'S OATH
>
> *I, Kharn, take the warrant of the fifth seal. I'll find him, wherever he is. I'll bring him back to his seat. I will not harm the seal to do it. And when it's done, I may rest.*

The fight

He opens seven wounds in the ground, cleaves a huge arc in front of him and locks heroes in prisons of bone. Stay out of the arc, break your friends free, and do not trade blows with him head-on.

Its cleave covers a huge area in front of it. Never stand where it is facing.

"A penitent. Good. It is so rare to meet a man who knows what he's owed."

"Nor I. The axe passes father to son. Nineteen years I held it, and I never chose a thing."



THE LAST FIRE · DEPTH 18

Morrigal, the Ashen Seraph

Herald of the Last Fire



LIFE	DAMAGE	ARMOR	ATTACKS
1,800	53	45	Melee

"I came down in fire to burn this shut. I remember that. I remember it was a beautiful idea."

The legend

Morrigal was an angel, sent down from above bearing the Last Fire to burn the deepest part of the wound shut. She fell burning through the dark in a line a mile long, and the wound drank the fire and kept her. Something down there calls her its herald now. A little girl stole her last breath as she fell, and has kept it in a jar ever since.

> THE OATH OF THE LAST FIRE
>
> *I, Morrigal, bear the Last Fire to the place below, and I'll burn it shut. I will not be sorry for it. I belong to the ones who sent me. Their name's on my wings, and it's written here, and I will not forget it.*

The fight

She calls burning stars down on your heroes, then freezes everything close to her, and hatches imps and wraiths. The hardest warden: bring full potions, and a hero who can heal.

Burning stars, then a freezing requiem. Keep moving, and run when the ice ring appears.

"Little Morwen. You took something of mine, on the day I fell. You've kept it in a jar, you nasty, faithful girl."

"And you told me it smelled like the inside of a jar. I remember that. I remember that, and not who sent me."



THE FIRST WOUND · DEPTH 20

Asmodar, the First Wound

The Bloodwake Itself



LIFE	DAMAGE	ARMOR	ATTACKS
2,900	64	60	Melee

"CARROW'S FORD. ENNOR. SAHR. ALL THE OLD NAMES. I KEEP THEM. I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO DOES."

The legend

Asmodar is the wound itself, older than the world it bleeds into. It wears all that it has eaten and keeps every name: Carrow's Ford, Ennor, Sahr, all the old names. It has been waiting a very long time for someone kind enough to lay its jailers to rest, one by one. What happens when you reach it is for you to find out.

The fight

It uses every warden's attacks, and grows more desperate the weaker it becomes. Everything you have learned on the way down will be asked of you here.

It wields the power of every lord below. Watch the floor, keep apart, and never stand still.



Advice from the Fire



“Someone has to remember your names.”

Brother Aldric has watched a great many people go down the stairs. These are the things he says to the ones he likes.

- Kill the healer first. Kill the archers second.
- Step round behind a foe before you swing: a backstab does 30% more. From the side, 12%.
- Read every oath you find. Reading a warden's own oath to them weakens them when the fight begins.
- A powder keg is a weapon. Strike it from a distance, and expect everything nearby to come running.
- Wet foes freeze solid when chilled, and take more from lightning.
- Each realm has its own monsters, met nowhere else. Learn them in the Bestiary.
- Don't linger on a cleared floor: something always wanders in.
- Take the portal home when the bag is heavy. Whatever you found is lost if the party falls before getting it home, and the portal will be waiting to take you back.



Ashara's work.

Credits

NotPresent Studio

Characters, monsters and icons drawn with PixelLab. Dungeon tiles and props from KayKit (CC0) and models made for the game. Voices, sound effects and music made with ElevenLabs. Set in EB Garamond. The full list of sources is in CREDITS.md.

The Wound Below is a NotPresent Studio game. A pixel-art, 3D-diorama tactical dungeon crawler. © NotPresent Studio.