

Holy Mandate

A Dungeons & Dragons Adventure Series

Chapter 4: Puzzling Encounters



About GND Adventures

Holy Mandate is part of a new series of adventures designed to be easy to read, easy to run, and a blast to play. They focus on detailed world building that grows alongside the characters. In these pages, players will find cunning intrigue, intricate puzzles, crafty combats, and grand adventures. The Dungeon Master will find easily accessible information, full stat-blocks for any monsters, creatures, or NPC's, and well laid out content that makes your job easier.

In the course of this adventure, some text appears in **Bold**. Any text, outside of a stat block, appearing in bold should be read or paraphrased to the PC's.

Stat Blocks

Full Stat Blocks are enclosed for each creatures or NPC used in this adventure. Abbreviations are used in some places. An explanation of the stat blocks and those abbreviations is listed below.

Example:

8 Brick Skeletons (**Number and type of creature appearing in the encounter**)

Atk (**Attack**): Shortsword +4 1D6+2 Dmg (**P**) (**Damage amount and type**; (**B**) Bludgeoning, (**P**) Piercing, (**S**) Slashing), HP: 15, AC: 14, Speed: 30; Saves: (+0,+2,+2,-2,-1,-3) (**Save values for Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma in that order**); M (**Size**. (**S**) Small, (**M**) Medium, (**L**) Large) Undead, LE (**Alignment**)

Vul: (**Vulnerabilities**) Bludgeoning, Imm: (**Immunities**) Poison, Exhaustion, Poisoned. Darkvision 60 ft. Perception 9. CR ½

NPC's

Key NPC's are described in detail, but random and minor NPC's have stat blocks that tell their gender, race, age, and general character traits. They appear as such:

M/HE/25/Random and Aloof.

Explanation

Gender (M(Male), F(Female))/**Race** (Hu(Human), HE(Half-Elf), Dw(Dwarf), E(Elf), G(Gnome), HI(Halfling), HO(Half-Orc), DB(Dragon Born), TF(Tiefling))/**Age**(years old in appearance)/**Character traits**(How they usually interact with the world.)

Introduction

Just outside the Lonely Desert, on the edge of civilized lands stands a massive 200 ft., black cube known as The Brick. Glyphs and symbols adorn The Brick, etched into its impossibly hardened sides in an ancient forgotten language. Some say The Brick is a doorway between the living and the dead. Some say it is a gateway to another plane. Still others claim that it is the foundation for the entire world and discovering its secrets will unlock the keys to the multiverse.

Every night, as the sun falls below the horizon, the glyphs on The Brick blaze to life in a hundred different hues. The Brick can be seen for miles and is a dazzling display, that is, before it vomits forth its horde of undead. A seemingly steady stream of zombies, skeletons, and worse exit The Brick and roam the night, venturing out only as far as it would take them to return by the time the sun makes its appearance in the morning. Even worse, at random intervals throughout the year, The Brick releases a violent, negative shock-wave that destroys anything in its path. Trees, animals, even rocks are destroyed by this wave. Those that fall, rise again as undead versions of their past self.

Into this unique landscape clerics and holy orders of all types come to The Brick to train in destroying and controlling undead. The vast majority of the undead are lowly skeletons, zombies, and other common types, but every once in a while, a truly intelligent undead will venture out and compel the undead waves to a specific task.

What secrets does The Brick hold? What treasure might be uncovered within its black sides? Gather your companions, grip your holy symbols, and bring light into true darkness as you come face to face with the mysteries of The Brick.

Γ N Δ

This series of adventures takes place in and around the Town of Safepoint, an area about two miles south of The Brick. It is the furthest point that a shock-wave has ever been recorded and is heavily fortified by holy orders that train in fighting off the undead. Once the PC's have gathered enough experience and power, they will find themselves entering The Brick itself in an effort to discover its lost secrets. The adventure is broken up into 12 parts and designed to start with first level characters. Each Chapter is set-up to run in one evening and should give the PC's enough experience to advance to the next level. They are designed as a fast paced, hack and slash adventure with problem and mystery elements.

Chapter Synopsis

Chapter 4 has the PC's trying to decipher the strange glyphs from The Brick. They start out retrieving one from an expert before heading over to meet with the mayor and retrieving hers. They can then find another glyph out in No Man's Land and attempt to assemble them into one, strange glyph. On the way they must fight off undead determined to retrieve the glyphs for their dark masters.

What's really going on.

A powerful Lich emerged one evening from The Brick several months past. Since then she has established herself as a reputable citizen and even manipulated events to get herself elected mayor. She is building a following of cult members to help undermine the town's defenses.

Hooks

There are many reasons why the PC's might head to Safepoint. Here are a few ideas if needed.

One of the PC's is here to train fighting undead. Safepoint is renowned as the safest way to learn how to fight the undead.

One of the PC's has a close relative or friend who lives in or near Safepoint and needs assistance.

The PC's have heard legends of a rare relic inside The Brick and go looking for information on it.

The PC's came into possession of one of the glyphs on their journeys and come to Safepoint to figure out what it does.

Key NPC's

Delila Norsh, young, mid-20's. Female human. Curly brown hair and green eyes. The current leader of the Templar's of Light. This is her first post and she second guesses herself constantly. She is currently looking for a partner in life and will target one of the PC's that exhibit the tenants of Pelor; good, strength, light. She'll pursue the PC throughout the story arc, though she is very shy. She'll give what healing she has daily for those that pay lip service to Pelor. The DM should do their best to cultivate this NPC-PC relationship throughout the adventure arc. Doing so will make decisions in the final chapter much more interesting and satisfying for the story. F/Hu/24/Shy and Nice

Lady Falow Parson. Looks early 30's or late 20's, Human, female, strawberry blonde hair, pretty. Smiles and laughs easily. Her eyes seem older. Current elected mayor of the town. Will seem very helpful to the PC's investigations. However, she is really known as The Falow Princess, a Lich in disguise from The Brick. She will attempt to manipulate the PC's into causing discontent in the town. Her goal is to bring about the destruction of Safepoint and raise it's residents as her army. Note that Lady Falow wears a ring of mind shielding and is

excellent at deception. Falow will do everything in her power to hide her true form from the PC's. On a practical note, if the PC's find out the truth and try to take her on too early, she would be way too strong. F/Hu/28/Helpful and Sweet

Trevadeer Unison. Late 50's Human Sage that has devoted his entire life to studying the glyphs on The Cube. He gladly shares his knowledge and loves to discuss the glyphs and discover their powers. He isn't much of a fighter, but has a cunning mind when it comes to tactics. M/Hu/58/Intelligent and Curious

Referki. A young Halfling with red hair and soothing blue eyes. He has been obsessed with the Negative Energy Wave ever since his traveling companion, Gorod, was turned into a zombie through it's influence. He likes people, hates undead, and also loves wine. Go Team People! M/Hl/23/Witless and Flighty

Freden Towerstand, is a rough, Dwarven weaponsmith. He also is a Floor Master at the Holy Order of the Vanguard and teaches people and groups how best to survive undead encounters. A Paladin of Moradin he is exceedingly polite and proper, in his own Dwarven way. M/Dw/31/Respectful and Serious.

Random NPC's

Peri Bluestring Barkeep; red blonde braided in a loose fishtail and a smattering of freckles dot her cheeks; F/Ha/45/warm and impatient

Zinnia Griffenglass Sorcerer; tawny-haired with walnut brown skin, weaving a series of tiny pale flowers into her hair; F/G/35/ Light-hearted and mischievous

Breagan Zalavaris Rogue; arms and hands wrapped in black cloth strips under cloak, can still see a few brass scales. M/DB/63/quick hands, even quicker mind, trusts his instincts about people, drawn to mysteries and the unexplained, compelled to seek the truth lying beneath.

Ralf Thoulso Noble; rather large with bulbous nose and wears red painted combat armor at almost all times; skin is unnaturally pale, very tight haircut with blue lively eyes; M/Hu/56 speaks confidently about a variety of topics with grace; is clearly well-traveled and educated

Milla Adleem Aristocrat; late middle aged in decent physical shape; has no hair, including eyebrows, has gleaming, smiling green eyes. F/Hu/52 Friendly and accommodating

Sim L'Fondant Warrior; average looking, tends to wear a large green jacket, lengthy black hair with brown eyes M/Hu/36 extremely passionate and proud; pride in being thorough and never missing a detail

Hubert Paxton Commoner; wears professional attire; hair is silver, silky, and of moderate length; has brown eyes M/Hu/52 extraordinarily eccentric; kind towards friends- Others will generally need to prove themselves to him.

Argren Wing Adept; stands about 5'4" and prefers to wear red pants and tee shirts; left leg appears badly burned and disfigured; His gray eyes dart from person to person to random spaces in the air M/HO/28 Bit of a stoner and generally out of it

Immereth Ethrotha Expert; scrawny and has patchy brown stubble; majority of his body covered in plate; moppish brown hair is in a traditional bowl cut and tends to wears goggles to shield his eyes M/E/115 considers himself a man of culture and sophistication; likes a good challenge to his wits

Syllin Ostsrithi Warrior; relatively dark skin and very physically imposing due to abundance of muscles; black hair is unkempt and raggedy F/E/99 quiet and unassuming; ignores others and carries on with the job

Investigations

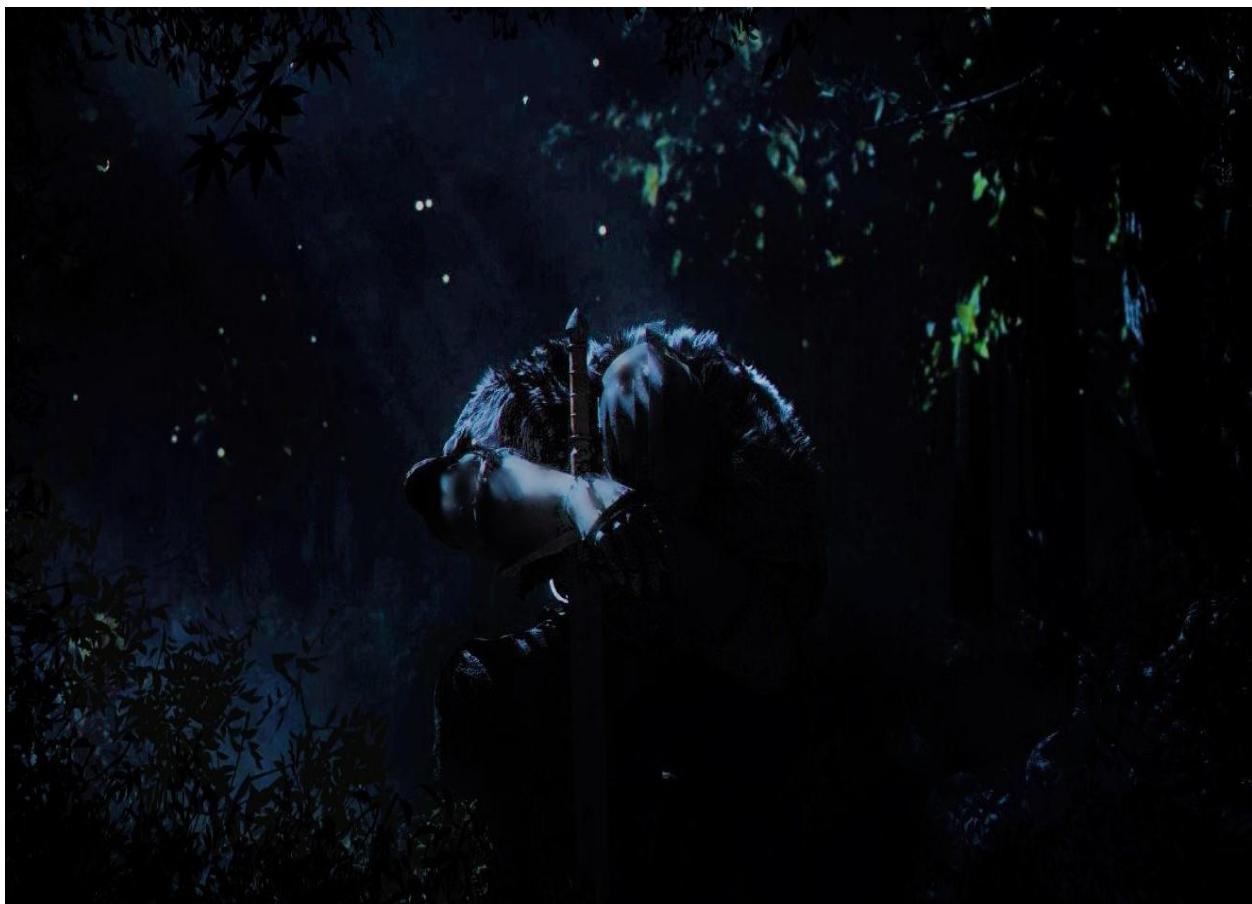
Investigations are tidbits of information PC's might learn from NPC's as they investigate the town. Not all of them are true; some don't even make much sense. They exist to add flavor or foreshadow future events. Each time the PC's are looking for clues or other guidance; have them roll Investigate Checks, DC 10. Success rewards one of the following rumors, which may or may not be true.

- The undead that come out of The Brick remember their past lives. You can see it in their eyes just before you kill them, or they kill you.
- The glyphs and runes on The Brick were created by a powerful Lich a millenia ago in order to slowly turn the world into an undead domain.
- Sometimes when the town is quiet, you can hear the undead stirring right below our feet!
- Undead are all afraid of black cats. Bring one with you whenever traveling and they'll avoid you.
- There is a vampire in town. He turned my friend's, brother's, cousin into a vampire spawn. Watch who you invite into your house at night.
- People have complained about high-pitched ringing in their ears lately, pretty sure there is a psychic dragon with a lair near town.
- Legends says a hundred years or so ago a horde of thousands of orcs stormed The Brick. They all died.

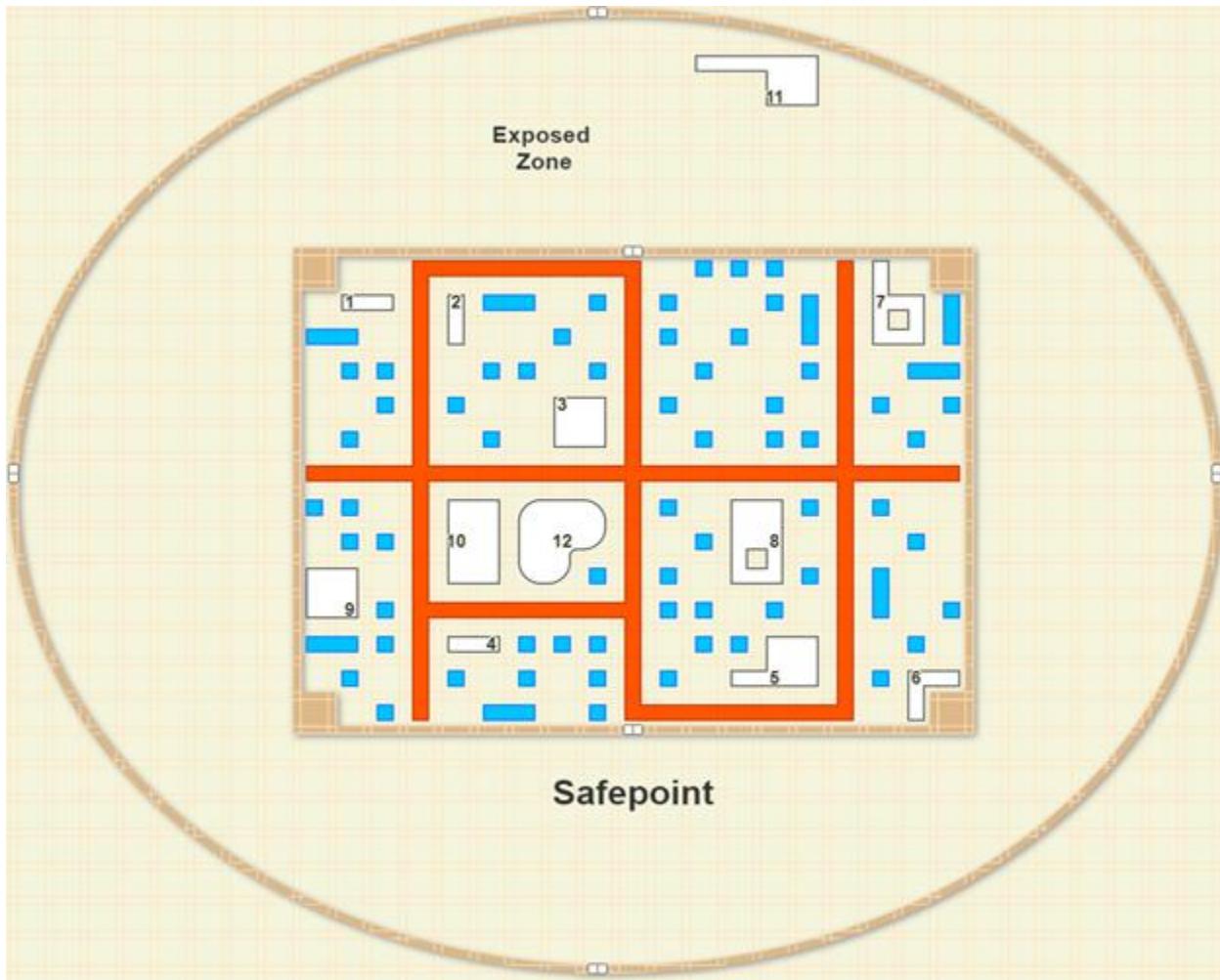
Prologue

Some say the Negative Energy Waves that is unleashed from The Brick is one of the most beautiful, but terrifying things to behold. Today you got to decide for yourself. You find yourself standing on the outer walls as the last undead fall to the city garrison. The injured are tended to and people congratulate one another with clasped hands. Suddenly, a loud chime splits the sky and your ears begin to ring. Looking outward you see a helisphere, ripple of force erupt from The Brick in all

directions. Moon and starlight reflects off it as it goes, sending motes of light dancing in a hundred directions. The wave of force rushes out at impossible speeds, obliterating the bodies and bones of the undead that have fallen. Today, the ripple ends 300 ft. short of the walls. It passes as fast as it came. Any joy that came from a hard fight washes away with the wave. For while this was another victory, what can mortals do against such a force? You join the throngs of warriors and other adventures and head off to a good night's sleep.



Safepoint City Map



—: Major Roads

1: Skeletal Fitting

2: Sam's Serious Sundries

3: Last Knight Inn

4: Poundin's Pete's Pastries

5: The Old Ones

6: Secrets and Lies

—: Walls

7: Six Holy Arms

8: Temple of Discipline

9: Templar's of Light

10: Holy Order of the Vanguard

11: Ehlonna's Stand

12: The Stand

Locations Detailed

1: Skeletal Fittings: A wealthy clothing shop that makes designer clothing as well as fitted light armor. Ran by a thin, frail man named Wyarm with beady, black eyes. M/Hu/58/Quiet and Misunderstood.

2: Sam's Serious Sundries: Ran by a woman, Samantha Doorkeel, who took over the business when her father, Nigel, passed away several years ago. She secretly buried him, as he wished, rather than cremate him as is required by town law. She sells most common items, rations, and other bulk food for long journeys. F/Ef/24/Loud and Anxious.

3: Last Knight Inn: A large inn always with a bard ran by, Den Freeman, a former member of the Holy Order of the Vanguard. He opened this place after exploring the first level of The Brick. He does not talk about what he saw. But the ordeal broke him, made him not want to adventure anymore. He stays here because he feels like he owes The Order something. Members can always stay for free. The Order has a saying, "Going Den." Which means you saw something that was too much for you to bare. M/Hu/29/Broken and Sad.

4: Poundin' Pete's Pastries: A small inn and tavern run by Poundin' Pete, an adventurer who retired after his group found a large cache of treasure. Quaint place known for Delina Cakes, an invention of his late wife, who died of disease. He likes to help

sometimes with nightly raids.
M/Hu/40/Honest and solemn.

5: The Old Ones: A lively tavern run by the elected mayor, Lady Falow Parson. Looks around 30 years old, but her eyes seem older. Rumor has it that she has consumed a great many Potions of Longevity, which has kept her young. Actually, she is a Lich and the true power behind what has been going on in town. She is polite and loves a good joke. She plans to make all of Safepoint her undead domain. She gives food to the downtrodden and lets people stay in front of the hearth if they can't pay for a room. F/Hu/28/Helpful and flirty, actually F/Lich/?/Cunning and Evil

6: Secrets and Lies: A two-story tavern ran by Uri Povyin', a semi-retired rogue. He does not get along with the holy orders. They always assume if something went missing, he did it. Sometimes they are right. He has dirt low prices on food and lodging. The right person could buy poison's here. M/Hl/27/Personable and Annoyed.

7: Six Holy Arms: A weapon shop and smith run by Lilith Farstride. She purchased the shop two months ago from the former owner who left town. They make and sell custom weapons. Has five workers that are all scared of her. She is actually a Marilith in disguise. She was summoned here by Lady Fallow and likes the ruse. She has a ring of mind shielding as well. She is great at deception and makes any Deception checks

at +12 and with advantage. F/Hu/36/Stern and Impulsive, actually
(F/Marilith/?/Deceptive and Cruel)

8: Temple of Discipline: The house of Cuthbert is built like a fortress with a wall surrounding the inner house and two towers protecting the walls. The Temple of Discipline organizes the nightly defenses. The Order is very strict with no alcohol use and chastity proclamations. Currently ran by Commander House Loring.
M/Dw/36/Disciplined and Polite

9: Templar's of Light: The temple of Pelor is a two story brick building with a blazing sun statue at the top. They provide healing at half cost to those that at least give lip service to Pelor. They sell minor healing potions and scrolls. Currently run by Delila Norsh F/Hu/24/Shy and Nice young

10: Holy Order of the Vanguard: This square, one story building is home to a small knightly order made up mostly of good aligned paladins, clerics, and fighters. They train specifically in fighting undead and hate the abominations. They sell holy water at half price. They will also cure any disease inflicted by an undead for the cost of the material components of the spell. Currently ran by Sir Gladus Fellstone, Long, curly black hair, muscular. Wears rich clothing. M/Hu/50/Disciplined and Polite

11: Ehlonna's Strand: In the exposed zone stands a ring of shaped trees with a thatched roof. Serving as both a temple to Ehlonna and a way stop for those that pray

to her, it is informally organized and frequented by Druids, Rangers, and Monks. Those at balance with nature can use it free of charge, although no metal is allowed through the doors. Caretaker is Terif Gorinhide who loves philosophy and meeting new people. M/HE/28/Calm and Ugly.

12: The Stand: At the center of town stands the largest structure, a four story, round, stone tower topped with an emblazoned open eye. The Temple of Boccob allows anyone into their first floor to buy minor scrolls or talk magic. The second level is a lounge specifically for those that work on the arcane arts to trade spells or discuss arcane matters. The third and fourth levels are for members only and are off limits to most travelers, though members can stay on the third level as they will. The tower mostly stays out of town affairs, though they practice spells on the undead hordes each evening and would come to the town aid if ever necessary. The fourth level is the home of the Tower First, Yamik Klav, the wizard who runs the place. He is largely over weight and eats a lot. M/Gn/41/Cocky and overweight.

Act 1: Explosive Investigations

This adventure revolves around the glyph the PC's now have in their possession. If they started the adventure here and did not play the previous adventure, they could have come into possession in some manner that the DM finds to be most organic. If the PC's need prompting to investigate the glyph.

As you walk the streets, a quiet humming vibrates from your pack. (whomever has the glyph) Searching for the source you find The Brick glyph you recently came into possession of, vibrating softly.

The PC's now have in their possession one of the glyphs that litter the side of The Brick. The glyph is shaped as such;  and constantly sends out a low, almost imperceptible hum. When the sun sets, it blazes with brilliant green energy for five to ten minutes. It gives off both necromantic and abjuration magic, but doesn't seem to have any specific use, if an *Identify* spell is cast on it. The PC's will most likely want to seek out an expert on the glyph, and while several people are working on the mysteries of the glyphs, only one true expert exists in town, Trevadeer Unison, who works out of his house in the south of the city. The PC's can find this information with an DC 10 Investigation Check, although any of their contacts at the temples will know of him as well.

Once the PC's decide to head over to Trevadeer's house, read or paraphrase the following.

You find the house you are looking for situated along the back wall of Safeton. The plots around the home have been cleared giving the house a wide berth. The house looks run down and appears to be falling apart. As you set foot in the yard you can feel a dark presence coming from the small, stone house.

Despite the outside appearance, Trevadeer's home is actually quite new and he is quite pleasant. He is very excited to see a removed glyph and will answer any of the PC's questions to the best of his ability. Have him engage in friendly banter and drop the bits of information below into the conversation. His unique knowledge is listed below.

- “The glyphs have a limited necromancy power.”
- “While each one has some power, their true power comes when they are combined. The more that are combined, the greater the effect. It has been my life goal to try to find as many of them as possible so that if the day comes, we can combine many of them into a weapon to stop any great evil that emerges from The Brick.”
- “Removing a glyph from The Brick is nearly impossible and I've only ever seen six of the removed from the surface.”
- “Lady Falow had one given to her from a someone close to her. Hers had the power to stun an undead.”
- “A member of the Holy Order of the Vanguard had one a few years back. I think his name was Referki.”

- “I’ve developed a small ritual to see what, if any, power the glyphs have. I can teach it to one of you learned in the Arcane if you’d like?”

After this last bit of information, have the PC’s make a Perception Check. A DC 17 indicates they “feel” something is not quite right. If they succeed they are not surprised in the following combat.

You watch as this normally tranquil room is thrown into chaos. The wind picks up and papers are tossed from side to side. A tiny, dark green dot flickers into being, then rapidly expands into a large sphere shape. The sphere zaps out of existence and a group of 4 men appear out of it. Their skin hangs unnaturally from their arms and their hands end in vicious claws. “Kill them all.” One of them spits behind sharp teeth.

4 Brick Ghasts

Atk: Bite +4, 2D8+3 (P) and Claws +6 2d6+3 (S) + DC 10 Con or Paralyzed 1 min. HP: 44, AC: 14, Speed: 30, Saves: (+4,+4,+1,+1,+1,0); M Undead, CE

Imm: Poison, Charm, Exhaustion. Resist: necrotic. Darkvision 60 ft. Percep 10. CR 2

Turning Defense: Adv. on Saves to be turned.

Stench: Any creature starting within 5 ft., DC 10 Con. or poisoned until start of next turn. If save, immune for 24 hours.

Tactics: Three of the Ghasts will engage the PC’s while the last moves to try to take out Trevadeer and acquire the glyph. Trevadeer is not much of a fighter, but will use the

glyph as a bludgeoning weapon against the undead. He also has access to several vials of *Holy Water*.

For simplicity, if a PC makes any save against any one of the Ghast’s *Stench*, they are immune to any of them for the next 24 hours.

After the fight, if Trevadeer lives he can teach a PC the *Identify Glyph* spell. It is similar to the *Identify* spell, but works only on runes of The Brick. If he dies, the ritual can be found in one of his books with a Investigate Check DC 15. If no one is trained in the Arcane skill he will cast it himself and give the PC’s 3 scrolls of the spell.

When the glyph is identified, the PC’s can learn all the information about it as identified in the appendix. The PC’s most likely have enough to go on to try to gather more of the glyphs from the sources Trevadeer mentioned. If Trevadeer is alive, he will suggest they seek out other glyphs, combine them, and build up their power against the undead.

Act 1: Making Friends

Depending on which part the PC's head to next, this Act might be done in either order.

Part IA

The PC's head over to find the mayor, Lady Fallow and ask her about her glyph. A little bit of asking will allow the PC's to find her at the Inn she owns and runs, "The Old Ones". When the PC's head over there read or paraphrase the following.

Most places in Safepoint have an upbeat, pleasant demeanor, as if attempting to fight off the evil with joy. But "The Old Ones" is on another level entirely. As you enter, your senses are assaulted with invigorating music, pleasant smelling spices, and cozy warmth from dueling fireplace hearths. One of the many comely young women clad in gold colored dresses skips over with a smile and takes you by the arm. "A table for you are your friends?" she asks happily before escorting you over to a sturdy looking table with comfortable padded chairs. "Have a seat and I'll bring you out some refreshments, love."

The PC's are free to take in the sights and sounds of the Inn. At almost all hours, it is bustling with activity. The servers all have a similar look; petite, young, attractive, and female, though it does not seem out of the ordinary. In reality, they make look demur and docile, but they are all trained assassins. Someone trained in Sleight of Hand with a DC 18 Perception Check would notice the servers all seem to be very agile, light on their feet, with dexterous hand

movements. After a few minutes, food arrives. If the PC's request to see Lady Fallow, she is happy to make an appearance.

Lady Fallow is sly, cunning, and intelligent. She never acts on emotion and considers her course of action before making any moves. She will observe the PC's from a hidden room for several minutes and deduce that they are adventures, which she is always careful with. Of course this is her true self, the role she is playing is flirtatious, happy, and with a generous and sunny disposition. She will talk about her Inn, her family (her staff), and anything the PC's would like to discuss. She'll even give them the glyph if they promise to use it for the good of the city and return it, if they can, when they are done. A friend gave it to her several months ago and it has just been sitting in her room collecting dust. She doesn't know what the glyph does, but would be happy to know if the PC's find out. If the PC's request it, they can do an Insight Check on her, but her abilities make it nearly impossible to deduce her true motivations. An Insight DC 30 reveals that every now and then, her smile slips slightly or her eyes reveal a hidden truth. If confronted she'll deny it, but if pressed make up a story about a former lover that gave her the glyph, only to die from an undead attack a few weeks after. She has always felt guilty about having it when it might have saved him. The glyph is shaped like a capital "M". (See appendix A)

Part 1B

If the PC's seek out Referki, from the Holy Order of the Vanguard, they'll probably head over to their headquarters. If so, read or paraphrase the following.

You find the headquarters of the Holy Order of the Vanguard bustling with activity. The place resembles a large square, with wide, open entrances on each side. In the middle dozens of people train with mock swords, shields, fighting dummies, or just bare fisticuffs. Others stand around instructing or watching, cheering on each other. Each corner of the building has office rooms each filled with desks and files. As you walk around a burley dwarf with a beard nearly down to his knees walks up to you. "Help ye, lads?" He says cheerily.

This is Freden Towerstand, a Floor Master here. He is a Paladin of Moradin and exceedingly polite and proper, in his own Dwarven way. He'll help the PC's in any way he can. The Holy Order of the Vanguard is a military order, set up to train and educate common folk on how to deal with undead. He'll happily give a few quick lessons that generally boil down to trying to avoid being touched by their "Damned cold hands!" Holy water is for sale at half price in one room and any undead disease is healed for free. If asked about Referki, read or paraphrase the following.

"Yea, yea, everyone knows Referki. Damn sodden good war cleric, even if he is crazy. He had a theory about The Brick that involved exposing healing potions to the energy explosions. So he went and set up

shop out in No Man's Land. Dug a hole and has been doing experiments ever since. If you are going out there, you should talk with Delila, that sun girl, she knows the way."

Freden will talk with the PC's as long as they want. He interrupts them every now and then to correct someone who is nearby in their position or technique. He is referring to Delila Norsh, with whom the PC's should already know and have a good relationship.

Part 2

If the PC's head over to find Delila she is thrilled to see them. More thrilled to see the individual whom she has singled out as a possible spousal candidate. She can offer the following advice.

- Referki is a Halfling who has some interesting theories on The Brick and its powers.
- He has an underground lab, heavily defended and warded against undead about a half a day's walk north.
- Referki makes the journey back to get supplies about every month or so.
- He only travels at night, as the Energy Waves never go off at the night. Traveling there during the day could lead to instant death.
- Before he left he gave her three scrolls of a spell derived from the *Locate Creature* spell designed to find him if he is ever lost. She is happy to share them with the party.

If she is still in good standing with her spousal candidate, she will ask him for a minute alone and bring him to her quarters. She'll use this as special alone time, telling and showing him how much she cares for him and for him to be careful. How far this goes is up to the DM's digression, but she is

very much interested in the PC at this point. She'll give him a *wand of cure light wounds* with 6 charges in it, but requests he return it when he comes back. She also makes him promise to only journey there in the night, as she can't bear the thought of losing him to the undead hordes.



Act 3: Saving Cleric Referki

You come to the edge of Safepoint. In the distance is a flat ground where nothing moves or lives. The ground itself has been pressed flat by the destructive wave and even the wind seems to die here. In the distance The Brick flashes to life and the night begins.

If the PC's decide to find Referki, they should go at night. It is the only way to be sure to avoid the energy waves that would utterly destroy them. The waves have been as far apart as 30 days, but as close together as 5 minutes, so there is no telling when one will go off. If the PC's try to travel during the day, have a perimeter guard warn them and then warn them again, and then, warn them one more time. Because of the nature of the land, horses and other domesticated animals refuse to enter the land. Wild animals know instinctively to avoid the area all together. Any summoned creature, magical or otherwise, has similar feelings.

If the PC's still attempt to leave during the day, there is a 5% chance per hour traveled that a wave goes off. Have one of the PC's roll this, AFTER WARNING THEM ONE FINAL TIME ABOUT THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THE WAVE. If the PC's do not roll their 5% chance, yea, they live and can continue. They will avoid the next fight completely. If they DO roll their destruction, read or paraphrase the following.

You travel along in dead silence, nothing moves, nothing breathes. Even you... You stop for a second as your vision clouds over in a brilliant green. Why aren't you

breathing? You look down in time to see parts of your flesh fall away. The day darkens and your vision slips from green to black, then back to a dull grey. Your mind falters and confusion sets in. What was your name? Who are you? You put your hands to your face and feel only bony, skeleton-like remains. A voice, soft, gentle, female, whispers in your mind, "Welcome to my army, young ones."

The PC's are dead, victims to the negative energy wave everyone warned them about a dozen times. The DM can move forward as he wishes. Maybe the PC's can find a "living" as their new, lawful-evil undead forms. They lose all class abilities and start at level 1 as whatever type of low-level undead you want them to start as. Or, have the PC's roll new characters and pick up where the last left off. Good luck.

As such, the only thing the PC's can do is make a run for it. If they cast the *Locate Creature* scroll, the spell lasts for 24 hours and gives the general direction of Referki. Note that this spell only work on him as it was specifically designed to last longer and work only on him.

Referki is 2 hours from Safepoint. The Brick is 4 hours from Safepoint. That means the PC's must move fast in order to make it to Referki's before the undead reach them!

If the PC's move any slower than a base speed of 25 and do not hurry, they will be see the undead hordes at least a half mile before reaching Referki's point and should be encouraged to head back. If they don't, more and more undead will join them in

combat each round. (2-3 Brick Zombies or Brick Skeletons each round)

If the PC's move 25 and attempt to hurry, move fast, or run, they must make Constitution Checks DC X after 1 hour. Failure means they gain one level of fatigue. After 2 hours they must make a second Constitution Check DC X, failure means they gain one level of fatigue.

Exhaustion

Some special abilities and environmental hazards, such as starvation and the long-term effects of freezing or scorching temperatures, can lead to a special condition called exhaustion. Exhaustion is measured in six levels. An effect can give a creature one or more levels of exhaustion, as specified in the effect's description.

Level Effect

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Disadvantage on ability checks |
| 2 | Speed Halved |
| 3 | Disadvantage on Attack rolls and saving throws |
| 4 | Hit Point Max Halved |
| 5 | Speed reduced to 0 |
| 6 | Death |

If an already exhausted creature suffers another effect that causes exhaustion, its current level of exhaustion increases by the amount specified in the effect's description.

A creature suffers the effect of its current level of exhaustion as well as all lower levels. For example, a creature suffering

level 2 exhaustion has its speed halved and has disadvantage on ability checks.

An effect that removes exhaustion reduces its level as specified in the effect's description, with all exhaustion effects ending if a creature's exhaustion level is reduced below 1.

Finishing a long rest reduces a creature's exhaustion level by 1, provided that the creature has also ingested some food and drink.

If the PC's can move at 40 or greater speed, they arrive without having to make any checks. Once the PC's have arrived, read or paraphrase the following.

The spell in your head gives you a final ping and in the distance, about 1000 feet or so away, you can see a large, steel grate open on the ground. Nearby are several vials of liquid tied to sticks in the ground. Unfortunately, several undead figures are approaching the grate. They get a few hundred feet toward it and it slams shut with a resounding thud. Confused they look around.

If the PC's are attempting to hide, have them make Stealth Checks DC 14. If one PC fails, they are spotted and the undead rush them, three rounds away. If the PC's successfully hide, the Undead will mill about by the potions. The PC's should engage them before more undead arrive.

7 Brick Skeletons

Atk: Shortsword +4 1D6+2 Dmg (P), HP: 15, AC: 14, Speed: 30; Saves: (+0,+2,+2,-2,-1,-3); M Undead, LE.

Vul: Bludgeoning, Imm: Poison, Exhaustion, Poisoned. Darkvision 60 ft. Perception 9. CR 1/4

1 Brick Ogre Zombie

Atk. Morningstar +7 2D8+5 (B), HP: 85, AC: 9, Speed: 30; Saves: (+5,-1,+5,-3,-1,-2); L Undead, NE

Imm: Poison. Darkvision 60 ft. Perception 9. CR 2. Undead Fortitude: If reduced to 0 HP, Con save DC 5+ Dmg taken to instead drop to 1 HP, unless Dmg. is radiant or from a critical hit.

The last undead falls and you look up to see the distant fog clear and hundreds of undead come stumbling out with gowns and yells of death. The metal hatch swings up and a tiny voice yells, “Get down here!” from the hole.

If the PC's stay, they will fight wave after wave of undead until they are overwhelmed. If the run, they can reach the hatch and the hole in the ground. Read or paraphrase the following.

You reach the hole and slide into a tunnel leading into the ground. The hatch swings shut on a mechanical, chain and a dirt-covered rug is pulled across the opening. The tunnel leads down into the earth and you hear a high-pitched voice yell, “Down here.”

When the PC's follow.

You descend into the small burrow as the sounds of groans and shuffling feet pound overhead. The burrow goes down another 20 ft. or so and opens into a spacious, perfectly squared room about 30 feet across. Several sitting chairs, tables laden with all types of concoctions, and miscelanious gear lay scattered around. A young halfling wearing a chain shirt with messed up blond hair turns as you enter from looking inside a tube that extends into the ceiling. “Hi-ya folks. Glad you could make it. What did you bring me?”

Referki is looking through a periscope-like device to observe the movements of the undead. A lever on one wall connects to the chain device that automatically lowers and raises the front gate, as well as the floor mat. Referki assumes Delila sent them with supplies, since no one else really come out here. He'll be generous with his knowledge and answer the PC's questions, although he is distracted for the time being with the movements of the undead. Here is some information he can share.

- He has been out here for just over 4 months.
- He came here with the intention of trying to see what effect the destructive wave has on magic items as well as to observe the movements of the undead.
- He has been experimenting with magic potions and scrolls mostly. So far when one of them survives the wave, its composition is changed with an influx on necromantic magic. A *Bless* potion became a

Bane potion, a *Light* scroll became a *Darkness* scroll, but oddly enough of *Healing Potion* became more powerful.

- The undead's movements are not random. They seem to be organized somehow, although he can't figure out how. The majority head for Safepoint while other, smaller groups, usually the more intelligent undead, head off other ways.
- He only has difficulty with undead when the smart ones figure out a way to get through. There was a vampire spawn a while back that eventually found his way in. Luckily, he was able to deal with him with the help of his glyph.
- The glyph he has is able to paralyze undead.

If the PC's want his glyph, they will have to convince him. It is one of the few reasons he counts himself still alive from the last attack. A Persuasion Check DC 18 is required. The glyph is shaped like thus: ◇
(See Appendix A)

If the PC's have all three glyphs, they can begin to try to put them together, although the puzzle is difficult. When all three touch there is a spark of energy and their edges all become jagged, like puzzle pieces. This lasts for about 15 seconds before the edges again become smooth.

10 successful Skill Checks are required to "fit" them all together. However, 4 failures make the glyphs "reset" so their edges are again smooth. If they are brought back together, they again return to form jagged edges, but the edges look different than last

time, effectively resetting the puzzle. Additionally, the puzzle resets about every 15 seconds, making each PC only able to help once before it resets.

Any PC attempting to help put them together can assist in the following manner.

- An Arcana Check DC 17 allows a PC to determine rudimentary arcane energy sources that match from one part of a glyph to the next.
- A History Check DC 20 reveals a story about a similar puzzle that will help.
- An Investigation Check DC 21 allows someone to clue together what pieces might fit where.
- A Sleight of Hand Check DC 18 allows a PC to feel where a piece might go.
- A Perception Check DC 20 allows a PC to locate a possible solution.

Finally, an Intelligence Check DC 10 indicates that the puzzle would become easier with additional pieces. Referki is happy to have the PC's and will share some food and wine with them. He suggests they return to Delila as maybe she has more information or can help now that there are three pieces.

If the PC's wait for the morning to leave, Referki will all but forbid it as he does not want to see them turned into undead by a stray energy wave. However, he will not stop them by force if they insist. If they travel by day, see the chances of forever being lost above. If they travel by night, read or paraphrase the following.

You bid Referki farewell and head off south, knowing full well that you have only four hours before the undead catchup and smash onces again into Safepoint.

Unless the PC's doddle or wish to do something else, they will easily make it back to Safepoint in about two hours.

Your journey through the strange, silent land is nearly complete. In this distance you can see the lights of Safepoint and know there are only a few more miles between you and a warm bed. Of course, things are rarely that easy. The wind suddenly picks up as it did before in Trevadeer's house and in front of you, 60 ft. or so away another tiny green dot blinks into existence. It expands into another sphere before disappearing, dropping out a group of undead. They hiss, point at you with angry howls and race toward you.

This is a straight up fight. The PC's can try to avoid it, but the undead will most likely run them down with their increased speed.

3 Brick Ghouls

Atk: Bite +3 2D6+2 (P) and Claws +4 2D4+2 (S) (Con Save DC 10 or Paralyzed 1 minute, repeat Save end of each round), HP: 24, AC 13, Speed: 30; Saves: (+1,+2,+1,-2,+0,-2); M Undead, CE

Imm: Poison, Charm, Exhaustion. Darkvision 60ft. Perception 10. CR 1.

1 Minotaur Skeleton

Atk: Greataxe +7 2d12+5 (S) and Gore +7 2d8+5 (P), HP: 76, AC: 13, Speed 40, Saves: (+5, +1, +3, -1, 0, -2); L Undead. LE

Vul. Bludgeoning, Imm. Poison, Exhaustion, Darkvision: 60 ft. Perception 10. CR 2.

Charge: If moves at least 10 in straight line, Gore does +2d8 Dmg and target must succeed at Str. Save DC 14 or be pushed 10 ft. back and knocked prone.

The last undead falls, you look through their possessions and pocket what looks interesting before hurrying home. The walls of safepoint are full of combatants for the nightly fight. Cheers and lively hollers of excitement and laughter are supported by a chorus of "Welcome back!" or "Your on the wrong side of the wall!" You pass through the gates to wide grins and beaming smiles.

If one of the PC's has been reciprocating Delilia's advances add the following to that PC.

Delila is there, handing out vials of healing. She sees you enter and a massive smile takes over her face. She runs over and without thinking jumps up to you embracing you in a deep kiss. The gathered crowd whoops and hollers. A moment passes between the two of you, just a moment, where there is no one else around. Then, the moment passes, Delila looks around and a streak of crimson flushes her cheeks in embarasement. She takes your hand and rushes you off to a more private spot to get better reacquainted.

Denouement

This ends chapter 4 of Holy Mandate. Reward the PC's enough experience to advance to level 5. The PC's are now have access to a powerful magic item against the forces of the undead. However, The Cult of Withering Rebirth has noticed their actions and have already begun to set a trap. Chapter 5 will pit the PC's against a very different kind of enemy. If the PC's are willing, Fredern Towerstand will offer to train them for one week. During that time the PC's will spend 10 hours a day learning

better tactics against undead. Anyone that participates in the training is awarded the *Undead Tactics* feat. (See Appendix 1)

Did something unexpected or amazing happen? Was there an especially epic or noteworthy encounter? Drop us a line at geeksnextdoorftw@gmail.com. We would love to hear from you. We will talk about it on our Geeks Next Door podcast and maybe even use your encounter as an NPC to liven up the world.

Appendix 1

Full NPC Blocks

Referki, Cleric Lvl 3

Atk: Mace +3 1D8+2 (B), HP: 23, AC: 15, Speed: 25, Saves:(+1,+3,+1,+0,+5,+4); S Humanoid, CG

Str: 12, Dex: 16, Con: 12, Int: 11, Wis: 15, Cha: 13

Skills: Arcana +6, Religion +5, Perception +5, History +3

Spellcasting: Referki is a 3rd level spellcaster. Usually he has the following spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): Light, Sacred Flame, Spare The Dying,

1st level (4 slots): Cure Wound, Guiding Bolt, Sanctuary, Command

2nd level (2 slots): Lesser Restoration, Silence, Augury

Abilities: Divine Domain (Knowledge), Blessing of Knowledge: Knows Undercommon and Draconic languages, Channel Divinity (Turn Undead) Each undead within 30 ft. Wisdom save DC 13 or Turned for 1 minute.

Equipment: Chain Shirt, Shield, Mace, Backpack, (5) minor healing potions, Holy Symbol

Description: A young Halfling with red hair and soothing blue eyes. He has been obsessed with the Negative Energy Wave. He likes people, hates undead, and also loves wine. Likes to experiment with items in the Negative Energy Wave. Witless and Flighty

Freden Towerstand, Paladin Lvl 6

Atk (2): +7 Battleaxe 1D8+4 (S), HP: 61, AC: 17, Speed: 20, Saves:(+4,-1,+4,+0,+6,+6); M Humanoid, LG

Str: 18, Dex: 8, Con: 18, Int: 10, Wis: 16, Cha: 16

Skills: Athletics +7, Religion +6, Knowledge Tactics +3

Spellcasting: Freden is a 6th level spellcaster. Usually he has the following spells prepared.

1st level (4 slots): Bless, Cure Wounds, Heroism, Divine Favor

2nd level (2 slots): Aid, Lesser Restoration

Abilities: Divine Sense: Sense Evil Within 60 ft. (3/day), Lay on Hands: Heal 30 hp. divided as you choose, Fighting Style (Defensive), Divine Smite: Expend Spell Slots to do extra Radiant Dmg. (2d8 for 1st lvl spell slot +1d8 per spell slot lvl above 1st. +1db vs Undead or Fiend), Divine Health: Immune to Disease, Aura of Protection: You or friend within 10 ft. gain +2 to Saving Throws, Channel Divinity (Sacred Weapon): +2 to Atk rolls with weapon for 1 minute, Channel Divinity (Turn Undead): Each undead within 30 ft. Wisdom save DC 13 or Turned for 1 minute.

Equipment: Scalemail, Shield, Battleaxe, Holy Symbol, Javelins (5), Book of Tactics

Description: Dwarven weaponsmith and Floor Master at the Holy Order of the Vanguard.

Teaches people and groups how best to survive undead encounters. A Paladin of Moradin he is exceedingly polite and proper, in his own Dwarven way. Respectful and Serious.

Trevadeer Unison, Sage Lvl 7

Atk (1): +2 Dagger 1D4+1 (S), HP: 7, AC: 9, Speed: 30, Saves:(+1,-1,+0,+3,+3,+0); M Humanoid, NG

Str: 12, Dex: 8, Con: 10, Int: 16, Wis: 14, Cha: 11

Skills: Arcana +7, History +7, Investigation +7, Religion +7.

Spellcasting: None

Abilities: None

Equipment: Robes, dagger, Glyph from the Brick

Description: A sage in his late 50's, trevadeer has devoted his entire life to studying the glyphs on The Cube. He gladly shares his knowledge and loves to discuss the glyphs and discover their powers. He isn't much of a fighter, but has a cunning mind when it comes to tactics. M/Hu

New Spells

Identify Glyph

1st-level divination

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (blood from a wounded creature)

Duration: Until dispelled

Similar to the *Identify* spell, but uniquely shaped to the glyphs of The Back, *Identify Glyph* allows you to determine the basic magical properties of the glyphs. Additionally, It bestows advantage on any check made to assemble or join glyphs and any success to do so is counted as 2 successes. During the casting, a living creature must be injured by the caster for 5 Hit Points worth of damage. The creature damaged must be whole, alive, and not a summoned entity. This spell has no effect on any other object other than a glyph from The Brick.

Magic Items

Wand of Cure Light Wounds, minor

Wand, uncommon

This wand has 6 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast the *cure wounds* spell from it. For 1 charge, you cast the 1st-level version of the spell. You can increase the spell slot level by one for each additional charge you expend.

The wand regains only 1 expended charge daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

Holy Water

As an action, you can splash the contents of this flask onto a creature within 5 feet of you or throw it up to 20 feet, shattering it on impact. In either case, make a ranged Attack against a target creature, treating the holy water as an Improvised Weapon. If the target is a fiend or Undead, it takes 2d6 radiant damage. A Cleric or Paladin may create holy water by performing a Special ritual. The ritual takes 1 hour to perform, uses 25 gp worth of powdered silver, and requires the caster to expend a 1st-level spell slot.

Brick Glyphs

The Glyphs that emblazoned The Brick are in themselves powerful magic items. Each has a unique ability undo themselves. Additionally, each gains power and possibly additional powers when joined together. However, joining the glyphs together is a difficult and ribosome trial. The glyphs hum with a low, almost unperceivable tone. Each evening when the sun sets, the glyphs flare into a bright, green glow for roughly 5-10 minutes. The light sheds dim light out to 30 feet. Undead sense the presence of the glyphs and do everything in their power to recover them. Mindless undead will prioritize glyph wielders over others, but will not endanger themselves for such.

Current Glyphs and Powers

Ceta

Ceta glyph is shaped as such  and allows its bearer to cast *Shield* once per day as a reaction. When combined in a chain of three glyphs the spell can be cast twice per day. If combined in a chain of 5 glyphs this increases to 3 times per day. If combined in a chain of 7 glyphs the AC Bonus to the granted *Shield* spell increases to +6 (from +5). If combined in a chain of 10 it grants the owner the *Parry* ability, whereas the wielder can as a reaction increase their AC by their Dexterity Score Bonus

Ctheta

Ctheta glyph is shaped like an **M** and allow its bearer to increase or decrease the light level in a 60 ft. area once per day. Dark areas become either deep dark or dim, dim areas become either dark or light, and light areas become either dim or bright. When combined in a chain of three glyphs the ability can be used twice per day. If combined in a chain of 5 glyphs this increases to 3 times per day. If combined in a chain of 7 glyphs the effect increases to 120 ft. If combined in a chain of 10 it grants the owner the ability to completely change the light levels in a 120 ft. to whatever level they chose from Magical Darkness to Bright Sunlight.

Ciota

Ciota glyph is shaped as such  and allows wielder to paralyze an undead with its touch. The wielder must successfully touch the undead to with a melee attack to apply the effect. The attack automatically paralyzes any unintelligent undead for 1 round. Intelligent undead are granted a Wisdom saving throw DC 15 to avoid the effect. However, once an undead successfully saves against the effect, it is immune to it for the next 24 hours. When combined in a chain of three glyphs the Wisdom save to avoid the effect increases to 16. If combined in a chain of 5 glyphs the Wisdom save to avoid the effect increases to 17 and the duration increases to 2 rounds. If combined in a chain of 7 glyphs the effect can be used at a range of 30 feet as well. If combined in a chain of 10 it grants the owner to target a second undead with the paralyzing effect.

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The World of Tahalas



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