

The Pythagorean Triage

An adventure for Lamentations of the Flame Princess.
For character levels 1-3 probably.

Introduction

Background

The Pythagorean monastic school lies forgotten in an unknown valley. At its peak it was a place of mathematical research, learning and peaceful life. The Pythagoreans created a powerful artifact that could disperse a living being into its components and reassemble it in superior form. A horrible accident with the artifact destroyed the cult and now the school is in ruins and few remember the Pythagoreans or their school.

Some hooks

The forests surrounding the school are infested with hungry shadows and escaped ghosts sometimes travel far from the school and haunt homes many miles from the forest. Some of the ghosts still maintain their mental faculties and can reveal the location to those who are not too scared to listen and happen to understand their ancient language.

An esoteric order of people who call themselves the Akousmatikoi still exists. They are a rival cult and would rob the school of its library and books therein.

A wizard will pay 2000 sp for a powerful magical prism that is to be found in the ruins. He plans to use the prism to switch bodies with the king of the realm.

Monsters

Zombie

Zombies are mindless animated corpses in various stages of decay.

HD: 2 **Speed:** ½ Human

AC: 12 **Intelligence:** mindless

Attack: One claw (1d6) or weapon.

Defence: Immune to sleep or charm spells.

Shadow

Shadows are incorporeal but are not undead, so they cannot be turned by a cleric. They look like real shadows and can alter their shape slightly. Shadows are hard to see and usually gain surprise (1-5 on 1d6). Direct sunlight will damage the shadow (1d6/round).

HD: 2+2 **Speed:** as human

AC: 12 **Intelligence:** animal

Attack: Drains a point of Strength. Any Character whose strength is drained to zero immediately becomes a shadow himself.

Defence: Immune to sleep or charm spells. Can be harmed only by silver or magical weapons.

Ghost

Ghosts are undead souls of people unable to pass on to afterlife. They appear as they did in life but incorporeal. They retain their intelligence but most have gone irreversibly insane. Ghosts are not harmed by sunlight but they usually avoid it.

HD: 3 **Speed:** as human

AC: 12 **Intelligence:** human

Attack: Ages target d20 years or possession as per the Magic Jar spell.

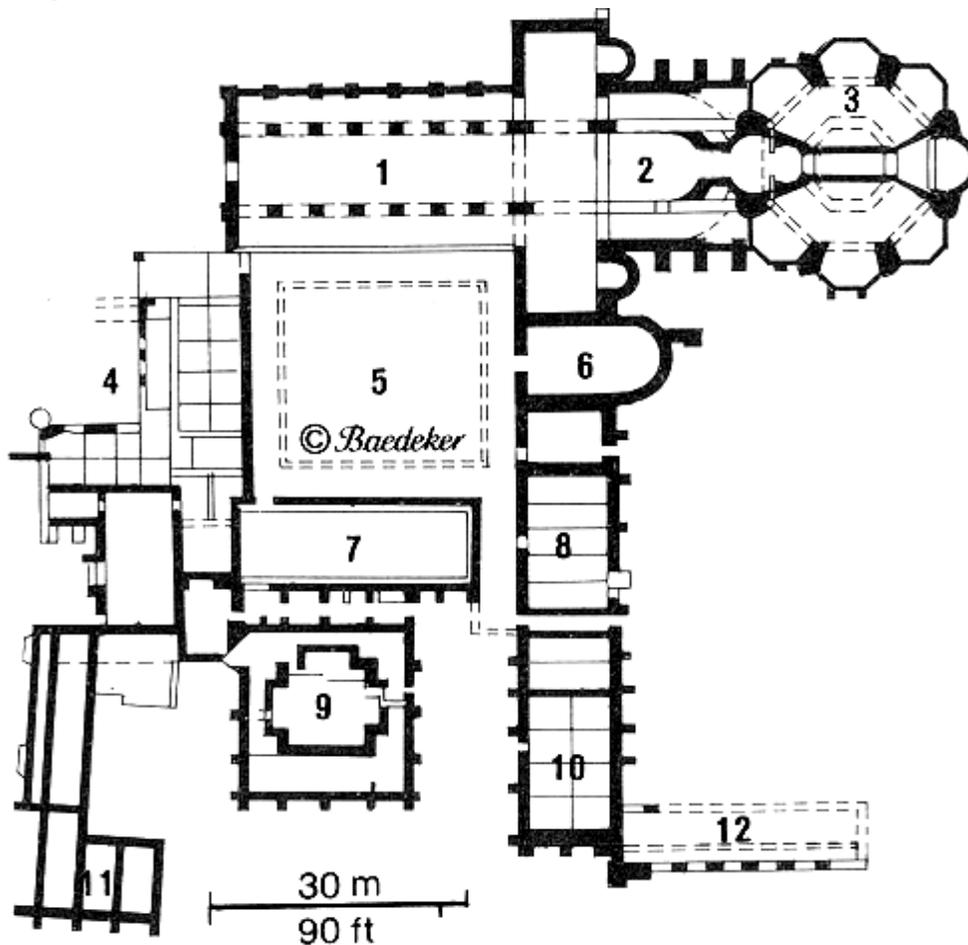
Defence: Can only be harmed with magical weapons or weapons made out of salt.

Random encounters

Roll 1d6 every three turns, on a 1, roll for an encounter:

2d6	
2	1d2 furious ghosts.
3	1d8 zombies and a ghost. The ghost will carefully explain why the characters should die for 1d4 rounds, then joins the zombies.
4	1d4 shadows and 1 zombie. The zombie is bait.
5	1d2 shadows.
6-8	1d6 zombies. 50% chance half of them have swords.
9	2d6 zombies. 50% chance half of them have swords. 1d4 of them have leather armor (AC: 14)
10	A ghost demands to know why the characters are here, then leaves.
11	A ghost demands to know why the characters are here, then attacks.
12	Roll twice and combine.

Map



General notes

In the ancient world gold was far more common and gold coins were the norm in trade. People weren't as careful with their coins as they are today. Every time a character spends a turn searching the floors in the school proper has a 5% chance of finding a gold piece fallen between flagstones, floorboards etc.

Some areas in the school are open to sunlight, shadows avoid these as sunlight will kill them, zombies have no trouble in the light, ghosts are more translucent in daylight and have a greater chance of surprise (3 in 6), but they tend to stay in the dark.

The referee will do well to consider the three types of undead in the adventure in tactical terms: what each can do and how they differ from each other. Have zombies use their strength to drive through party defenses, ghosts move through walls and shadows are invisible in darkness. Make the players feel the full strength of each creature and the possibilities of mixed forces.

Map key

1 Nave

This area has collapsed ages ago and is merely a pile of rubble. Some columns still stick out from between the stones.

2 Choir

A group of 2d4 zombies wander here. They have shovels. 2 in 6 chance there's also an angry ghost.

3 Mirror Hall

This is a large roundish chamber with an open ceiling. There are twenty large mirrors (worth 50 sp) carefully aligned so that sunlight reflects from mirror to mirror and through the center of the room. The geometric formula in the geometry room (area 7) and at least basic familiarity on Pythagoreanism is needed to realign the mirrors if they are disturbed and an expert to rebuild it from scratch. In the middle on a dais, there's a pedestal, about chest high, that has a triangular hole on top. The floor has complex geometrical designs inlaid with gold. The gold is worth 2d6*100 sp if pried off.

The hole on the pedestal is for the prism found in the library (area 8). If the prism is on the pedestal and it's daytime, sun will reflect on the several mirrors and through the prism. The prism will affect everyone in the room but instead of simply dispersing people, the mirrors reflect different components back through the prism in complex ways. The effects are permanent. If characters stay in the room or come again the effect will repeat in 1d4 hours.

If the prism is on the pedestal and sun is visible, roll 1d4 rotate each character's Strength ability score around the table counterclockwise so that each player's character's score is replaced with the player's on their left, if 1 was rolled etc. Do this for all abilities. Finally do this for gear, so that all items in one character's possession end up on someone else.

If there are any living NPCs in the room when this happens include the referee in the rotation as well. We'll assume that the NPCs ability scores will mix randomly amongst themselves. The referee can pass on the ability score from any NPC present and assign the received score to any NPC.

If there are any undead present, things can go hairy. For every undead present there is a 5% cumulative chance that something goes terribly wrong. Roll on the table or choose if just one type of undead are present:

1d10	
1-3	If no zombies are present, ignore this result and

	roll again. A random character will end up with a rotting corpse for a body and will lose 1d6 from Con, Dex and Cha permanently. Reroll Strength
4-6	If no shadows are present, ignore this result and roll again. A random character's anima is replaced with a shadow. The character is forevermore subject to evil impulses and must save against magic at the referees whim or follow his them.
7-9	If no ghosts are present, ignore this result and roll again. A random character's soul is left floating without a body. Save against magic or go insane and become a monster under the referee's control. If successful, the character is essentially a ghost and has special abilities as ghost's.
10	Roll twice for two affected characters.

If the mirrors are removed, broken or covered there's a cumulative 5% chance per mirror for each character that they're unaffected by the prism. There's also a cumulative 5% chance per two mirrors that something goes wrong:

1d10	
1-3	One affected character is combined without his body. The character immediately becomes a Wraith under the referee's control and his body becomes a zombie with his gear.
4-6	One affected character becomes a Lich and his anima a shadow. Reroll Strength and reduce Charisma and Constitution 1d6 permanently.
7-9	One affected character's body is combined with his anima, forming a Ghoul. His soul is left behind as a ghost. Save against magic or became an insane monster under the referee's control.
10	Roll twice for two affected characters.

4 Scholastic's Chambers

These are the living quarters and offices for the scholastics. The offices all have a desk, bookshelves, some chairs, writing tools. The chambers will have a wardrobe, bed and a night stand. Every room will yield 5d10 sp in Pythagorean implements and rare manuscripts, personal items etc.

Office 1: This office is like the others but on one side, there's a couch with 1d6 gold pieces lost in it.

Office 2: There are 1d4 shadows skulking in this room

Office 3: Among the books in this room is a scroll with a random spell of 1d6th level.

Office 4: A ghost sits here behind his desk as he would have in life, studying a book. If characters agree to leave a member of their party to help him turn pages, he'll let them take the 2d6 gold coins he keeps in a drawer in his desk. Otherwise he'll destroy the fools who disturb his research. The ghost can cast Magic Missile as a third level wizard once.

Chamber 1: 1d6 zombies and a painting in the golden ratio, worth 2d10 sp.

Chamber 2: There are two gold pieces under the bed and one at the bottom of the wardrobe.

Chamber 3: A short sword in a belt in the wardrobe is magical and will glow blue whenever rabbits are near. "Blade of Lagos" is inscribed on the scabbard.

Chamber 4: There's a ghost fast asleep on the bed.

5 Cloisters

This is a rectangular open space surrounded by covered walks or open galleries, with open arcades on the inner side, running along the walls of buildings and forming a quadrangle. In the middle there's a large parabolic mirror mounted on a swivel. The mirror doesn't do anything.

6 Chapter house

This room is highly ornamented with golden statues, tapestries, precious stones. It was used for holding meetings and by study groups. Easily removed and transported ornaments are worth 1d6*100 sp but if the larger statues and tapestries are gathered, they'll net a total of 1d6*1000 sp.

A venerable ghost is giving an endless lecture about Pythagorean cosmology to a group of 6d10 zombies. When the characters enter, the ghost will gesture them to join the audience. The zombies are under the ghost's control. If the characters try to leave in the middle of the lecture or won't listen, the ghost will become very annoyed. In 1d6 weeks the characters will learn the basics of Pythagoreanism and in 1d6 months will become experts on the subject.

7 Geometry room

The floor of this room is covered inches deep in fine white sand. A wooden walking platform about a yard wide encircles the room at the walls. At the sides are pegs, closets, etc with an assortment of compasses, knotted ropes, yardsticks and rakes. The sand on the floor is filled with complex mathematics. If carefully copied (1d6+2 hours) the formula is worth 1d6*100 sp for the right buyer. It's possible to walk across the room without disturbing the drawings if this is done slowly and carefully, but anything else, running fighting etc. will ruin the drawings and render them worthless. A Pythagorean expert is required to restore the formula.

1d4 Shadows stalk here.

8 Library

Shelves upon shelves of Pythagorean and Neoplatonist literature and scriptures. Scattered among these are a scroll with a 3rd level spell, two 2nd level spells and three 1st level random magic-user spells, 1d4 scrolls with a random cleric spell of 1d3 level each.

An hour of research lets the characters learn a random piece of knowledge:

1d10	
1	Salt is an anathema to ghosts.
2	Silver will drive away shadows.
3	Men and women shouldn't have sex during the summer. Winter is the correct season.
4	Shadows can't exist in sunlight.
5	Living things are composed of three parts: Flesh, anima and soul.
6	Beans and people are of same nature, therefore eating beans is cannibalism.
7	Music played on the diatonic scale will have power over zombies.
8	A purified soul will reincarnate.
9	A man with bear anima will have giant's strength (Str 19).
10	Pythagoreanism developed at some point into two separate schools of thought, the mathēmatikoi("learners") and the akousmatikoi("listeners").

A small chest sits in plain sight on a corner table. The words "Do not open in sunlight." are written on the lid in ancient greek. The chest has no locking mechanism and is easily opened. Inside is lined with dark velvet and contains some scrolls tied up with string and a prism one foot in length and a half in diameter. Its cross-section is triangular and it's made out of clear light blue crystal.

The scrolls in the chest describe the prism as the culmination of the Pythagorean research conducted here. The description is lengthy and goes into much esoteric detail on the principles the prism operates on, but does not explain at all how the prism works or what it does. The Mirror Hall (area 3) is described in the scrolls to be built specifically to utilize the prism's full power.

The Death Prism: The prism was designed to break living things up into their spectral components (flesh, anima and soul). If someone's shadow is cast upon the prism in sunlight their soul and anima are immediately separated from their bodies. There's a 1 in 6 chance that this happens with artificial light as well. Their body is left behind as a fresh zombie with all their gear. The body will begin to decompose in 1d4+2 days if the anima and soul are not somehow returned. Their anima becomes a shadow and their soul is left to wander as a ghost. Save against Magic or the character goes permanently insane and becomes an NPC. If the save is successful, the character retains all their mental faculties.

9 Kitchen

The silver utensils are worth 3d6 sp. There are three carefully sealed unmarked jars of beans hidden under a loose floorboard.

10 Novice's quarters

These consist of simple bedrooms with 4 bunk beds and a small desk each. A successful search will yield 1d4 gold pieces and 1d6 sp in small personal items per room. There are eight such rooms. There are 1d6 zombies and a shadow hiding in the rooms.

11 Guest House

These rooms have been used for storage. They are filled with useless junk. A thorough search of 1d4 hours will find a purse with 3d6 gold pieces.

12 Latrines

The latrines are a mess.

Epilogue

When the characters return with the prism, have some fun with them:

- An old man approaches the party. He needs the prism and the chamber of mirrors to reverse a tragic accident that befell his two sons — an evil wizard switched their bodies with each other. 50% chance the man just wants to steal a new body for himself.
- A merchant pays well to have his lanky son, a caged bear and the prism brought back to the chamber of mirrors for some elective anima transfer.