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116

Food for
the GM's
Mind



Elven
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Cartography

Cartography by:



Elven Tower Cartography

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Map 116 - Jinxed Sapphire

Cartography by:



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Jinxed Sapphire



Mr. Friedrich used to be the court's composer. Since he was a very young boy the tutors found in him a special talent for music. He was good with the piano and the fiddle. When he was twelve, the king appointed him to compose a weekly sonata for the mass at the temple. Since then Mr. Friedrich always delivered. With the years he became a reputable figure in court and the tutor of many young musicians and children of other court members.

He was in his thirties and unmarried. Some said he simply did not enjoyed the company of women. He could approach any lady given his position but never did. He spent his free time alone in his residency, working in his music. What few people knew was that he was obsessed.

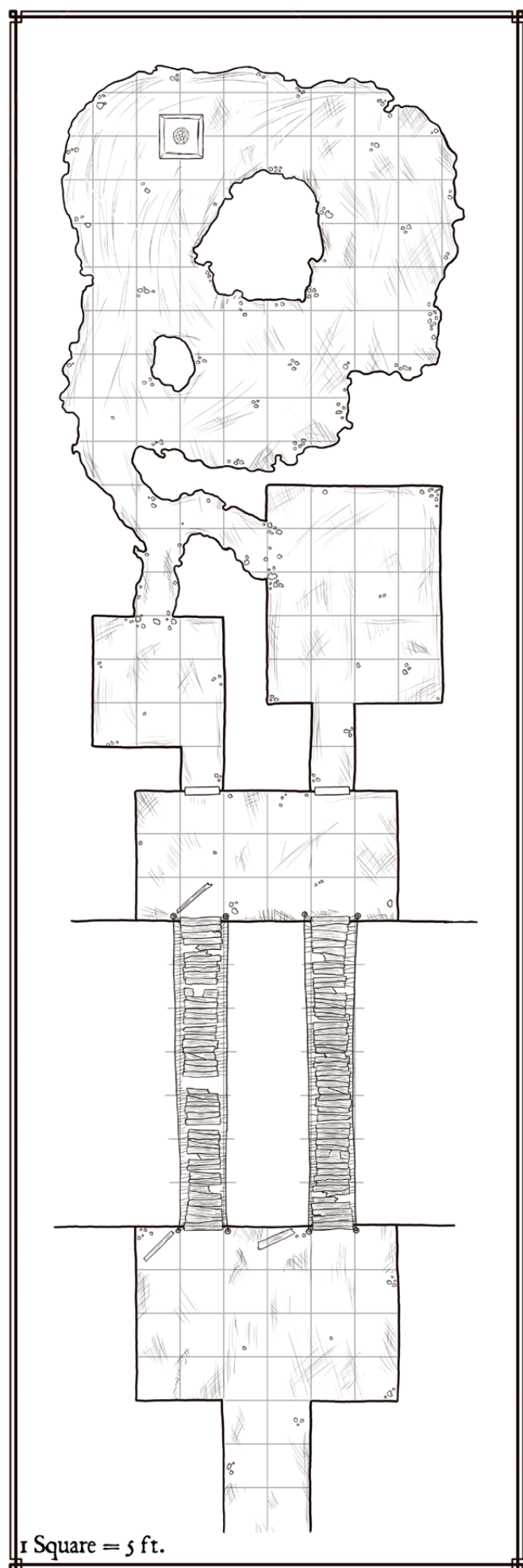
He had dreams. For years he had had a dream where an angel visited him in his studio. The angel was beautiful in its own way, a fine androgynous face, white skinned and long blonde hair down to its waist. The angel had deep blue eyes and stared at immobile Mr. Friedrich with a questioning face. Without ever talking, the angel wanted to know what was Mr. Friedrich's wildest dream. Ashamed of saying it, Mr. Friedrich confessed in his dream that he wanted to write the most powerful piece of music, the best symphony ever heard by mortals, even capable of impressing the gods. A wild dream, probably caused by writing music for the mass for all his life, still unable to catch the attention from the stone idols in the building.

The angel nodded and opened its mouth. Words did not come out. What followed was a miracle, the music of the gods came out of it. Unbelievable notes and complex impossible chords, the secrets of music at last revealed to Mr. Friedrich. He would always wake up after this. For years he had the recurring dream, he became determined to writing the song from the gods. The only reason he was having those dream must have meant that the gods wanted him to transcend through his music. How-

ever, hard as he worked, the music eluded him, what he heard in his dreams was impossible to put into paper or sound with his human means. Even worse, the music seemed to mutate and change from dream to dream. That was his obsession.

One day he was approached by a merchant from a distant land, he looked to sell his wares to the rich people in court. He offered Mr. Friedrich a beautiful sapphire, almost as big as a strawberry, but purple with white and yellow highlights. Not only was it a beautiful gem, but the merchant swore it was a magical object. He explained that as long as the sapphire was kept away from prying eyes, the owner would grow ever closer to his goals. The closer he got, the bigger the sapphire would grow. A tale for fools, Mr. Friedrich thought. But he bought it anyway because it seemed like a valuable gem at a reasonable price. He later put it in a jewelry box in his room. After that day, anytime the dream returned, he would now remember more than before upon waking up. He starting making real progress with the copying of the song. His obsession became chronic and he stopped all his other work. After some weeks he was officially removed from the





court, but he still kept working. He was not surprised when the jewelry box broke apart because the sapphire was too big for it, he then placed it inside a wooden chest. He spent his diminishing money reserves in milk of the puppy, which he used to sleep more than usual and dream more. He grew thin and weak as the song in his papers progressed.

One day he finished the piece. The secrets of the gods were his. He was the only human with the understanding to create such powerful music. It didn't need any notes, or chords or even instruments. The gods did things differently, and the knowledge was his. He decided to share the song. The sapphire was so big he had to carry it with both hands, it was the channel for the knowledge and it could also be the channel for sharing the song to all. He placed it on a table and touched the top of it, imbuing it with the melodies of life and death within him. The gem resonated with it and the air vibrated with great force all around him, the tune of the gods could at last be heard in the material world. The melody could be heard a few hundred feet from his residence. Every sentient being who heard the music was instantly enthralled by it. People in the city enraptured by the song walked to his house only to stay outside and hear it. The power that attracted people to listen to the melody was overwhelming and none could resist it. The music did not stop and people gathered there for days, unmoving.

It became an emergency, any who approached the zone did not return, city guards were sent, even mercenaries to find out the origin of the "evil music spell" but none would return and no one came out. After a few days someone had the first good idea, they sent three deaf homeless men to find out what was happening. They returned. They explained hundreds of people gathered outside a house and did not move or respond to any interaction. They were in the open, dehydrated and dying from it. Inside the house was the old court's composer sitting by a table with a big sapphire. They could not confirm that the sapphire was producing any sound but they felt the air pressure emanating from it.

The deaf men were ordered to carry the stone away from the city. Through an evacuated zone. The operation was a success. Many people died, but hundreds were saved. The stone could not be left in the wild, so it was placed in an old underground construction that was abandoned. It never stopped its song of attraction and enthrallment. The underground complex was deep enough that no sound from the sapphire could be heard from the surface. Mr. Friedrich's notes were not readable by other musicians, but they were taken with the stone

so that no one could ever replicate the process.

Mr. Friedrich who was the one closest to the stone lost his mind, he became dull and unintelligent after the event, he even lost his musical proficiency. Some say he can still be seen begging the streets from town to town.

Game Notes

Please feel free to adjust or change this background lore to fit your own game. The sapphire's origin is not explained in this article, nor its exact properties. It is left ambiguous so that a DM can give it any interesting properties. I will give two suggestions about them.

The gem is explained to ring to a particular melody that attracts people and leaves them enthralled. This is very akin to the Antipathy/Sympathy spell. It would then be a very dangerous affair to get close and it would probably be a high DC to escape its power. Additionally, the gem is said to enhance one's best property, in order to make a person get closer and closer to their dreams. That's a very broad description. In that case the gem would work as an artifact and it could have any range of properties. The specifics would completely depend on you overarch adventure.

What would bring a party of adventurers to go search for this gem? A few ideas come to mind: promise of power, curiosity, unlimited music abilities, finding a charm strong enough to affect an archfey or simply finding what's behind a well constructed rumor.