

## Where the Wild Roses Bloom

### *Module for Second-Level Adventurers.*

#### **Synopsis**

Elizabeth (Eliza) Day was the young heir of a prosperous merchant family, the only heir. As her father's health began to wane, he hid much of the family fortune on the family property near the river in order to protect her from thieves.

Not long after her father's passing, a wandering tinker named Janus Duvall came to town, hearing of the Day fortune. He came as a gentleman caller, intent to woo the young and impressionable Eliza. His charms were irresistible to the naïve girl, and she fell in love with him in only a few days. As a sign of her devotion, she promised to show Duvall to the buried treasure.

She led him down by the river, where the wild roses grew. There, he struck. He took a large rock and battered the unsuspecting Eliza, leaving her to die in the river among the roses. Then, he took the treasure and disappeared. A forged note stated Eliza had run off with him. Duvall, having his "big score", moved to a nearby city and began a thieves guild.

But the guilt never left him. They say he became paranoid, refusing to spend the rest of the fortune. He also remained a bachelor, never naming an heir to his guild. Eventually, he died a bitter and paranoid old kook, never telling anyone of the murder that haunted him so long ago. In accordance to his last will, he was buried in the local cemetery in a special crypt, along with the rest of the Day fortune.

But he doesn't rest there. The guilt has kept his spirit tethered to this world, and his pain acts as a magnet to the burial catacombs for all manner of undead and sinister figures.

However, it is said Eliza does not rest either. Local rumors say the Day residence is haunted, and none who have tried to develop that land have made it successful. Most telling is the Wild Rose, a apparition of a woman near the bank of the river who cries in the patch of wild roses. What story could she tell?

#### **Character Hooks**

The Adventurers have arrived in the village of Westbrook, looking for respite from the road. After entering town, read the following text:

*"As dusk settles, you take a few moments near the local inn, discussing your evening plans. Your attention is diverted to a group of noisy children, playing a game in the street. One shouts out 'Wild Rose, Wild Rose, can't catch me' and another rapidly chases the other children around. After a minute of this, another child yells 'Wild Rose cry no more!' and they all fall down, giggling. As they pick themselves up to play again, a matronly woman grabs one of the young playmates by the shirt and cries 'Lord of sunlight preserve us! I told you not to play that game. Do you want the Wild Rose to come in your room and take you in the middle of the night. Now go clean up and be ready for bed when I get home.' With that, the child is sent running to the streets toward his home, and many of the other local children begin to slowly travel away, toward their own abodes, mixing with the other villagers as the sun slowly begins to set."*

Should the adventurers appear interested in the scene, the mother will notice them and say:

*"Oh, don't mind them. Old wives tale. Always happens this time of year, the kids begin trying to find the Wild Rose, calling her out and asking for trouble. I tell them not to go looking for trouble, but you know kids."*

And with that, she will leave unless the Adventurers ask questions. The mother doesn't know a whole lot about the rumors (DC 10 info) but others in town might.

#### **History**

**DC 10:** The Wild Rose is a ghost story, they say she haunts the old Day residence just outside town. Nobody goes up there and everyone whose ever spent the night at the place disappears mysteriously.

**DC 15:** The Day residence has been abandoned for nearly thirty years. That's when the young Miss Day ran off with a tinkerer and her father's inheritance. Some say she was trying to flee the Wild Rose, who has tormented her family for generations.

**DC 20:** Four families have tried to live there, and all four have left. One disappeared late at night without a trace, two moved out after encounters with the ghost. The last one bought the house and intended to live in it, but never did. He still lives in town and I guess he still owns the house, but no one has gone there in years. All too afraid of the ghost.

#### **Streetwise**

**DC 10:** The Wild Rose only appears around this time of year. She appears for a couple weeks, and then disappears again for a year. It leads a lot of people to doubt her existence.

**DC 15:** She chases away those who disturb her with unearthly shrieks and wailing, and causes those to she stares at to break out in tiny cuts, like rose thorns.

**DC 20:** Rumor has it that Old Man Day buried a fortune up there, and perhaps the Ghost is guarding it. Or searching for it.

**DC 25:** The Wild Rose haunts the river where she supposedly died. No one knows how. Probably murdered.

#### **Religion**

**DC 15:** Ghosts typically are bound to this world because of great tragedy. Whatever tragedy befell this "Wild Rose", it must be truly terrible. Perhaps if the tragedy was righted, she could find peace.

Adventurers who wish to investigate the last owner of the Day Residence can learn by asking (Streetwise DC 15). The owner is Tamon Duranis, a half-elf and local captain of the guards. He can confirm seeing the ghost, but never got close enough to get a good look. He's spent the last ten years living in the barracks, unable to sell the property.

#### **Investigating the Old Day Residence**

The Day residence is nothing remarkable by daylight. It's a two-story old house which has seen dilapidation and neglect over the years. Due

to the four attempted residencies, there is no evidence from the original owners left, save for the wall decoration and some of the original furniture. Thorough searching of the house won't yield much.

As the sun falls and night comes, things become more active. Faint sobbing can be heard coming from the river down by the Southeast of the property. The wailing becomes louder and until its near manic. Then, it ends about an hour from when it begins.

If the Adventurers go down closer to investigate, read the following text.

*"As you travel down to the river in the dark, your eyes capture sight of a white, shimmering figure sitting crouched in the middle of a bed of wild rose bushes. She is crying into her hands, oblivious to nearly everything around her. However, your presence is noted as she looks up at you with beautiful, haunting blue eyes."*

Eliza will not immediately engage the Adventurers in conversation. They must address her (probably by her "ghost name") This begins a skill challenge.

### **Skill Challenge: Addressing the Wild Rose**

**Setup:** To learn what Eliza knows, the Adventurers must give it a reason to help.

**Level:** 2

**Complexity:** 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures, see below).

**Primary Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Insight.

**Bluff** (moderate DCs): You falsely suggest that you share a connection with Eliza, whether it be family, religion, purpose, or the like. If the corpse catches the adventurer in a lie (the check fails), she shrieks at the adventurer (see failure).

**Diplomacy** (moderate DCs): You explain why you need the information, truthfully detailing the needs of your quest.

**History** (moderate DCs): You bring up what you have learned about her past life, or you disclose what happened after her death to make her feel more at ease talking to you.

**Insight** (moderate DCs): You try to connect with the ghost on an emotional level to make it more open to answering your questions. First success with this skill opens up the use of the Religion skill (Eliza mentions that it never received last rites before it died).

**Religion** (easy DC): You perform the death rites appropriate to Eliza's faith. This is available only after one character has gained a success using the Insight skill, and it can be used only once in this way during the challenge.

**Success:** The amount of answers Eliza gives depends on how many successes and how many failures the group has. After the group has gained six successes, subtract the number of failures from it and consult the following chart.

**3 Successes:** They call me the 'Wild Rose', but my name was Eliza Day. I lived here over thirty years ago, until a suitor came calling. I fell in love with him, but he betrayed me. He murdered me here and

took off with my father's inheritance.

**4 Successes:** His name was Janus, Janus Duvall. He came not long after my father's death. He was my first love, and how naïve I was. He promised we'd wed, and I shown him where my father hid much of his wealth. Here, where I stand now, is where he killed me.

**5 Successes:** I cannot let go until Duvall is punished for his crime. Should you find and punish him, you may have what remains of my fortune. It is all I have to give.

**6 Successes:** Actually, there is one other favor I must ask. As a gift, I gave Duvall my father's ring. Return it to me, and I can grant you a small boon.

After the Adventurers have gained all the info they can get, she fades away again.

**Failure:** If the Adventurers receive more than three failures, she shrieks her deathly scream at them, causing them to lose a healing surge. She then fades away without answering their questions until the next night. If an adventurer is caught lying to her, she shrieks at him as well (causing the adventurer to lose a healing surge) and the next check is one DC higher) until the next successful check.

### **Finding Duvall**

Few, if anyone has heard of him in Westbrook, but those with criminal connections can recall or learn (Streetwise or History, DC 15) that Duvall is the name of a once-prominent thieves' guild-master that operated a couple days travel from here.

Following that lead should lead them to Tormyn, a small town on the crossroads to a much larger city. It is here members of Duvall's Dark Knife guild still operate. This leads to the second skill challenge.

### **Skill Challenge: The Dark Knives Guild**

**Setup:** The group must locate Duvall's final resting place.

**Level:** 2

**Complexity:** 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures)

**Primary Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Streetwise

**Bluff** (hard DCs): You successfully find and convince a local guild member you are a fellow guild member, who grants you access. This opens thievery, shown below.

**Diplomacy** (moderate DCs): You speak with local officials, trying to glean info on the Dark Knife Guild. They are generally willing to oblige you, but repeated attempts to bother them will get rebuffed in order for them to do "real work."

**History** (Easy DCs): Doing research on the area yields you clues to Duvall and his gang based on local lore and old guard accounts.

**Streetwise** (Moderate DCs): You put your ear to the local gossip and ask some of the shadier characters. You pick up enough hearsay and rumors to narrow down Duvall's final resting place.

**Thievery** (Moderate DCs): After convincing some locals your one of

them, you give them a show of your ability. This gleans you a bit of info, as you manage to sneak in some non-chalant questions in your “exam.”

**Success:** If the group succeeds, they learn of the Duvall’s death and burial, with “his fortune” in the Tormyn crypts near town.

**Failure:** You asked too many questions! While you learn Duvall is dead and in the local crypts, some dark knife thugs come to shut you up.

**Encounter: Dark Knife Silencers (Level 2; 625 XP)**

- 2 halfling thief
- 2 human bandit
- 1 guard drake

**Tactics:** The halflings wait in ambush while the bandits release the drake on weakest member (or the one who did too much asking). After a round, the halflings dash in, trying to target any foe hit with a dazing strike or who is in flank with a bandit. The drake will attempt to aid whichever group is currently weakest. They are no heroes, they attempt to flee as soon as they become bloodied.

**The Local Crypts**

The crypts are located just outside of Tormyn. As the adventurers draw closer to it, read the following text.

*“The lonely cemetery sits out the outskirts of town. It shows a distinct lack of care, as graves seem hastily dug and the ground run amok with weeds. Near the northern side sits a simple stone building, the entrance to the underground crypts.”*

The overgrowth of the cemetery counts as difficult territory, if for any reason combat should occur outside.

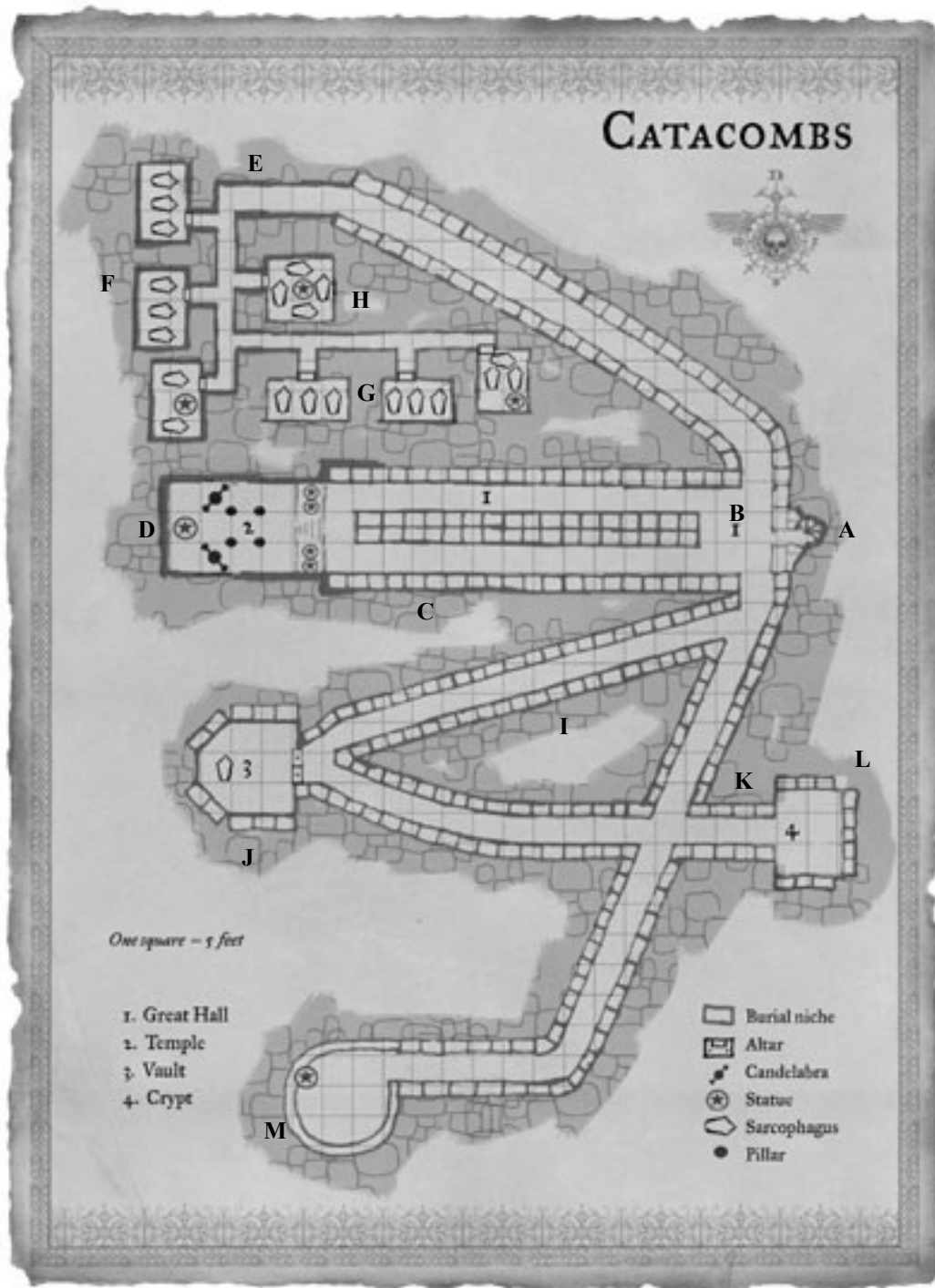
The entrance is lined with the oldest mausoleum vaults. It shows some recent traffic, but general disregard. Beyond the spiral stairwell, there is little of value up here.

**A.) The Stairs Downward**

*“A long spiral stone staircase descends into the darkness below.”*

**B.) The Entrance**

*“The darkness of the crypt is occasionally pierced by everburning*



*sconces nailed to the wall. A great hall stands directly in front of you, and small halls stand to your left and right.”*

Not long after entering the crypt, two mausoleum vaults open and the undead “guardians” of the crypts crawl out.

**Encounter: Rotting Welcome Party (Level 3; 750 XP)**

- 2 Gravehound (zombie) 300 xp
- 2 Skeleton 300 xp
- 1 Shadowhunter bat 150 xp

**Tactics:** The undead do not attack in any particular organization; the

gravehounds charge the nearest foes, while the skeletons move to guard the halls. The shadowhunter bat, not directly affiliated with them, swoops from the ceiling to attack living foes not engaged with the undead.

### C.) The Great Hall

*"This hall is lined with vaults, dating back over 200 years. More crypts line the center, dividing the hall into two smaller halls. The hall ends with a row of statues and a short stair descending downward."*

### D.) The Temple of Darkness

*"A row of statues of hooded men create a wall blocking view of the room below. A single staircase descends down into a room lit by candleabras. Four pillars stand in the center, and a fifth stone statue overlooks the scene in grim silence."*

The temple was once a place where last rites were performed. Now, it is overrun by a dark wizard and his bodyguards.

#### **Encounter: Dark Cabal (Level 2; 625 XP)**

- 1 Human Mage 175 XP
- 2 Human Bandits 250 XP
- 1 Iron Defender 150 XP
- 2 Goblin Cutters 50 XP

**Tactics:** The mage, obviously is angered by anyone who disturbs his study, and reacts with force by using his Thunder Burst first, then targeting enemy casters with his remaining powers. The bandits attempt to flank a foe and use dazing strike on different turns to keep their foe dazed and flanked. The goblins attempt to ambush any weak or unarmored foe, and the iron defender stays with the mage, guarding him from any foes who engage him in melee.

**Treasure:** On the altar, there is a moonstone (100 gp), and 70 gp. The mage wears a *robe of contingency +1*.

### E.) The Catacombs

*"The long, silent rows of vaults eventually give way to faded murals dust-covered floors. A narrow 5' wide hall turns sharply left to reveal a hall of crypts, seemingly untouched and forgotten."*

Two separate encounters appear here, and one can quickly extend into the other. The first is in area F, the western crypts where a group of ancient undead linger. They strike as soon as the adventurers enter the catacombs. The second group is further back in area G, the southern crypts. They stay back unless the adventurers turn the corner from the western to southern hall.

### F.) The Western Crypts

*"These crypts have long since fallen into disrepair, and large chunks of stone sarcophagi and bone litter the dusty floor."*

#### **Encounter: The Forgotten Dead (Level 1; 500 XP)**

- 1 Deathlock Wight 175 XP
- 1 Zombie 125 XP

- 8 Decrepit Skeletons 200 XP

**Tactics:** The Deathlock wight and zombie emerge from the southernmost crypt, the zombie charging his foes and the wight using his grave bolt. If the zombie falls, he uses his reanimator power to revive him. The skeletons shuffle out of the upper two crypts one at a time, single file and fight until destroyed. If his minions fall and his zombie is dying, the deathlock wight may attempt to flee down the hall into area G.

### G.) Southern Crypts

*"The stone walls in this section have begun to collapse, littering the hall with debris. White mushrooms occasionally grow in the areas of exposed earth on the walls."*

If the deathlock wight flees down this hall, he retreats to the end of the hall.

#### **Encounter: Foul Things Grow (Level 3; 701 XP)**

- 1 Doomsore (hazard) 350 XP
- 1 Corruption Corpse (zombie) 175 XP
- 2 Zombie Rotter 76 XP
- 1 Fire Beetle 100 XP

**Tactics:** The corruption corpse stands near, but behind the doomsore, forcing anyone who wishes to engage it in melee to disturb the spore (of which all the undead are immune to). The zombies emerge from the center crypt, and the fire beetle emerges from the first crypt after two rounds of combat.

**Treasure:** In the easternmost crypt, lying in a sarcophagi, is a *pact dagger +1*.

#### **Encounter The Crypts Come Alive (Level 6, 1201)**

If the wight retreats and the Adventurers follow, the encounter becomes more difficult.

**Tactics:** If the deathlock wight enters combat in area G, he stays near the corruption corpse, using his reanimator on it if he was unable to use it on the zombie in area F.

### H.) Undisturbed Crypt

*"Unlike many of the collapsing crypts in this area, these appears mostly in tact. A single stone statue sits in the center surrounded by four sarcophagi."*

**Treasure:** draped around the statues hands is a *Magic Holy Symbol +2*.

### I.) Diagonal Hall

*"This long hall extends out from the great hall southwest toward a great set of double doors. The hall turns again to the southeast."*

**Treasure:** An odd vault labeled "H. Masterson" appears to be recently opened. Checking inside, there is a *potion of healing + 40 gp*, hidden by the wererats.

### J.) Violated Vault

*“ The double doors open to reveal a vault utterly destroyed. Vault doors hang open or are missing, and remains, debris, and garbage is strewn amongst the floor.”*

Two ghouls have made this crypt their personal buffet. Drawn to the feast has been a collection of rats (led by a dire rat) which growing tired of carrion, seeks fresh meat.

#### **Encounter: Scavengers (Level 2; 625 XP)**

- 2 Ghouls 400 XP
- 1 Dire Rat 100 XP
- 1 Rat Swarm 125 XP

**Tactics:** The ghouls target any divine characters first, attempting to immobilize them first. The rat swarm simply targets the closest adventurer to them, and the dire rat aids the swarm by attempting to create flanks. The rats ignore the ghouls and vice-versa.

**Treasure:** scattered among the debris is 30 gp and 300 sp, but it will take about 10 minutes to collect it all up.

#### **K.) Crossroads**

*“Four halls, converge in this spot, which is dimly lit by the everburning sconces.”*

This encounter can change slightly, depending on if the adventurers enter from the west or north.

#### **Encounter: Rat’s Den (Level 3, 750 XP)**

- 1 Ochre Jelly 300 XP
- 3 wererats 450 XP
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**Tactics:** The wererats attempt to listen to hear the Adventurers approach (17 perception) so unless the group is all using stealth, the wererats can set up the ambush. The ochre jelly oozes out from a crack near the center of the crossroad, while a wererat takes point on the other remaining halls. They have surprise unless the Adventurers can detect the wererats (DC 20). The Ochre jelly enters on the center square on its turn and moves towards the nearest creature, while the wererats attempt to divide and conquer.

#### **L.) Wererat’s Lair**

*“These crypts appear relatively recent. A table and chairs sets in left side of the crypt, and several cots are stacked along the right.”*

The wererats use this as their base of operations for their nightly thefts. As such, their ill gotten gains remain hidden in an unused vault. (Str DC 15 to open).

**Treasure:** In the vault is a 170 gp.

#### **M.) Duvall’s Crypt**

*“The final hall turns to the left to reveal a circular room with a stone statue of an old man dressed in finery. A single stone sarcophagi sits in the center, and a single low-burning scone spreads shadows across the room in all directions.”*

The statue is a marker of Duvall, and his lone crypt sits here. His spirit haunts this crypt, as well as other foul dead.

#### **Encounter: Haunted by Regret (Level 4; 875)**

- 1 Shadowborn wraith 400 XP
- 1 Specter 175 XP
- 2 Skeleton 300 XP

Shadowborn Wraith	Level 5 Elite Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 400
<b>Initiative</b> +10	<b>Senses</b> Perception +2; darkvision
<b>HP</b> 80; <b>Bloodied</b> 40	
<b>Regeneration</b> 5 (if the shadowborn wraith takes radiant damage, regeneration is negated until the end of the shadowborn wraith’s next turn)	
<b>AC</b> 18; <b>Fortitude</b> 13, <b>Reflex</b> 18, <b>Will</b> 16	
<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 10 necrotic, insubstantial;	
<b>Vulnerable</b> 5 radiant (see also <i>regeneration</i> above)	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> fly 6 (hover); phasing ; see also <i>shadow glide</i>	
<b>Action Point:</b> 1	
④ <b>Shadow Touch</b> (standard; at-will) ☐ <b>Necrotic</b>	
+8 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).	
<b>Combat Advantage</b> ☐ <b>Necrotic</b>	
The shadowborn wraith deals an extra 1d6 necrotic damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
<b>Shadow Glide</b> (move; encounter)	
The shadowborn wraith shifts 6 squares.	
<b>Spawn Wraith</b>	
Any humanoid killed by the shadowborn wraith rises as a free-willed wraith at the start of its creator’s next turn, appearing in the space where it died (or in the nearest unoccupied space). Raising the slain creature (using the Raise Dead ritual) does not destroy the spawned wraith.	
<b>Cloak of Shadows</b> (minor; encounter)	
The shadowborn wraith is invisible until the end of its next turn.	
✱ <b>Cloud of Darkness</b> (minor; encounter)	
Close burst 1; this power creates a zone of darkness that remains in place until the end of the shadowborn wraiths’s next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the shadowborn wraiths. Any creature entirely within the area (except the shadowborn wraith) is blinded.	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Common
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +11	
<b>Str</b> 4 (–1)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+6)
<b>Con</b> 13 (+3)	<b>Int</b> 6 (+0)
	<b>Wis</b> 10 (+2)
	<b>Cha</b> 15 (+4)

**Tactics:** The Shadowborn wraith emerges from his crypt, but does not interact with the adventurers except to fight. The spectre emerges from through the statue, and the two skeletons arise from piles near the entrance. The wraith uses hit-and-run tactics, starting with his cloud of darkness to gain combat advantage and using his action point to strike two different foes if possible. He uses his shadow glide and cloak of shadows if surrounded and is not against fleeing into his coffin to heal for a round or two. The skeletons attack any foes in the room, preferring to harry casters and lightly armored foes. The specter uses his spectral barrage on foes near the wraith so that the the wraith can use his combat advantage on them. He also will use his invisibility to quietly gain a flank with the wraith.

**Treasure:** True to legend, the miser took it with him. What remains of the Day fortune is two pearls (100 gp), a golden bracelet (250 gp), 100 gp, and a *Pouch of Platinum*. Elizas father’s ring (a simple gold band)

is on Duvall's left ring finger. The Adventurers could sell it for 100 gp, but doing so would anger Eliza, who may haunt them in ways devised by the DM.

Once Duvall is destroyed, Eliza can rest easily. The adventurers receive 125 XP each, plus 25 more if they return her father's ring. If the Adventurers inform Tamon his home is no longer haunted, he will give them 50 gp + a *potion of healing*. No matter what, the adventurers become local heroes for solving the mystery of the Wild Rose

### **Where The Wild Roses Grow**

Lyrics by Nick Cave and Kylie Minogue

#### *CHORUS:*

*They call me The Wild Rose  
But my name was Elisa Day  
Why they call me it I do not know  
For my name was Elisa Day*

*From the first day I saw her I knew she was the one  
As she stared in my eyes and smiled  
For her lips were the colour of the roses  
They grew down the river, all bloody and wild*

*When he knocked on my door and entered the room  
My trembling subsided in his sure embrace  
He would be my first man, and with a careful hand  
He wiped the tears that ran down my face*

#### *CHORUS*

*On the second day I brought her a flower  
She was more beautiful than any woman I'd seen  
I said, 'Do you know where the wild roses grow  
So sweet and scarlet and free?'*

*On the second day he came with a single rose  
Said: 'Will you give me your loss and your sorrow?'  
I nodded my head, as I layed on the bed  
He said, 'If I show you the roses will you follow?'*

#### *CHORUS*

*On the third day he took me to the river  
He showed me the roses and we kissed  
And the last thing I heard was a muttered word  
As he stood smiling above me with a rock in his fist*

*On the last day I took her where the wild roses grow  
And she lay on the bank, the wind light as a thief  
As I kissed her goodbye, I said, 'All beauty must die'  
And lent down and planted a rose between her teeth*

#### *CHORUS*