

# Kzmatic's Keep

## A "Legends of Novus" 5E Adventure

Welcome to Kzmatic's Keep.

This adventure is created for the rules of 5E, as a stand-alone adventure.

This adventure can easily be modified to fit into any campaign setting, and is intended to be played in a single 3 to 4 hour session. The adventure is designed for four to five 5th level characters, however the DM can scale back on the number of creatures in any given encounter to make the module playable for lower levels.

If there is a desire to use for a higher level party, some substitution recommendations will be provided near the end of the module.

A 3-4 hour adventure for four to five 5th level characters

by Wesley Woodbury of FunDaMental Games



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# Summary

The adventuring group will encounter a mysterious stranger, who transports them to a dark cell in an unknown place. Their regular gear is missing, all they have is their basic gear (and basic components required to cast spells/etc). No weapons or armor until discovered later. They will have to find their way out of the room, then through a series of other chambers, before eventually forced to battle images of themselves, and find the prisoner, and the way out of Kzmatiks' Keep.

## The Hook

While enjoying a meal together (perhaps after their last adventure came to an end), the group of adventurers is interrupted...

"The noise of the tavern, loud and boisterous, comes to a sudden stop. All around you the other patrons seem frozen in position. One gent was in the process of pouring a drink down his throat, but even the ale is frozen in position halfway to his mouth. Looking around instinctively, each of you realize your party can move only your eyes and heads, everything else is locked into position. The halfling waiter is in mid step, holding a plate of roasted bacon in each hand intended for the troupe of dwarves at the table next to yours."

Each player must make a DC15 WIS (Insight) , the player that succeeds with the highest result is the only player able to interact in the following scenario.

Striding out of the shadows comes a cloaked figure, taller than most men but very thin and emaciated. You cannot see the person's eyes or facial features, only the neatly-trimmed pointed beard protruding from the hood. The beard is a dark grey, with lines of white hair streaked through it. One of the man's arms is outstretched, robe slid back to reveal an armful of indecipherable glyphs tattooed on his skin. He spends a moment standing in front of each of you before walking to the next, even trailing his hand over muscles, equipment, and weapons. You can't help but feel he is measuring your capabilities, whispering to himself extremely fast and unintelligible.

The hooded figure stops to stand in front of the player who passed their skill save.

His voice slows down, and he pulls back the hood to reveal his bald head, covered in a spiral circle pattern of glyphs and symbols you do not recognize. His fast ramblings come to an end, and he stares at you with milky white eyes, with no pupils...

"You and your group may be the answer I have been looking for," he says, a slight chuckle coming afterward. "Keep in mind, this is what I felt about the last four groups."

The old man pauses, as though waiting for a response from the player (this will give the player an opportunity to interact with the NPC, but they cannot seek advice from the frozen players).

The GM is to play the old man as uncaring and disinterested in the world in which he is in. His only goal in being here is to find a way to get help for the world he came from. Some phrases which can be placed in the conversation are:

"Although your group seems rather... inexperienced... I see a potential that few have."

"I am in need of a capable group of people, one that can find their way out of a very significant problem."

"I do not have any interest in asking for your assistance, but I will need your assistance. So for those of you listening (he stares at each of the companions for a moment), prepare yourselves for the most challenging trial of your petty little lives."

"If you find a way past the first challenge, which none of the others have, then perhaps I will find it worth my time to come back and enlighten you further."

After this back and forth dialogue, at any point the DM decides, the following action takes place:

The old, tattooed man raises his right hand, and suddenly the player who was speaking can no longer speak.

"Enough... the castle stirs... the time to return is now!" The man pounds his fist with an incredible, unexpected force in a downward motion (knuckles into the table). The wooden table shatters apart, a blizzard of timber and slivers whirls around the room, then all goes black.

# The Library

The purpose of this room is to provide the group with a confined room in which to solve a puzzle. There will be one combat that will take place in the room, the timing of it will depend on how the players explore and complete the room puzzles.

Make sure you read through, and understand, this entire scenario before putting the players through it.

Each player must roll a Wisdom plus Constitution check. The player with the highest success result will waken first, then every ten minutes after that the next person will wake up until all are awake. Any efforts made to wake the others up will fail, however they will still show signs of life. This will give players the opportunity to explore and interpret the room in a non-group way at first.

It is recommended to find a way to separate the first one or two players that wake up, but then you can regroup all players after that. Time should be planned appropriately so that it is not ten actual minutes, but ten minutes in the game world. IE if a player says they want to spend time looking at cracks in a wall, then that may take half of the ten minutes all by itself.

As you shake off the groginess of the blackout, you can see you are in a fairly large, stone walled room. For its size, approximately 40' x 40', it feels empty, but the distinct, musty smell of an old library promises it to be much fuller than it looks. The room appears to have no doors or windows. The walls and ceiling are identical to the floor. The ceiling is about 15' high. The room is lit by some of the stone squares on one wall giving off a faint blue light (the opposite wall is difficult to see).

In the corner of the room is a 3'x3' opening in the floor. In the centre of the room is a large iron chest, the lid is secured shut and locked, with a keyhole but no key visible. Each of your companions is lying on the floor around this chest, uninjured, but also unarmed.

On one wall of the room is a large bookcase, 20' wide and 10' tall, with four levels of shelves loaded with all manner of books.

The players do not have any of their weapons or magical items, and the items are nowhere to be seen in the room.

Approximately 1,200 books are on the shelves.

At a rate of 2 seconds per title (assuming 10+



Intelligence), this would be 2,400 seconds, or about 40 minutes, for someone to read every single title.

Depending on the Intelligence of the person checking the books this could take more or less time, and the important book title could be overlooked.

If players ask to read book titles the GM can be as inventive as they like with them. One of my most favourite list of books I've come across lately is the book titles from the boardgame by Renegade Studios, called Ex Libris. I have included a PDF link for this for those of you that are interested in them!

<https://bit.ly/2kutZo2>

Also, to make this part of the adventure more interesting, at the GMs discretion they can have book titles that, if touched or pulled from the shelf, will trigger an illusionary image. Examples could include:

A Wolf in Sheeps Clothing - Suddenly a pack of wolves materializes and runs across the room.

Kamikaze Kobolds - A dozen kobolds armed with explosives comes into the room through a wall opening (that closes afterwards). The charge at the group, while lighting their packs to explode.

Have fun with the potential here, keeping in mind this could confuse players as to what the purpose is, which is to find a way out.

One of the books is labelled "The Key to Begin". Inside of this book is a hollowed out section of pages, with an iron key resting inside.

When you place the key into the lock of the iron chest, it turns with ease, and the lid automatically snaps open to reveal that it is full of needles. Thousands and thousands of needles, with an envelop on top.

Within this chest full of iron needles is a single aluminum needle, which looks exactly like the rest. Players will not likely be able to find this needle without some kind of help.

# The Library

The helpful hint was in the envelope, which is a letter that is now in the pocket of one of the corpses at the bottom of the chute.

The bottom of the chute is impossible to see without a light source that can extend at least 60', or some form of Infravision. Base your description on the lighting and method of descent into the chute. A talented rogue or high dexterity character should be able to get down without the use of a rope by using the walls as bracing points.

The 3x3 opening in the floor is a straight chute downwards. It smells of death, sickening death. It is pitch black down below, difficult to determine how far down it goes.

With your light source you are able to see about 30' down, but cannot see the bottom of it yet.

When you get down far enough, you see a pile of bodies at the bottom of the chute, at least three or four of them. Much like yourselves, they do not appear to have been armed or armored.

You set yourself down on the corpses, having no solid ground visible to stand on. It turns out there are a few more corpses beneath the upper ones. Thankfully they all seem truly dead. There seem to be of different professions, and ethnicity, but they are all human.

You dig around the upper layers of corpses, seeking anything of value or a hint at what could help. After a few minutes of searching you come across a folded parchment in one of the mens trouser pockets.

A hissing sound suddenly echoes throughout the chute, and the bodies beneath you begin to shake and shift about.

Make a DC12 Dexterity, if you fail the creature gets a first free attack.

Bursting out of the pile of corpses is a giant, many legged insect, about 4' long, covered in blood and puss from feasting down below. You have either disturbed its peaceful meal, or come across as a tastier treat for it!

## CARRION CRAWLER

[ Charognard rampant ]

Large monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 51 (6d10 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

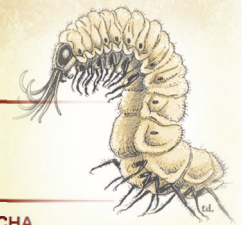
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)



The creature has long, whiplike tentacles protruding from the front of its beady eyed face, and chitinous plates about its caterpillar like body.

When attacking, the monster lashes out with its 2' long tentacles, each of which produces a sticky secretion that can paralyze its victims for 2-12 turns. A save versus paralyzation is allowed to escape these effects. The monster will always attack with all of its tentacles.

The insect creature will attack only until the target is either paralyzed, or leaves the chute. It will not climb out to follow the character as it has enough food to last it several weeks already. It just didn't like the sounds and movements above it.

If the character is paralyzed, it can watch as the giant insect burrows back down into the corpse pile below, to feast on the lowest, softest bodies.

Other characters can work at pulling the paralyzed person out, or wait until they can climb out themselves. Players are welcome to try other things to lure out the creature, but it will only come out if something is disturbing its food pile.

The letter will be provided as a handout to the players once it is found and opened. It will be a folding puzzle that will spell the name of two books, once folded correctly. The book names are "A Study of Magnetic Fields" and "The Magical Needle". The Magnet book must be brought to the pile of needles, it will attract all of them onto it and leave only the aluminum needle left. The aluminum needle must be placed onto the image of the needle on the cover of the book, then the book will open (it does not open without the magic needle). Inside, the book pages are blank, but when the cover opens the book will provide a temporary magical light.