

That DOESN'T Belong in a Museum!

A ONE-PAGE DUNGEON ABOUT REPATRIATING LOOT

by Jake Christie

"A days-long trek through the jungle finally brings you to the temple's rotten wooden doors - still hanging open from the day it was sacked. Holes in the roof allow only shafts of sunlight into the towering hall, and damp, cool air welcomes you..."

2. Storeroom. Broken beer casks and wine bottles lend this room its overpowering sticky-sweet odor. The devotees' storeroom doesn't store anything edible or potable anymore, just decaying garbage and empty shelves. It might not sound appetizing to the heroes, but it's the perfect home for the giant rat who's taken up residence - and he'll defend his spoils.

The fallen pulpit is illuminated by a single ray of light, almost as if Solara is still looking over her temple...

4. Private altar. In this intimate room of worship, stone benches surround an intricate design on the floor: concentric circles with rusted edges, inset with golden orbs, forming a pattern of nested suns. On the far side of the room, a piece of the stone wall has slid away to reveal a hidden passage. Rotating the circles or removing any of the orbs causes the door to slam shut, but it can easily be opened again by restoring the design to how it was found.

"Aye, I've bested dragons, stared down basilisks, and spat in the faces of demons. But a heroic legacy is one of good acts, not simply good victories."

Summary: Retired adventurer Gliplak Strongholt calls the heroes to his Museum of Antiquities, which is - for a museum - strangely empty. He tells them that in his old age he has decided to return his ill-gotten gains to the people and places they were taken from, and he's in the process of getting the rarest pieces home. He offers the heroes a reward to take the ornate Necklace of Solara back to the Temple of the Sun in the Carginian Jungle.

The vibe: Dark, musty, spooky. After Strongholt looted this temple, the devotees left, and it fell to ruin. Get your players thinking about longer timelines, adventuring careers, and the legacy they leave behind; after they beat the boss and the campaign is over, what happens to the dungeon?

1. Temple. Once a place of worship for the sun goddess Solara, the temple now cowers in devotion to darkness. Stone benches are abandoned; walls collapsed; a pulpit overturned. Petrified air chokes the air. Grime obscures faded yellow frescoes with a sun motif. **1d6 monkeys** swing from vines hanging through the shattered roof.

3. Sleeping Quarters. Utter darkness. The sconces have gone unlit for decades, though torches can be salvaged here. It's hard to tell whether the devotees left in a hurry or trickled away after their temple was sacked; did they leave anything behind? If the heroes decide to search the moldering linens and chests, they find a **sun-themed magic item** on a critical success.

6. Triggered Pit Trap. When Strongholt plundered this temple, he set off this 15-foot wide, 20-foot deep, spike-lined pit trap. There doesn't appear to be any easy way across, and the deadly poison on the spikes has only fermented over the years. How to get across - a flight spell? a grappling hook? a hastily-constructed bookshelf bridge? Time to put those problem-solving skills to work.

Chattering voices echo up these stairs from room 5...

8. Vaults. These dark, cavernous chambers held the treasures that the devotees collected to honor Solara. Today, the pickings are pretty slim. There are a number of small crafts: beautiful statuary and beadwork that are worthless; and **2d10x10 copper pieces**. Taking any treasure disturbs the **swarm of spiders** nesting here.

5. Secret Library. Scuzz C. Skazz and his band of **1d6+2 goblins** have made this library that formerly housed Solaran holy books their home. Not many of the books have survived their occupation; a burn pile and stew pot take up the center of the room, and they've turned the bookshelves into their beds (including the one in the bottom left that used to hide a secret doorway, now open). The aroma of roasted vermin and root vegetables fills the air. Skazz and his goblins will defend their home, but are willing to let the heroes pass for the right amount of food or gold. They can't share anything about the depths of the ruins because they've never been past the pit in hallway 6.

What if...

...My players decide to just keep the Necklace of Solara for themselves? They won't get paid, that's for sure. It doesn't really do anything, and Strongholt has plenty of contacts he can reach out to in order to "correct" their behavior if they double-cross him.

...I want a longer adventure? The Carginian Jungle is remote and dangerous. Expand the adventure by including travel to, and through, the jungle - and then back again.

...I want to turn this into a campaign? Strongholt has many items to repatriate, and needs heroes to deliver them. This could mean more dungeon-delving, mystery solving (where do these belong?) and social encounters (how do the rightful owners respond?)

...I don't play in a fantasy setting? Strongholt could be a space pirate, repatriating his booty to different planets; or an archeology professor, returning relics to delay the coming of eldritch gods; or a tech magnate who needs hackers and punks who know their way around the paved-over undercity where this thing came from.

...I want to learn more about the repatriation of art and cultural property?

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Repatriation_\(cultural_property\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Repatriation_(cultural_property)) is a good place to start!

7. Hall of the Gods. This collapsed hall housed statues to Solara's family: The Spark. The Lightbringer. The twins, Dawn and Dusk. Eclipse. And the empty pedestal for Nova, where his living statue rose to defend the shrine with his **fiery sword** before being defeated by Strongholt. Nova's statue is still alive, just missing his legs; and he'll still defend the shrine, but mostly he's lonely and distressed by his failure. Maybe the heroes can offer him some measure of peace?

9. Stairs to Solara's Shrine. The gas trap defending these stairs was set off by Strongholt so long ago that the poison has coated the walls, congealed, and gained sentience as **1d8 angry green oozes**.

10. Solara's Shrine. The majesty of this shrine is marred by the giant rotting golden dragon corpse draped in front of it. This golden dragon, Magma, was the defender of Solara's shrine until he was slain for the necklace. Now the defenders of the room are the **3d6 carrion-feeding monsters** who see what's left of the corpse as their property.

Upon returning the necklace to the shrine, the heroes are greeted with a vision of the goddess Solara herself, resplendent in her sunbeam-woven gown. She thanks them for bringing the necklace to her, bringing its journey full circle after all these years. As her light fills the corridors, bringing back warmth, she grants the characters a **boon** to help them continue their good work.