

Kobold Cult Collusion

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Read to Player (Hook):

As you venture deeper into the ancient catacombs, the air grows heavy with a chilling silence. Cobwebs drape over crumbling archways, and the faint scent of decay lingers in the air. Suddenly, a guttural chant, punctuated by the rhythmic clinking of bones, echoes through the cavern. Ahead, a motley crew of kobolds emerges from the shadows, their reptilian eyes gleaming with fanaticism. They brandish crude weapons and stand amidst a horde of animated skeletons, their leader, a particularly large and cunning kobold stands near the back, barking orders in a guttural tongue. It seems you've stumbled upon a hidden ritual conducted by a fanatical kobold cult. Will you stand and

fight these skeletal guardians and their reptilian overlords, or attempt to unravel the secrets of their dark ceremony?

Setting:

The encounter takes place within a large chamber within the catacombs. The room is dimly lit by flickering torches, casting long, eerie shadows across the chamber walls. Scattered around the room are several stone pillars and urns, some overturned and broken. In the center of the chamber, a crude altar made of bones and skulls stands before a large, ominous rune etched into the floor.

Player Configuration:

This encounter is designed for a party of 4-6 adventurers of level 3-4.

Main Challenge:

The main challenge involves defeating a group of animated skeletons controlled by a fanatical kobold cult, led by the charismatic and ruthless Korvus Blackwood and the fanatical priestess Sister Seline. Korvus's ability to raise fallen skeletons with his amulet adds a significant threat to the encounter.

What's really going on

What's truly driving Korvus isn't just blind fanaticism, but a deep-seated resentment that burns within all kobolds. Tired of being mocked for their small stature, he seeks to compensate with a show of power that will leave all other creatures trembling. By raising an undead army within the catacombs, he envisions a force that will not only grant him dominion over these caverns, but also strike fear into the hearts of those who once belittled him. This twisted ambition fuels his dark magic, turning the catacombs into a breeding ground for his vengeance.

NPC Characters:

Korvus Blackwood

Level 5 Kobold Sorcerer

H.P. 38 – A.C. 16

Speed: 30 ft.

STR: +0 **DEX:** +2 **CON:** +1 **INT:** +3 **WIS:** -1 **CHA:** +2

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Notice 9

Languages: Common, Draconic

Armor: Leather Armor

Weapons: Dagger 1d4 damage

Spells:

- Cantrips (at will): Mage Hand, Prestidigitation, Thaumaturgy
- 1st Level (4 slots): Charm Person, Detect Magic, Disguise Self, Magic Missile
- 2nd Level (3 slots): Flaming Sphere, Hold Person, Mirror Image

Special Abilities:

- **Amulet of Raise Dead:** As an action, Korvus can expend a charge from the amulet to target a fallen creature within 10 feet of him. The creature rises as a skeletal warrior under his control. The skeletal warrior has the same statistics as a regular skeleton from the Cresthaven RPG monster manual, except it obeys Korvus's commands. The amulet has 3 charges that recharge daily at dawn.
- **Cunning Action:** As a bonus action, Korvus can Dash or Disengage.

Tactics:

Korvus will use his cunning and magic to manipulate the battlefield. He will prioritize using his spells to control the party, such as casting Charm Person or Hold Person to take them out of the fight. He will also use his amulet to raise fallen skeletons as additional combatants, bolstering his forces. Furthermore, he will primarily stay out of melee range, using his dagger and ranged spells to attack from a safe distance.

Sister Seline

Level 5 Kobold Cleric (Death Domain)

H.P. 35 – A.C. 11

Speed: 30 ft.

STR: 0 **DEX:** +1 **CON:** 0 **INT:** 0 **WIS:** +3 **CHA:** 0

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Notice 13

Languages: Common, Draconic

Armor: None

Weapons: Mace +2 damage 1d6 + 2 damage

Spells:

- Cantrips (at will): Sacred Flame, Thaumaturgy, Toll the Dead
- 1st Level Spells (4 slots): Bless, Cause Wounds, Inflict Wounds, Sanctuary
- 2nd Level Spells (3 slots): Spiritual Weapon, Hold Person, Ray of Enfeeblement

Channel Divinity:

- **Turn Undead:** As an action, Sister Seline can present her holy symbol and speak a word of rebuke. Undead creatures within 30 feet of her that have a challenge rating less than or equal to her cleric level must make a Wisdom saving throw or be turned for 1 minute. A turned creature must use its turn to flee the cleric or the battle area.

Special Abilities:

- **Channel Divinity: Reaper:** When Sister Seline reduces a creature to 0 hit points with an attack or spell, she can deal an additional 2d6 damage to the creature.

Tactics:

Sister Seline will focus on bolstering the skeletal warriors with her spells, using Bless to increase their attack rolls and Spiritual Weapon to deal additional damage. She will also unleash powerful attacks with spells like Cause Wounds and Ray of Enfeeblement to weaken the adventurers. Additionally, she will use her Channel Divinity to turn any undead creatures the adventurers might summon against them.

- **Kobold Cultists (4):** These kobolds are driven by a twisted sense of religious fervor and wield crude daggers and shortbows. They are not skilled warriors, but their fanaticism makes them relentless in combat. Their scales range in color from reddish brown to black, and their eyes gleam with a mixture of fear and fanaticism.
- **Skeletal Warriors (6):** These animated skeletons are the primary offensive force of the encounter. They wield rusty swords and shields and are controlled by Korvus and Sister Seline through dark magic.

Tactics:

- The kobold cultists will act as support, harassing the party with ranged attacks while staying out of melee range themselves, utilizing the cover of the chamber and their natural agility.

- The skeletal warriors will always move into close range of the players to attempt to keep them in hand-to-hand combat and unable to launch ranged attacks on the kobolds.

Possible Player Actions:

- **Focus fire:** Prioritizing Korvus and Sister Seline to disrupt their control over the skeletons and weaken their offensive capabilities.
- **Area-of-effect attacks:** Utilizing spells or abilities that can damage multiple skeletons simultaneously can be highly effective.
- **Disrupt the ritual:** If the adventurers can identify the key point of the ritual (perhaps the rune on the floor), they can attempt to disrupt it, potentially causing the skeletons to fall inactive and weakening Korvus's ability to reanimate them.

Potential Outcomes:

- **Victory:** If the adventurers defeat Korvus, Sister Seline, and all the skeletal warriors, they can investigate the chamber further, potentially uncovering additional secrets of the cult, their rituals, and the source of their dark power.
- **Retreat:** If the party is overwhelmed, they can attempt to retreat deeper into the catacombs, potentially encountering other dangers or finding another way to overcome the kobold cult.
- **Negotiation (Optional):** If the adventurers possess strong charisma or persuasion skills, they might attempt to reason with Korvus, potentially learning more about his motives or even gaining temporary assistance from a portion of the kobold cultists, though their inherent resentment towards larger creatures might make this a difficult feat.

Further Ideas:

- Defeating Korvus and Sister Seline could reveal a larger plot involving a more powerful entity behind the scenes, potentially leading the adventurers to a hidden kobold base or a more sinister threat.
- The chamber might contain valuable artifacts or clues related to the cult's activities, such as the amulet of Raise the Dead, Sister Seline's staff, or ritualistic scrolls containing dark magic spells.
- The adventurers might encounter other factions within the catacombs, such as rival treasure hunters or tomb guardians, who could offer assistance or pose additional challenges.

Treasure:

- Upon defeating Korvus, Sister Seline, and the skeletons, the adventurers can recover the amulet of Raise the Dead from Korvus's body. This powerful artifact allows the user to reanimate fallen creatures as skeletal warriors, but it has limited charges.
- Additionally, they might find valuable items hidden amongst the bones and urns in the chamber, such as gold, gems, ritualistic daggers, or scrolls containing dark magic spells.

Experience Points (XP):

Defeating Korvus, Sister Seline, and all the skeletal warriors in this encounter would award the party approximately 600 XP per player, reflecting the increased difficulty presented by the powerful leaders and the amulet of Raise the Dead.