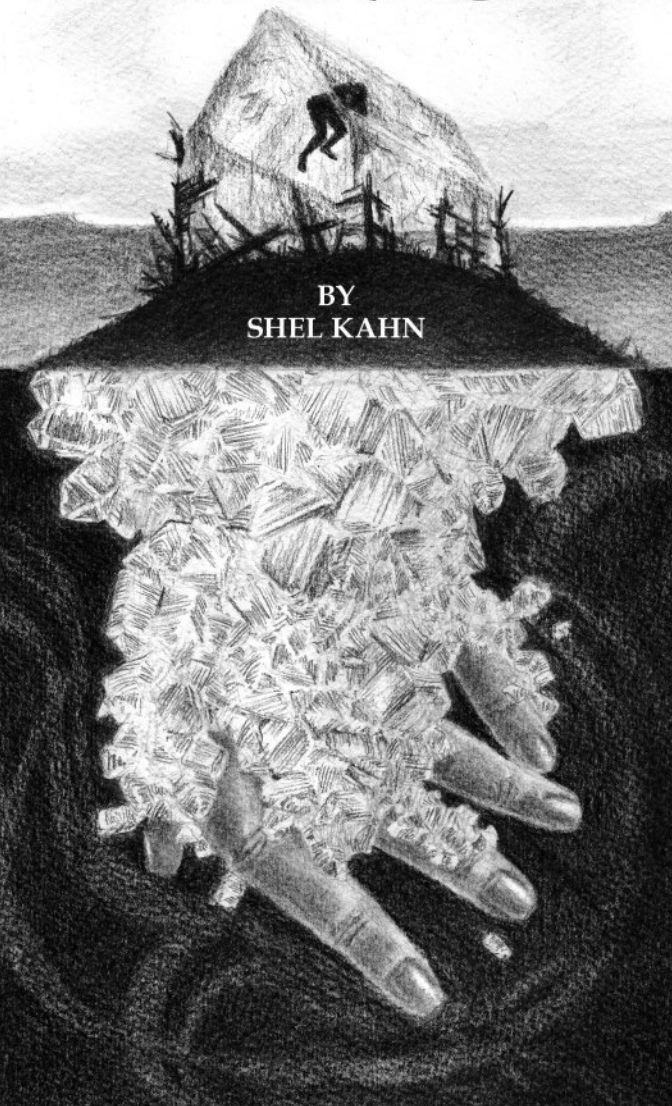


THE GHOST HOUSES of PHYLINECRA

BY
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The Ghost Houses of Phylinecra

*is a Pocket Dungeon, published in 2019,
written and designed by Shel Kahn.*

*This dungeon would not have existed without
the advice and assistance of Ruth Tillman.*

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The Ghost Houses of Phylinecra



Content Note:

This game is both a dungeon delve and a storygame-inspired investigation into *grief, loss, and mortality*. Please, before you start play, make sure you discuss *safety and consent* with your players. This adventure will be the most powerful, exciting and moving if everyone at the table is comfortable, safe, and able to buy in equally.

Easily googlable methods like the *X-Card, Lines & Veils* or *other safety tools* can add a lot of comfort to the table mood, but most importantly, please clarify that player comfort is paramount to this whole experience. If you are GMing, please also assess your own comfort as you play - you are a player as well!

If things get too heavy, I, the author, will be relieved to hear that you paused, reapproached and found mutual common ground narratively.

Now, for the adventure!

Creating your Village of Phylincra - and your Adventurers

As you begin character creation, share all of this setting and set-up information with your players.

Before this adventure begins, the Village of Phylincra has suffered a **devastating flood**.

Adventurers are members of, or are familiar with this village - they may be neighbours, relatives of residents, frequent visitors - players' choice. They could have been there for the flood and been lucky to survive, or they could have shown up after hearing about the flood and been horrified.

If they were present for the flood, this is their understanding of what happened:

A flood came, the water rising first suddenly, a torrent pushing down the river, wiping away almost a third of the village's population; and then slowly, bringing disease and worse from farther upstream. People had to flee until the waters receded, and when they came back, their homes were in disarray, their gardens and infrastructure destroyed, the beauty of the town just washed away by the water. And while they were slowly rebuilding their homes, making the village livable again, they mourned without focus.

Then, after about a week of living back in their village, rich red crystal growths began to erupt from the ground, grabbing survivors' treasured mementos of their lost loved ones. Most people were too stunned to try and prevent it - they watched the

uncanny crystalline arm creep up and surround the memento, then retreat back down into the ground. Many returned to their homes to find a shallow hole in the ground below where that memento once stood.

*Those who tried to fight the crystal as it emerged instead **became encased in it**, and it grew around them to fill the shape of their house - the house as it was before the flood, that is. So even if walls or roofs were missing, the glittering red form fills in the spaces as they once were. Inside these new faceted houses, those encased seem to go into a **deep sleep**.*

*After this surreal invasion, the village is not just rebuilding from the flood and the loss of lives, it now holds what people are referring to as the **Ghost Houses**, each with a once-living human sarcophagied in stasis inside. Some of the surviving residents chose to flee this additional horror, and the few that remain have noticed that in the crystal of the ghost houses, a **strange woman** is reflected as if she is walking the town constantly, but she is not visible or detectable with the usual senses.*

If adventurers were absent for the flood itself, they may have received word that things have gone awry at home, or at least heard news of the disaster, and when they arrive, the few residents still on site can fill them in on what happened.

As the players start to consider who their adventurers are, share with them this information about the village itself.

Phylinecra - The Village's Past

*This village was founded as a creative retreat, home to a large artistic collective. Even after generations, this village's diverse roots still show in the faces, the architectural styles, the fashion and the art. Each family built a house that combined private living space with public gathering space - workshops, forges, studios, cafes and more, creating a tradition of exchanges of visits. The houses stand near the banks of a river, in which lies **The Blessed Isle**, a preternaturally beautiful island with a **reflecting pool** in the centre, where the village created their graveyard.*

*This isn't a field of buried corpses, but instead a beautiful collection of shrines to those lost, where people may bring artwork and plants to leave as tributes and enact musical and poetic grieving rituals. These surround the reflecting pool. Once a year at most, this large pond washes small pieces of a pristine, sparkling **pink crystal** to its shores. These crystals exude a kind of gentle, calm comfort - while being immensely hard and near indestructible. Some folks collect them as blessings from the Goddess - residents might decorate their hearths or place them above doorways for good luck; other folks trade them as building supplies or tools.*

*The village has been there for many generations now; but the rumours of how it was founded revolve around the Blessed Isle. The official story is that a group of young bards, artists, theatre folk and such were travelling from town to town to perform for folks, and came across this beautiful island; upon spending the night there, each dreamt of a **beautiful** Goddess who draped them in flowers and sang sad, enchanting songs to them, and so they decided to settle down and found their own village nearby.*

In less official records, folks tell tale of a member of the troop who fell in love with the Goddess, and refused to leave the island. They drowned in the reflecting pool, and the community, devastated, set up homes nearby so they could honour their companion's death, and built a shrine at which to mourn them on the island itself.