

ASTONISHING SWORDSMEN AND SORCERERS OF

HYPHERBOREA™

**BENEATH
THE
COMET**

BY BEN BALL

MULLEN





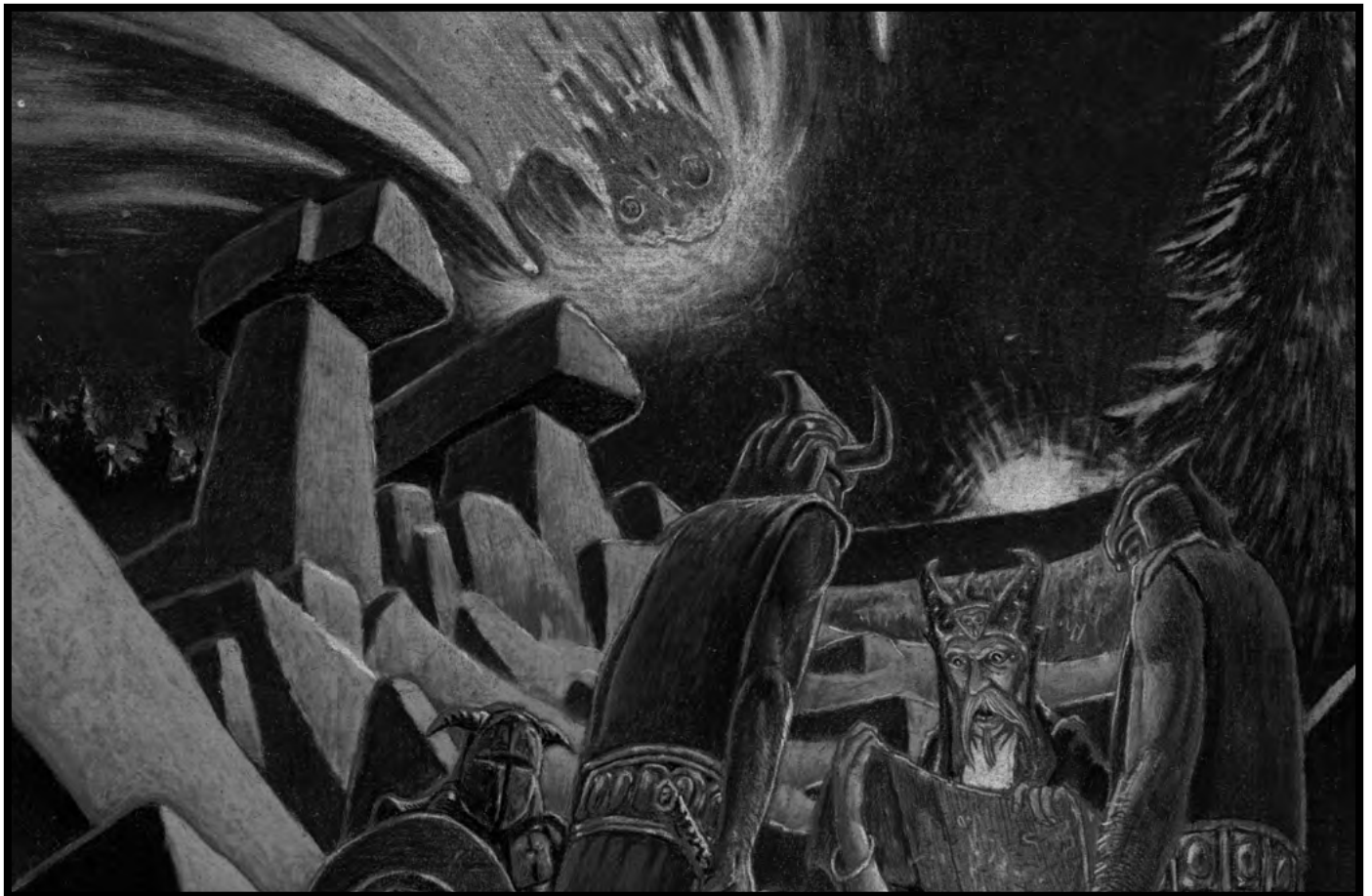
ASTONISHING SWORDSMEN AND SORCERERS OF **HYPARBOREA**™

BENEATH THE COMET™

An adventure in Hyperborea

designed for from four to six characters of 6th through 9th level

by Ben Ball



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Beneath the Comet™ takes players into an action-packed realm of adventure: the mythical world of Hyperborea, a sword-and-sorcery campaign setting inspired by the fantastic fiction of Robert E. Howard, H.P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, and others. It is designed for use with *Astonishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers of Hyperborea™* (AS&SH™), a role-playing game descended from the original 1974 fantasy wargame and miniatures campaign rules as conceived by E. Gary Gygas and Dave Arneson. AS&SH is compatible with most traditional fantasy role-playing games (c. 1974 to 1999) and their modern simulacra, such as OSRIC™ and *Swords & Wizardry™*.

For more information about AS&SH, please visit us at hyperborea.tv.

Play-Testing: The earliest draughts of this adventure were taken on a convention tour in 2014; stops included TotalCon, Gary Con, NTRPGCon, and Carnage, the last of which resulted in a most satisfying TPK for referee Jeff Talanian.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I: THE ADVENTURE BEGINS..... 3
Table 1: Rumours..... 10
Table 2: Male Names..... 10
Table 3: Female Names..... 11
Table 4: Clan Names..... 11
Table 5: Quirks..... 11
PART II: THE LONELY HEATH 11
Table 6: Standard Encounters..... 12
Table 7: Comet Encounters..... 13
Table 8: Fortune Telling..... 14
PART III: THE MOUND OF THE SILVER FLAME 27
Table 9: Dead Pool Treasure..... 34
EPILOGUE: THE COMET PASSES..... 42
APPENDIX 42
OGL STATEMENT 43

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The devoted aficionado of Weird Fiction may perceive that sections of this adventure were deliberately made to resemble the works of E.A. Poe, H.P. Lovecraft, R.E. Howard, and C.A. Smith. Such a reader may wish to amuse himself by attempting to deduce which author inspired the theme and subject matter of a particular portion of the adventure.

**PART I:
THE ADVENTURE BEGINS**

INTRODUCTION

For weeks the Comet has blazed in the sky above Hyperborea, inspiring widespread superstitious dread and fear of some star-borne contagion. Under the light of this harbinger from the Black Gulf, the PCs have come to Bogrest, following a magical treasure map that reveals great wealth buried in the Lonely Heath north of the village. Finding that treasure will be no simple matter, however, for Hyperborea is a weirder and deadlier place than ever beneath the Comet.

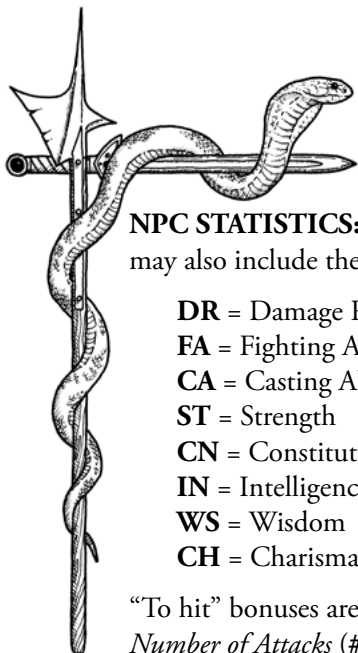
Beneath the Comet is an adventure for from four to six characters of 6th through 9th level, for use with *Astonishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers of Hyperborea* and other traditional fantasy role-playing games.

If this adventure is used with the Hyperborea setting, the default starting point is the small village of Bogrest in the wild depths of the Gal Hills. With some modification, *Beneath the Comet* could be set in any rustic portion of Hyperborea, or in any other campaign world based on traditional fantasy RPGs.

INFORMATION FOR THE REFEREE

MONSTER STATISTICS: All monsters and non-player characters (NPCs) have the following statistics, abbreviated as noted:

- AL = Alignment
- SZ = Size
- MV = Movement
- DX = Dexterity
- AC = Armour Class
- HD = Hit Dice
- hp = Hit Points
- #A = Number of Attacks
- D = Damage
- SV = Saving Throw
- ML = Morale
- XP = Experience Points
- Special** = Special Abilities



NPC STATISTICS: Non-player character statistics may also include the below abbreviations:

- DR** = Damage Reduction
- FA** = Fighting Ability
- CA** = Casting Ability
- ST** = Strength
- CN** = Constitution
- IN** = Intelligence
- WS** = Wisdom
- CH** = Charisma

“To hit” bonuses are noted for each weapon in the *Number of Attacks (#A)* entry. *Armour Class (AC)* and *Damage (D)* figures are calculated to include all pertinent modifiers from attribute scores, magic items, *weapon mastery*, and the like.

A LEGEND OF HYPERBOREA: With great wisdom and mighty sorcery, the ancient kings of Hyperborea in immemorial times ruled over a land of endless summer. Stately they were, and beautiful their queens, and the splendour of their reign has never been matched from that day to this. Amongst the mightiest and subtlest of their number was **Ka-Ven**, an astrologer and sorcerer of unmatched sagacity. He came to the throne at a time when his people were turning away from their joyous reverence of Apollo, toward decadence and the worship of the strange alien being Xathoquua—but rather than seek to combat this apostasy as his predecessors had, Ka-Ven instead struck a most puissant bargain with the “Bat-Toad”.

Xathoquua granted Ka-Ven sorcerous powers undreamt and a span of mortal existence far beyond the norm for even the long-lived Hyperboreans; in exchange, Ka-Ven swore both to promote the worship of the “Bat-Toad” throughout the land and to render his soul unto Xathoquua upon death. This first vow Ka-Ven kept, and his court was a riot of license and depravity under a succession of the loveliest queens Hyperborea had ever seen. The cult of Xathoquua spread throughout the land, and Hyperborea grew darker as a faint chill began to spread in the fragrant summer air. But the second vow, Ka-Ven was determined not to keep.

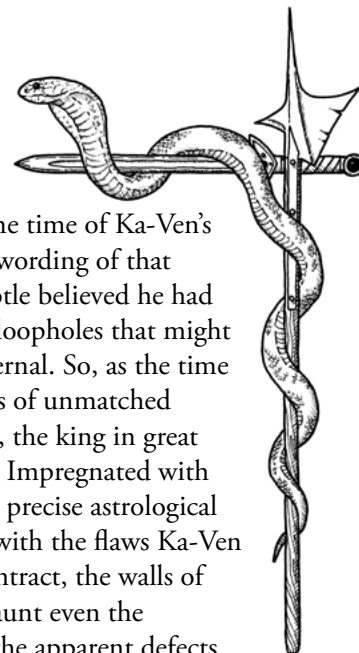
As seal of their agreement, Xathoquua had given Ka-Ven a **tablet**, forged from a fragment of the great

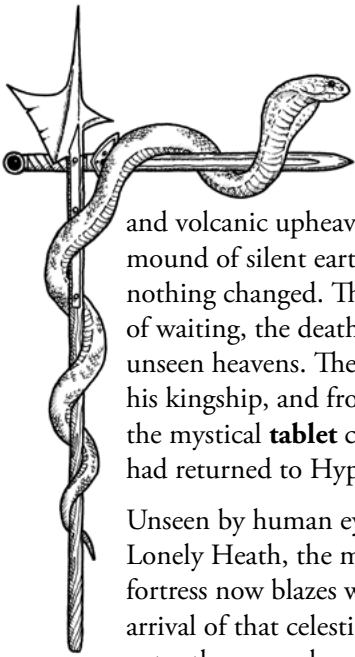
silver comet that lit the sky at the time of Ka-Ven’s ascension to the throne. In the wording of that agreement, Ka-Ven the ever-subtle believed he had detected the minutest of flaws, loopholes that might allow him to escape with life eternal. So, as the time to pay the price for his centuries of unmatched power and splendour drew near, the king in great secrecy reared a hidden fortress. Impregnated with mighty sorceries and laid out in precise astrological and numerological accordance with the flaws Ka-Ven had detected in Xathoquua’s contract, the walls of this concealed bastion would daunt even the “Bat-Toad” himself. (Whether the apparent defects in the contract were real, or some strange jest by the inscrutable Xathoquua, none can say.)

As the time to render his soul to Xathoquua drew nigh, Ka-Ven retreated to his sorcerous hold with his servants and his 13th wife, a good-natured soul dragged weeping from her beloved gardens. The king sat on his throne in the gloom, surrounded by his silent servants and terrified queen, and waited as the hour of his doom arrived... and passed unmarked. Ka-Ven had retained his soul, blackened as it was, and succeeded in cheating Xathoquua—or so he believed.

Innumerable years elapsed in the gloom of the fortress, which Ka-Ven could never again leave lest the “Bat-Toad” claim his due. Other kings reigned outside its walls, and Ka-Ven was soon forgotten. One by one his servants perished, their souls imprisoned in the walls of the fortress to power its eldritch magic. His queen died in time, and Ka-Ven confined her spirit in a lifeless replica of the gardens she once had loved (whether as mockery, or from some lingering spark of affection, is impossible to know). At length Ka-Ven himself passed into undeath, and his fortress became a great tomb in which strange magical devices shimmered and whirled through long centuries of darkness.

Ka-Ven brooded over the existence he had won, as glaciers claimed the surface of Hyperborea... as the land was dragged away from Old Earth to a strange destination... as new peoples lived and loved and fought and died where once the Hyperboreans had ruled unchallenged. For countless ages Ka-Ven sat in the darkness of his fortress, which glaciers





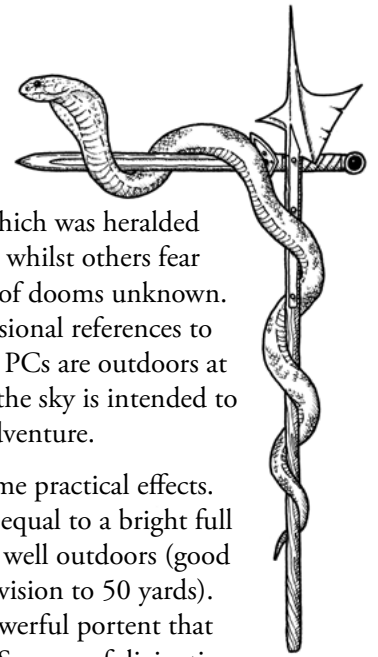
and volcanic upheaval had reduced to a forgotten mound of silent earth in the Gal Hills, and for him nothing changed. Then, after a seeming eternity of waiting, the deathless **lich** raised his eyes to the unseen heavens. The great Comet that had heralded his kingship, and from which Xathoqqua had forged the mystical **tablet** commemorating their agreement, had returned to Hyperborea at last.

Unseen by human eyes in the wild depths of the Lonely Heath, the mound that was once Ka-Ven's fortress now blazes with a silver flame to hail the arrival of that celestial messenger. Now mortals can enter the mound and slay Ka-Ven—but only if they can pass through the obstacles specified by Ka-Ven's reinterpretation of the pact with Xathoqqua. At this very moment, maps leading to Ka-Ven's hiding place have found their way into the possession of greedy adventurers—maps drawn by no human hand. Lured by gold and all unwitting, these adventurers are the instruments of Xathoqqua's vengeance.

That more than one such group competes for the prize is simply another dark jape by the sardonic Xathoqqua. If the adventurers should slay one another in their foolish pursuit of wealth, or fall prey to the many dangers and horrors of the Lonely Heath before they have a chance to destroy Ka-Ven, what of it? The "Bat-Toad" will laugh mockingly and merely wait, in patient divine slothfulness, yet more æons for the Comet to return and offer another chance to exact his revenge.

THE COMET: One unusual feature of this adventure is the great Comet that blazes in the sky throughout. The default assumption is that the Comet appeared about a month before the adventure begins, although the referee can adjust this schedule as appropriate for his needs. If the referee plans to use this adventure as part of an ongoing campaign, he might have the Comet arrive during a prior session as a bit of foreshadowing.

Once the Comet appears, it is highly visible both day and night. By day, it appears as a lurid silver scar filling almost half the sky. At night, it blazes even larger to the eye and illumines the darkness with an eldritch silvery light. The arrival of the Comet has fuelled anxiety throughout Hyperborea. Some amongst the wise dread the coming of another



plague like the Green Death (which was heralded by just such a celestial portent), whilst others fear the great Comet as a harbinger of dooms unknown. The referee should include occasional references to the Comet, especially when the PCs are outdoors at night; its brooding presence in the sky is intended to add to the atmosphere of the adventure.

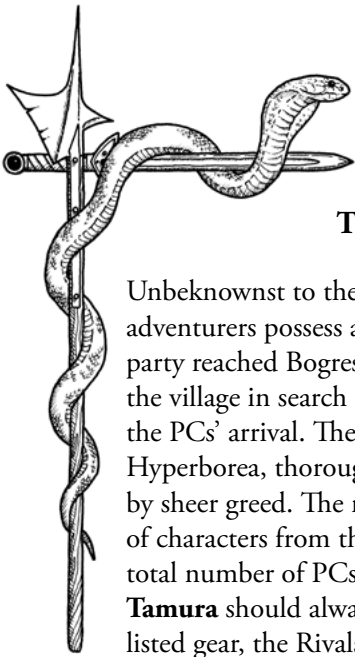
Additionally, the Comet has some practical effects. At night the Comet sheds light equal to a bright full moon, so the PCs can see fairly well outdoors (good vision to 25 yards and dimmer vision to 50 yards). As well, the Comet is such a powerful portent that it overwhelms all lesser omens. Sorcery of divination (including such spells as *augury* and *commune*) and detection (including *find*, *locate*, and *detect* spells) will perform unreliably so long as the Comet is in the sky. Since the Comet arrived weeks ago, the PCs should be well aware of these restrictions.

THE TREASURE MAP: What brought the PCs to Bogrest is their possession of a strange, magical **treasure map** that mentions the village (see **PLAYERS' MAP**); if this adventure is used as part of an ongoing campaign, the referee might elect to have the parchment actually found during a prior session. Before the coming of the Comet, this item seemed to be nothing more than a blank sheet of ancient parchment. Under the garish blaze of the Comet, however, the parchment was seen to be inscribed with silvery calligraphic letters. The writing remains visible and clear whilst the parchment is held under the light of the Comet, but vanishes utterly otherwise.

Writ in the Common tongue at the top of the parchment is the message, "BENEATH THE MOUND OF THE SILVER FLAME GREAT TREASURE IS HID. KNOCK UPON THE STONE AND ENTER...". Beside this legend is drawn a stylized mound topped by a flame; beneath the mound and to the left is a drawing of a small circle of standing stones. Betwixt the mound and the stones, "SIX MILES NORTHEAST OF THE STONES LIES THE MOUND," is writ in smaller letters. The bottom of the map reads, "IN THE LONELY HEATH BEYOND BOGREST. ONLY WHILST THE COMET BURNS...".



JLB
2014



THE RIVALS

Unbeknownst to the PCs, another party of adventurers possess an identical **treasure map**. This party reached Bogrest a few days earlier and left the village in search of the treasure the day before the PCs' arrival. These **Rivals** are truly the scum of Hyperborea, thoroughly Chaotic Evil and motivated by sheer greed. The referee should choose a number of characters from the following list equal to the total number of PCs and henchmen. (**Garazul** and **Tamura** should always be used.) In addition to their listed gear, the Rivals can have any mundane items that the referee deems reasonable and entertaining.

BODICCA (7th-level witch): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40 (fly 80); AC 9; HD 7 (hp 19); FA 3; CA 7; #A 1 (dagger [-1 *melee*]); D 1d4-1; SV 13 [*transformation* +2, *sorcery* +2]; ML 5; XP 750; ST 6, DX 9, CN 7, IN 14, WS 14, CH 13.

Special: Witch spells (*alter self, charm person, ferie fire, hold portal, protection from good, cause blindness, hold person, ungovernable hideous laughter, dispel magic, witch fire, turn sticks to serpents*). *Dance of beguilement* (entices up to seven observers; *sorcery* save to negate; can plant *suggestion* in one victim).

Gear: dagger, **wand of polymorphing** (3 charges), **magic broom, soporific potion, hallucinogenic potion, spell book** (contains all prepared spells), **9 gp**.

This evil-looking Pictish hag has lived beyond her natural span through pacts with dæmonic forces. If slain, she will decay to a pile of mouldy bones in a single round.

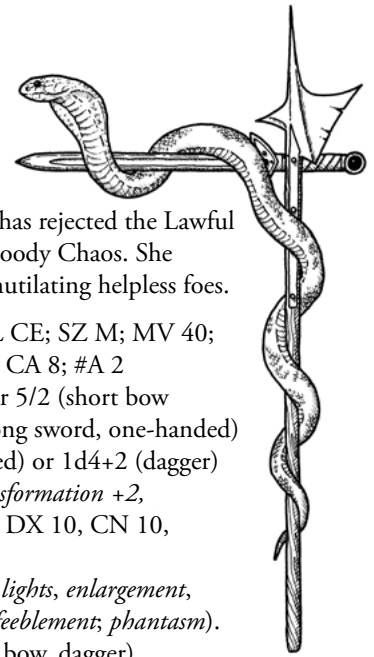
Greedy Gut (gull familiar): AL CE; SZ S; MV 10 (fly 80, swim 10); DX 12; AC 9; HD ¼ (hp 2); #A 1 (peck); D 1; SV 17; ML 12; XP 7.

This carrion-gorged seabird may act as an aerial spy for the Rivals, but Bodicca will not risk him without good cause. In combat, Greedy Gut tends to peck out the eyes of the fallen and wounded on either side.

EUDOXIA (7th-level fighter): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40; AC 2 (1 vs. missiles); DR 1; HD 7 (hp 35); FA 7; #A 2 (falcata [+3], short spear [+2], or dagger [+2]); D 1d6+3 (falcata) or 1d6+2 (short spear) or 1d4+2 (dagger); SV 13 [*death* +2, *transformation* +2, *dodging* +1]; ML 9; XP 510; ST 15, DX 15, CN 14, IN 14, WS 12, CH 9.

Special: *Weapon mastery* (short spear, falcata, dagger). *Super-heroic fighting* (double normal melee attacks vs. opponents of up to 2 HD).

Gear: **+1 chain mail**, large shield, short spear, **+1 falcata**, dagger, **3 gp**.



This perpetually sneering Amazon has rejected the Lawful mores of her people in favour of bloody Chaos. She particularly enjoys torturing and mutilating helpless foes.

GARAZUL (8th-level warlock): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40; AC 4; DR 1; HD 8 (hp 47); FA 8; CA 8; #A 2 (long sword [+3] or dagger [+2]) or 5/2 (short bow [+1, +2 *point blank*]); D 1d8+3 (long sword, one-handed) or 1d10+3 (long sword, two-handed) or 1d4+2 (dagger) or 1d6+1 (short bow); SV 13 [*transformation* +2, *sorcery* +2]; ML 9; XP 760; ST 15, DX 10, CN 10, IN 14, WS 10, CH 15.

Special: Magician spells (*dancing lights, enlargement, ventriloquism, invisibility, ray of enfeeblement, phantasm*). *Weapon mastery* (long sword, short bow, dagger).

Gear: **+1 scale armour**, small shield, **+1 long sword**, short bow, 12 arrows, dagger, **spell book** (contains all prepared spells), **4 gp**.

This hollow-eyed, lotus-chewing Hyperborean is the leader of the Rivals and carries their copy of the **treasure map**. If Garazul dies, the other Rivals will be 90% likely to abandon the adventure.

SNORRI (8th-level barbarian): AL CE; SZ M; MV 50; AC 6; HD 8 (hp 65); FA 8; #A 2 (great axe [+3] or long sword [+3]) or 5/2 (longbow [+2, +3 *point blank*]); D 2d6+4 (great axe) or 1d10+4 (long sword, two-handed) or 1d6+4 (longbow); SV 11 [*poison* +1]; ML 11; XP 760; ST 18, DX 13, CN 16, IN 7, WS 7, CH 8.

Special: *Alertness* (-1 to be surprized). *Ambusher* (surprize 3-in-6 if prepared). *Climb* 9-in-12. *Leap* 25 feet. *Move silently* 8-in-12. *Weapon mastery* (great axe, long sword, longbow).

Gear: studded armour, great axe, long sword, longbow (adjusted for strength bonus), 12 arrows, **6 gp**.

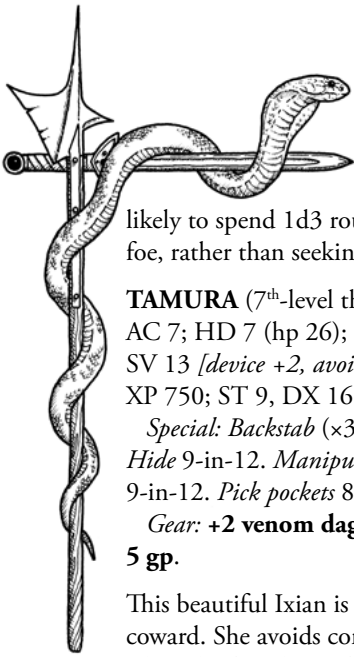
This massive Viking is a dumb brute and alcoholic. If the PCs manage to surprize the Rivals in their camp, Snorri will be passed out drunk on a 1-in-4 chance.

TAAN GOOCH (7th-level scout): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40; AC 4; HD 7 (hp 23); FA 5; #A 1 (hand axe [+2 *melee*, +4 *hurled*] or dagger [+2 *hurled*]) or 3/2 (short bow [+2]); D 1d6+2 (hand axe) or 1d4 (dagger) or 1d6 (short bow); SV 13 [*device* +2, *avoidance* +3, *other dodging* +1]; ML 7; XP 510; ST 12, DX 17, CN 12, IN 15, WS 12, CH 10.

Special: *Alertness* (-1 to be surprized). *Backstab* (×3 damage). *Climb* 10-in-12. *Hide* 9-in-12. *Manipulate traps* 7-in-12. *Move silently* 9-in-12.

Gear: studded armour, small shield, **+2 hurling hand axe**, short bow, 12 arrows, dagger, **potion of invisibility**, **3 gp**.

This squat, sinister half-blood Pict is given to scalp collecting and other abominable pastimes. He is 50%



likely to spend 1d3 rounds taking a scalp from a fallen foe, rather than seeking another melee opponent.

TAMURA (7th-level thief): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40; AC 7; HD 7 (hp 26); FA 5; #A 1 (dagger [+2]); D 1d4+2; SV 13 [*device* +2, *avoidance* +3, *other dodging* +1]; ML 3; XP 750; ST 9, DX 16, CN 12, IN 13, WS 9, CH 16.

Special: *Backstab* (×3 damage). *Climb* 10-in-12. *Hide* 9-in-12. *Manipulate traps* 7-in-12. *Move silently* 9-in-12. *Pick pockets* 8-in-12.

Gear: +2 **venom dagger** (3 doses *penetrative III* poison), 5 gp.

This beautiful Ixian is a manipulative hussy and wretched coward. She avoids combat at all costs and surrenders when the first drop of her blood is spilt.

VULDAR (8th-level assassin): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40; AC 4; HD 8 (hp 29); FA 5; #A 1 (long sword [+1], dagger [+1 *melee*, +2 *hurled*], or light crossbow [+2]); D 1d8+2 (long sword, one-handed) or 1d10+2 (long sword, two-handed) or 1d4+2 (dagger) or 1d6+1 (light crossbow); SV 13 [*device* +2, *avoidance* +3, *other dodging* +1, *poison* +1]; ML 7; XP 1,000; ST 17, DX 17, CN 12, IN 13, WS 10, CH 9.

Special: *Assassinate*. *Climb* 10-in-12. *Hide* 9-in-12. *Manipulate traps* 7-in-12. *Move silently* 9-in-12.

Gear: studded armour, small shield, long sword, light crossbow, 20 bolts coated with *penetrative I* poison, 1 dose *ingestible IV* poison, dagger, 2 gp.

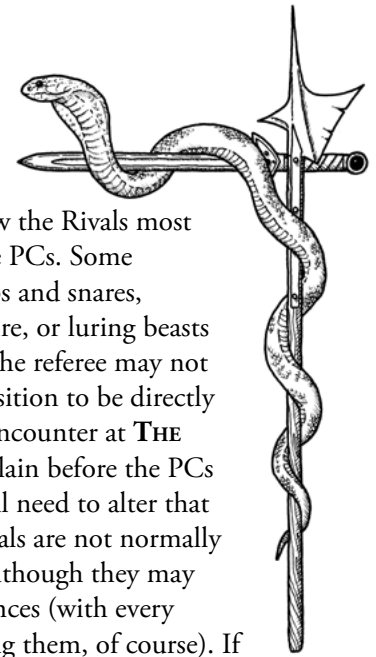
This nondescript killer always goes about his business with a smile. He is adept at setting lethal improvised traps (the details of which are left to the referee's fiendish imagination).

ZANN (7th-level pyromancer): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40; AC 6; HD 7 (hp 23); FA 3; CA 7; #A 1 (scimitar [+1] or dagger [+1 *hurled*]); D 1d8+2 (scimitar, one-handed) or 1d10+2 (scimitar, two-handed) or 1d4+1 (dagger); SV 13 [*device* +2, *sorcery* +2, *mental sorcery* +3, *fire* +2, *cold* -2]; ML 7; XP 750; ST 14, DX 13, CN 14, IN 16, WS 15, CH 10.

Special: Pyromancer spells (*burning hands*, *fire resistance*, *flash*, *influence normal fire*, *smoke cloud*; *fire web*, *flaming sphere*, *glitterdust*, *heat metal*; *blinding light*, *flame arrow*; *produce bonfire*).

Gear: **defensive bracers** (AC 6), +1 **scimitar**, dagger, **spell book** (contains all prepared spells), 6 gp.

This robust, wild-eyed madman is obsessed with watching things (and people) burn. He never misses an opportunity to commit senseless arson, even at the risk of his own life.

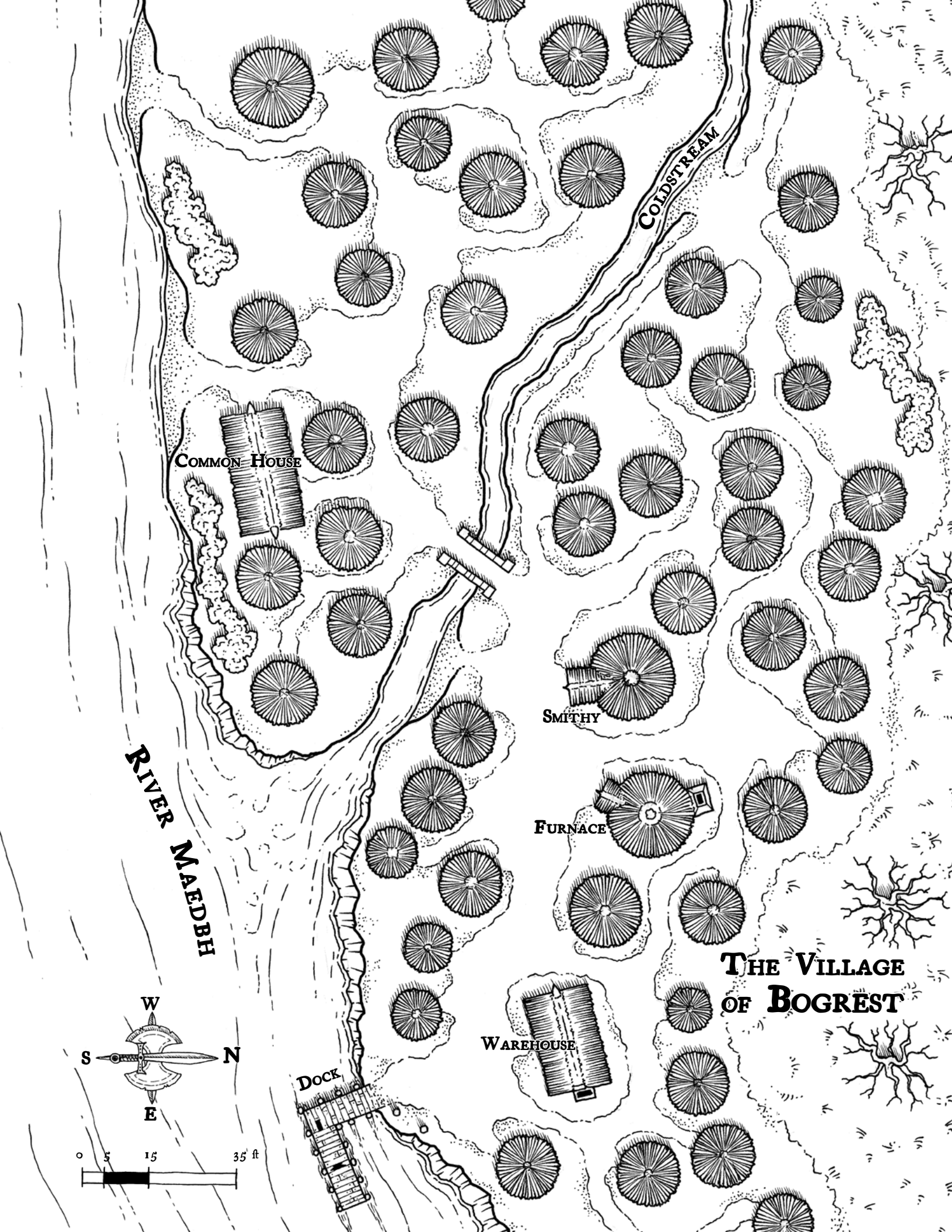


The referee must determine how the Rivals most amusingly can interact with the PCs. Some possibilities include setting traps and snares, ambushing them with missile fire, or luring beasts and monsters to attack them. The referee may not wish to place the Rivals in a position to be directly engaged and killed before the encounter at **THE STONES** (q.v.); if the Rivals are slain before the PCs reach the Stones, the referee will need to alter that encounter accordingly. The Rivals are not normally inclined to ally with the PCs, although they may do so under unusual circumstances (with every intention of eventually betraying them, of course). If captured and interrogated, they know nothing about the adventure beyond what the PCs already do.

THE VILLAGE OF BOGREST

Bogrest is a small village in the depths of the Gal Hills, on the north bank of the slow-moving River Maedbh. It was founded some two centuries ago to extract iron ore from the surrounding bogs. The people of Bogrest smelt the ore, forge it into bars, and trade the iron to the Keltic clans who live along the river. All parties involved respect the neutrality of Bogrest because of the valuable commodity the village provides (and because the other clans would unite against any one clan that seized control of iron production). In stark contrast to the typical Keltic penchant to cut throats and break heads over cattle and women, the people of Bogrest are peaceful, hardworking, and relatively friendly.

The village consists of a ramshackle boat dock, 51 crude but homey residences, a furnace for smelting the bog iron, a smithy where the iron is beaten into useable form, a warehouse for trade goods, and a large common house where a traveller can find cheap meals and a sleeping pallet for 1 cp per night (see **THE VILLAGE OF BOGREST MAP**). Smoke can be seen rising from the furnace, and hammers heard ringing in the smithy, almost every hour of the day. Boggy ground and scattered stands of unhealthy-looking trees surround the village. Approximately 200 souls live in Bogrest, sturdy folk of almost unmixed Keltic blood. These people hold hard work to be the highest virtue and feel no special animus towards any race of men. The village elders make



COMMON HOUSE

SMITHY

FURNACE

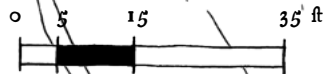
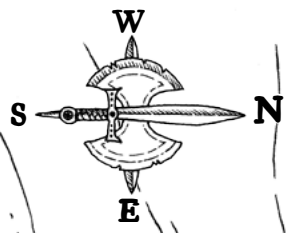
WAREHOUSE

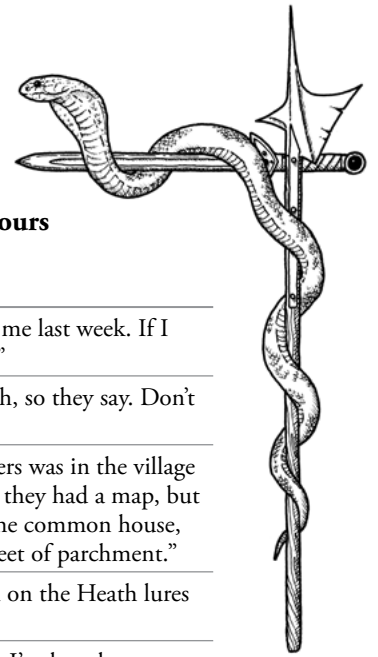
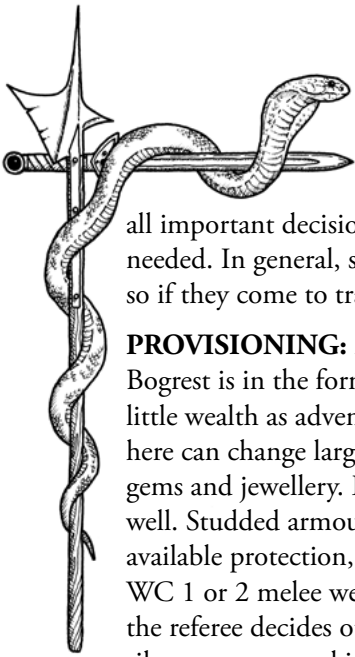
DOCK

COLDSTREAM

RIVER MAEDBH

THE VILLAGE OF BOGREST





all important decisions for Bogrest when such are needed. In general, strangers are welcome (and more so if they come to trade iron).

PROVISIONING: Most of the iron custom in Bogrest is in the form of barter, so the village has little wealth as adventurers understand it. No one here can change large quantities of coin or purchase gems and jewellery. Equipage is in scarce supply as well. Studded armour and small shields are the best available protection, and only short bows, slings, and WC 1 or 2 melee weapons can be purchased, unless the referee decides otherwise. Such superfluities as silver weapons and incendiary oil are not to be had.

Exactly what equipage can be purchased is for the referee to determine, but in general luxurious goods and specialized adventuring gear are not available. As well, no hirelings can be found, and the people of Bogrest will not sell any of their precious few animals (or will do so only at a greatly inflated price). Under normal circumstances, Gal City is the closest settlement where civilized amenities can be had. (Should the referee elect to set further adventures in and around Bogrest, an “adventuring œconomy” could arise in the village, making weapons and equipment more readily available; such developments are left to the referee’s discretion.)

RUMOURS: The people of Bogrest are comparatively friendlier than the typical inhabitants of Hyperborea, albeit somewhat reticent and taciturn. The sinister portent in the sky heightens their disquiet, though a few drinks or coins will loosen their tongues. Unfortunately for the PCs, no one in Bogrest knows anything about a treasure, **THE STONES**, or **THE MOUND** (qq.v.). The Lonely Heath is considered accursed and is shunned at the best of times, so the villagers truly know little about it. However, their ignorance does not necessarily inhibit them from offering advice and opinions on the subject.

Each PC who plies the locals with drink and/or coin will learn 1d3 rumours. The referee should roll 1d10 on **table 1** for each such tale, with a duplicate result indicating that the PC hears the same account from more than one villager. The referee can create additional wild stories as seems appropriate.

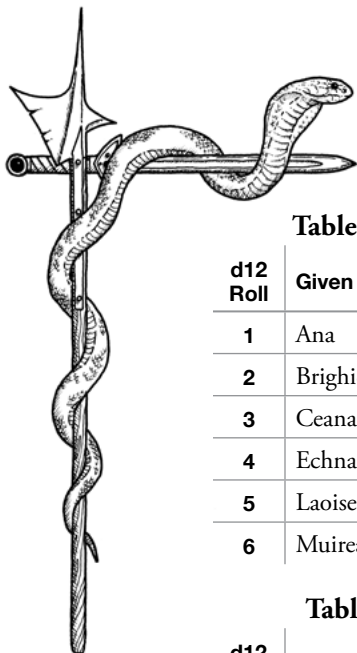
Table 1: Rumours

d10 Roll	Rumour Heard
1	“A foreign wench robbed me last week. If I see her again, I’ll kill her!”
2	“A witch haunts the Heath, so they say. Don’t let her take your soul!”
3	“Another group of strangers was in the village until yesterday. I thought they had a map, but I sneaked a look at it in the common house, and it was just a blank sheet of parchment.”
4	“Beware! An evil old man on the Heath lures travellers to their doom.”
5	“For three straight nights, I’ve heard strange howling from across the Heath.”
6	“I was walking along the bogs and saw a wagon crossing the Heath with no one driving it!”
7	“There have been strange flashes of silver light on the Heath since the Comet appeared.”
8	“The dead buried in the soil of the Heath don’t rest quietly.”
9	“They say Yoon’Deh walks the Heath. Do not offend her!”
0	“Watch out for rust monsters! They love the smell of all this bog iron.”

VILLAGERS: If desired, the referee may generate the name of a particular villager by rolling once on either **table 2** or **table 3** and again on **table 4**. Males add “Macc” before the clan name, whereas females use “Inghean”; Cormac of Clan Finnean would be “Cormac Macc Finnean”, and his sister Echna would be “Echna Inghean Finnean”. The referee optionally may elect to roll on **table 5** to add some additional colour to a villager. If brutally murdered and robbed by the PCs, each villager will be found to have **1d8 cp** and **1d6 sp** on his or her person.

Table 2: Male Names

d12 Roll	Given Name	d12 Roll	Given Name
1	Artagan	7	Machar
2	Bran	8	Niall
3	Cormac	9	Ross
4	Diarmad	10	Scannal
5	Fionn	11	Taran
6	Gormal	12	Uallas

**Table 3: Female Names**

d12 Roll	Given Name	d12 Roll	Given Name
1	Ana	7	Neasa
2	Brighid	8	Osnaith
3	Ceana	9	Riona
4	Echna	10	Saraid
5	Laoise	11	Sorcha
6	Muireall	12	Treasa

Table 4: Clan Names

d12 Roll	Clan Name	d12 Roll	Clan Name
1	Artair	7	Lachlann
2	Brion	8	Maon
3	Cassair	9	Ruarc
4	Conall	10	Scannlan
5	Donnan	11	Sionn
6	Finnean	12	Urard

Table 5: Quirks

d12 Roll	Quirk
1	Buried a body in the bogs and fears discovery
2	Constantly praises Yoon'Deh, regardless of subject at hand
3	Feuding with all members of a certain clan (roll randomly; might be own clan!)
4	Greatly admires minor possession of a PC (referee's choice) and wants it as a gift
5	Insists on speaking in bad rhyming couplets
6	Minds own business and wants nosy adventurers to do the same
7	Proud and quick to pick a fight, even if hopelessly outmatched
8	Secretly worships the "Bat-Toad"
9	Staggering drunk (overly friendly or belligerent; 50% chance of each)
10	Suffers from mild insanity (randomly determined)
11	Terrified of outlanders, especially the PCs
12	Wants to sell the PCs something odd (referee's choice)

PART II: THE LONELY HEATH

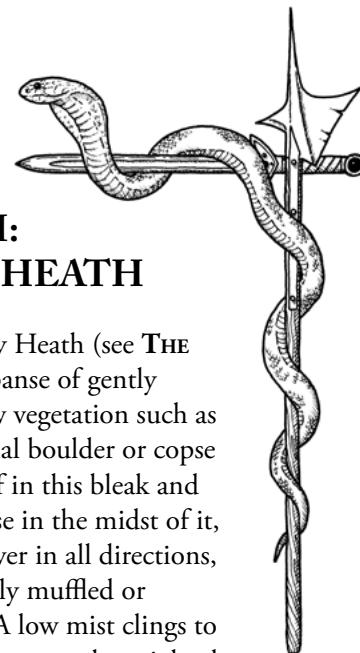
North of Bogrest lies the Lonely Heath (see **THE LONELY HEATH MAP**), a vast expanse of gently rolling ground covered with low vegetation such as heather and furze. The occasional boulder or copse of stunted trees is the only relief in this bleak and monotonous landscape. To those in the midst of it, the Heath seems to stretch forever in all directions, whilst sounds are either curiously muffled or accompanied by weird echoes. A low mist clings to the Heath even in the noonday sun, and at night the mist gleams an eerie silver colour in the light of the Comet.

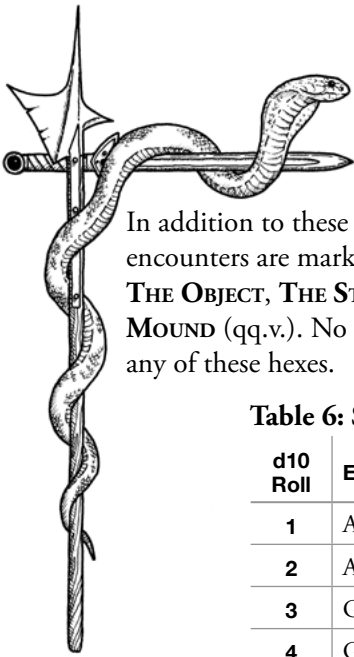
Each hex on the map represents one mile. For purposes of travel, the Lonely Heath is considered *scrublands*; it is smooth terrain, and the chance of becoming lost is only 1-in-6 per day (1-in-8 if the party include a ranger or like class). However, the referee should emphasize the misty conditions and lack of landmarks so that the PCs fear the risk much greater. If the PCs do become lost, all standard rules apply. Wild game is sparse on the Lonely Heath (though grouse and red deer may occasionally be seen), and but little edible vegetation or clean water may be found. Those who lose their way here will be in serious trouble.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

One finds many strange things on the Lonely Heath—and more so whilst the great Comet blazes in the sky. For every four hours the PCs spend on the Heath, the referee should roll 1d6; a random encounter will occur on either a 1 or a 6. If the d6 roll is 1, the referee should roll 1d10 on **table 6**; if the d6 roll is 6, the referee should roll 1d10 on **table 7**.

All standard encounters are hostile and will attack at once, whilst Comet encounters will react as noted in their individual descriptions. Each encounter (standard or Comet) can occur but once; if the same result is rolled a second time, no encounter ensues.





In addition to these random encounters, five keyed encounters are marked on the map: **THE ALCHEMIST**, **THE OBJECT**, **THE STONES**, **THE CAVE**, and **THE MOUND** (qq.v.). No random encounters will occur in any of these hexes.

Table 6: Standard Encounters

d10 Roll	Encounter
1	Ape-Men, Super
2	Apes, Carnivorous
3	Gargoyles
4	Ghost, Banshee
5	Hyæna-Men
6	Rust Monsters
7	Snake, Giant Python
8	Spider, Giant Phase (Purple Spider of Leng)
9	Tiger, Sabre-Tooth
0	Wolves, Dire

All standard encounters arise at a distance of 2d6×10 yards (1d3×10 yards if either party is surprized). Except where otherwise noted, these creatures have no treasure.

APE-MEN, SUPER^[1] (×9): AL LE; SZ M; MV 30; DX 12; AC 7; HD 3+4 (hp 22); #A 3/2 (improvised war club); D 1d8+1; SV 15; ML 12; XP 120.

Special: *Climb* 11-in-12, at full MV. Constant *extrasensory perception*; cannot be surprized by sentient creatures. Three super ape-men working together can *hold person* one target in 60-foot range for as long as they concentrate; *sorcery* save at -2 to resist.

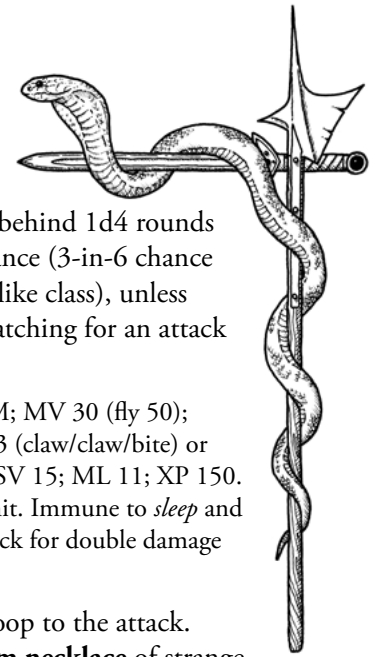
If **THE OBJECT** (q.v.) has been neutralized, then this encounter will not occur. Three of the super ape-men will attempt to use their *hold person* ability to paralyze the most dangerous-looking PC, whilst the other six close to attack with crude stone picks and shovels (treated as war clubs).

APES, CARNIVOROUS (×5): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40; DX 11; AC 6; HD 5 (hp 26); #A 2 (claw/claw); D 1d6+1/1d6+1; SV 14; ML 9; XP 200.

Special: Surprized only on a 1-in-6 chance. If both claw attacks hit, rends for additional 1d8+1 hp damage.

These simians hunger for man-flesh. Three of the hulking beasts will attack the PCs frontally. The

1. See **APPENDIX**.



remaining two will strike from behind 1d4 rounds later, surprizing on a 4-in-6 chance (3-in-6 chance if the party include a ranger or like class), unless the PCs specify that they are watching for an attack from the rear.

GARGOYLES (×4): AL CE; SZ M; MV 30 (fly 50); DX 12; AC 5; HD 4 (hp 29); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite) or 1 (gore); D 1d4/1d4/1d6 or 1d6; SV 15; ML 11; XP 150.

Special: +1 or better weapon to hit. Immune to *sleep* and *charm*. Can deliver flying gore attack for double damage dice.

These winged monstrosities swoop to the attack. Each gargoyle wears an **electrum necklace** of strange and unsettling design (*value* 1d8×10 gp each).

GHOST, BANSHEE: AL CE; SZ M; MV 20 (fly 50); DX 12; AC 0; HD 7 (hp 44); #A 1 (touch); D 1d10; SV 13; ML 10; XP 1,110.

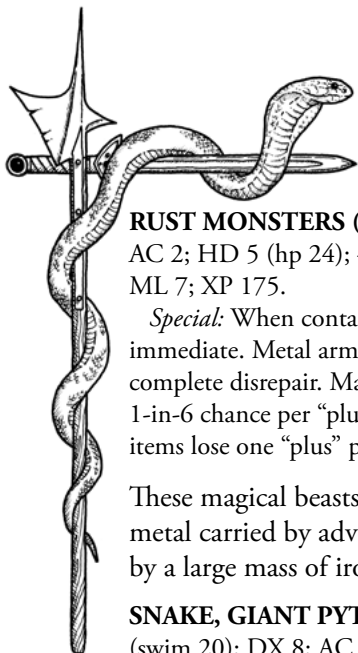
Special: Sight causes fear, unless *sorcery* save made; victim flees for 2d6 rounds. Harmed only by silver or magical weapons. Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold- or electricity-based attacks. *Perform exorcism* destroys. Once per day, only in darkness, can emit wail that slays living creatures within 30-foot radius, unless *death* saves made; wisdom modifier applies. Touch attack considered cold damage.

This ghastly spirit is heard wailing some distance away, so it is unlikely to surprize the PCs. If encountered by daylight, the banshee cannot use its death wail.

HYÆNA-MEN (×12): AL CE; SZ M; MV 30; DX 9; AC 5; HD 2+2 (hp 8); #A 1 (bite or weapon); D 1d4+1 (bite) or 1d4+1 (javelin) or 1d8+1 (war club, two-handed); SV 16; ML 8; XP 35.

Hyæna-Man Leader: AL CE; SZ M; MV 30; DX 12; AC 5; HD 4+4 (hp 24); #A 1 (bite or javelin) or 3/2 (war club); D 1d4+1 (bite) or 1d4+2 (javelin) or 1d8+2 (war club, two-handed); SV 15; ML 9; XP 150.

The cackling of these mad brutes is heard well before they attack, so the PCs are unlikely to be surprized. The hyæna-men will charge in a loose mob, hurling crude javelins and then closing to melee with spiked war clubs. Each common hyæna-man has **3d4 ep** and **1d8 gp**; the leader has **12 ep**, **8 gp**, and a pair of **tiger-eye stones** (*value* 10 gp each).



RUST MONSTERS (×3): AL N; SZ M; MV 40; DX 12; AC 2; HD 5 (hp 24); #A 1 (antennæ); D nil; SV 14; ML 7; XP 175.

Special: When contact with metal made, rust is immediate. Metal armour and weapons oxidized to complete disrepair. Magical armour and weapons have 1-in-6 chance per “plus” to not be affected. Such magic items lose one “plus” per hit if not resisted.

These magical beasts are drawn irresistibly to the metal carried by adventurers. They can be distracted by a large mass of iron.

SNAKE, GIANT PYTHON: AL N; SZ L; MV 30 (swim 20); DX 8; AC 6; HD 5 (hp 27); #A 1 (bite); D 1d4; SV 14; ML 8; XP 275.

Special: Upon successful bite, constricts for 2d6 hp damage per round. Victim can escape via *extraordinary feat of strength* or *dexterity*. Allies whose strength totals at least 75 can remove snake in 1d4 rounds. Whilst constricting prey, giant python may be attacked at +2 “to hit”.

This monstrous serpent approaches under cover of the heather, surprizing on a 4-in-6 chance (3-in-6 if the party include a ranger or like class).

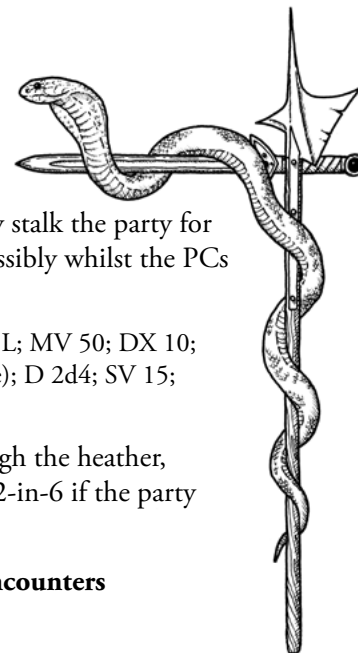
SPIDER, GIANT PHASE (*Purple Spider of Leng*): AL CE; SZ L; MV 50; DX 14; AC 7; HD 5+4 (hp 33); #A 1 (bite); D 1d6; SV 14; ML 8; XP 740.

Special: If entrapped in web, a man can break free in 19–ST rounds. Phases before and after attacking; only 1-in-4 chance to counterattack. Bite highly venomous; make *death* (poison) save or die.

This horror has strayed far from its home on the Leng Plateau. If the PCs are surprized, they have stumbled into its almost invisible web; otherwise, they spy the web from a distance and may choose whether to approach. Tangled in the sticky strands are numerous bones and a **yellow ivory tube** (100-gp value). Because the tube closely resembles a bone, it can be spotted only on a successful roll to find a **secret door**. The tube contains a **protection from elementals** scroll. The spider, of course, will “phase” in to investigate any disturbance of its web.

TIGER, SABRE-TOOTH: AL N; SZ L; MV 50; DX 14; AC 6; HD 8 (hp 33); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1d6+1/1d6+1/2d8; SV 13; ML 8; XP 840.

Special: Able to surprize on 4-in-6 chance. If both claw attacks hit, automatically rakes with two rear claws for 2d4 hp damage each.



This monstrous feline will likely stalk the party for some time before pouncing, possibly whilst the PCs are otherwise engaged.

WOLVES, DIRE (×6): AL N; SZ L; MV 50; DX 10; AC 6; HD 4+1 (hp 16); #A 1 (bite); D 2d4; SV 15; ML 8; XP 150.

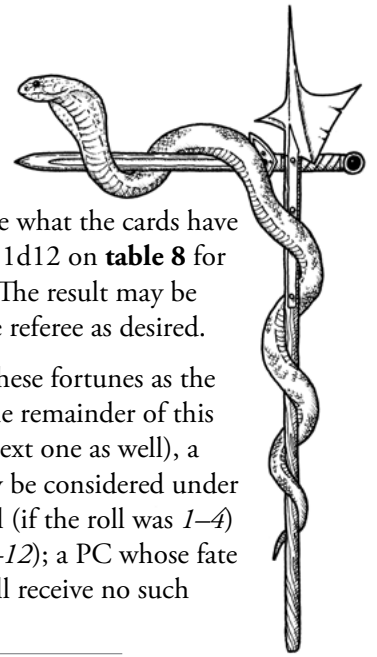
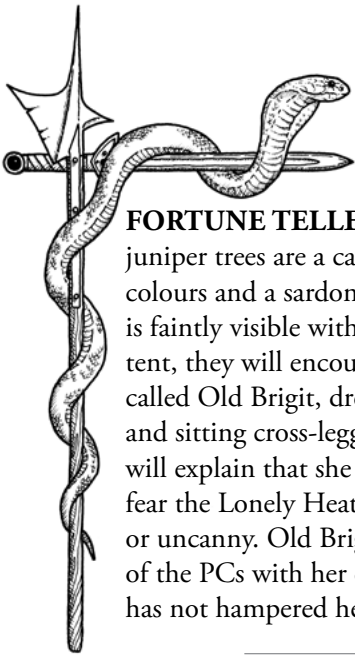
This cunning pack creeps through the heather, surprizing on a 3-in-6 chance (2-in-6 if the party include a ranger or like class).

Table 7: Comet Encounters

d10 Roll	Encounter
1	Corpse Candle
2	Fortune Teller
3	Ghost Child
4	Kor and Akas
5	Madman
6	Moth Collector
7	Mystery Wagon
8	Orphan
9	Survivors
0	Werewolves' Banquet

Unless otherwise noted, all Comet encounters occur at a distance of 2d6×10 yards. Most of these encounters yield no treasure, with exceptions noted. Unless specified to the contrary, none of the NPCs encountered knows the location of **THE STONES** or **THE MOUND** (qq.v.).

CORPSE CANDLE: A pale blue light appears in the distance and slowly floats away from the PCs. If the PCs follow the corpse candle, it will always remain about 30 yards ahead of them. The corpse candle will lead the PCs directly away from the Mound and into peril. One hour after the PCs begin following the corpse candle, the referee should roll on **table 6** to determine what horror is met, rerolling a duplicate result if necessary. The corpse candle will vanish during the ensuing combat and not be seen again.



FORTUNE TELLER: Beside a clump of stunted juniper trees are a canvas tent painted in once-bright colours and a sardonic-looking mule. At night a light is faintly visible within the tent. If the PCs enter the tent, they will encounter an ancient Keltic crone called Old Brigit, dressed in colourful tattered rags and sitting cross-legged before a fire. If asked, she will explain that she has seen too many long years to fear the Lonely Heath—or anything else, mundane or uncanny. Old Brigit will offer to tell the fortunes of the PCs with her cards; she claims that the Comet has not hampered her gifts, but rather made them

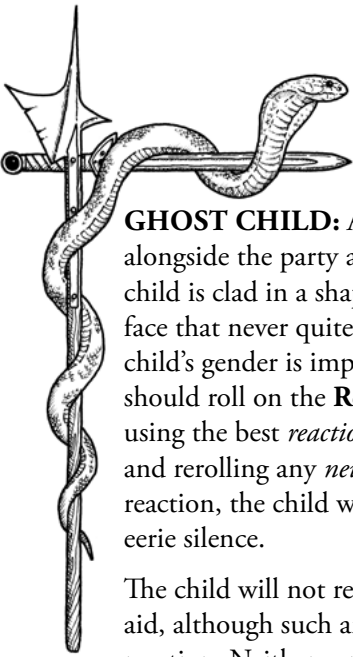
stronger than ever. To determine what the cards have foreseen, the referee should roll 1d12 on **table 8** for each PC whose fortune is told. The result may be paraphrased or expanded by the referee as desired.

The referee may choose to use these fortunes as the basis for future intrigues. For the remainder of this adventure (and optionally the next one as well), a PC whose fortune was told may be considered under the effects of either a *blight* spell (if the roll was 1–4) or a *bless* spell (if the roll was 9–12); a PC whose fate was equivocal (a roll of 5–8) will receive no such bonus or penalty.

Table 8: Fortune Telling

d12 Roll	Fortune Told	d12 Roll	Fortune Told
1	“Guard your treasures well, for you are in danger of losing them all!”	7	“Swords all around you, but with courage you can win your way free.”
2	“Lucky at war, perhaps, but you will never be lucky in love.”	8	“Learn whom to fear and whom to trust, and you will have found wisdom.”
3	“Beware! There is a sword blade with your name graven on it.”	9	“Great treasures can be yours, if you have the wit to claim them.”
4	“Take care, for those closest to you may be plotting your downfall!”	10	“Love is knocking upon your door. You need merely answer.”
5	“Riches on the one hand, ruin on the other... the choice is yours.”	11	“Stout are your blade and shield, and stricken be your foes.”
6	“The path to true love never runs smooth, but your foot is upon it.”	12	“Your shrewdness has made friends both fast and true.”



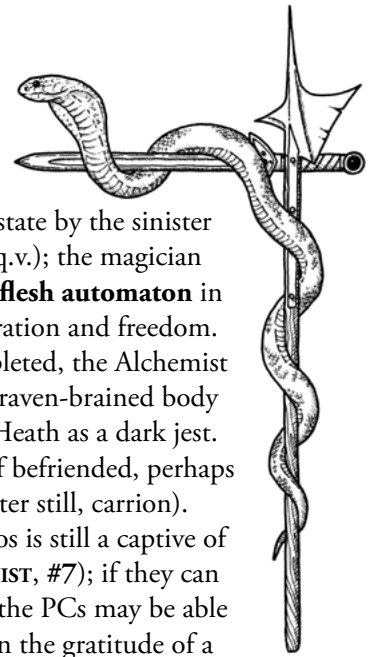


GHOST CHILD: A small child appears behind or alongside the party and begins to pace them. The child is clad in a shapeless smock and has a blurred face that never quite comes into focus; even the child's gender is impossible to determine. The referee should roll on the **Reaction** table for the child, using the best *reaction/loyalty adjustment* in the party and rerolling any *neutral* results. Regardless of its reaction, the child will continue to follow the PCs in eerie silence.

The child will not respond to proffers of food or aid, although such an offer will improve the child's reaction. Neither can the PCs harm or catch the child—it will vanish and reappear in a different location if they try—and such an attempt will worsen the child's reaction. The child will continue to follow the PCs until their next combat encounter. The PCs will then receive a +2 bonus on “to hit” rolls and saving throws during the combat if the child's reaction was positive; they will suffer a -2 penalty to the same if the child's reaction was negative. In either case, the child will disappear during the combat and never be seen again.

KOR AND AKAS: A talking, two-headed **archæopteryx** flutters down to land on a tree or shrub near the PCs. If the referee is right-handed, then the right head is Kor and the left Akas; if the referee is left-handed, then the opposite is true. Kor always tells the truth, and Akas always lies. The referee should ask the PCs to specify which head they are addressing and then respond appropriately. Kor knows roughly where **THE STONES** (q.v.) are located and can tell the PCs in which direction they lie, but he knows nothing of **THE MOUND**. Akas lies about both matters, of course. The archæopteryx will fly away after answering 1d4+3 questions.

MADMAN: The PCs spot a figure moving in an odd manner through the heather. It is an elderly man dressed in a dark blue robe decorated with astrological symbols. However, his behaviour is most undignified: hopping, flapping his arms, and cawing like some gigantic crow. In fact this man, a magician named Talos, has had his mind switched with that of his raven familiar, Sable.



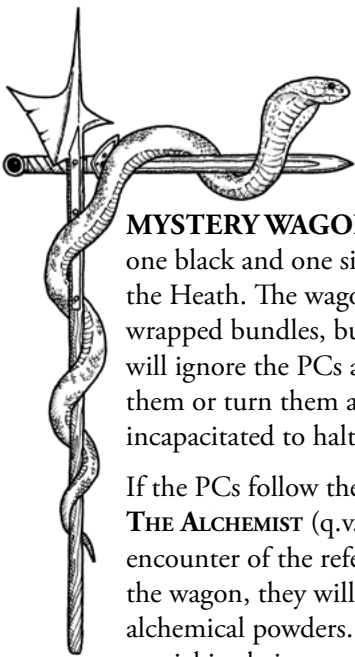
Talos was reduced to this sorry state by the sinister concoctions of the **Alchemist** (q.v.); the magician was then forced to help build a **flesh automaton** in exchange for a promise of restoration and freedom. After the monstrosity was completed, the Alchemist betrayed Talos and released the raven-brained body of the magician on the Lonely Heath as a dark jest. Talos will accompany the PCs if befriended, perhaps by offerings of raw meat (or better still, carrion). The raven with the mind of Talos is still a captive of the Alchemist (see **THE ALCHEMIST**, #7); if they can bring Talos and Sable together, the PCs may be able to undo the mind swap and earn the gratitude of a powerful magician.

MOTH COLLECTOR: A middle-aged man in tattered travelling clothes wanders into sight. He seems oblivious to danger and does not even notice the PCs unless they call attention to themselves. He is Cædmon the Wise, a sage from Gal City, and he seeks the mystical **Aurorus moth**, which is only active during great celestial events such as the Comet.

Cædmon is quite absent-minded and prone to rambling. He embarked on his mission with little more than the clothes on his back, a small sack of food, and a tiny cage for the moth. The PCs cannot dissuade Cædmon from his mission (although they may elect just to leave him to his fate).

If the PCs agree to help Cædmon, they must search for the moth by night, since it hides during the day. Locating the Aurorus moth requires 1d8 hours, with random encounters being rolled as usual. To catch the shining green moth, a PC must make a “to hit” roll versus AC 0. The moth will flutter away if three attempts to catch it fail, and the search must begin again. The referee should make this process as amusing and frustrating as possible.

If the PCs present the elusive insect to Cædmon, he will thank them kindly and wander away toward Bogrest, with the luminous caged moth glowing like a lantern. Just as Cædmon vanishes from sight, a shining aurora will appear briefly above the PCs, even momentarily blotting out the Comet. For the next 12 hours, the PCs will enjoy all the benefits of a *heroes' feast* spell.



MYSTERY WAGON: An open wagon drawn by one black and one silver horse slowly moves across the Heath. The wagon contains some canvas-wrapped bundles, but no one drives it. The horses will ignore the PCs and resist any attempt to stop them or turn them aside; they must be killed or incapacitated to halt the wagon.

If the PCs follow the wagon, it will lead them to **THE ALCHEMIST** (q.v.), or to some other appropriate encounter of the referee's device. If the PCs hijack the wagon, they will find barrels and sacks of strange alchemical powders. The powders do nothing special in their current form, although a magician or pyromancer may (at the referee's option) be able to use them to concoct substances that duplicate the effects of low-level fire spells like *pyrotechnics* or *produce flame*. At a major city, the wagonload of alchemical supplies could be sold for 1d6×1,000 gp.

ORPHAN: Just ahead in the Heath the PCs see a dark shape, hunched over and devouring the rotting carcass of a **red deer**. If the PCs approach, the figure will raise its head and growl; it is a **flesh automaton**, horribly stitched together from human corpses. This unnatural thing is the handiwork of the **Alchemist** and his unwilling assistant Talos (qq.v.). The creature proved intractable to the will of its would-be master and ultimately escaped onto the Lonely Heath.

If the PCs attack, the flesh automaton will immediately go berserk and fight until destroyed. If the party approach the lonely, miserable creature in a gentle manner, the referee should make a standard roll on the **Reaction** table. If befriended and treated well, the creature will accompany the PCs indefinitely (or until the referee decides otherwise) and will fight to protect them. The flesh automaton cannot speak, but understands simple commands in Common speech. It has no name and will be absurdly pleased if the PCs name it. This creature will attack the Alchemist on sight.

Flesh Automaton: AL N; SZ M; MV 20; DX 7; AC 7; HD 9+2 (hp 35); #A 2 (pummel/pummel); D 2d8/2d8; SV 12; ML 11; XP 1,600.

Special: +1 or better weapon to hit. Immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *bold*, and other mind-affecting sorceries. Electrical attacks heal it. 1-in-10 chance per round that creature loses control, attempting to kill all in sight; it attacks

berserkly at +2 "to hit" and damage and then flees after 2d6 rounds.

SURVIVORS: The PCs come upon three soldiers, worn and bloodied but still proud and defiant. The soldiers will not attack, except in self-defence, but will warily parley with the PCs. The three men, Captain Achilles and his lieutenants Fergus and Liam, were part of a mercenary company that stumbled onto the Lonely Heath. The mercenaries were set upon by Comet-frenzied **hyæna-men**, and only these three escaped with their lives. If healed and given food and water, the soldiers may be willing to accept employment as hirelings. Achilles demands 60 gp per month in pay; Fergus and Liam require 20 gp each.

Achilles (5th-level fighter): AL N; SZ M; MV 30; AC 5; DR 1; HD 5 (hp 3 of 29); FA 5; #A 3/2 (long sword [+2] or dagger [+2]) or 1 (light crossbow [+2, +3 *point blank*]); D 1d10+3 (long sword, two-handed) or 1d4+3 (dagger) or 1d6+2 (light crossbow); SV 14 [*death* +2, *transformation* +2, *poison* +3]; ML 7; XP 175; ST 17, DX 13, CN 15, IN 13, WS 10, CH 13.

Special: *Heroic fighting* (double normal melee attacks vs. opponents of 1 HD or less). *Weapon mastery* (long sword, dagger, light crossbow).

Gear: chain mail, long sword, dagger, light crossbow (no bolts), **6 gp**.

Fergus (2nd-level fighter): AL N; SZ M; MV 40; AC 6; HD 2 (hp 2 of 7); FA 2; #A 3/2 (long sword [+2]) or 2 (short bow [+1, +2 *point blank*]); D 1d10+2 (long sword, two-handed) or 1d6+1 (short bow); SV 16 [*death* +2, *transformation* +2]; ML 7; XP 24; ST 15, DX 12, CN 12, IN 9, WS 10, CH 12.

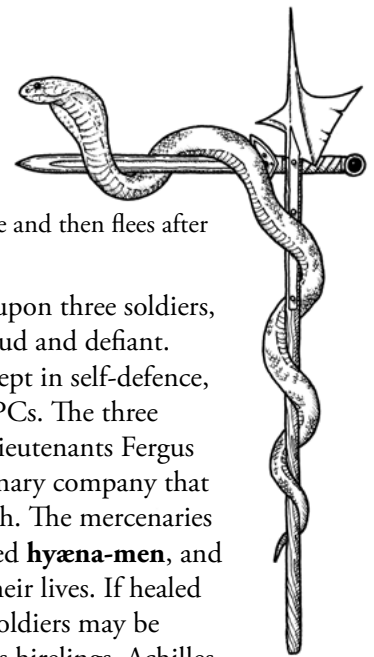
Special: *Heroic fighting* (double normal melee attacks vs. opponents of 1 HD or less). *Weapon mastery* (long sword, short bow).

Gear: studded armour, long sword, short bow, 3 arrows, **6 gp**.

Liam (2nd-level fighter): AL N; SZ M; MV 40; AC 6; HD 2 (hp 1 of 8); FA 2; #A 3/2 (short spear [+1]) or long sword [+1]); D 1d6+2 (short spear, hurled) or 1d8+2 (short spear, two-handed) or 1d10+2 (long sword, two-handed); SV 16 [*death* +2, *transformation* +2]; ML 7; XP 24; ST 14, DX 12, CN 12, IN 10, WS 10, CH 10.

Special: *Heroic fighting* (double normal melee attacks vs. opponents of 1 HD or less). *Weapon mastery* (long sword, short spear).

Gear: studded armour, short spear, long sword, **2 gp**.



WEREWOLVES' BANQUET: In the distance the PCs see a banquet table set incongruously in the midst of the heather; at night, torches burn at all four corners of the table. Ten high-backed chairs surround the table, four of which are occupied by plump, ruddy men in rich clothing. At the head of the table sits a voluptuous woman in a beautiful velvet dress. All five eat hungrily (and with no great attention to table manners) from several brass platters set before them. Two brass bowls on the table are heaped with valuables: **550 pp**, **3 violet garnets** (*value 500 gp each*), and **4 gold bracelets** inlaid with tiny rubies (*value 500 gp each*).

When they see the PCs, the diners will greet them heartily and invite them to join the feast. The victuals on the platters are most unsavoury, being both raw and of horribly suspicious shape; in fact, this feast is an anthropophagous banquet. If the PCs attack or refuse to join the meal (or once the cannibals tire of toying with them), the banqueters will assume the shapes of four male **werewolves** and a female **werewolf superiour**, who will then savagely attack the PCs. The fine clothes of the werewolves will be destroyed during this transformation. No matter how much they may be scrubbed, the brass dishes forevermore shew grisly bloodstains and cannot be sold.

Werewolves (×4): AL CE; SZ M; MV 60; DX 14; AC 5; HD 4 (hp 22); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1d4/1d4/2d4; SV 15; ML 8; XP 285.

Special: Horses keen to presence of lycanthropes; will snort with fear when they approach. Harmed only by silver or magical weapons. If wolfsbane wrapped about a spear and lycanthrope struck, it must make *death* (poison) save or flee. Bite confers lycanthropy unless *death* (poison) save made. If killed, lycanthrope reverts to human form. Can summon **1d4 wolves** thrice per day, arriving 1d4 rounds later.

Werewolf Superiour: AL CE; SZ L; MV 60; DX 15; AC 5; HD 6 (hp 33); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1d6/1d6/2d6; SV 14; ML 10; XP 780.

Special: Horses keen to presence of lycanthropes; will snort with fear when they approach. Harmed only by silver or magical weapons. If wolfsbane wrapped about a spear and lycanthrope struck, it must make *death* (poison) save or flee. Bite confers lycanthropy unless *death* (poison) save made. If killed, lycanthrope reverts to human form. Can summon **1d4 dire wolves** thrice per day, arriving 1d4 rounds later.



THE ALCHEMIST

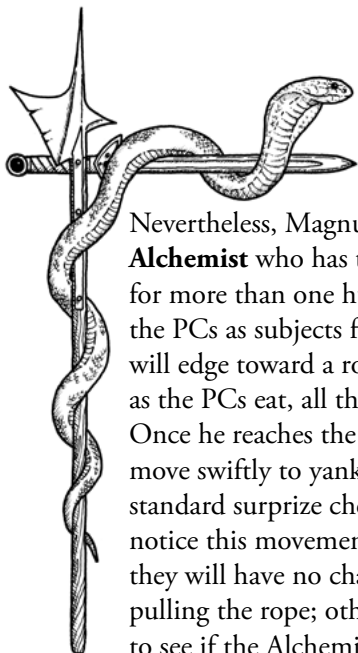
N.B.: The following description assumes the PCs happen upon the cabin unawares. If they are following the **mystery wagon** that delivers alchemical supplies, or are accompanied by the **flesh automaton**, the situation may develop quite differently; too, an exceedingly vigilant party might approach the cabin with utmost stealth and surprize its occupant. Adjudication of such contingencies is left to the referee.

The PCs find a ramshackle cabin with smoke rising from the chimney. They are immediately hailed by a tall, elderly man in homespun clothes that belie his dignified bearing. He greets the PCs most courteously and introduces himself as Magnus, a hermit by inclination but not averse to some occasional company. He politely asks the party's business and invites them inside for some wine and rabbit stew. If the PCs mention either **THE MOUND**

or **THE STONES**, Magnus will rub his chin and say, "I may have heard tell of such a thing. Come inside, good masters, and we'll discuss it." If the PCs adamantly refuse to enter the cabin, Magnus will bid them farewell and trouble them no more.

If they enter the cabin, the PCs will discover a perfectly ordinary and homey scene, with wine and bread on a small table and savoury rabbit stew bubbling in a pot on the fire. Magnus will bid the PCs be seated and help themselves to the comestibles on the table, whilst he ladles stew into wooden bowls. Magnus will serve himself as well as the PCs; if the PCs cautiously wait for Magnus to eat some of the stew, he will do so with gusto and suffer no ill effects. Indeed none of the victuals is poisoned or drugged, and Magnus will offer pleasant conversation as the PCs eat (though evading the subject of the Mound or the Stones). He seems nothing more than a lonely old man.





Nevertheless, Magnus is an Evil being—the **Alchemist** who has terrorized the Lonely Heath for more than one human lifetime—and he wants the PCs as subjects for his crazed experiments. He will edge toward a rope pull beside the fireplace as the PCs eat, all the while chatting pleasantly. Once he reaches the rope pull, the Alchemist will move swiftly to yank it. The referee should make a standard surprise check for the PCs to see if they notice this movement. If the PCs are surprised, they will have no chance to stop the Alchemist from pulling the rope; otherwise initiative must be rolled to see if the Alchemist can pull the rope before the PCs can act to stop him.

If the rope pull is yanked, the cabin instantly will be flooded with **dust of sleepiness**. The Alchemist has taken an antidote against the **dust** and will be unaffected, but all other creatures in the cabin will suffer the usual effects. On the next round, the Alchemist will spring forwards and attack, throwing a **rust bomb** (q.v.) at a wakeful PC in heavy armour and then drawing his poisoned dagger for melee. The Alchemist will attempt to render all the PCs unconscious, thereafter dragging them to the holding cells in his underground lair (#8). This kindly old man cum snarling fiend will fight until death—which for him will not come easily!

THE ALCHEMIST (9th-level assassin): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40 (or 20); AC 3 (or 8); DR 0 (or 3); HD 9 (hp 61); FA 6; #A 1 (dagger [+1]); D 1d4+1; SV 12 [*device* +2, *avoidance* +3, *other dodging* +1, *poison* +3]; ML 12; XP 1,300; ST 16, DX 16, CN 18, IN 17, WS 13, CH 15.

Special: Assassinate. Hide 10-in-12. *Move silently* 10-in-12. *Alchemical blood* (see below).

Gear: defensive bracers (AC 5), dagger with *sleep* poison (see below), **3 rust bombs** (see below), **potion of extraordinary healing**, **small key** (see below).

Alchemical Blood: The Alchemist long ago replaced his organic blood with a sorcerous alchemical fluid. If struck by an edged weapon, he bleeds a sickly greenish-yellow liquid. This vile substance gives the Alchemist a hideous vitality.

The Alchemist can continue to fight with a negative hit point total, and he suffers no additional hit point loss from bleeding. In addition, he is more difficult to injure further once below 0 hit points; all

subsequent attacks made against him must overcome DR 3. The PCs will find they must hack him to pieces to make him stop. The Alchemist moves in a grotesque, stumbling manner when below 0 hit points; his MV drops to 20, and he is effectively AC 8. When reduced to -10 hit points, the Alchemist will collapse to the ground and dissolve into a foul-smelling puddle of greenish slime, his unnatural life force finally snuffed out.

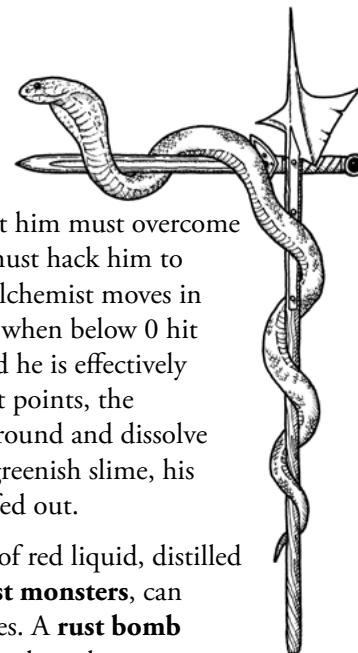
Rust Bombs: These small vials of red liquid, distilled from the essence of unlucky **rust monsters**, can be hurled as grenade-like missiles. A **rust bomb** detonates with a sizzling crack and produces a sparkling, reddish-brown cloud some six feet in diameter. Any creature within the cloud must make a *device* saving throw. If the saving throw fails, all non-magical iron carried or worn by the target is instantly oxidized and crumbles to bits; each item of magical iron is entitled to a *class 5* item saving throw to avoid destruction. (*XP value* = 200; *GP value* = 1,000)

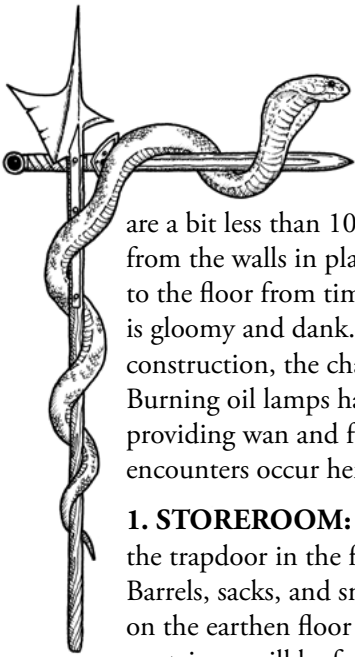
Sleep Poison: The Alchemist's dagger is treated with a *sleep* poison. The first three targets struck by the dagger must make *death* (poison) saving throws or suffer the effects of a *sleep* spell. This poison can affect any living creature, regardless of hit dice or level.

Small Key: This item is hidden inside a cunningly concealed inner pocket of the Alchemist's tunic (detected as a **secret door**). The **key** safely opens all locked doors in the Alchemist's underground lair, as well as the strongbox in #6.

If the Alchemist defeats the PCs, the survivors will awaken in the holding cells (#8). If the PCs manage to slay the Alchemist, they may wish to search the cabin. Nothing unusual or valuable will be found (save the items carried by the Alchemist), but moving the rug on the floor will reveal an obvious trapdoor that leads to #1, hereafter (see **THE ALCHEMIST'S LAIR MAP**).

THE ALCHEMIST'S LAIR: Walls, ceilings, and floors are of hard-packed earth reinforced with crooked wooden beams. Doors are wooden with iron bands and open easily unless locked; locked doors may be picked or forced open normally. Ceilings





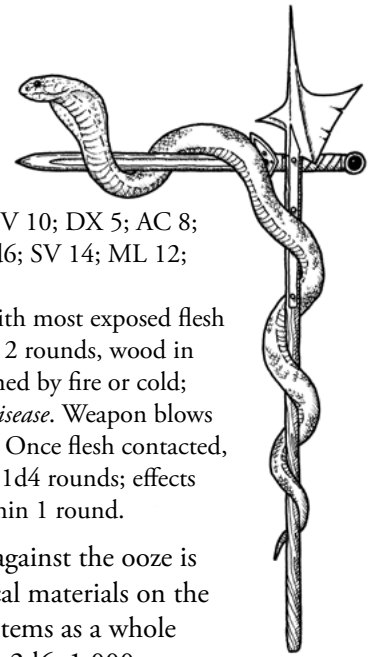
are a bit less than 10 feet high. Pale roots protrude from the walls in places, and wriggling insects drop to the floor from time to time; the whole complex is gloomy and dank. Despite the ramshackle construction, the chance of a cave-in is negligible. Burning oil lamps hang on wall hooks in each room, providing wan and feeble illumination. No random encounters occur here.

1. STOREROOM: A wooden ladder leads to the trapdoor in the floor of the Alchemist's cabin. Barrels, sacks, and small wooden chests are stacked on the earthen floor of the room. If searched, the containers will be found to hold various alchemical powders and other curious materials. None have any special use in their current form, although a magician or pyromancer may (at the referee's option) be able to use them to concoct substances that duplicate the effects of low-level fire spells like *pyrotechnics* or *produce flame*. If the PCs manage to transport the whole lot to a major city (which would require at least two wagons), they can sell the alchemical supplies for 2d6×1,000 gp.

2. TRAPPED ANTECHAMBER: If the **locked** door to the north is opened with the **key** carried by the Alchemist, nothing untoward will happen. If the door is forced open, or if the lock is picked without first finding and removing the **trap** on the door, **dust of sneezing and choking** will shower forth from hidden ceiling vents and affect all within this 10 × 10-foot area.

3. LABORATORY: The walls here are lined with wooden shelves holding a vast array of bottles, jugs, and jars of many-coloured liquids. Also found on the shelves are a number of alchemical treatises and sundry tools of that trade: mortar and pestle, balance scales, measuring cups, beakers, and so forth. Near the north wall is a workbench and a well-worn chair. A lit charcoal brazier on the workbench casts a feeble, flickering light.

In the centre of this room is a great stone vat, 10 feet in diameter and 5 feet high, topped with a heavy stone lid that requires a *test of strength* to slide off. The vat contains a **chartreuse ooze**, which will surge forth and attack if the lid is removed. The Alchemist created this lurid yellow-green hybrid of **ochre jelly** and **green slime** as a demented experiment.



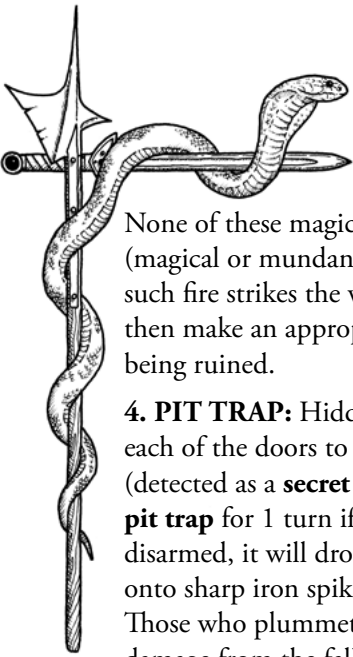
Chartreuse Ooze: AL N; SZ L; MV 10; DX 5; AC 8; HD 6 (hp 26); #A 1 (touch); D 2d6; SV 14; ML 12; XP 540.

Special: Will attack opponents with most exposed flesh first. Corrodes cloth and leather in 2 rounds, wood in 4 rounds, metal in 6 rounds. Harmed by fire or cold; suffers 3d8 hp damage from *cure disease*. Weapon blows or lightning split off smaller oozes. Once flesh contacted, victim becomes chartreuse ooze in 1d4 rounds; effects avoided if burnt or scraped off within 1 round.

Excessive use of fire in combat against the ooze is 90% likely to ruin the alchemical materials on the shelves. If not destroyed, these items as a whole could be sold at a major city for 2d6×1,000 gp. Moving the lot would require at least two wagons. None of these materials have any special use in their current form, although a magician or pyromancer may (at the referee's option) be able to use them to concoct substances that duplicate the effects of low-level fire spells like *pyrotechnics* or *produce flame*. A PC who tastes any of the liquids must make a *death* (poison) saving throw or be sickened (–2 on “to hit” rolls) for 1d4 hours.

A hidden stud on the side of the workbench may be discovered upon close examination (detected as a **secret door**). Pressing this catch causes the top of the bench to swing open, revealing a hidden compartment that contains the following sorcerous materials:

- ★ **potions of climbing, delusion, extraordinary healing, and levitation**
- ★ **elixir of longevity**
- ★ **dust of appearance** (4 doses)
- ★ **dust of nightmares and visions** (2 doses)
- ★ **dust of the feeble mind** (3 doses): This magical greenish powder is packed into small bone tubes. If the **dust** is blown in the face of a sorcerer, the victim must make a *death* (poison) saving throw or suffer the effects of a *feblemind* spell. This condition can be alleviated as usual for the spell. (*XP value* = 500, *GP value* = 1,000)
- ★ a small bottle of clear liquid (an antidote for the baboon transformation caused by the poisoned needle in #5)
- ★ a small bottle of amber liquid (an antidote for the bone gelatinization caused by the poisoned needle in #6; this cure is horribly painful and inflicts 3d6 hp damage on the victim).

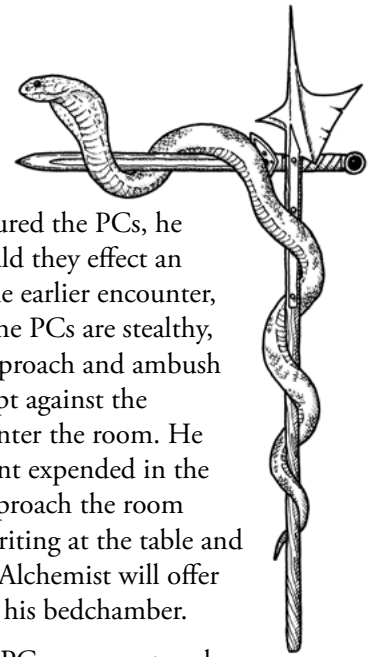


None of these magical substances are harmed by fire (magical or mundane) used within the room, unless such fire strikes the workbench directly; each must then make an appropriate item saving throw to avoid being ruined.

4. PIT TRAP: Hidden on the inside wall near each of the doors to this corridor is a small button (detected as a **secret door**), which will disable the **pit trap** for 1 turn if pressed. If the trap is not disarmed, it will drop those who step on it 20 feet onto sharp iron spikes coated with a sinister poison. Those who plummet into the pit suffer 2d6 hp damage from the fall and are impaled on 1d3 spikes. Each spike causes 1d6 hp damage and requires a separate *death* (poison) saving throw. If any saving throw is failed, the victim dies—his blood turning instantly to quicksilver. The lid closes on victims and must be forced open somehow to rescue them.

5. BEDCHAMBER: Here is the true living area of the Alchemist, the cabin above serving merely to lure victims. It contains a shabby sleeping pallet, a round wooden table piled with scrawled papers, bookshelves with musty tomes on alchemy and astrology, a wardrobe full of grubby homespun clothing, and an unlocked chest. A **poisoned needle** is concealed in the latch of the chest; anyone stuck by it must make a *transformation* saving throw or slowly *polymorph* into a smelly baboon over the course of 1d6 turns. This baleful transmogrification can be undone by *dispel magic* or *remove curse*, or by the antidote found in #3; the victim must pass a *trauma survival* check to survive reversal. The chest contains a pile of dirty rags and jumbled garments, some bottles of noisome indeterminate liquids, and one item of interest: a wrinkled triangular **fragment** of strange metal, about a foot across and glowing with a soft silvery radiance.

If the PCs have seen **THE OBJECT** (q.v.), they immediately cognize the **fragment** as being part of it. If the **fragment** is carried out into the open, it will begin to glow more brightly; the one holding it will feel a mild compulsion to travel in the direction of the Object, although this urge can be resisted easily. The light from the **fragment** will grow stronger as it approaches the Object, until it sheds illumination equal to a *light* spell when within one mile (one hex) of the Object.



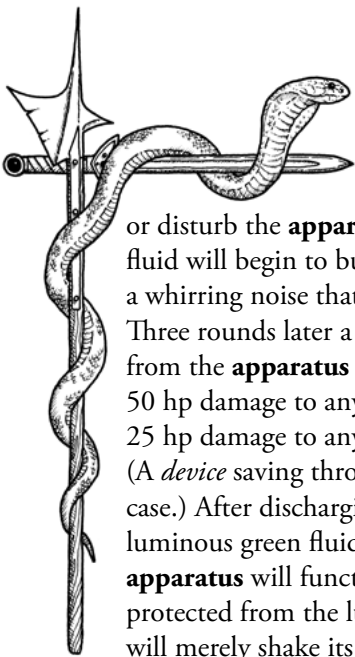
N.B.: If the Alchemist has captured the PCs, he will be found in this room should they effect an escape; if he was wounded in the earlier encounter, he will be fully healed. Unless the PCs are stealthy, the Alchemist will hear their approach and ambush them (with an *assassinate* attempt against the strongest-looking PC) as they enter the room. He will have replaced any equipment expended in the earlier encounter. If the PCs approach the room quietly, the Alchemist will be writing at the table and can be surprized normally. The Alchemist will offer no quarter to those who invade his bedchamber.

6. TREASURE VAULT: If the PCs were captured and stripped, their gear will be piled in this room. Also here is a heavy, **locked** iron strongbox with a **poisoned needle** in the lock. Anyone stuck by the needle must make a *death* (poison) saving throw or immediately undergo a macabre transformation similar to the *gelatinize bones* spell. This grisly effect can be reversed as usual for that spell, or by the antidote found in #3. The strongbox contains **14,017 sp, 8,058 gp, 210 pp**, and 17 assorted **bloodstones, carnelians, and moonstones** (*value 50 gp each*).

7. WORKROOM: Dominating the centre of this room is a metal table, equipped with heavy chains and manacles and showing some curious scorch marks. On the ceiling directly above it is a weird brazen **apparatus**, with a central crystalline lens and six glass tubes half-filled with luminous green fluid. Two wooden tables flanking the metal one hold a wide variety of archaic surgical instruments (treated as daggers if used in combat).

A wooden shelf on the east wall supports several musty books; these volumes detail the Alchemist's gruesome experiments and unholy dealings with Yug, mad scrawls that mean but naught to any sane person. To the north of the shelf a large metal lever is set into the wall; the lever is in the upmost position. To the south of the shelf a wire cage hangs from the ceiling, enclosing a large raven that watches the PCs with beady eyes.

If the PCs seem about to pull the lever on the wall, or to tamper with the device in the ceiling, the raven will speak in a hoarse croaking voice: "I wouldn't do that if I were you." If the PCs lower the lever



or disturb the **apparatus** in any way, the luminous fluid will begin to bubble, whilst the device emits a whirring noise that grows louder by the second. Three rounds later a bolt of green lightning will flash from the **apparatus** to the metal table, inflicting 50 hp damage to anybody touching the table and 25 hp damage to anyone else inside the room. (A *device* saving throw halves the damage in either case.) After discharging a single lightning bolt, the luminous green fluid will be exhausted, and the **apparatus** will function no more. The raven will be protected from the lurid electricity by its cage and will merely shake its head at the foolishness of the PCs: “I told you so.”

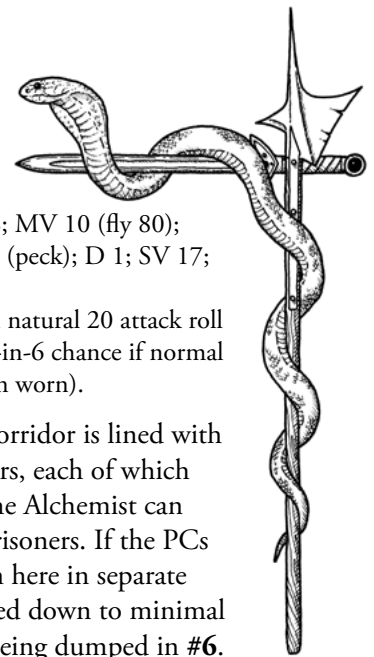
This raven is Sable, a familiar of the magician Talos (see **RANDOM ENCOUNTERS**, *madman*) that now retains the mind of that worthy sorcerer. It will gladly tell its tale if asked. A year earlier, the Alchemist kidnapped the magician and his familiar from Gal City and swapped their minds using a diabolical alchemical preparation. Talos was then convinced to help the Alchemist build a **flesh automaton** by a promise that he and Sable would be restored to their rightful minds. But once the flesh automaton was created (and brought to life by the green lightning **apparatus**), the Alchemist betrayed Talos and released his raven-brained body on the Lonely Heath.

If the PCs are able to bring the bodies of Talos and Sable into close proximity, they can reverse the mind swap with *remove curse* or *dispel magic*. Talos can offer sage advice in this matter, although he is unable to cast spells personally whilst trapped in the raven body. If restored, a grateful Talos will agree to join the PCs for the remainder of this adventure.

Talos (9th-level magician): AL N; SZ M; MV 40; AC 9; HD 9 (hp 26 [28 with familiar]); FA 4; CA 9; #A 1; D per weapon; SV 12 [*device* +2, *sorcery* +2, *mental sorcery* +3]; ML 7; XP 1,300; ST 9, DX 10, CN 11, IN 16, WS 15, CH 14.

Special: Magician spells (*charm person*, *decipher language*, *feather fall*, *hold portal*, *light*, *protection from evil*, *unseen servant*; *extrasensory perception*, *gust of wind*, *knock*, *levitate*, *mirror image*, *strengthen*; *black cloud*, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, *rope trick*; *lesser globe of invulnerability*, *remove curse*, *secure shelter*, *hold monster*, *telekinesis*).

Gear: small emergency **spell book** sewn into lining of robe (contains all prepared spells).



Sable (raven familiar): AL N; SZ S; MV 10 (fly 80); DX 12; AC 9; HD ¼ (hp 2); #A 1 (peck); D 1; SV 17; ML 4; XP 9.

Special: May pluck out an eye on natural 20 attack roll (2-in-6 chance if no helm worn, 1-in-6 chance if normal helm worn, no chance if great helm worn).

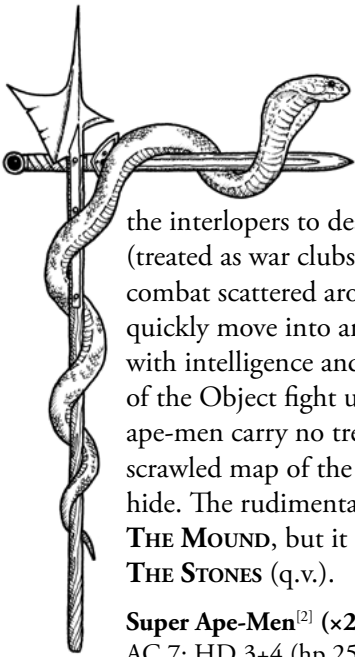
8. HOLDING CELLS: This corridor is lined with **locked**, reinforced wooden doors, each of which has a small barred window so the Alchemist can check on (and gloat over) his prisoners. If the PCs were captured, they will awaken here in separate cells; they will have been stripped down to minimal clothing, the rest of their gear being dumped in #6. The locked doors can be broken down with *tests of strength*. If the PCs were not captured, the cells will be unlocked and contain nothing but scattered filth.

THE OBJECT

The PCs will begin to see a pale silvery glow in the distance as they near this hex. Could this be the “Silver Flame” mentioned on their map? As the PCs approach, they will encounter a bizarre scene indeed. Two dozen **ape-men** are hard at work, using crude but effective tools to excavate a great pit in the soil of the Lonely Heath—but these are no ordinary ape-men. Their craniums are swollen to larger-than-human size, and their eyes shine with silvery light. These **super ape-men** work tirelessly—and with frightening speed and organization—to unearth a glowing Object in the pit.

Should the party incautiously approach within 60 feet of the excavation, the super ape-men will become aware of them through *extrasensory perception* and immediately cease their task to deal with the intruders. Otherwise, the PCs will be ignored and may take action as they see fit (including simply leaving the super ape-men to their work). If the PCs make some attempt to distract or deceive the super ape-men, the referee must determine the success of their endeavour. If the PCs simply attack these numerous, powerful creatures without an intelligent plan, the referee should let the chips fall where they may.

If they notice intruders, six of the super ape-men will attempt to paralyze the two most dangerous-looking foes, whilst the other super ape-men rush to beat



the interlopers to death with stone picks and shovels (treated as war clubs). The super ape-men begin combat scattered around the dig site, but they will quickly move into an effective formation and attack with intelligence and coordination. These thralls of the Object fight until all are killed. The super ape-men carry no treasure, but one has a crudely scrawled map of the Lonely Heath on a piece of hide. The rudimentary drawing does not shew **THE MOUND**, but it does give a rough location for **THE STONES** (q.v.).

Super Ape-Men^[2] (x24): AL LE; SZ M; MV 30; DX 12; AC 7; HD 3+4 (hp 25); #A 3/2 (improvised war club); D 1d8+1; SV 15; ML 12; XP 120.

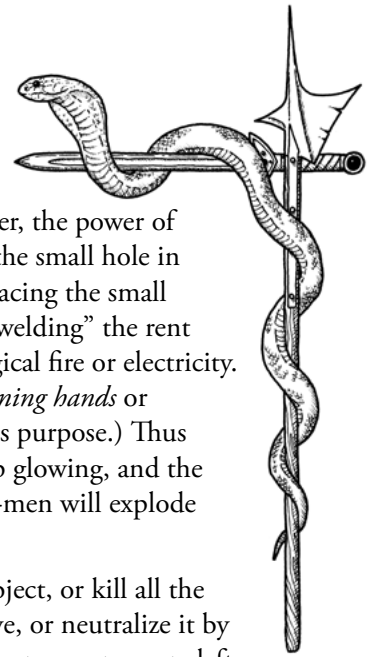
Special: *Climb* 11-in-12, at full MV. Constant *extrasensory perception*; cannot be surprized by sentient creatures. Three super ape-men working together can *hold person* one target in 60-foot range for as long as they concentrate; *sorcery* save at -2 to resist.

The half-buried Object is unlike anything the PCs have seen before. It is spindle-shaped, 100 feet long and at least 30 feet around. The Object is formed of some unknown, dull grey metal, its surface carved with eldritch runes and cryptic symbols. The whole of the Object exudes a pale silvery radiance; near the narrow end is a small triangular hole that shines with a brighter light and occasionally releases harmless bursts of electricity. If the PCs have the triangular metal **fragment** from the underground lair of the **Alchemist** (see **THE ALCHEMIST**, #5), they immediately cognize it as the piece missing from the Object.

For untold æons, the enigmatic Object lay dormant beneath the Hyperborean soil. Then came the great Comet, and the sleeper awoke. The Object exerted all its power to transform a nearby tribe of particularly wretched ape-men into powerful and obedient slaves. Temporarily exhausted by this effort, the Object bides its time whilst its servants feverishly work to uncover it. Who knows what this mysterious Object truly is and what terrible things may happen if it is completely freed from the earth?

The Object has no power over higher beings at this time and can do nothing to the PCs beyond directing the super ape-men. By the same token, no physical or magical force wielded by the PCs

2. See **APPENDIX**.



can damage the Object. However, the power of the Object can be contained if the small hole in its narrow end is closed, by replacing the small triangular **fragment** and then “welding” the rent shut with an application of magical fire or electricity. (Even a level 1 spell such as *burning hands* or *shocking grasp* will suffice for this purpose.) Thus neutralized, the Object will stop glowing, and the heads of all surviving super ape-men will explode like ripe melons.

Whether the PCs ignore the Object, or kill all the super ape-men and leave it active, or neutralize it by closing the hole, the long-term consequences are left to the referee. Perhaps the Object again will quiesce once the Comet passes from the sky, or perhaps it will transform more and more creatures into silver-eyed thralls with enormous craniums as its power slowly grows. Perhaps the Object desires the ape-men build it a vast citadel to serve as a conduit for the arrival of otherworldly beings, or perhaps the Object itself is an enormous entity—alive but petrified—that might eventually stir into active life once more. These potentialities are the stuff of further adventures in Hyperborea.



THE STONES

N.B.: If the Rivals have been defeated, this encounter will not occur as written. In that case, the referee can substitute a different encounter if desired, or else the ring of stones simply may sit empty and eerie in the silvery light of the Comet.

Just ahead the PCs can see five great menhirs rising from the rolling surface of the Lonely Heath. Surely these must be the Stones depicted on their map. As the PCs draw nearer, they will see that the Stones are wreathed in glowing mists of lurid green colour. If they choose to investigate, they will see

the silhouette of an antlered nymph standing in the eldritch vapours—apparently Yoon'Deh herself! A voice will echo from amongst the Stones:

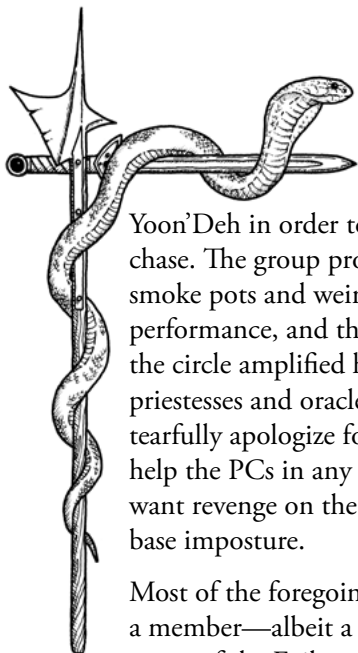
ARE YOU MORTALS MAD, TO COME THUS UNBIDDEN TO MY MOST SACRED SHRINE? GO YOU TO THE CAVERN THAT LIES FOUR MILES SOUTHEAST OF THIS SPOT, AND RECOVER THE IVORY STATUE THAT WAS STOLEN FROM ME! LAY YOU THAT STATUE WITHIN MY CIRCLE, AND THEN BEG FOR PARDON! DO THIS, AND I MAY NOT LEVY A CURSE UPON YOU. YOON'DEH HAS SPOKEN!



Regardless of any protestations by the PCs, the figure standing amongst the Stones will say nothing else. If the PCs take no action to stop her, this vision of Yoon'Deh will fade into the mists after 1 round and be seen no more.

Suspicious (or foolhardy) PCs may decide to launch an attack on the self-styled “Elk Goddess”. If stricken for any amount of damage, or even if simply fired upon with missile weapons, “Yoon'Deh” will shriek in a most ungodlike manner and attempt to flee into the Heath. If caught, she will surrender and plead for mercy from the PCs; she is obviously a mortal woman wearing an antlered headdress.

If questioned, the trembling woman will identify herself as Tamura, an Ixian dancer and actress who found herself penniless and hungry in Bogrest (where theatricals are not much appreciated). According to Tamura, she was hired by a group of adventurers who threatened her life if she refused their offer. Tamura's task was to await the PCs at the Stones and then impersonate



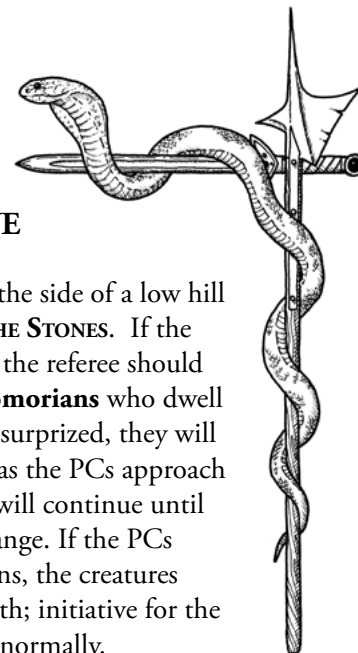
Yoon'Deh in order to send them on a wild-goose chase. The group provided her with alchemical smoke pots and weird green candles to aid her performance, and the cunningly shaped stones of the circle amplified her voice as they had for myriad priestesses and oracles in the past. Tamura will tearfully apologize for the deception and offer to help the PCs in any way she can; she will claim to want revenge on the reavers who forced her into this base imposture.

Most of the foregoing is a lie, as Tamura is herself a member—albeit a treacherous and cowardly one—of the Evil party (see **PART I, THE RIVALS**). If Tamura is allowed to accompany the PCs, she will flirt shamelessly with the males and take every opportunity to play on their sympathies and protective instincts. Tamura has no taste for frontal combat, much preferring a dagger in the back or (better still) manipulating others to do her dirty work for her.

If the PCs engage the Rivals, Tamura will stand idly by and do little or nothing to assist her supposed comrades. In any case, she will attempt to ingratiate herself with whomever comes out on top, telling whatever lies are necessary to this end without a hint of conscience. If the party succeed in plundering the Mound, Tamura will slip away as soon as possible afterwards (taking some valuable items with her if she can).

Given the other preternatural events they have likely encountered beneath the Comet, the PCs may well believe they face Yoon'Deh herself. If they seek to fulfil her charge to them, the referee should consult **THE CAVE** (q.v.) to resolve such a venture. If the PCs return to the Stones after a trip to the Cave, they will find smoke pots and flickering green candles, as well as bare human footprints.

Tamura, however, will be long gone, having decided to abandon the treasure hunt and return to Bogrest, rather than face the wrath of the furious adventurers. If the PCs attempt to track her, the referee must adjudicate the results; if the PCs are encumbered, they are unlikely to overtake her without magical aid. If the PCs do manage to catch Tamura, she will react as described previously.



THE CAVE

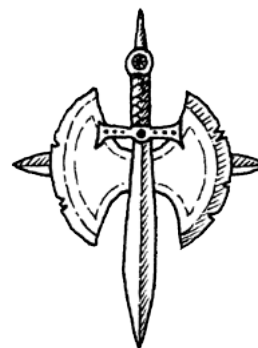
This 50-foot opening yawns in the side of a low hill some four miles southeast of **THE STONES**. If the PCs approach the Cave openly, the referee should make a surprise roll for the **3 fomorians** who dwell inside. If the fomorians are not surprised, they will begin hurling boulders as soon as the PCs approach within 100 yards. This barrage will continue until the PCs flee or close to melee range. If the PCs manage to surprise the fomorians, the creatures will meet them at the cave mouth; initiative for the ensuing melee should be rolled normally.

Fomorians (x3): AL CE; SZ L; MV 40; DX 8; AC 4; HD 8 (hp 39); #A 1 (giant club); D 4d4; SV 13; ML 8; XP 680.

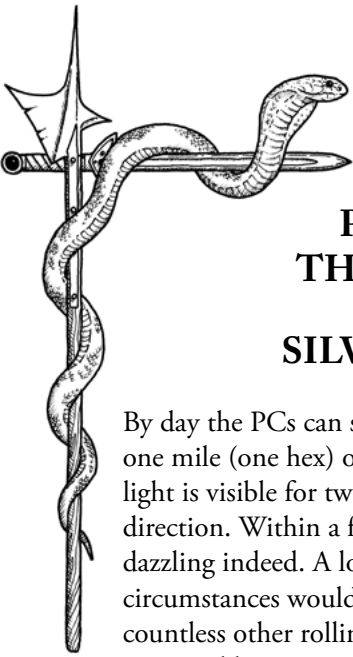
Special: Can hurl boulder to range 100 (or 200 at -2 “to hit”) for 2d8 hp damage.

Littered with human and animal bones, the Cave is a single huge chamber (unless the referee chooses to expand it into a full-fledged dungeon adventure). Stacked near the entrance are a dozen boulders suitable for throwing. Three huge, reeking piles of animal pelts and bloodstained human clothing serve as beds for the fomorians.

Each giant carries a sack containing **1d8x10 gp**. In addition, mixed amongst the foul litter in the Cave are **3,453 gp**, a **protection from undead** scroll in a **silver case** (50-gp value), and a **necklace of missiles** (with four 2-HD fireballs, two 4-HD fireballs, two 6-HD fireballs, and one 8-HD fireball). Conspicuously absent is any ivory statue of the “Elk Goddess” (see **THE STONES**).







PART III: THE MOUND OF THE SILVER FLAME

By day the PCs can see a faint silvery glow if within one mile (one hex) of this place; at night the eldritch light is visible for two miles (two hexes) in every direction. Within a few hundred yards the sight is dazzling indeed. A low mound, which under normal circumstances would be indistinguishable from the countless other rolling hills of the Lonely Heath, is topped by a raging silver blaze the size of a large bonfire. This can only be the **Mound of the Silver Flame**, and the end of the adventure must surely be near at hand.

The resplendent fire atop the Mound radiates no heat, but rather a freezing cold. The surface of the Mound beneath the flame is heavily coated with rime. Anyone who comes into contact with the silver flame must make a *death* saving throw or immediately disintegrate into a cloud of ice crystals, which swiftly disperses in the breeze.

ENTERING THE MOUND

If the PCs circle the Mound searching for some means of ingress, they will find a 10 × 10-foot stone slab on the north side near the base. Assuming the Rivals have not yet been defeated, they stand near the slab, squabbling over their hitherto unsuccessful attempts to penetrate the Mound. If the PCs are reasonably quiet, they can approach the Rivals unseen and perhaps ambush them. (The referee may grant a surprise bonus under these circumstances, particularly if the PCs include a ranger or like class.) The tricks and stratagems of the Rivals have been exhausted; if defeated here, the survivors will flee into the Heath, never to be seen again.

No obvious means of opening or moving the slab are apparent, and it resists physical force. However, as hinted on the **treasure map**, a simple *knock* spell will cause it to sink into the ground with a grinding noise, revealing a 10 × 10-foot passage leading into darkness (see **THE MOUND OF THE SILVER FLAME MAP**). If the PCs missed the hint and failed to

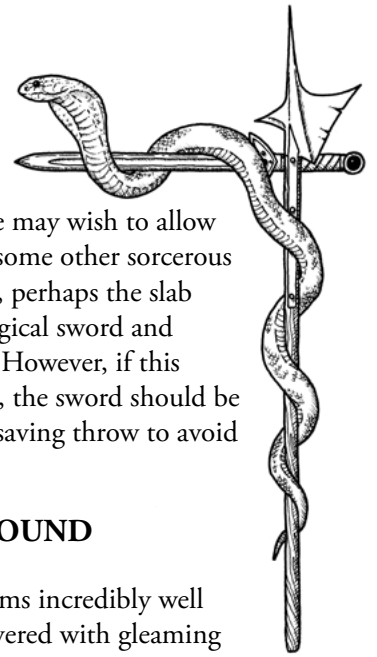
prepare a *knock* spell, the referee may wish to allow them to open the slab through some other sorcerous or physical means. For example, perhaps the slab could be pried open using a magical sword and an *extraordinary feat of strength*. However, if this alternative method is permitted, the sword should be required to make a *class 2* item saving throw to avoid breakage.

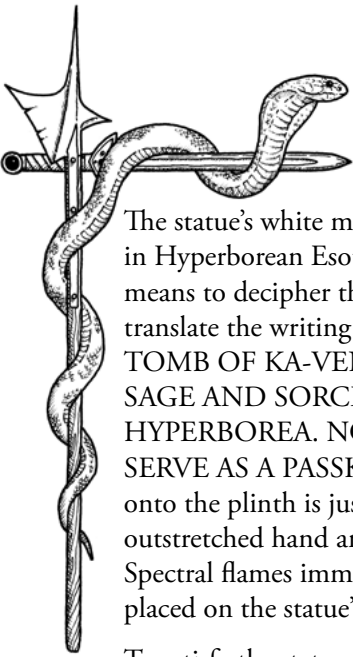
UNDER THE MOUND

The interior of the Mound seems incredibly well preserved: Walls are of brick covered with gleaming white plaster, floors are colourful abstract mosaics, and doors are of polished bronze. Ceilings are vaulted and 15 or more feet high. Unless otherwise stated, no light is present save what the PCs bring with them. In contrast to the pristine appearance of rooms and fixtures, the air within the Mound is quite stagnant; mundane light sources burn but half as long as usual. (To soothe his vanity, Ka-Ven has preserved the resplendence of his dwelling through a sorcerous glamour, but he feels no need to facilitate the breathing of living intruders.) No random encounters occur inside the Mound.

1. VESTIBULE OF SCREAMING FACES: The ceiling of this room vaults to a height of roughly 30 feet. Life-sized reliefs of human faces cover the walls. The faces wear typical Hyperborean headgear, and their mouths are agape in silent screams. On a five-foot-tall marble block in the centre of the south wall is a 12-foot iron statue, depicting a sneering, arrogant-looking man attired in Hyperborean robes. The statue's right hand rests on the hilt of a sword, and its left is extended outwards, palm up.

The sculpted faces have disturbingly realistic painted eyes; anyone who spends a few moments in the room will become certain that these eyes move when he is not looking. In fact, the faces contain imprisoned human souls. Anyone who attempts to communicate with a face (using *extrasensory perception*, *speaking with dead*, or the like) will be brought into intimate mental contact with utter, hopelessly screaming madness; he will lose consciousness for 1d4 rounds and must make a *magic* saving throw to avoid developing 1d3 random forms of insanity.





The statue's white marble base bears an inscription in Hyperborean Esoteric. If the PCs have the means to decipher this archaic language, they can translate the writing as follows: "I GUARD THE TOMB OF KA-VEN THE ILLUSTRIOUS, SAGE AND SORCERER, MIGHTY KING OF HYPERBOREA. NO CHEAP TRINKET SHALL SERVE AS A PASSKEY." A tall PC who climbs onto the plinth is just able to reach the statue's outstretched hand and place something there. Spectral flames immediately consume any item placed on the statue's palm, destroying it utterly.

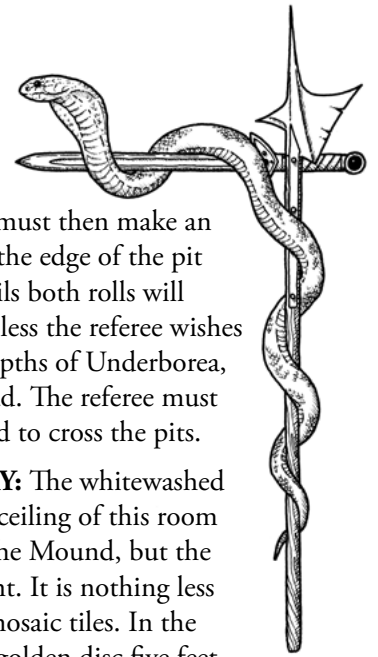
To satisfy the statue, the thing sacrificed must be a single gem, piece of jewellery, or small magic item (e.g., a ring or wand) with a value of 500 gp or more. (At the referee's discretion, an item of esoteric import—such as the party's **treasure map**—might fulfil this requirement, its intrinsic worth notwithstanding.) The statue will bellow in rage if a baser article is surrendered, and the carved faces will begin to wail and roll their painted eyes. If the PCs make three such unacceptable offerings, the statue will animate as an **iron automaton** and seek to slay them. It is unable to pursue intruders beyond the confines of this room. Once all invaders have been killed or repelled, the automaton will return to its base and resume its former condition.

Iron Automaton: AL N; SZ L; MV 20; DX 5; AC 3; HD 16+2 (hp 67); #A 1 (giant sword); D 4d10; SV 9; ML 12; XP 6,000.

Special: +1 or better weapon to hit. Immune to sorcery, except lightning, which functions as *slow* for 3 rounds. Fire attacks heal it. Every 7 rounds, can breathe poison gas cloud of 10 cubic feet volume, as *cloudkill*.

If the proper offering is made, or the statue is destroyed in combat, the marble plinth will slide to the east with a loud grinding noise. Revealed is a five-foot-square opening that PCs can use to continue to the south. Save as prescribed above, no physical or magical force can move this block.

2. WELLS OF THE EARTH: This corridor contains three yawning, brick-faced pits that descend into darkness. A draught of cool air blows from the pits, and any attempt to determine their depth will fail. Eight-inch ledges along the sides of each pit are just wide enough to slowly and carefully sidle across. Doing so requires a *test of dexterity* for each



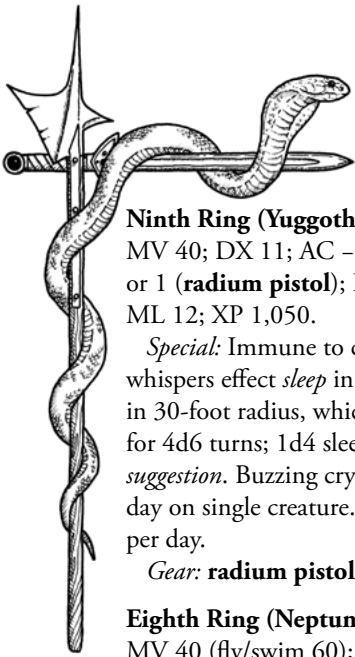
pit; if this roll is failed, the PC must then make an *avoidance* saving throw to grab the edge of the pit and arrest his fall. A PC who fails both rolls will plunge to an unknown fate. Unless the referee wishes to create an adventure in the depths of Underborea, such a PC can be presumed dead. The referee must adjudicate any other means used to cross the pits.

3. GREAT MOSAIC ORRERY: The whitewashed walls and 20-foot-high vaulted ceiling of this room are typical for the interior of the Mound, but the floor is something quite different. It is nothing less than a great orrery laid out in mosaic tiles. In the centre of the room is a shining golden disc five feet in diameter. Nine concentric golden rings surround this "sun" at intervals of two and one-half feet, and each ring bears a one-foot disc of its own: white, green, blue, red, orange, yellow, purple, silver, and black (in order from the mosaic "sun" outwards). Pale, multi-coloured radiance exuded by the "sun" and "planets" dimly illumines the chamber. More wondrous still, the orbiting spheres appear to be in motion, slowly creeping widdershins around the "sun" with a subtle rippling of the mosaic floor tiles. A **gold key** is plainly visible, lying atop the "sun" in the very centre of the room.

Although the PCs are unlikely to recognize it, the mosaic is a stylized model of Old Earth's solar system. Touching one of the orbital rings will conjure a type of creature rumoured to dwell on the respective world; the creature will immediately attack the PCs until destroyed. Touching one of the discs, however, will not conjure a monster. Unless a PC specifically tries to avoid stepping on a ring whilst crossing it, he will be 50% likely to do so.

A PC must make a *test of dexterity* (at a +1 bonus) to carefully avoid a ring; during combat, a moving PC must roll a *test of dexterity* (at no bonus) for each ring crossed. A PC can attempt to hop from disc to disc, which requires nine consecutive *tests of dexterity* (as well as a decent amount of patience waiting for the "worlds" to near one another). The conjured creatures do not themselves trigger the rings. The orbital rings block all sorcery, whether from spells or magic items, although advanced technological devices (e.g., **radium pistols**, **laser swords**) may be used across the rings without penalty. The creatures conjured by the rings are as follows:





Ninth Ring (Yuggoth)—Mi-Go: AL LE; SZ M; MV 40; DX 11; AC -1; HD 6+6 (hp 30); #A 4 (claw×4) or 1 (**radium pistol**); D 1d4+4(×4) or 5d6; SV 14; ML 12; XP 1,050.

Special: Immune to cold and airless vacuum. Buzzing whispers effect *sleep* in living creatures of 6 or fewer HD in 30-foot radius, which must make *sorcery* saves or sleep for 4d6 turns; 1d4 sleepers can be implanted with a *suggestion*. Buzzing cry can effect *hold monster* once per day on single creature. Can cast *extrasensory perception* ×3 per day.

Gear: **radium pistol** (7 charges).

Eighth Ring (Neptune)—Elder Thing: AL CE; SZ L; MV 40 (fly/swim 60); DX 11; AC 2; HD 6+6 (hp 38); #A 5 (pummel×5); D 1d4+4(×5); SV 14; ML 12; XP 870.

Special: Immune to cold and airless vacuum. Once per turn can release piping that inspires *fear* effect (*sorcery* save to resist). Once *fear* ends, second *sorcery* save required; if it fails, 1d3 forms of insanity manifest.

Seventh Ring (Uranus)—Will-o'-Wisp: AL CE; SZ S; MV 60; DX 17; AC -6; HD 8 (hp 34); #A 1 (touch); D 2d8; SV 13; ML 12; XP 1,080.

Special: Immune to sorcery, save *protection from evil*, which will drive it away, and *magic missile*.

Sixth Ring (Saturn)—Saturnine Cat (treated as **sabre-tooth superiour**): AL N; SZ L; MV 40; DX 15; AC 5; HD 10 (hp 38); #A 5 (claw×4/bite); D 1d8+2(×4)/2d10; SV 12; ML 12; XP 1,300.

Special: Able to surprize on 4-in-6 chance.

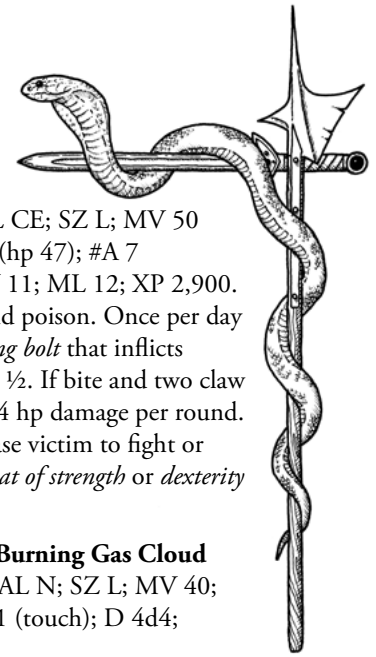
Fifth Ring (Jupiter)—Ice Worm of Ganymede (treated as **ice salamander**): AL N; SZ L; MV 40; DX 11; AC 3; HD 9 (hp 38); #A 5 (claw×4/bite); D 1d6(×4)/2d6; SV 12; ML 12; XP 1,100.

Special: Immune to cold. Emits cold; any creature within 20 feet suffers 1d8 hp damage per round.

Fourth Ring (Mars)—Green Martian Ape (treated as **albino ape superiour**): AL CE; SZ L; MV 30; DX 8; AC 4; HD 8+4 (hp 39); #A 4 (claw×4); D 1d8+2(×4); SV 13; ML 12; XP 1,400.

Special: If all four attacks strike one opponent, strangulation ensues next round, causing 1d8+2 hp damage per round. An *extraordinary feat of strength* can break grasp. On 3rd round of strangulation, victim must make *death* save or pass out, with cumulative -2 penalty each successive round. Rare victims who survive have been known to forever lose their voices.

Third Ring (Old Earth)—No creature is conjured by crossing this ring.



Second Ring (Venus)—Behir: AL CE; SZ L; MV 50 (swim 60); DX 10; AC 4; HD 12 (hp 47); #A 7 (claw×6/bite); D 1d6(×6)/2d6; SV 11; ML 12; XP 2,900.

Special: Immune to electricity and poison. Once per day can discharge 30-foot-long *lightning bolt* that inflicts 6d6 hp damage; *avoidance* save for ½. If bite and two claw attacks hit, victim squeezed for 2d4 hp damage per round. If damaged to 50% total, will release victim to fight or retreat. Otherwise, *extraordinary feat of strength* or *dexterity* might allow escape.

First Ring (Mercury)—Sentient Burning Gas Cloud (treated as **class I fire elemental**): AL N; SZ L; MV 40; DX 11; AC 2; HD 8 (hp 38); #A 1 (touch); D 4d4; SV 13; ML 12; XP 840.

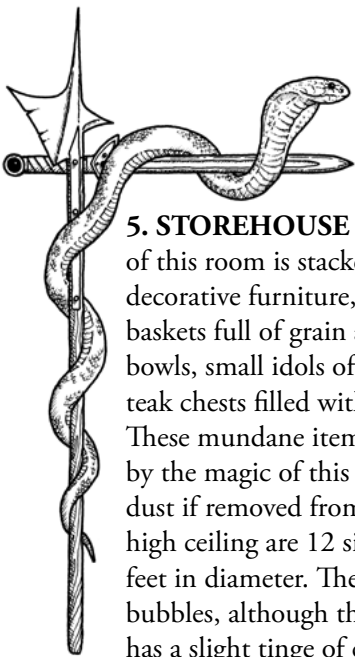
Special: +1 or better weapon to hit. Fire attacks heal at 50% effectiveness. Inflicts extra 1d8 hp damage to cold-based creatures.

Conjured creatures will pursue intruders anywhere inside the Mound, but they cannot leave it. A conjured creature dissolves into a cloud of black motes and vanishes when slain. Once a PC reaches the golden disc, he can take the **gold key** without incident—although he must then carry it past all the rings again. If the key is taken outside the bounds of the nine rings, the motion of the mosaic will cease, and no more creatures will be conjured.

4. HALL OF REFLEXIONS: The north and south walls of this corridor are lined with 10-foot-wide by 5-foot-high mirrors of polished silvery glass. Anyone who steps within three feet of one of these cursed mirrors must make a *sorcery* saving throw or be drawn inside. (Practically speaking, the PCs must proceed in single file to avoid this fate.) Such a victim can be seen reflected in the mirror, pounding ineffectually on the glass and shouting for help. Each mirror can hold but one prisoner at a time.

Casting *dispel magic* on a mirror automatically frees its victim. Alternatively, a prisoner can be freed by smashing the glass. These mirrors are preternaturally durable; one can be broken only with a magical weapon, or with a mundane weapon accompanied by an *extraordinary feat of strength*. Such an attempt, successful or not, will inflict damage on the prisoner equal to a normal melee attack with that weapon (including all applicable modifiers). This method can be attempted repeatedly by the same PC, but the one wielding the weapon must take care not to fall victim to nearby mirrors.





5. STOREHOUSE OF ETERNITY: The floor of this room is stacked with funerary offerings: decorative furniture, brightly dyed textiles, wicker baskets full of grain and fruit, myriad clay pots and bowls, small idols of forgotten Hyperborean gods, teak chests filled with parchment scrolls, and more. These mundane items are amazingly well preserved by the magic of this room, but they will crumble to dust if removed from it. Floating near the 20-foot-high ceiling are 12 silvery orbs, each some three feet in diameter. These spheres resemble large soap bubbles, although their contents are obscured. Each has a slight tinge of colour that distinguishes it from the others. Ka-Ven stored sundry items he thought might be useful in these **Hyperborean stasis bubbles**, though he has long forgotten about them.

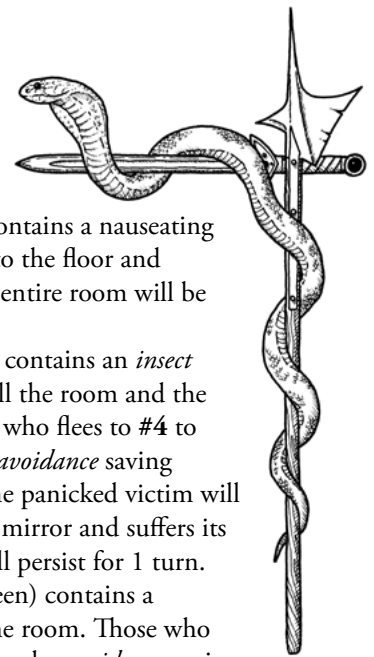
A bubble can be broken by a successful missile attack versus AC 3, or a successful melee attack (by a flying or levitating PC) versus AC 5. The bubbles are impervious to sorcery (although a spell such as *fireball* may incinerate the mundane contents of the room). If a bubble is hit, its contents will be released from stasis. A PC trying to break a bubble should specify which one by colour; if the “to hit” roll misses by 2 or more, another bubble will be stricken instead (determined by random roll). The colours of the bubbles and their stowage are as follows:

- ☼ **Bubble 1** (silver and scarlet) is empty.
- ☼ **Bubble 2** (silver and crimson) contains **12 giant pink centipedes**, which will rain down upon everyone in the room. Each person who stands inside the room must make an *avoidance* saving throw to prevent 1d2 centipedes from landing on him and inflicting one bite automatically. Those centipedes that fail to land on victims will splatter messily on the floor instead.

Giant Pink Centipede (×12): AL N; SZ S; MV 20; DX 13; AC 9; HD ½ (hp 2); #A 1 (bite); D 1d2; SV 17; ML 7; XP 45.

Special: Bite delivers poison; make *death* (poison) save or suffer blindness and (1d6 turns later) paralysis. In 1d2 days, additional *death* (poison) save must be made or victim dies; otherwise paralysis fades, but blindness permanent.

- ☼ **Bubble 3** (silver and deep orange) contains a **ring of warmth**. Falling to the floor does it no harm.
- ☼ **Bubble 4** (silver and light orange) is empty.
- ☼ **Bubble 5** (silver and brass) contains a **silver key**. Falling does it no harm.



- ☼ **Bubble 6** (silver and gold) contains a nauseating greasy substance, which will fall to the floor and splatter the PCs. Henceforth the entire room will be under the effects of a *grease* spell.
- ☼ **Bubble 7** (silver and yellow) contains an *insect plague*, which will immediately fill the room and the corridor 20 feet beyond. Anyone who flees to #4 to escape the insects must make an *avoidance* saving throw; if this save is not made, the panicked victim will pass within three feet of a cursed mirror and suffers its effects (q.v.). The *insect plague* will persist for 1 turn.
- ☼ **Bubble 8** (silver and pale green) contains a *cloudkill* that billows out to fill the room. Those who flee to #4 to escape the gas must make *avoidance* saving throws as noted for **bubble 7**. The cloud dissipates after 12 rounds.
- ☼ **Bubble 9** (silver and dark green) contains a **gibbering mouther**. It will suffer no harm from dropping to the floor and will attack the PCs at once.

Gibbering Moulder: AL CE; SZ M; MV 10 (swim 30); DX 5; AC 1; HD 4+4 (hp 17); #A 1d4+4 (bites); D 1 (per bite); SV 15; ML 10; XP 475.

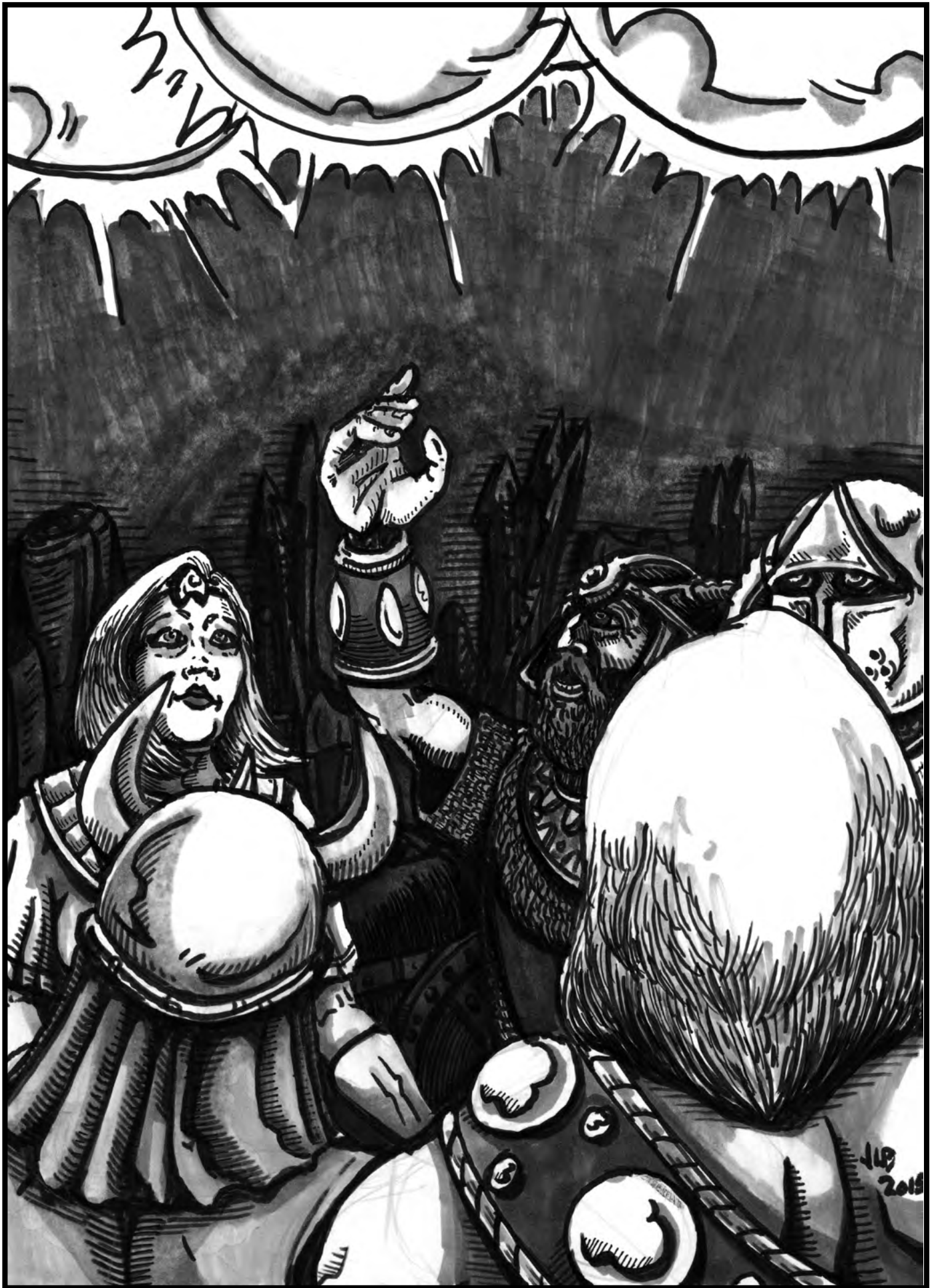
Special: Attacks with 1d4+4 mouths, targeting 1–2 victims. Each hit latches on, draining for 1 hp damage per round. If 3+ mouths bite victim, *avoidance* save must be made, or victim pulled down and bitten by 1d6+6 more mouths, each of which also drains as noted. Once per day can emit cacophonous babble, causing *confusion*; *sorcery* save to resist. Can eject spittle to 60-foot range. Spittle blinds all within 30 feet for 1d4 rounds; *transformation* save to resist. Enzyme release allows it to transform stone into quicksand.

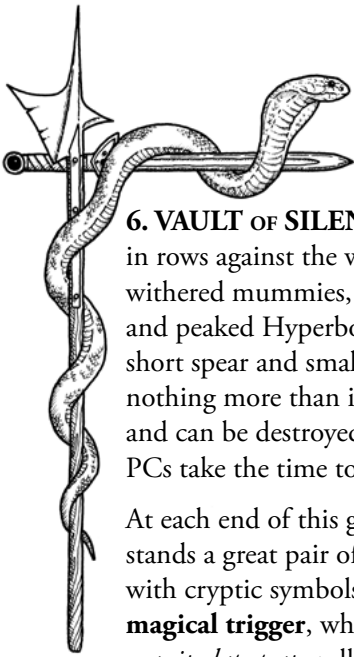
- ☼ **Bubble 10** (silver and sky blue) is empty.
- ☼ **Bubble 11** (silver and pale violet) contains an enraged and malevolent **ghost** that will immediately attack.

Ghost: AL LE; SZ M; MV 30 (fly 50); DX 8; AC 0; HD 10 (hp 51); #A 1 (touch); D nil; SV 12; ML 10; XP 1,900.

Special: Sight causes victim to flee for 2d6 rounds, unless *sorcery* save made. Harmed only by silver or magical weapons. Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold-based attacks. Touch causes victim to age 13 years unless *death* save made.

- ☼ **Bubble 12** (silver and royal purple) contains a **crystal decanter** of vintage Boreas wine (500-gp value). It will fall to the floor and shatter unless a PC makes a *test of dexterity* to catch it. Only one PC can attempt to save the bottle.





6. VAULT OF SILENT GUARDIANS: Leaning in rows against the walls of this hallway are 200 withered mummies, clad in archaic studded armour and peaked Hyperborean helms. Each clutches a short spear and small round shield. These husks are nothing more than inanimate corpses at the moment and can be destroyed by chopping or burning if the PCs take the time to do so.

At each end of this gauntlet of the watchful dead stands a great pair of brazen portals inscribed with cryptic symbols. Each set of doors boasts a **magical trigger**, which can be found by a successful *manipulate traps* roll, or discovered on a 2-in-6 chance by a sorcerer who can *read magic*. Once cognized, the trigger can be removed either through a successful *manipulate traps* roll, or by *dispel magic* versus CA 12. If either set of doors is opened without eliminating this magical trigger, or if a failed attempt is made to remove or dispel it, all intact corpses in the hallway will animate and move to attack the intruders. Despite having a thin layer of withered flesh, they are treated as **skeletons**.

Skeletons (×200): AL CE; SZ M; MV 30; DX 11; AC 5; HD 1 (hp 4); #A 1 (short spear); D 1d6; SV 16; ML 12; XP 19.

Special: Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold-based attacks. Edged weapons cause ½ damage. Attack as FA 4 monsters.

Once animated, the corpses will attack relentlessly until destroyed, following intruders to other parts of the Mound if necessary. If the PCs assume a defensive position in the hallway, the referee should note that up to eight of the shrivelled guardians can attack simultaneously along the 20-foot frontage. The referee must keep careful track of how many animated corpses fall to clerical turning or area effect attacks. The brazen doors cannot hold against the mass of undead unless magically secured.

7. DEAD POOL: The ceiling of this room vaults to a height of 20 feet. Sunken into the centre of the floor is an artificial pool, 20 feet in diameter and 3 feet deep. Edging the pool are wide tiles inscribed with runes of death and damnation (similar to those found at #10). Pale blue lights shimmer in the silvery water, in which valuable-looking jewels can also be glimpsed. Anyone who gropes in the pool

(or otherwise searches for treasure) for 1 round and succeeds at a *test of dexterity* can retrieve an item rolled at random from **table 9**. Each such item can be retrieved but once; the referee should reroll if a duplicate result is obtained.

Table 9: Dead Pool Treasure

d10 Roll	Item Retrieved
1	jade (100-gp value)
2	elixir of longevity in an ornate silver flask (100-gp value)
3	black pearl (500-gp value)
4	spoon of never-ending gruel
5	moonstone (50-gp value)
6	10-pound bar of gold (1,000-gp value)
7	amber (100-gp value)
8	+3 dagger
9	jet (100-gp value)
0	lapis lazuli (10-gp value)

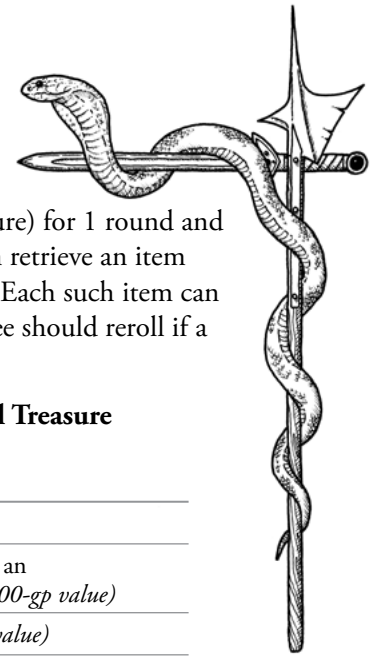
Each round of fishing in the pool risks a 1-in-6 chance per treasure seeker that a ghastly blue **spectre** arises from the pool and attacks. If the spectre is destroyed, the blue lights in the pool will fade away, and any remaining treasure will vanish forever.

Spectre: AL CE; SZ M; MV 50 (fly 80); DX 11; AC 2; HD 7+4 (hp 39); #A 1 (touch); D 1d10; SV 13; ML 11; XP 1,080.

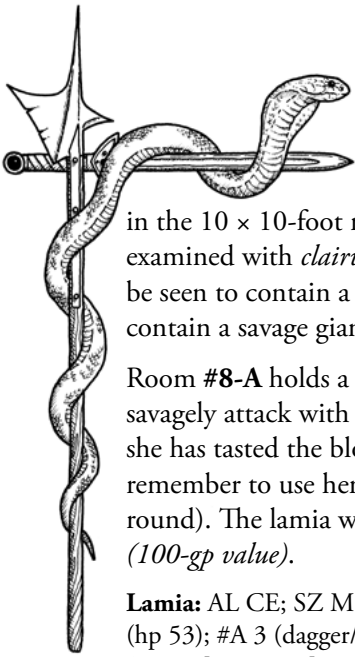
Special: +1 or better weapon to hit. Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold-based attacks. Touch drains 1d2 levels unless *death* save made; if drained to 0th level, one day later become spectre. A *raise dead* spell kills a spectre.

The **secret door** in the west wall can be discovered normally. It has a **magical trap** on it which, if not found and removed, will blast the first person to open the door with a small jet of violet flame, causing 12 hp damage (*avoidance* save for ½ damage).

8. THE LADY OR THE TIGER: Centred on the east wall of this otherwise empty room is a life-sized bronze statue of a voluptuous naked woman, with her hand resting on the head of a ferocious-looking **sabre-tooth**. This provocative figure is flanked by two identical brass doors. Opening either door will release a creature that has been held in magical stasis







in the 10 × 10-foot room beyond. If the rooms are examined with *clairvoyance* or the like, **#8-A** will be seen to contain a beautiful woman, and **#8-B** to contain a savage giant cat.

Room **#8-A** holds a ravenous **lamia** who will savagely attack with uncontrollable ferocity. Once she has tasted the blood of at least one PC, she may remember to use her charm ability (50% chance per round). The lamia wears a plain **gold necklace** (100-gp value).

Lamia: AL CE; SZ M; MV 50; DX 14; AC 3; HD 9 (hp 53); #A 3 (dagger/dagger/bite); D 1d4/1d4/1d3; SV 12 [*sorcery* +2]; ML 9; XP 2,100.

Special: Voice charms all within 60 feet, unless *sorcery* saves made. Bite victim must make *death* (poison) save or die in 1d4 rounds; if save successful, 3d6 hp damage sustained.

Room **#8-B** holds a **sabre-tooth** with a **bronze key** on a chain around its neck. If the party include a barbarian, ranger, witch, druid, shaman, or scout, the sabre-tooth will approach that PC docilely. (If more than one such PC is in the party, the sabre-tooth will choose the one with the highest charisma.) Unless molested, the sabre-tooth will lick the chosen PC's hand and become his tame animal companion (dependent upon reasonably good treatment in the future). The chosen PC can remove the **bronze key** with no protest from the great cat. If the party include none of the listed subclasses, the sabre-tooth will attack on sight.

Sabre-Tooth: AL N; SZ L; MV 50; DX 14; AC 6; HD 8 (hp 46); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1d6+1/1d6+1/2d8; SV 13; ML 8; XP 840.

Special: Able to surprize on 4-in-6 chance. If both claw attacks hit, automatically rakes with two rear claws for 2d4 hp damage each.

9. TOMB OF THE CONCUBINES: The atmosphere in this low-ceilinged room is thick with strange perfumes and even staler than the air in the rest of the Mound; mundane light sources shed only half as much illumination as usual here (and for half-normal duration, as previously noted). Against the east wall are three sandstone sarcophagi, each decorated with the painted image of a beautiful, naked courtesan. The floor is strewn with dried flower petals, and the walls are covered with erotic murals depicting lotus chewing and the most

decadent of Hyperborean sexual practices. Against the south wall is a pair of ironbound teak chests, draped with garlands of ancient, withered flowers.

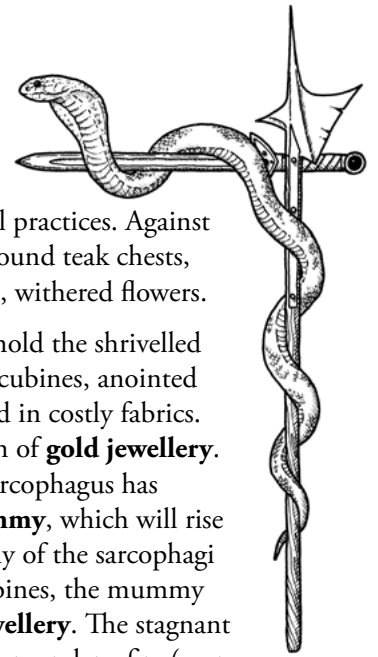
The two outermost sarcophagi hold the shrivelled remnants of once-beautiful concubines, anointed with perfumed oils and wrapped in costly fabrics. Each corpse wears 500 gp worth of **gold jewellery**. The concubine in the middle sarcophagus has become a horrible undead **mummy**, which will rise and attack if the PCs disturb any of the sarcophagi or chests. Like the other concubines, the mummy wears 500 gp worth of **gold jewellery**. The stagnant atmosphere of the room renders mundane fire (even incendiary oil) useless and reduces magical fire to half damage.

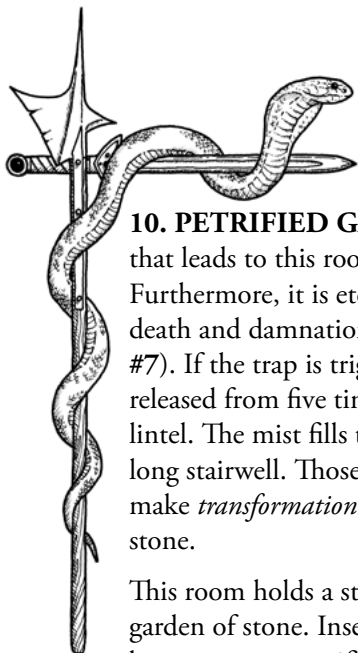
Mummy: AL CE; SZ M; MV 40; DX 11; AC 3; HD 6+4 (hp 27); #A 1 (pummel); D 2d6; SV 14; ML 12; XP 1,050.

Special: Sight within 60 feet paralyzes men with fear for 2d4 rounds unless *sorcery* saves made. Unharmed by non-magical weapons; magical weapons inflict ½ damage. Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold-based attacks. Vulnerable to fire: +2 hp per die (but see above). Touch infects with rotting disease, unless *death* (poison) save made. Disease prevents sorcerous healing; wounds require ten times as long to heal. Deadly within 2d6 weeks; only *cure disease* can end affliction.

The two chests are bolted to the floor, are **locked**, and have contact poison spread on the latches; unless this poison is detected and washed off with alcohol (or like cleaning agent), anyone handling either latch must make a *death* (poison) saving throw or suffer 3d6 hp damage. The western chest contains **2,000 gp** and **9 bloodstones** (value 50 gp each). The eastern chest holds **2,000 gp**, a **periapt of wound closing**, and a **ring of elemental command (wood)**.

The eastern chest has a false bottom (detected as a **secret door**), which hides a handle set in the floor. If this handle is twisted, the **secret door** on the east wall will open (and will remain open until the handle is turned in the other direction). The secret door can be located normally; absent the use of the hidden handle, it can be opened with either a *knock* spell or a pry bar (the latter requiring an *extraordinary feat of strength*).





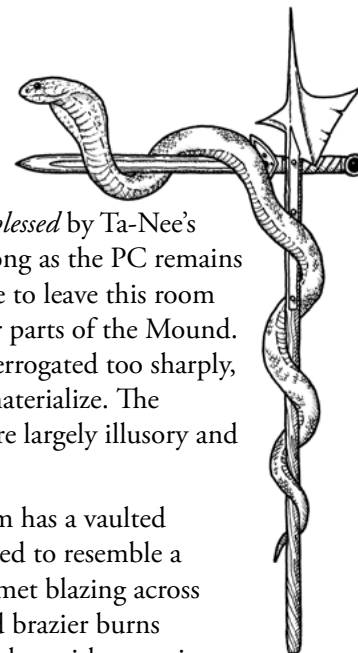
10. PETRIFIED GARDEN: The barred iron door that leads to this room is **locked** and **trapped**. Furthermore, it is etched with runes that symbolize death and damnation (similar to those found at #7). If the trap is triggered, a floral-scented mist is released from five tiny holes drilled into the door's lintel. The mist fills the bottom half of the 20-foot long stairwell. Those who are exposed to it must make *transformation* saving throws or be turned to stone.

This room holds a strange sight indeed: a magical garden of stone. Insects carved from amber flit and buzz amongst petrified trees and colourful crystal flowers. Beautiful mica birds sing sweetly and fly in graceful loops. In the very centre of the room is a 15-foot-diameter "pool" formed from a solid sheet of mica, and delicate fish carved from coral "swim" on the surface of this pool. The room is well lit by a *continuous light* spell glowing in the centre of the soaring, 50-foot-high vaulted ceiling. Soft music can be heard, emanating from a grove of petrified trees just beyond the glittering mica pool.

The source of the music is a tall and beautiful blonde woman, clad in archaic Hyperborean attire. She sits on a stone bench, strumming a lyre and weeping softly. This woman is a **ghost**, and if attacked she will simply disappear. If the ghost is not molested, she will notice the PCs after a moment and rise to greet them. This unhappy spirit will relate her story and ask the PCs for help; each will hear her speak in his native tongue. The referee may read the following passage or paraphrase as desired:

I am Ta-Nee, who in life was queen of Hyperborea. But my king would not accept death and trapped my soul, along with so many others, in his sorcerous tomb. You are the first mortals to breach the Mound in untold ages. You must destroy Ka-Ven! Only then will our curse be broken and our souls freed.

To open the door to his crypt, you will need three keys: bronze, silver, and gold. They are hidden within the Mound—I know not where, but they are surely guarded. You must do this thing! This place is an offence against nature and sanity, and the madness has persisted for far too long. Swear that you will destroy Ka-Ven and grant us rest at last!

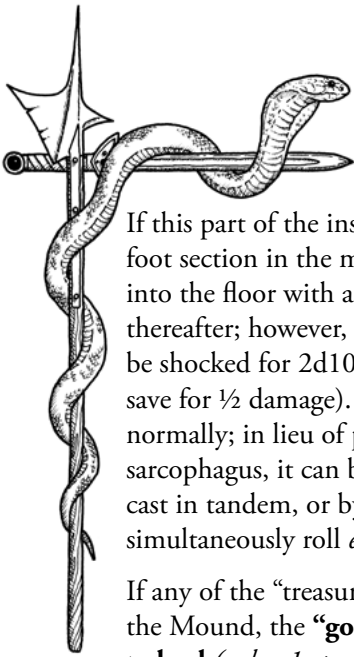


Any PC who so swears will be *blessed* by Ta-Nee's spirit, this effect lasting for as long as the PC remains in the Mound. Ta-Nee is unable to leave this room and knows nothing of the other parts of the Mound. If threatened in any way, or interrogated too sharply, she will vanish and will not rematerialize. The curious contents of this room are largely illusory and will disappear if removed.

11. FOOL'S GOLD: This room has a vaulted ceiling some 30 feet high, painted to resemble a night sky with a great silver Comet blazing across it. In each corner a heavy tripod brazier burns eternally, filling this burial chamber with an eerie flickering light. The walls are decorated with murals depicting court life during the glory days of ancient Hyperborea. Along the south wall is a white marble dais, on which rests a huge, black stone sarcophagus. Inscribed on the sarcophagus in Hyperborean Esoteric are the words, "HERE LIES KA-VEN, KING OF HYPERBOREA. LOOK UPON MY FATE, MORTALS, AND KNOW THAT IT SHALL ONE DAY BE YOUR OWN."

Three great iron chests sit at the base of the dais. Each is **locked** and **trapped** to spray *russet mould* spores in the face of the one who opens it; the target must make a *death* (poison) save or suffer infection, transforming into a **spore-man** in 48 hours unless *cure disease* is cast. The eastern chest contains **10,000 ancient "gold" coins** inscribed with the noble profile of Ka-Ven. The centre chest holds **100 "gems"**, chunks of **amber**, **jet**, and **jade** that appear to be worth at least 100 gp each. The western chest encloses **two dozen ancient scrolls** closely written in Hyperborean Esoteric. If any PC can read that language, the scrolls will appear to be documents of great historical interest and monetary value, dealing with the mightiest æra of the lost Hyperborean Empire; reading them all would require many months of study.

If the enormous sarcophagus is opened (which requires a *test of strength* to accomplish), a once-gigantic but now sadly withered corpse will be revealed. This body resembles, in a general way, the man depicted by the statue in #1. If the inscription on the sarcophagus is studied closely, a PC has a chance of noticing a faint crack around the pictogram for *KA-VEN* (detected as a **secret door**).



If this part of the inscription is pressed, a 10 × 10-foot section in the middle of the west wall will sink into the floor with a grinding noise and remain open thereafter; however, he who pushes this button will be shocked for 2d10 hp electrical damage (*sorcery* save for ½ damage). The **secret door** can be found normally; in lieu of pushing the button on the sarcophagus, it can be opened by two *knock* spells cast in tandem, or by two PCs with pry bars who simultaneously roll *extraordinary feats of strength*.

If any of the “treasure” in this room is removed from the Mound, the “**gold**” coins will immediately turn to **lead** (*value 1 cp each*), the “**gems**” will turn to **coloured glass** (*value 1 sp each*), and the “**ancient scrolls**” will crumble to dust no matter the measures taken to preserve them. Furthermore, the removal of any false treasure from the Mound will cause the Comet to begin fading, in observance of the fact that Ka-Ven has duped these mortal fools (see **EPILOGUE**).



12. ANTECHAMBER OF MURALS: On the north wall of this room is a gleaming brass door with inset locks of gold, silver, and bronze. Unlike in the rest of the Mound, the 30-foot-high ceiling here is flat and decorated with a colourful mosaic similar to that on the floor. Tall, brightly painted murals cover the walls.

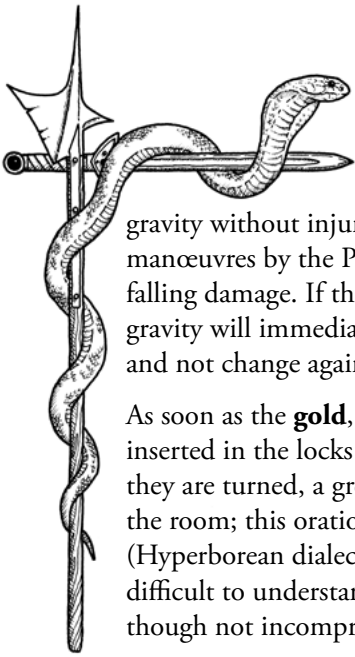
The eastern mural shows a Hyperborean man (recognizable as the model for the statue in #1) kneeling before Xathoquqa and receiving a stone **tablet** from the hand of the “Bat-Toad”, whilst a great silver Comet blazes overhead. The southern mural shows the man ruling in splendour, **tablet** in his left hand, and Xathoquqa watching from below. The western scene shows the man running with the **tablet** whilst the “Bat-Toad” pursues him. The northern mural shows the man holding the **tablet** and smugly sitting on a throne within the Mound, as Xathoquqa rages impotently outside.

As soon as anyone crosses the threshold into this room, a **class IV dæmon** will appear in the centre of the chamber and move to attack. This creature never leaves the room, but rather vanishes if all intruders depart; it reappears (fully healed) if the room is again violated. Because of the binding spell that keeps it inside the Mound, the dæmon is unable to summon its kindred.

Class IV Dæmon: AL CE; SZ L; MV 30 (fly 40); DX 8; AC -1; HD 11 (hp 61); #A 3 (claw/claw/gore); D 3d4/3d4/4d4; SV 11; ML 10; XP 4,700.

Special: 10-in-20 *spell resistance* vs. CA 12 casters. +1 or better weapon to hit. Cold, electricity, fire, and gas inflict ½ damage, or ¼ damage if save made. Attacks at +2 “to hit”. Can cast at will: *cause fear*, *darkness*, *decipher language*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *improved phantasm*, *infrared vision*, *levitate*, *polymorph self*, *pyrotechnics*, *telekinesis*, *teleport* (without error).

At the end of every round of combat, the gravity in this room magically shifts. The referee should roll 1d6 as follows to determine the new centre of gravity: 1 = floor, 2 = south wall, 3 = east wall, 4 = north wall, 5 = west wall, 6 = ceiling. If the centre of gravity differs from that of the previous round, every PC in the room will fall immediately, suffering standard damage if the distance fallen is 10 feet or greater. The dæmon will be prepared for the gravity shifts and will fly down to the new centre of



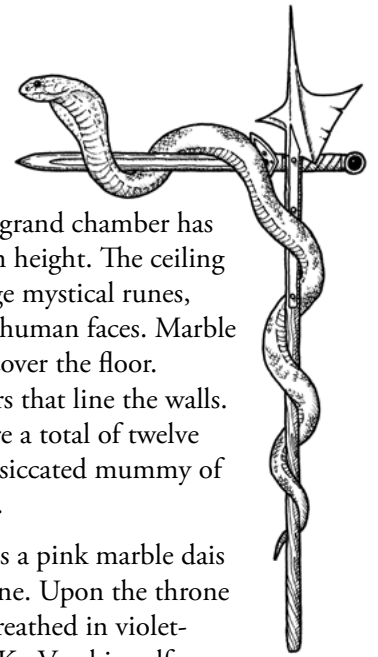
gravity without injury. The referee must adjudicate manœuvres by the PCs to avoid or mitigate their falling damage. If the dæmon is slain, the centre of gravity will immediately return to normal (the floor) and not change again.

As soon as the **gold**, **silver**, and **bronze keys** are inserted in the locks of the brass door, but before they are turned, a great booming voice will fill the room; this oration is in the Hellenic tongue (Hyperborean dialect), which may be somewhat difficult to understand by other Hellenic speakers, though not incomprehensible:

HOW DARE YOU COME HERE? YOU, WITH YOUR MAYFLY LIVES AND PALTRY, GRASPING AVARICE—HOW DARE YOU VIOLATE MY HALLOWED TOMB? I, WHO WAS KING WHEN HYPERBOREA KNEW ITS GREATEST GLORY... I, WHO SAW THE MIGHTY GLACIERS CRAWL ACROSS THE LAND AND THEN RECEDE, LEAVING A NEW WORLD BEHIND... I, WHO WATCHED THE SUN CHANGE FROM GOLD TO RED WITH MY OWN EYES... I, WHO CHEATED EVEN THE MIGHTY "BAT-TOAD" HIMSELF! HOW DARE YOU COME BEFORE ME, MORTALS?

IF I BUT REACHED OUT MY HAND, I COULD DESTROY YOU WHERE YOU STAND... BUT THIS DAY, KA-VEN THE BENEFICENT GRANTS YOU MERCY. DESPITE YOUR IMPUDENCE, YOU MAY GO. LEAVE MY TOMB NOW AND NEVER RETURN! IF YOU REMAIN, YOUR SOULS WILL SCREAM INSIDE THESE WALLS FOR ALL ETERNITY. DEFY ME NOT! GO!

No physical or magical force available to the PCs can open this door, save the three keys hidden elsewhere in the Mound. The referee may encourage the PCs to worry about the order in which they turn the keys, but in fact the sequence makes no difference. Turning the three keys, in any order, will cause the locking mechanism to snap open with a loud clunk. The door will then swing silently open, granting access to the crypt of Ka-Ven. The keys will melt into the locks and cannot be retrieved.

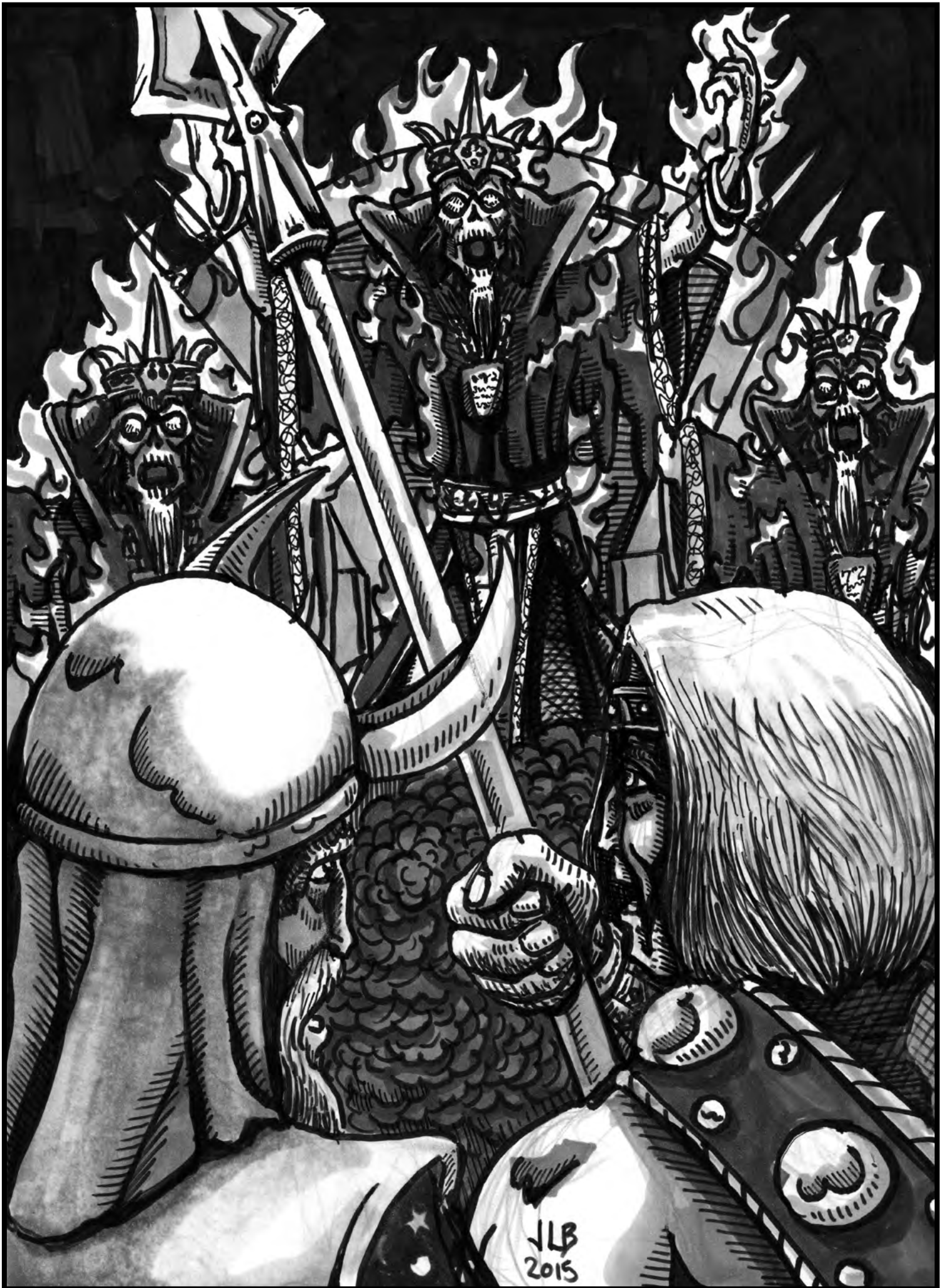


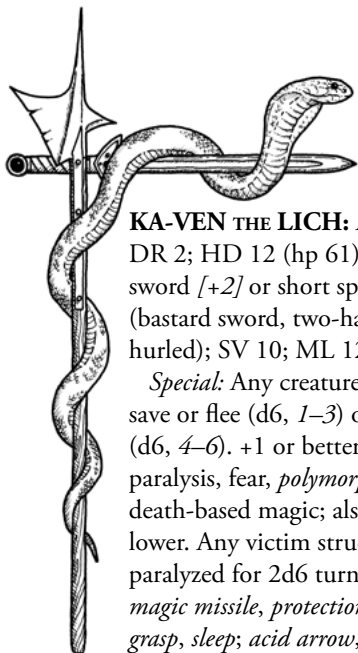
13. CRYPT OF KA-VEN: This grand chamber has a vaulted ceiling some 30 feet in height. The ceiling and walls are carved with strange mystical runes, bizarre abstract symbols, and inhuman faces. Marble tiles of jet black and rose pink cover the floor. Weird incense rises from braziers that line the walls. Along the east and west walls are a total of twelve sarcophagi, each holding the desiccated mummy of one of Ka-Ven's closest advisors.

On the far side of the room rises a pink marble dais topped by a great obsidian throne. Upon the throne sits a towering, crowned **lich** wreathed in violet-blue flames—the sorcerer-king Ka-Ven himself—surrounded by a fortune in glittering jewels and the dazzling panoply Ka-Ven wore as a living king. From an iron chain around Ka-Ven's neck depends a small stone **tablet** (recognizable as the one shown in the murals in #12).

Ka-Ven will be filled with rage at the party's intrusion and will attack without further parley. As soon as he rises from the throne, three seeming duplicates of the lich will appear on the dais, each also burning with violet-blue fire. These images are the result of previously cast *fire shield* and *mirror image* spells, which will persist for 12 rounds and 22 rounds, respectively. Ka-Ven also will have cast *protection from good* (5 turns remaining) and *lesser globe of invulnerability* (11 rounds remaining), and he will enjoy the benefits of all these spells during the ensuing combat.

The lich will cast his remaining spells intelligently, seeking to eliminate the most threatening-looking opponents as quickly as possible. Ever the magician, Ka-Ven will rely upon his sorcery to defeat the interlopers; if hard-pressed, however, he may resort to use of the magical weapons at his disposal. If the PCs use area effect spells against the lich whilst he stands on the dais, the referee should make appropriate item saving throws for Ka-Ven's treasure to see if any is destroyed. (A generous referee might warn players of this possibility in advance.) Cornered at the end of his fabulously long life, Ka-Ven will neither ask nor grant quarter.





KA-VEN THE LICH: AL LE; SZ M; MV 20; AC 0; DR 2; HD 12 (hp 61); CA 12; #A 1 (claw or bastard sword [+2] or short spear [+3]); D 1d10 (claw) or 2d6+2 (bastard sword, two-handed) or 1d6+3 (short spear, hurled); SV 10; ML 12; XP 4,300.

Special: Any creature under 6 HD must make *sorcery* save or flee (d6, 1–3) or become paralyzed with fear (d6, 4–6). +1 or better weapon to hit. Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, *polymorph*, and cold-, electricity-, or death-based magic; also unaffected by spells of CA 5 or lower. Any victim struck must make *death* save or become paralyzed for 2d6 turns. Magician spells (*burning hands*, *magic missile*, *protection from good* [already cast], *shocking grasp*, *sleep*; *acid arrow*, *invisibility*, *mirror image* [already cast], *ray of enfeeblement*, *web*; *blink*, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, *slow*; *confusion*, *fire shield* [violet-blue, already cast], *ice javelin*, *lesser globe of invulnerability* [already cast]; *cloudkill*, *interposing hand*, *wall of force*; *death*, *freezing sphere*).

Gear: **ring of protection**, +2 **bastard sword**, +3 **short spear**.

The Tablet: Any PC attempting to smash the **tablet** must make a successful melee attack versus AC –4 with either a magical weapon, or a mundane weapon accompanied by an *extraordinary feat of strength*. Any weapon that breaks the **tablet**—mundane or magical—will be destroyed in the process. No other attack or spell whatsoever can affect it. If the **tablet** is destroyed, Ka-Ven will be instantly struck down and will fall lifeless to the floor. If the **tablet** is still intact when Ka-Ven is otherwise slain, it will shatter to pieces with an ear-splitting crack and then crumble into dust.

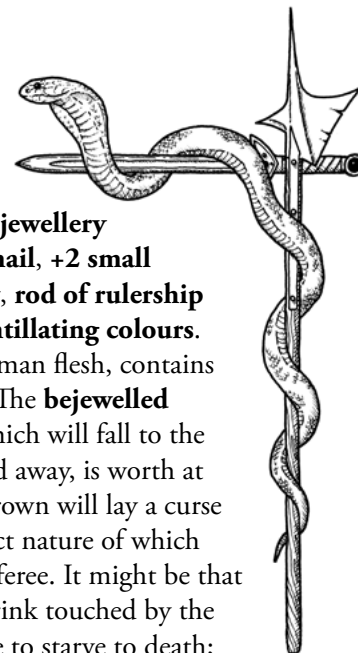
One round after Ka-Ven perishes, he will startle the PCs by springing back to life, writhing and screaming on the floor. The ceiling will begin to glow with a ghastly green light, and the squirming form of Ka-Ven will be drawn toward this nauseating illumination. On the next round, the thrashing figure of the lich will vanish into the light. The PCs will hear a horrible chuckling as the sickly green radiance fades away, carrying Ka-Ven forever beyond the ken of mortal man. Left behind are his magical accoutrements.

The treasure heaped around Ka-Ven's throne amounts to the following: **50 polished pieces of amber, jet, and jade** (*value 100 gp each*), **12 pieces**

of **gem-set gold and platinum jewellery** (*value 750 gp each*), +2 **chain mail**, +2 **small shield**, +2 **composite longbow**, **rod of rulership** (16 charges), and a **robe of scintillating colours**. An **ancient tome**, bound in human flesh, contains all the spells listed for the lich. The **bejewelled platinum crown** of Ka-Ven, which will fall to the floor when his corpse is whisked away, is worth at least 10,000 gp; however, the crown will lay a curse on whomever claims it, the exact nature of which should be determined by the referee. It might be that the crown spoils all food and drink touched by the bearer, causing that unfortunate to starve to death; or perhaps the one who claims the crown adamantly refuses to sell it, becoming murderously paranoid in the conviction that others plan to steal it.

After Ka-Ven is gone, all sorcerous effects inside the Mound will cease, and any remaining guardians will either fall to pieces or disappear entirely; the trapped souls are at last released to the Void. The false treasure in #11 immediately will revert to base materials and will disintegrate shortly thereafter. Everything within the Mound will appear worn, faded, and decayed.

The PCs will notice that walls are beginning to crack and ceilings are crumbling to pieces, which should be their cue to depart. If the PCs are still inside the Mound an hour after Ka-Ven is slain, they will be in grave peril from falling stonework. Two hours after the lich perishes, the interior of the Mound will collapse completely, slaying anyone who is still within and creating a sinkhole in the trackless reaches of the Lonely Heath.



EPILOGUE: THE COMET PASSES

If the PCs exit the Mound without slaying **Ka-Ven**, any supposed valuables from #11 will change instantly into inferior equivalents. A mocking chuckle will echo from the depths of the Mound, and the silver flame will flicker as the Comet begins to fade in the sky above. Any PC with sorcerous knowledge can estimate that the Comet will pass away within a few hours.

If the PCs decide to re-enter the Mound, they will have 1d4+2 hours (secretly rolled by the referee) before the Comet vanishes back into the Black Gulf. If the PCs are still in the Mound at that time, the stone slab will close and then disappear, trapping them inside. What Ka-Ven does about his uninvited guests, and whether they have any hope of ever escaping the Mound, is left for the referee to adjudicate.

If the PCs exit the Mound after having slain **Ka-Ven**, the entire hillock will collapse into rubble behind them. After an interminable silence, the great silver flame above the ruin will flicker and die. If the PCs still have the **treasure map**, it will be consumed by pale, heatless fire and vanish. In the sky above, the Comet will begin to fade, having completed its task of heralding the strange and wondrous events in the world below. Within the hour, it too will be gone.

A great stillness will lie over the Lonely Heath after the Comet has passed. If the PCs have performed admirably, the referee may allow them to return to Bogrest without further incident (although they need not necessarily be told of this dispensation). At any rate, no further Comet encounters need be rolled; those strange times will have ended, for the nonce.

Though the PCs undoubtedly will have many strange adventures ahead of them in the lost lands of Hyperborea, their adventure beneath the Comet is finished. And as for that great messenger itself? It may yet return one day, to again herald the arrival of some prodigy from the lightless depths of the Black Gulf—or from the dark, unplumbed deeps of the human soul.

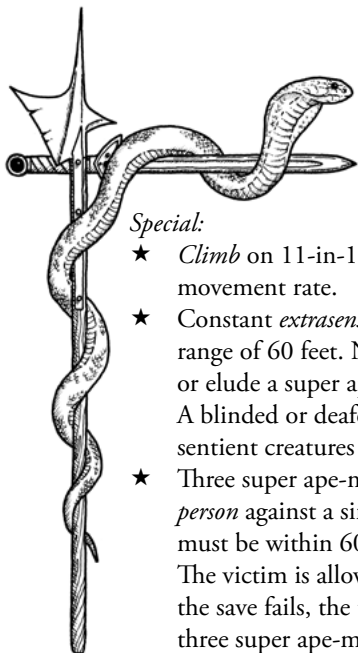
APPENDIX

APE-MAN, SUPER

<i>No. Encountered:</i>	2d6 (6d6)
<i>Alignment:</i>	Lawful Evil
<i>Size:</i>	M
<i>Movement:</i>	30
<i>Dexterity:</i>	12
<i>Armour Class:</i>	7
<i>Hit Dice:</i>	3+4
<i>No. of Attacks:</i>	3/2 (weapon)
<i>Damage:</i>	(per weapon +1)
<i>Saving Throw:</i>	15
<i>Morale:</i>	12
<i>Experience Points:</i>	120
<i>Treasure:</i>	L; C, Q (x2), S

These lowly brutes have been hyper-evolved by the buried Object to serve as its unquestioning slaves. Physically each has been increased to the strength of an **ape-man alpha**. More terrible still, their grotesquely swollen brains hold great mental power.





Special:

- ★ *Climb* on 11-in-12 chance of success, at full movement rate.
- ★ Constant *extrasensory perception* (as the spell) to a range of 60 feet. No sentient creature can surprize or elude a super ape-man within that distance. A blinded or deafened super ape-man can attack sentient creatures without penalty.
- ★ Three super ape-men working in concert can *hold person* against a single foe. All three super ape-men must be within 60 feet of one another and the target. The victim is allowed a *sorcery* save at -2 to resist. If the save fails, the target is paralyzed for as long as the three super ape-men remain still and concentrate on the effect. If the concentration of any super ape-man is broken (e.g., by a successful attack), the paralysis ends immediately.



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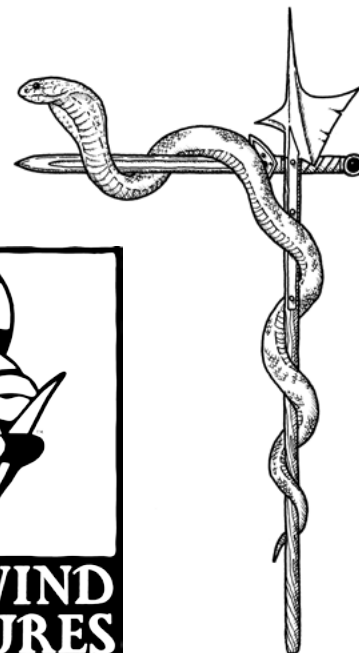
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Beneath the Mound of the
Silver Flame
Great treasure
is hid



Knock upon the stone
and enter...

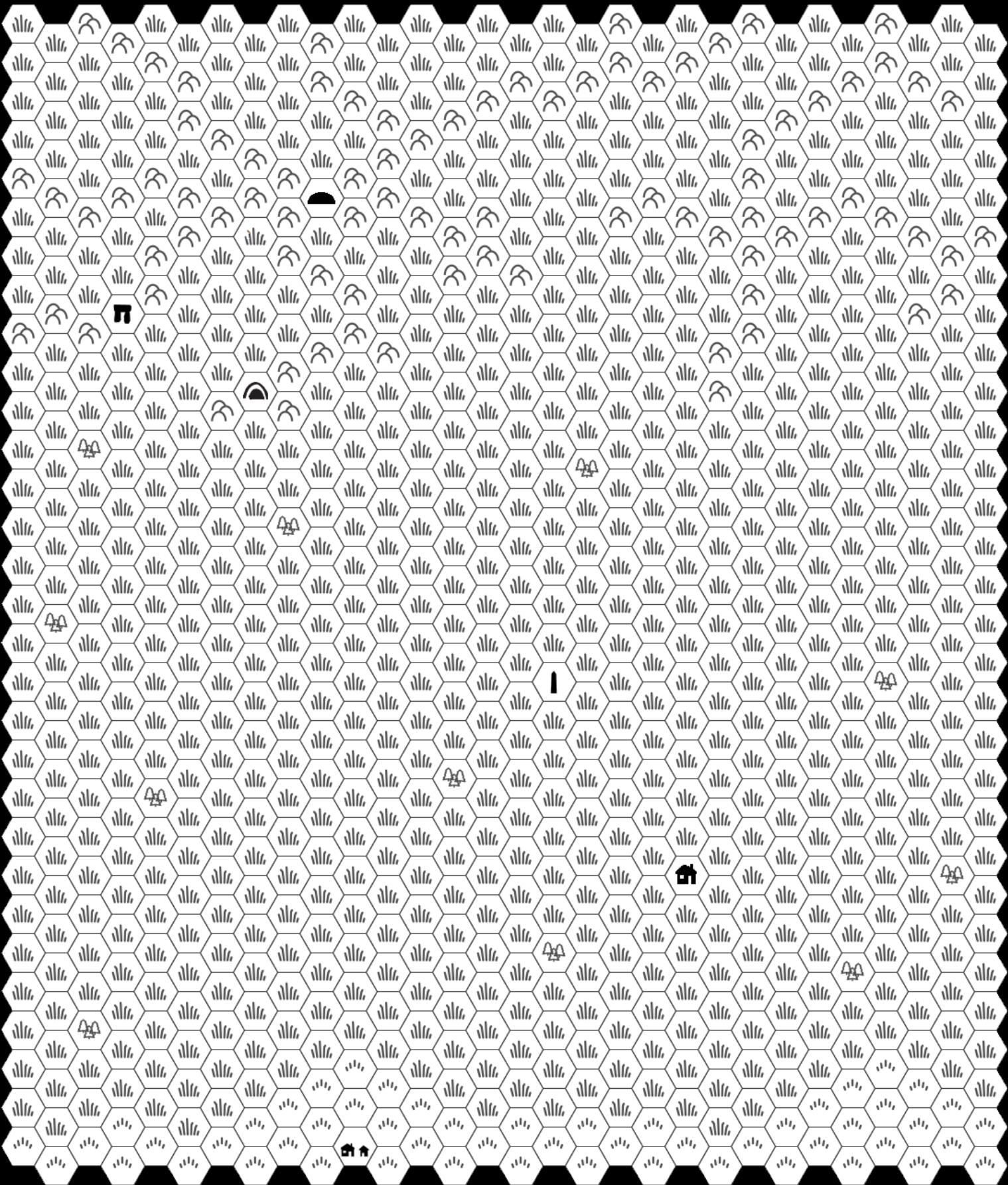
Six miles Northeast of
the stones lies the
Mound.



In the Lonely Heath beyond
Bogrest. Only whilst the
Comet burns...













JLB 2015

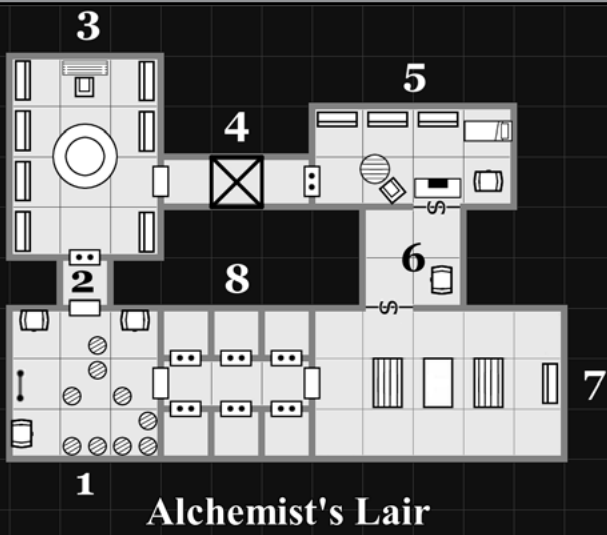


THE LONELY HEATH

Key 1 hex = 1 mile

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
|  Bog |  Light forest |  Bogrest |  The Object |  The Cave |
|  Heath |  Low hills |  The Alchemist |  The Stones |  The Mound |

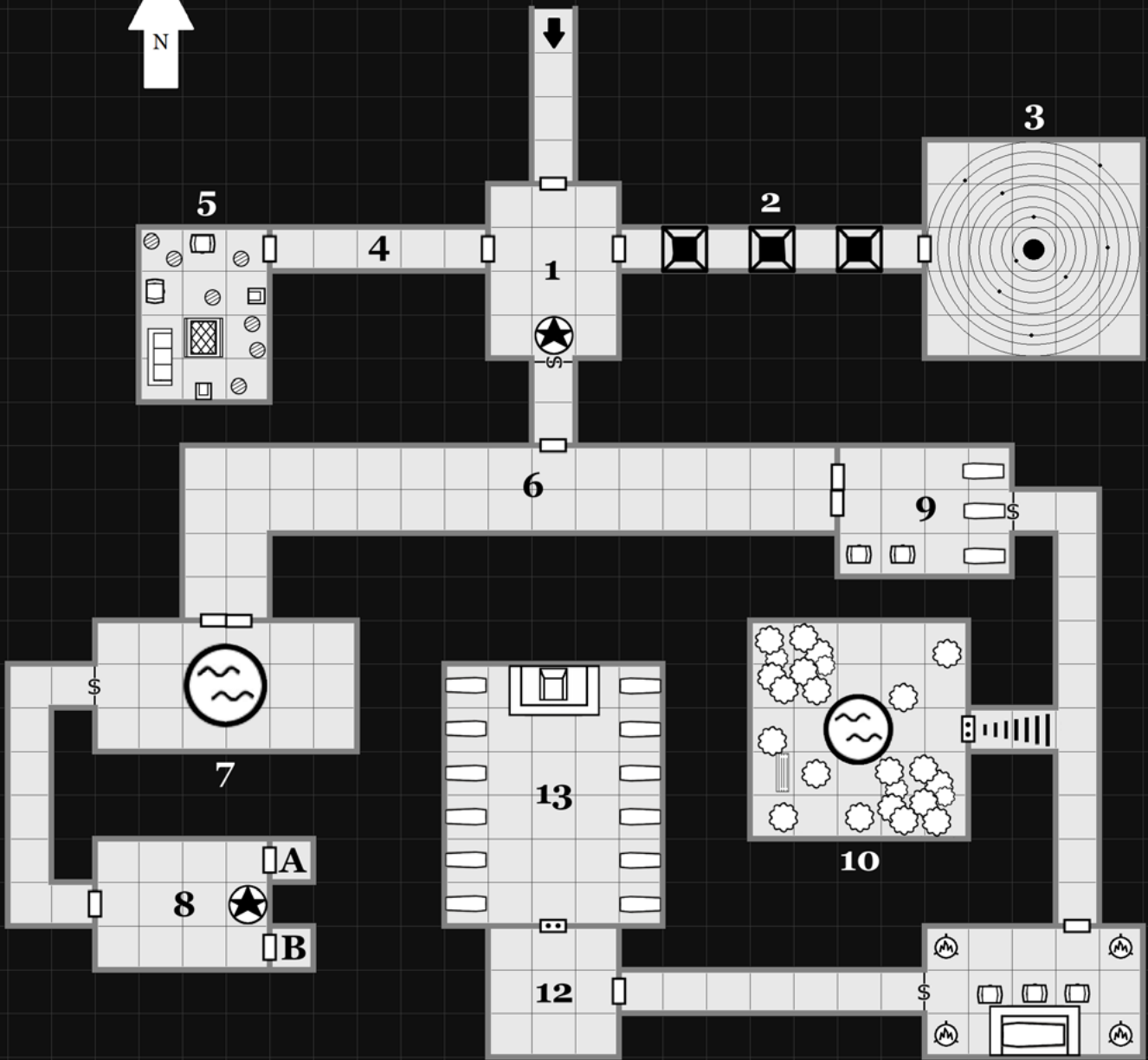




Key

1 square = 10 feet

- | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|----------|--|-------------------|
| | Door | | Table | | Chest |
| | Locked Door | | Table | | Barrel |
| | Secret Door | | Table | | Rug |
| | Stairs | | Chair | | Brazier |
| | Ladder | | Throne | | Sarcophagus |
| | Closed Pit | | Bench | | Dais |
| | Open Pit | | Bed | | Petrified Tree |
| | Vat | | Sofa | | Entrance to Mound |
| | Pool | | Shelf | | Mosaic Orrery |
| | Statue | | Wardrobe | | |



Mound of the Silver Flame

11

BENEATH THE COMET™

An adventure in Hyperborea designed for from four to six characters of 6th through 9th level



For weeks the Comet has blazed in the sky above Hyperborea, inspiring widespread superstitious dread and fear of some star-borne contagion. Under the light of this harbinger from the Black Gulf, the PCs have come to Bogrest, following a magical treasure map that reveals great wealth buried in the Lonely Heath north of the village. Finding that treasure will be no simple matter, however, for Hyperborea is a weirder and deadlier place than ever beneath the Comet.

ASTONISHING SWORDSMEN AND SORCERERS OF HYPERBOREA™



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