

A BLAZE in the NORTHERN SKY

a mini-adventure for four to six 1st-3rd level characters



for use with

**CASTLES
&
CRUSADES**



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CREDITS

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A copy of the Castles & Crusades Players Handbook and Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure is required to play this adventure.

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THE BEGINNING

For the CK

A Blaze in the Northern Sky is written for the Castles & Crusades game, a copy of the Players Handbook and Monsters & Treasure are required for play.

Blaze is for 1st or 2nd level characters and the Challenge Level for most tasks rarely exceeds 0. You can easily adapt this to your own needs. You will need to place this adventure in your own campaign world or the World of Airhde ©.

Getting There

As the players approach a village from the south they see the smoldering remains of a small forest north of town. Small wisps of smoke and ash can still be seen on the horizon.

The Village

The people in the village are weary but still worried.

The village was raided by Hobgoblins and a large Ogre that wore a collar and chain last night.

The local ranger fought and killed 3 Hobgoblins before succumbing to his wounds.

The Hobgoblins took most of the town's supply of grain and with winter around the corner they fear they will go hungry come years end.

Several men in town got together and decided they would go after the raiders. They gathered their weapons and followed the Hobgoblins into the woods north of town.

About a half hour later the villagers noticed the woods north of town were on fire.

It rained here around sunrise and the forest fires died out, which is strange because the players noticed no signs of rain on their travels to here.

The villagers can amass a small sum of 56 gold pieces and a jeweled necklace worth 100 gp if the players need more motivation to investigate. *Offer this only if needed.*

Supplies

The players can find most standard supplies in town, the mayor does have a few Potions of Cure Light Wounds he would part with for 40 gp each.

There is a blacksmith, but he is slow, so with weapons or armor there would be a long wait.

To The Forest

As the players get closer to the smoldering remains of the forest they spot some greenery already beginning to grow, birds landing in blacked out trees, silhouettes of deer and other game standing in the remains of the forest.

Tracking where the village men went into the woods is CL2 but as the players traverse the ash and burned trees they are surprised by a willowy old man in a cloak carrying an oaken staff.

The man is Perlon, a druid of the north, he saw the fire this morning while he was traveling (he was shape changed into a hawk but will not say so unless pressured).

When he saw the flames he called a storm to stop the fires.

He has been here since this morning helping the forest regrow and expects to be here several weeks.

Perlon saw several burnt bodies at the epicenter of where the blaze started and can easily point the PC's in that direction.

The Bodies

The bodies lay in what was once a grove. 4 badly burned human corpses, one with a spear still stuck in its ribcage, the others with obvious signs of bludgeoning damage to their heads and faces.

Inspecting the bodies will uncover several small glass bottles containing a flammable liquid in a fire resistant belt pouch (a mixture of lantern oil and alcohol) on one of the corpses. Each body has the remains of a torch in their hand.

4 On the ground next to that body is a broken bottle. Most likely where the fire started.

(The reality of what happened is the men used the flammable liquid to make their torches brighter. The man with the broken bottle at his feet spilled the liquid on his shirt and when he lit the torch it caught him on fire. He dropped the bottle and it broke starting a larger fire. The Hobgoblins heard the screams and backtracked and killed them all before fleeing the woods as the fire got stronger.)

Tracking the Hobgoblins from here is CL -1 (or hand-waved) as they fled through the woods quickly leaving a definitive trail.

The Hobgoblins

The Hobgoblins are holed up in an ancient necromancer's dungeon, raiding nearby areas for supplies before the winter hits.

The hobgoblins are the remains of a much larger tribe that was devastated by a wasting disease towards the end of last winter. They were led here by a young Hobgoblin Shaman named Sh'Nakt who charmed and then enslaved an Ogre with a Collar of Control.

Sh'Nakt holds the key to the collar.

The Approach

Normally there would be 2-3 guards at the entrance to the Hobgoblin's lair but because of last night's losses they are all inside with some tending the wounds they received from the flames. Sh'Nakt is busy making a healing salve to help the wounded and will not leave his chambers unless there is a fire or worse, as he believes the ogre will stop all intruders.

As long as the players make no loud sounds they may enter without the Hobgoblins hearing them.



THE DUNGEON

All Ceilings are roughly 12 feet, except Room 4 which has 20 foot ceilings.

Smells of burnt hair but also the faint smell of herbs. Sounds of movement and occasional pained moans.

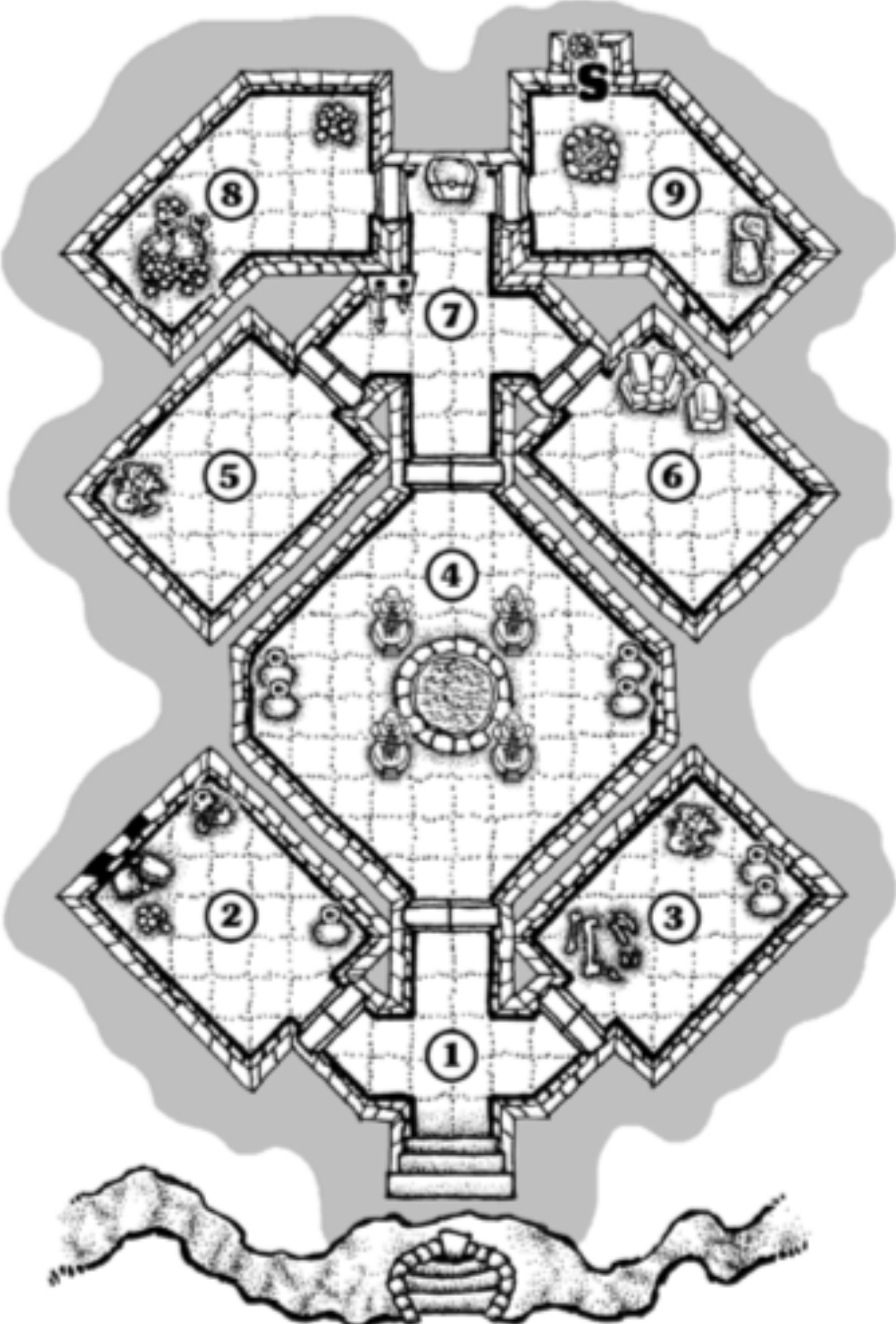
Most areas are lit by torch or fire besides abandoned rooms and store rooms.

The dungeon itself is pretty ancient and most likely hadn't been used for decades before the Hobgoblins stumbled across it.



Player Map

A printable version of this map is available on page 14.



CK Map

01. Entryway

Sounds of dice games and grumbling speech from room 2.

Torches on the walls near the double doors to the north.

A close inspection of the room would uncover ancient runes carved into some of the floor tiles. A **CLO Intelligence Check** would uncover they were placed here in ancient times, most possibly to keep something **INSIDE** here.

02. Guard Room

Whether opening the door stealthily, or by sudden force, the **4 Hobgoblins** here are caught unawares. They are grouped around the center of the floor playing a dice game.

On the first round they cannot do much more than move and gather their weapons.

At the end of round one roll a 1d4, if the Hobgoblins are not killed or disabled in that many rounds one will sound a horn he wears on his belt as an alarm to the others in the dungeon.

There are 2d6x10 gp in a small pile on the floor that the Hobgoblins were using for betting.

Hobgoblins (4): SIZE: Medium, HD: 1 (d10), AC: 15, SAVES: P, MOVE: 30 ft., ATTACKS: Sword (d6), INT: Average, ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil, TYPE: Humanoid, TREASURE: 1, XP: 5+1
SPECIAL: Darkvision 60 ft.

03. Abandoned

A large pile of animal bones is near the entry door, mostly smaller deer, but several rabbit, squirrel and the skull of an elk are in the pile.

The bones are anywhere from fresh to a few months old.

Gnawing on the bones are several **Giant Rats**. They appear quite starved and will attack.

Giant Rats (3): SIZE: Small, HD: 1 (d4), AC: 13, SAVES: P, MOVE: 30 ft., 15 ft. (climb), ATTACKS: Bite (1d2), INT: Animal, ALIGNMENT: Neutral, TYPE: Animal, TREASURE: 1, XP: 7+1
SPECIAL: Disease, Twilight Vision

Piled in the back corner are the bones of several humanoids including a dwarf, an elf, 2 humans and a gnome. A closer inspection reveals 5 pendants hanging from rotted leather strings, all bear the same symbol of an owlbear. Possibly the remains of an adventuring party? The bones have been here a long, long time.

The ancient pottery in the back is filled with brackish water but they would be worth some money (50 gp each) if they could be safely transported back to town.



04. Main Room

If the Hobgoblins in room 2 sounded the horn the **Ogre** in this room gets an attack before the players get their wits about them and the **2 Hobgoblin guards** lie in wait and ready to attack.

If the Hobgoblins had not sounded the horn the Ogre is drinking water from the well and his guards are talking near the double doors to room 7.

The statues are all identical and depict an ancient warlord. His true name has been lost to time but a Wizard on a CL 0 Intelligence Check will know him as The Pale One, an ancient warlord who subjugated the area and purged it into a 100 years of darkness.

The well is filled with fresh water. The magics that power the well and keep it filled with water are still working. If players think of it they could possibly hire workers to remove it brick by brick and place it elsewhere (would take 2d10+10 days of labor and x100 that number in gp).

The pottery in here is newer but primitive in make and is used to transport water throughout the dungeon.

Hobgoblins (2): SIZE: Medium, HD: 1 (d10), AC: 15, SAVES: P, MOVE: 30 ft., ATTACKS: Sword (d6). SPECIAL: Darkvision 60 ft., INT: Average, ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil, TYPE: Humanoid, TREASURE: 1, XP: 5+1

Ogre: SIZE: Large, HD: 4 (d8), AC: 16, SAVES: P MOVE: 30 ft., ATTACKS: Slam (1d10), or Big Club (1d8 +3 damage), INT: Low, ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil, TYPE: Giant, TREASURE: 3, XP: 40+4 SPECIAL: Darkvision 60 ft., Twilight Vision

With his current state of mind the Ogre gets enraged after losing half his hp, when enraged he gets *2 Attacks and does +3 additional damage* until slain. The Ogre wears a **Collar of Control**. Sh’Nakt has the key.

Collar of Control: Magic Item, those who possess the key to the collar can control the wearer of the collar until they are freed.

05. Burn Room

Smells of burnt hair and flesh, there are **3 wounded Hobgoblins** on the floor with some fairly severe

burns*. They become severely agitated when seeing the PCs and will fight by biting and tearing doing 1d3 damage.

Hobgoblins- Wounded (3): SIZE: Medium, HD: 1 (*d6 wounded), AC: 15, SAVES: P, MOVE: 30 ft., ATTACKS: Sword (d6). SPECIAL: Darkvision 60 ft., INT: Average, ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil, TYPE: Humanoid, TREASURE: 1, XP: 5+1

The bones in the back of the room are ancient and definitely all human.

06. Storage

The village’s grain bags are stacked in here. They have been singed a bit but are otherwise still in good shape.

A close inspection of this room will uncover an old golden locket tucked beneath a loose stone, it is worth 50 gp.

07. Hallway

The treasure chest in the back is filled with alchemy supplies. The contents are worth 150 gp. When it is opened allow the PC to make a CL 0 Wisdom Check, a success indicates they notice the false bottom. The false bottom contains **3 Potions of Cure Light Wounds** that Sh’Nakt hid there in case of emergencies (his emergencies).

There is a **trap** on the northern wall leading into room 5. A successful CL0 WIS check to spot and a CL0 Dex Check to disarm. The trap does 1d6 damage to those who step in the square in front of it unless a successful CL 1 Dexterity check is made to dodge it.

08. Treasure Room

Sh’Nakt’s pet **Displacing Beast** (see Monsters p. 12) guards his treasures here. Sh’nakt raised the beast from a young age and it is loyal to him.

Sh’Nakt has amassed a fair amount of treasure. 630 gp lay in here and an additional 270 gp in items of value.

Displacing Beast (1): SIZE: Large, HD: 6 (d8), AC: 16, SAVES: P, MOVE: 40 ft., ATTACKS: 2 Tentacles (2d4), INT: Low, ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil, TYPE: Magical Beast, TREASURE: 5, XP: 180+6 SPECIAL: Darkvision 60 ft., Twilight Vision, Displacement

09. Sh'Nakt's Chambers

Even if the horn had sounded Sh'Nakt is here near the fire tending to the potions he is making on the open flame. Sh'Nakt carries a +1 dagger and has a few spells. He casts spells as a 2nd level cleric and can cast each of his spells one time.

Sh'Nakt (Hobgoblin Shaman): SIZE: Medium, HD: 2 (d6), AC: 15, SAVES: P, M, MOVE: 30 ft., ATTACKS: +1 magical dagger (1d4+1), INT: Average, ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil, TYPE: Humanoid, TREASURE: 1, XP: 5+1
SPECIAL: Darkvision 60 ft., Spells: Cause Light Wounds, Charm Person, Sound Burst

Sh'Nakt is not the true danger here, the danger lies in finding the secret door in this room and finding The Pale One's Phylactery and its undead guards.

After defeating Sh'Nakt and searching the room allow the players to make a CL0 Wisdom Check to spot the secret door (this is a Check they will wish they all failed).

Upon opening the door they will see a small pile of 120 gp and 70 sp with a large gem in the middle, the Gem glows a strange purplish color when touched and will detect as magical.

When the gem is touched the walls of room 9 will appear to wave, like dropping a rock into a pool of water. Through the center of the ripples a Wraith will come out and relentlessly attack the intruders until killed *or they flee without the gem.*

The gem itself is worth 5000gp but it holds a secret (see The Phylactery below).

Wraith: SIZE: Medium, HD: 5 (d12), AC: 15, SAVES: M, MOVE: 30 ft., 60 ft. (fly), ATTACKS: Incorporeal Touch (1d6), INT: High, ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil, Type: Undead (Extraordinary), Treasure: 5, XP: 320+5
SPECIAL: Energy Drain, Create Spawn, Incorporeal, Immunity (Weapon +1), Darkvision 60 ft., Unnatural Aura

CONCLUSION

Returning the Grain to the Village

If the PCs had to be bribed to follow the Hobgoblins the mayor will pay them the agreed upon sum of 56 gp and the jeweled necklace worth 100 gp.

If they did not have to be bribed the Villagers and Mayor will gift the party with 56 gp, the jeweled necklace, 3 Potions of Cure Light Wounds and the dead Ranger's wife will gift them with his **Elven Chain Mail** (page 34 M&T 5th Printing) and **Magical +1 Long Sword**.

The villagers will also gather together their best food stuffs and give the players a great feast.

The Phylactery

Destroying the Pale One's phylactery is no easy task and destroying the Pale One himself is an even harder one.

In my campaign, The Pale One is an ancient Lich who rules from a throne made of elven bones and resides in a castle in the northern mountains. His armies include Northern Orc who fight alongside his undead troops.

Where do the players go from here?



MONSTERS

Displacing Beast

NUMBER: 2-5
SIZE: Large
HD: 6 (d8)
AC: 16*
SAVES: P
MOVE: 40 ft.
ATTACKS: 2 Tentacles (2d4)
INT: Low
ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil
TYPE: Magical Beast
TREASURE: 5
XP: 180+6
SPECIAL: Darkvision 60 ft., Twilight Vision, Displacement

The displacing beast is a savage carnivore that resembles a black panther with six legs, glowing green eyes, and two muscular tentacles growing from its shoulders.

COMBAT: A Displacing Beast makes two tentacle attacks each round.

DISPLACEMENT*: The displacing beast projects a magical illusion that makes it appear to be standing near its actual location, causing attack rolls against it to be at -4. If it is hit by an attack, this is disrupted until the end of its next turn.

Hobgoblin

NUMBER: 4-12, 10-200
SIZE: Medium
HD: 1 (d10)
AC: 15
SAVES: P
MOVE: 30 ft.
ATTACKS: By weapon
INT: Average
ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil
TYPE: Humanoid
TREASURE: 1
XP: 5+1
SPECIAL: Darkvision 60 ft.

COMBAT: Hobgoblins are smart tacticians. They rely on their collective knowledge in battle and sheer numbers and power to end battles in their favor. They favor tight formations, using their armor and pole arms to great effect.

Ogre

NUMBER: 1-20
SIZE: Large
HD: 4 (d8)
AC: 16
SAVES: P
MOVE: 30 ft.
ATTACKS: Slam (1d10), or By weapon (+3 damage)
INT: Low
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil
TYPE: Giant
TREASURE: 3
XP: 40+4
SPECIAL: Darkvision 60 ft., Twilight Vision

COMBAT: Ogres are not so dumb as to rely on force alone. They are shrewd, and learn from their numerous battles. They value crude tactics in an attempt to gain an upper hand on their foes. If they banded with weaker creatures, ogres will intimidate those creatures into entering battle first. Then, when the opposition is softened, the ogres will enter combat to finish the fight. They often find the tables turned when in the service of stronger creatures, such as giants. In these cases, ogres often make the frontal assault.



RAT, GIANT

NUMBER: 1-100

SIZE: Small

HD: 1 (d4)

AC: 13

SAVES: P

MOVE: 30 ft., 15 ft. (climb)

ATTACKS: Bite (1d2)

INT: Animal

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

TYPE: Animal

TREASURE: 1

XP: 7+1

SPECIAL: Disease, Twilight Vision

COMBAT: Rats are skittish and avoid combat at all costs, fleeing whenever disturbed. They may try to bite and eventually eat anyone that is wounded and vulnerable. Large swarms of rats become emboldened, and may attack partially wounded people.

DISEASE: Any creature bitten by a rat has to make a successful constitution to avoid being infected by a disease from the rodent's saliva. The Castle Keeper should refer to the CKG for examples, but the disease should have a base CL of 2.

WRAITH

NUMBER: 1-4

SIZE: Medium

HD: 5 (d12)

AC: 15

SAVES: M

MOVE: 30 ft., 60 ft. (fly)

ATTACKS: Incorporeal Touch (1d6)

INT: High

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil

TYPE: Undead (Extraordinary)

TREASURE: 5

XP: 320+5

SPECIAL: Energy Drain, Create Spawn, Incorporeal, Immunity (Weapon +1), Darkvision 60 ft., Unnatural Aura

COMBAT: A wraith is normally insubstantial like a ghost or spectre and thus only magical weapons of +1 or better can affect her ectoplasmic form. A wraith attacks by passing through objects to attack their foes unawares. They strike, disappear back through an

object, and return again. They slowly whittle a foe to death.

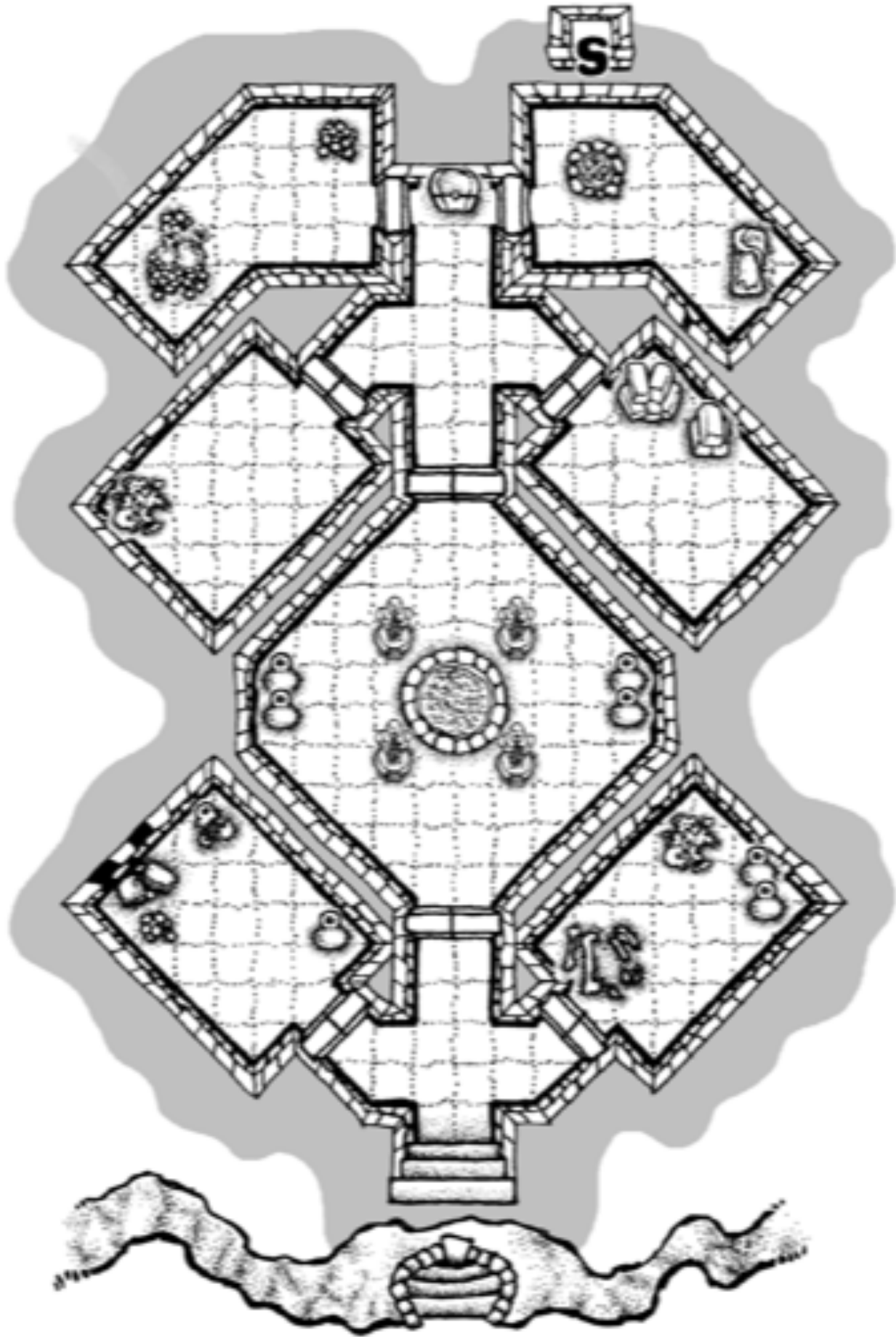
ENERGY DRAIN: Living creatures hit by a wraith's attack lose one level. For each such level lost, the wraith heals five hit points

CREATE SPAWN: A human victim killed by the wraith's energy drain can be brought back to life as a wraith, under the control of the slaying wraith. The slaying wraith must want to use this ability; it is not automatic. A creature affected loses all abilities, and gains the statistics of a wraith. Spawn created in this way are only half strength; they have 3 hit dice, instead of 5, and lose the ability to create spawn, but are otherwise identical.

INCORPOREAL: Wraiths are incorporeal creatures, and normal weapons pass through them harmlessly. Only magical weapons of +1 or better can affect them.

UNNATURAL AURA: Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that, and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.





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Perfect for a one shot or last minute game session,
‘A Blaze in the Northern Sky’ is a mini-dungeon
based adventure for four to six, low level characters.

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written by scott myers
2020