

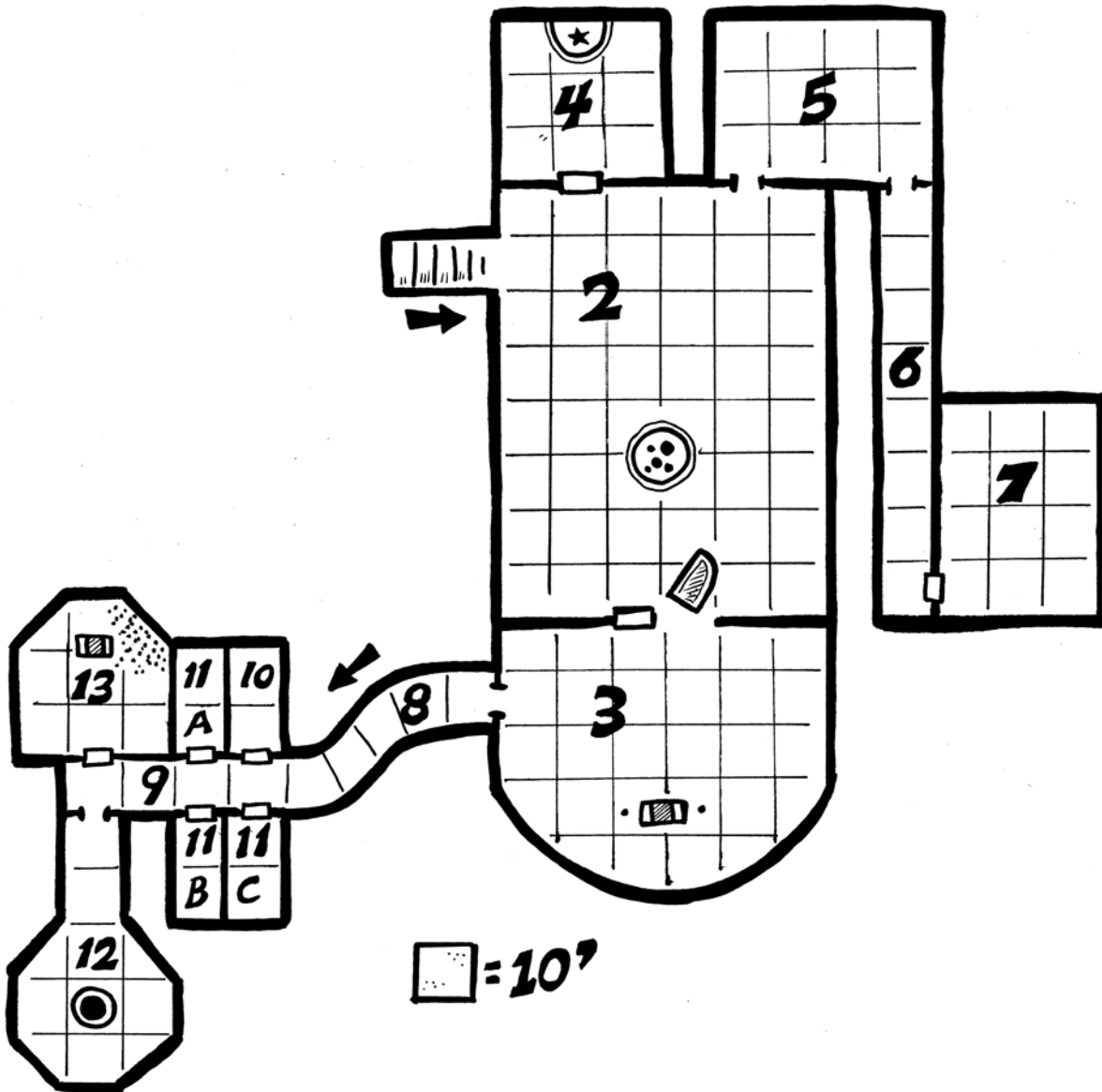
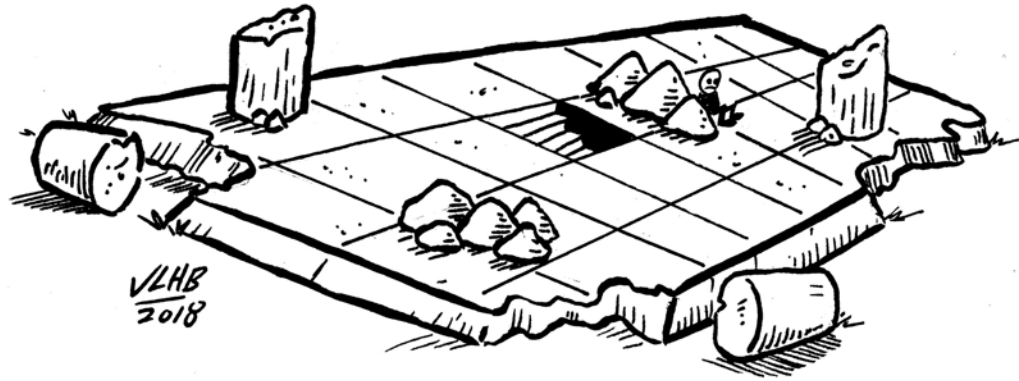
# CRYPAT OF MORGRATH

By Joshua LH Burnett



COMPATIBLE WITH  
**DCC  
RPG**

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# Crypt of Morgrath

## INTRODUCTION

*Crypt of Morgrath* was an OSR adventure I wrote and shared on my blog back in 2011. Now I've decided to adapt it for use with *Dungeon Crawl Classics* by Goodman Games. This adventure is designed for a party of 4-6 1<sup>st</sup> level heroes with a variety of talents and skills. Magic of both flavors will certainly help the party, but isn't necessary. The adventure could also work as a funnel dungeon for a larger group of 0-level characters with few changes required.

The default set-up for the adventure casts the PCs as former members of a mercenary band, now stuck in the northern settlement of **Hogarth's Keep**. This setup can easily be changed by the Judge to fit their campaign. Just give the party a reason to be in the keep and a reason to work for Baron Hogarth.

## Setup

*You have all traveled north as part of the Black Banner mercenary company, hired to help the baron of Hogarth's Keep repel raids on his land by the local tribes of barbarian beastmen. Your campaign was successful as the Black Banners crushed the savages. Flushed with victory, you took your earnings and mustered out of the company, planning on continuing your adventuring careers as free agents.*

*Unfortunately, like so many adventurers, drink was your downfall. As the rest of the Black Banners left town, you stayed behind in Drunken Dowager Inn. The wine and ale flowed a bit too freely as you all celebrated. Insults were spoke, punches were thrown, tables were turned, and you woke up hung-over and bruised in the dungeons of **Baron Markus "Mooseblood" Hogarth**.*

*You now stand before the Baron, a mountain of a man with a bristling blood-red beard. He stares you down with steely eyes. "You have caused a lot trouble and carnage in my town. By rights, I should have you in the pillory, ready for a flogging. But I remember your valor in the campaign against the savages, and I am in a forgiving mood. I'm going to pardon your crimes and even cover your bar tab, but I want you to do a simple task for me..."*

While the heroes were busy whooping it up last night, a group of thieves were busy breaking into Baron Hogarth's treasury. They stole no gold, and took but a single item—a black gem of questionable value set within an angular plate mounted on a band of gold. The circlet has been in the treasury since the baron's grandfather's rule, and it was far from the most valuable thing in the vault.

A trap in the vault disabled one of the thieves, and the Baron's guards captured him while his fellow thieves escaped. Under the "gentle persuasions" of Hogarth's chief interrogator, the thief revealed that his group of robbers were hired by a wizard named "**Squid Eye**" **Varnagon Nix**. They were instructed to retrieve the circlet (and only the circlet) from the Baron's vault and bring it back to him. Varnagon and the bandits have set up base in the ruins of an ancient crypt to the north of the Hogarth's Keep. He does not know what Varnagon wants with the circlet, but he paid well for their services. Unfortunately, the captured thief died under interrogation, so the heroes are unable to question him personally (not without dark magic, anyway).

Baron Hogarth wants the heroes to retrieve his stolen property. He'll also pay them a bounty for each bandit (25gp a head) and 100gp for the head of the wizard Varnagon. They're also welcome to whatever they find in the crypt. Hogarth will not risk his own men to hunt down a sorcerer in a shunned tomb. The heroes might be able to hire help in town.

## Baron Markus “Mooseblood” Hogarth

HD: 5d12 (40 hp); AC: 14 (scale)

Init: +0; Act: 2d20+1d14

Attacks: Greataxe +2 melee +1d7 Deed Die (1d10+2)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1

Move: 25'; AL: N

## What's going on here?

The black-jeweled circlet once belonged to **Morghrath**, a sorcerer from Times of Old. While the circlet is not magical, it was a prized heirloom of great sentimental value to the evil wizard. After Morgrath's death and rebirth, the circlet fell into the hands of wandering adventurers and passed through many hands before finding its way back to Morgrath's former haunts and into the coffers of Hogarth's ancestors.

Morghrath had ambitions of becoming a lich, but the required rituals proved to be beyond his ability. He had to make do with becoming a form of lesser undead (specifically a *draugwight*). While he lost his ability to perform magic, immortality was immortality, as far as Morgrath was concerned.

Varnagon is an evil magician with dreams of power. He has located Morgrath's tomb and divined the existence of the circlet. He hopes to earn the favor and tutelage of the undead former wizard by returning to him his lost treasure.

## The Crypt of Morgrath

The surface structures of the old mausoleum have long ago fallen to ruin. Only the underground structure remains intact. The crypt lies about a day's ride to the north of Hogarth's Keep. The terrain consists of hills and pine forests lightly covered with snow. The crypt's location is commonly known and shunned by the locals as a haunted place.

### Random Encounters

While in the crypts, check for random encounters every hour. The heroes have a 1-in-6 chance of having an encounter.

Roll 2d6	Encounter
2	Giant Woodlouse (stats: page 3)
3-4	A chunk of masonry falls on a random hero. DC: 12 Reflex save or take 2d4 damage.
5-7	A bandit, frightened, insane, and desperate. (stats: page 4)
8-9	Thick mist rises from the stones, -1d to attack rolls and +1d stealth rolls for the next hour.
10-11	1d3 Razortooth Skeletons (stats: page 4)
12	1d2 Zombies (stats: page 4)

**1) Upper Courtyard:** An ancient courtyard of broken stone flagstones made of some gray-green stone. Old stone columns are shattered and toppled. Moans of pain echo across the flags. A dying bandit with nasty gut and leg wounds (he was attacked by skeletons) lies behind rock, menaced by wolves.

The bandit is mad with pain and terror and will die shortly (1d6+3 rounds) unless the heroes decide to help him. He will tell them that Varnagon went mad and summoned up “fiends from the 17<sup>th</sup> Hell” to slaughter his fellow bandits. Even if healed, he refuses to return to the crypt and will fight the heroes if they try to force him. Without healing magic, a medically trained PC can make a DC: 14 Intelligence check to restore the bandit to 1 hp.

### Wolves (4)

HD: 1d6 (4 hp each); AC: 12

Init: +3; Act: 1d20

Attacks: bite +2melee (1d4)

Saves: Fort

+3, Ref +2, Will +1

Move: 40'; AL: N

### Wounded Bandit (Hank)

HD: 1d8 (4 hp, currently 0); AC: 12 (leather)

Init: +2; Act: 1d20

Attacks: unarmed (+1 attack bonus if healed and armed)

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0

Move: 30' (currently 5'); AL: C

**2) Main Gallery:** A huge, arched chamber of crumbling black stone. The thick dust on the floor was recently disturbed, but the tracks are too jumbled to follow. A large ruined statue of black marble sits in the center of the room. Five thick, trunk-like legs are all that's left of the alien statue. The party can hear the wet, meaty sounds of rending and chewing to the south.

**3) Temple:** An arched chamber with nooks evenly spaced around the walls. The nooks hold the residue of ancient black candles. A large altar of black-green metal covered with tattered black cloth rests near the back.

Six **razortooth skeletons** hunker down around two human bodies, tearing off bloody hunks of meat, shoving them into their fanged mouths, and chewing. Bloody gobs of flesh fall out of their empty torsos and splat to the floor. Upon detecting the heroes, the skeletons will attack, hungry for fresh people meat.

A character who examines the floor around the altar notices obvious grooves gouged into the stone flags. A DC: 13 Strength check moves the altar. A hidden compartment underneath holds Morgrath's spellbook, a rotting black leather tome with an iron seal on front bearing the impression of left hand. This magic lock only opens if Morgrath's left hand (dead, alive, or otherwise) is placed on seal. Forcing open the lock destroys 1d4 random spells.

### **Razortooth Skeletons (6)**

HD: 1d8 (3, 3, 5, 5, 6, 7 hp); AC: 10

Init: +1; Act: 1d20

Attacks: bite +1 melee (1d6)

Saves: Fort

+0, Ref +1, Will +0

Move: 35'; AL:C

Special: Un-dead. Half damage from slashing or piercing damage.

### **Morghrath's Spellbook**

#### Level 1

*Chill Touch*

*Ward Portal*

#### Level 2

*Scare*

*Phantasm*

#### Level 3

*Demon Summoning*

**4) Pool of Madness:** This wooden door is locked. This low-ceilinged room contains a low pool of cold black water. A statue stands in center of pool—a faceless woman in a hooded robe holding a horned animal skull from which water pours. Several gold coins (58gp) and a couple of bright red jewels (worthless cut glass) glint in the bottom of the pool.

Touching the water triggers horrific hallucinations, paralyzing the character (DC: 15 Fortitude save to resist) for 1d4x10 minutes. The screams of the affected causes a wandering monster check with a 4-in-6 chance of attracting attention.

**5) Ruined Library:** The wooden door to this room has been battered down. Several rotten wooden bookshelves fill the room. Moldered old tomes are torn apart and scattered across the floor. Several have Morgrath's sigil on the pages. The heroes can hear the sounds of fists pounding on wood to the south.

Spending an hour or so piecing together fragments of the books will reveal that the books are mostly theology of dark gods and Morgrath's mostly-ruined journals. One scrap reads: *"Though lichdom has been denied me, I pray the Unspeakable Ones will at least..."*

A giant woodlouse lurks beneath a pile of books and will probably surprise the heroes if they search through the litter.



### **Giant Woodlouse**

HD: 5d8 (24 hp); AC: 16

Init: -1; Act: 1d20

Attacks: bite +4 melee (2d4)

Saves: Fort

+3, Ref -1, Will +1

Move: 30'; AL: N

Special: The giant woodlouse can roll itself up into a ball. While rolled up, its AC increases to 20, its movement increases to 60', and it cannot attack.

**6) Hallway:** Three desiccated corpses (zombies) in tattered black and green robes hammer on the splintering wooden door at the end of the hall. The will not notice the PCs unless they make themselves targets, as they are concentrating on the bandits behind the door. If the PCs do nothing, they will break through to the next room in 1d4+1 rounds and kill the bandits 2d5 rounds later.

### **Zombies (3)**

HD: 3d6 (8, 9, 10 hp); AC: 9

Init: -4; Act: 1d20

Attacks: slam +3 melee (1d6)

Saves: Fort

+4, Ref -4, Will +2

Move: 20'; AL: C

Special: Un-dead.

**7) Bandit Barricade:** Three bandits and their leader, the only survivors of Varnagon's mad scheme, have holed themselves up in here, hiding from the undead until they can figure how to get out of the crypt. They have piled crates and chests against the door, and requires a DC: 16 Strength check to batter down.

The chests contain 12 woolen blankets, 2 flint & steel, 12 torches, 100 feet of rope, a grappling hook, 3 large sacks, 9 days of rations, 13 gp and 87sp in a small sack, and 2 bottles of halfling moonshine.

The bandits are eager to get the hell out of the crypts. Even if the heroes rescue them from the zombies, they will want to leave. It will take a lot of convincing (threats, bribery, etc.) to convince them to stick around. Alternately, if the party has suffered fatalities the Judge might allow one of the bandits to join the party as a new PC.

The bandits can tell the heroes that once they returned to the crypts and gave the circlet to Varnagon, the wizard went mad and turned against them with his magic. He captured a couple of the younger bandits and took them further into the crypts, no doubt to sacrifice them to his dark gods. Before the bandits could regroup and try and rescue their fellows, they were set upon by the undead.

### **Bandits (Bruno, Studsy, and Ox)**

HD: 1d8 (4, 5, 8 hp); AC: 12 (leather)

Init: +2; Act: 1d20

Attacks: shortsword +1 melee (1d6) or shortbow +1 ranged (1d6)

Saves: Ref +2, Fort +1, Will +0

Move: 30'; AL: C

### **Bandit Leader (Grumdobble)**

HD: 2d8 (11 hp); AC: 13 (studded leather)

Init: +2; Act: 1d20

Attacks: longsword +2 melee (1d8)

Saves: Ref +3, Fort +2, Will +1

Move: 30'; AL: C

**8) Stairs Downward:** Sloping passage and eroded stone stairs twist further into the earth. A group of skeletons armed with bone shortbows and rusty swords lay in wait on the stairs (DC: 12 Intelligence check to spot them hiding in the shadows).

#### **Bone Archers (4)**

HD: 1d8 (5, 5, 7 hp); AC: 12

Init: +3; Act: 1d20

Attacks: bone shortbow +3 ranged (1d6) or rusty sword +1 melee (1d5)

Saves: Fort

+0, Ref +3, Will +1

Move: 30'; AL:C

Special: Un-dead. Half damage from slashing or piercing damage.

Each bone archer carries 6 bone arrows. If an arrow misses its target, it shatters and has a 4-in-6 chance of growing into a razortooth skeleton 1 round later. Sprinkling the broken arrow with holy water will stop this transformation.

#### **Razortooth Skeleton**

HD: 1d8; AC: 10

Init: +1; Act: 1d20

Attacks: bite +1 melee (1d6)

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0

Move: 35'; AL:C

Special: Un-dead. Half damage from slashing or piercing damage.

**9) Crypt Corridor:** The corridor is cold and damp. In the flickering circle of light from a dying lantern, a dead bandit lies in front of the door to Room 10. His head is missing.

On the bandit's body: Leather armor, short sword, hooded lantern, a blue rabbit's foot on a short chain, flint and steel, 1 flask of oil.

**10) Idol Room:** The stone door is locked and trapped. A spring-loaded scythe blade inflicts 2d6 damage (DC: 13 Reflex save to avoid) to anyone who tries to open the door. The trap is DC: 15 for a thief to detect and/or disable.

The room is a small shrine to a forgotten and lost god. A small statue of green-black metal depicts a writhing mass of teeth and tentacles on top of five trunk-like legs. It is flanked by large black candles that glow green when lit. The idol is worth 250 gp to the right buyer and weighs 50lbs. It will plague anyone who sleeps near it with nightmares, interrupting sleep and preventing natural healing or spell/disapproval recovery. The nightmares will allow a wizard or elf to learn the *Patron Bond* spell dedicated to the nastiest patron the Judge has access to.

**11) Crypts:** This is the resting place of Morgrath's old minions, who followed him into death.

**A)** Eight stone slabs, dusty but empty, hold only the tattered remnants of black and green robes. Three ornate longswords, rusted beyond repair, can be found among the scraps.

**B)** Slabs, flagstones, and coffins are all busted up. Large, thorny grey-green roots and vines have burst through the walls from the earth. A skeleton in rusted black platemail with a large green gem on silver chain hanging around his neck (50 gp value) lies twisted in the vines.

#### **Poisonous Whacker Weed**

HD: 3d10; AC: 14

Init: +2; Act: 3d20

Attacks: thorny vine +3 melee, 20' reach (1d8 + poison)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref -1, Will +2

Move: 0'; AL: N

Special: A character whacked by a thorny vine must make a DC: 12 Fortitude save or take 1d3 STA damage.

**C)** Eight stone slabs hold skeletal remains of men and women in tattered black and green robes. These bodies are non-animate, and bear no treasure.

**12) Abyssal Well:** This room contains only a round stone well. A cold, chanel wind blows from the darkness below. The stone shaft descends for 150 feet, then opens into a massive, dark, bottomless abyss. Whether this abyss is merely a huge natural cave, an entrance to further chambers below the earth, or a literal portal to some nether hell is up to the Judge, but it should be used as a seed for further adventure and/or danger.

**13) Morgrath's Tomb:** Varnagon is here, sacrificing a bandit on a burial slab, under the direction of Morgrath (now a draugwight). Morgrath wears the jeweled circlet stolen from Baron Hogarth (worth 150 gp) and is dressed in black and green velvet robes, eaten by age. A pile of gold and treasure (110gp, 97sp, and a platinum ring with a bird motif worth 50gp) lies in the cobwebbed shadows behind the slab.

Morghath has agreed to teach Varnagon the ways of black magic and thus bring glory to the Ancient and Unspeakable Ones. His first test of devotion is to kill his hirelings, a task Varnagon readily accepted. Unless stopped, he will kill the helpless bandit, who will rise up as a zombie the next round.

"Squid-Eye" Varnagon Nix is a shabby man in a dirty brown robe with thin yellow hair going prematurely bald. A five-inch-long blue tentacle extends from the socket where his right eye used to be. An iron scimitar hangs from a black chain around his waist. He is quite insane.

### Morghath the Draugwight

HD: 4d10 (24 hp); AC: 13

Init: +1; Act: 2d20

Attacks: claws +4 melee (1d4 + 1 Luck)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +4

Move: 20'; AL: C

Special: Un-dead. A character hit by the draughwight's claw permanently loses a point of Luck (including thieves and halflings).

### "Squid-Eye" Varnagon Nix, the Wizard

HD: 3d4 (8 hp); AC: 10

Init: +0; Act: 2d20

Attacks: scimitar +1 melee (1d8) or by spell

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2

Move: 30'; AL: C

Special: Spellcheck +4; Knows the spells *Magic Missile*, *Ropework*, and *Mirror Image*. The first three times he casts a spell, he will spellburn 1d3 points by chewing the flesh off his own arms.

### Zombie Bandit

HD: 3d6 (10 hp); AC: 9

Init: -4; Act: 1d20

Attacks: slam +3 melee (1d6)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref -4, Will +2

Move: 20'; AL:C

Special: Un-dead.

# Crypt of Morgrath

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