

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

ROLE PLAYING GAME



ADVENTURE STARTER



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ROLE PLAYING GAME

GLORY & GOLD WON BY SORCERY & SWORD

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Welcome to Free RPG Day 2011, a grand tradition inaugurated by Goodman Games in 2007. As one of the creators of the concept and the very first publisher to sign up for the very first Free RPG Day, Goodman Games is proud to take part in the fifth year of this great event supporting RPGs in general and brick-and-mortar game stores in particular.

As announced earlier this year, Goodman Games is releasing the Dungeon Crawl Classics Role Playing Game in late 2011. The Free RPG Day supplement you hold in your hands contains two short adventures designed to introduce your gaming group to the DCC RPG. To play these adventures, you need to download the DCC RPG beta rules. These rules are available now from www.goodman-games.com!

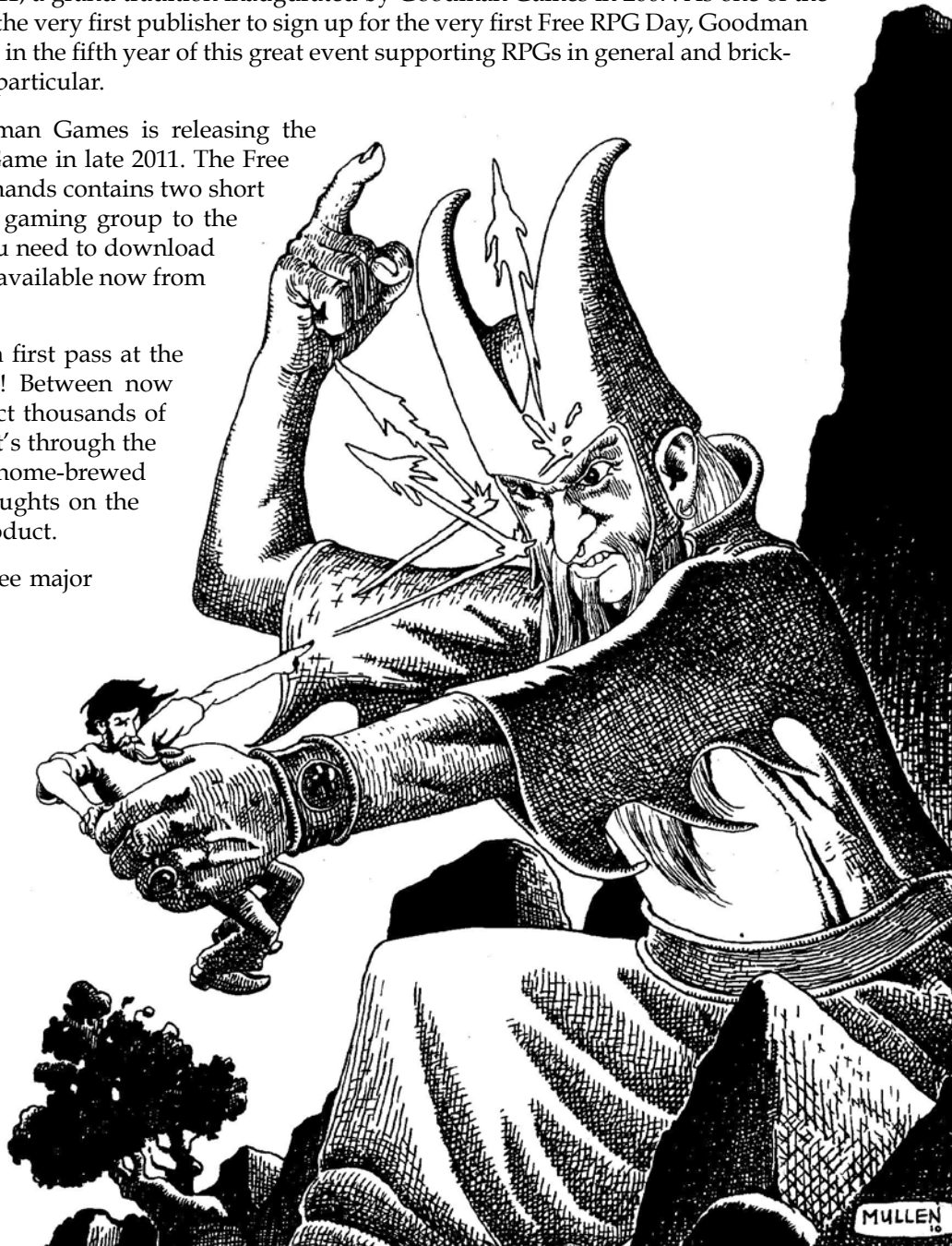
The DCC RPG beta rules are just that: a first pass at the game's rules. We welcome your input! Between now and the game's formal release, we expect thousands of gamers to give the rules a try. Whether it's through the adventures in this supplement or through home-brewed adventures, we'd love to have your thoughts on the game. Your input will shape the final product.

In the following pages you will find three major entries:

- A brief overview of DCC RPG.
- *The Portal Under the Stars*, a low-level adventure for either a horde of 0-level adventurers or a smaller number of 1st-level characters.
- *The Infernal Crucible of Sezrekan the Mad*, a level 5 adventure for more experienced characters.

And now: Let the adventures begin!

If you like what you see here, be sure to pre-order DCC RPG from your friendly local game store!



You're no hero.

You're a reaver,
a cutpurse,
a heathen-slayer,
a tight-lipped warlock guarding long-dead secrets.

You seek gold and glory,
winning it with sword and spell,
caked in the blood and filth of the weak, the dark, the demons, and the vanquished.

There are treasures to be won deep
underneath, and you shall have them...

Return to the glory days of fantasy with the Dungeon Crawl Classics Role Playing Game. Adventure as 1974 intended you to, with modern rules grounded in the origins of sword & sorcery. Fast play, cryptic secrets, and a mysterious past await you: turn the page...





bandon all presumptions, ye who enter here. Turn the pages of this tome only should you meet these qualifications:



hat you are a fantasy enthusiast of imaginative mind, familiar with the customs of role playing, understanding the history and significance of the Elder Gods Gygax and Arneson and their cohorts Bledsaw, Holmes, Kuntz, Moldvay, and Mentzer, and knowledgeable of the role of “judge” and the practice of “adventure.”



hat you are in possession of the implements of role playing; namely, graph paper and an assortment of polyhedrons, including but not limited to d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20; that you know the works of the great mage Zocchi and are prepared to exercise d3, d5, d7, d14, d16, d24, d30, or d% should they need to be deployed; and, although you may possess metal figurines and erasable mats for purposes of enjoyment, you understand their role as optional visualizers not prerequisites.



hat you understand and appreciate certain visual hieroglyphs derived from denizens of the higher planes whose deific identities among mortals are rendered, in the Common tongue, Otus, Easley, Roslof, Holloway, Caldwell, and Dee.



hat you should be appreciative of a life of fantastic adventure and escapades, and acknowledge that a dungeon crawl facilitates the judging of a game focused thereon, but in no way excludes broader adventures in the wilderness, at court, or on the sea, air, or outer planes.



hat you apprehend the fantasy pandect recorded in Appendix N with reverence and delight, acknowledging its defining place in creating this hobby.



hat you are prepared to pledge, with right hand upon your little white books, that you shall uphold the honor of the hobby of role playing to all comers, whether young and old.



f these conditions are not met, then replace this book upon the shelf on which it belongs and flee with great celerity, for a bane befalls the heretical beholder of that which lies herein.



hould you meet these qualifications, be aware that you are indoctrinated into the order of Dungeon Crawl Classics and will find kind fellows of similar sentiment also within this order. You may proceed in good health.



THE CORE MECHANIC



The core mechanic in the Dungeon Crawl Classics Role Playing Game is the d20 roll. You will frequently be asked to roll 1d20 and add or subtract modifiers. The goal is to roll high and beat a DC, or Difficulty Class. Sometimes the DC will have specific terms, such as an Armor Class, or AC, which is a combat variety of a DC. A higher DC is more difficult to beat, and a better-armored creature has a higher AC.

If you roll equal to or higher than the DC (or AC), you succeed. Otherwise, you fail.

A roll of 1 is an automatic miss and often results in a fumbling failure of some kind.

A roll of 20 is an automatic hit and often results in a critical success of some kind.

Occasionally, a character may roll a die other than 1d20 when acting. 1d16, 1d24, and even 1d30 are used for weaker or stronger warriors and spellcasters, as described herein.

HOW IS THIS GAME DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I HAVE PLAYED BEFORE?

If you are familiar with the d20 system (3.0 and 3.5):

- DCC RPG does not have prestige classes, attacks of opportunity, feats, or skill points.
- Classes and races are one and the same. You are a wizard or an elf.

If you are familiar with various iterations of 1E:

- DCC RPG uses an ascending armor class system. A normal, unarmored peasant is AC 10; a warrior in plate mail is AC 18.
- Attacks, saves, and skill checks all involve rolling 1d20, adding modifiers, and trying to beat a number.



- There are three saving throws: Fortitude, Reflex, and Willpower.

No matter what edition you've played before:

- Clerics turn creatures that are unholy to their religion - which may include undead *and* other creatures.
- All spells are cast with a *spell check*, where the caster rolls 1d20, adds certain modifiers, and tries to score high. A high roll yields a more effective result. Each spell has a unique chart that adjudicates the spell's results.
- Wizards may or may not lose their spells after a casting. A low result means the wizard cannot cast the spell again that day. However, on a high result, he can cast the spell again.
- Cleric spellcasting works differently from wizard spellcasting. Clerics never lose a spell after it has been cast. However, as a cleric casts any spell, he may take a -1 penalty to his next spell check. By the end of the day, a cleric may have a significant penalty to his spell checks.
- There is a critical hit matrix. Higher-level characters and martial characters generate critical hits more often and roll on more deadly result tables.
- You can burn off ability scores to enhance dice rolls. All characters can burn Luck, and wizards and elves can burn other abilities.

Those are the basics. Now: Go to www.goodman-games.com and download the DCC RPG beta rules. Read them, then begin your adventures with the following scenarios!

FUNKY DICE

This game utilizes polyhedrons of unusual shapes. Specifically, it utilizes the standard suite of dice, as well as what the author refers to as "Zocchi dice." As an experienced gamer, you undoubtedly own a d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20. DCC RPG also makes use of Zocchi dice in the following configurations: d3, d5, d7, d14, d16, d24, and d30. Later this year you will be able to purchase these dice from Goodman Games. For now, you can purchase from your local game store (ask them to special order if they do not already stock them), and from www.gamestation.net, www.chessex.com, and www.koplowgames.com (as well as other select internet sites).

It is easy to substitute for the "funky dice" with a regular dice set. For a d3, roll 1d6 and divide by two. For a d7, roll 1d8 and re-roll on an 8. For d14 or d16, roll d20 and ignore rolls above the die-facing threshold. For d24, roll 1d12 and 1d6; if the 6-sider is odd, add 12 to the 1d12 roll. And so on.



ROY
LOX
15

THE PORTAL UNDER THE STARS

A Level 0-1 DCC RPG Adventure
By Joseph Goodman

INTRODUCTION



Seeking wealth and escape from their peasant lives, the characters investigate a supernatural portal that appears only once every half-century when the stars are right. The portal leads to the burial tomb of a war-wizard of eons past. The characters must fight iron men, a demonic snake, the living dead, and a variety of strange statues to recover the treasures left by the war-wizard.

This adventure is designed for 15-20 0-level characters or 8-10 1st-level characters. Remember that players should have 2-3 characters each, so they can continue enjoying the fun of play even if some of their PCs die off. In playtest groups of 15 0-level PCs, 7 or 8 typically survive. The author has playtested this adventure with groups of up to 28 PCs and experienced one complete TPK and several sessions with only a handful of survivors. The adventure focus is on traps and tricks rather than combat, as that ensures the greatest likelihood of low-level survival. Nonetheless, there should be an expectation of the lessons of mortality. The author recommends that the judge tweak the challenge of certain encounters on the fly depending on the size and skill of the adventuring party, particularly area 3 (which has the potential to wipe out the entire party if they cluster around the doors).

BACKGROUND



ons ago, a primitive war-wizard ruled this land with the aid of barbarian tribes and strange creatures from beyond the stars. When his mortal form was close to expiration, his alien allies instructed him to seal himself away in a protected tomb. Within the tomb the war-wizard could then use astral projection to travel the stars beyond our world. He intended to return later to take possession of his mortal body, which his spirit could do when the stars were properly aligned. However, the war-wizard's extraplanar adventures did not go as planned. Now his body sits perfectly preserved in the tomb built, protected by enchantments and the remains of his barbarian hordes. If these defenses can be bested, the treasures within are ripe for the taking.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

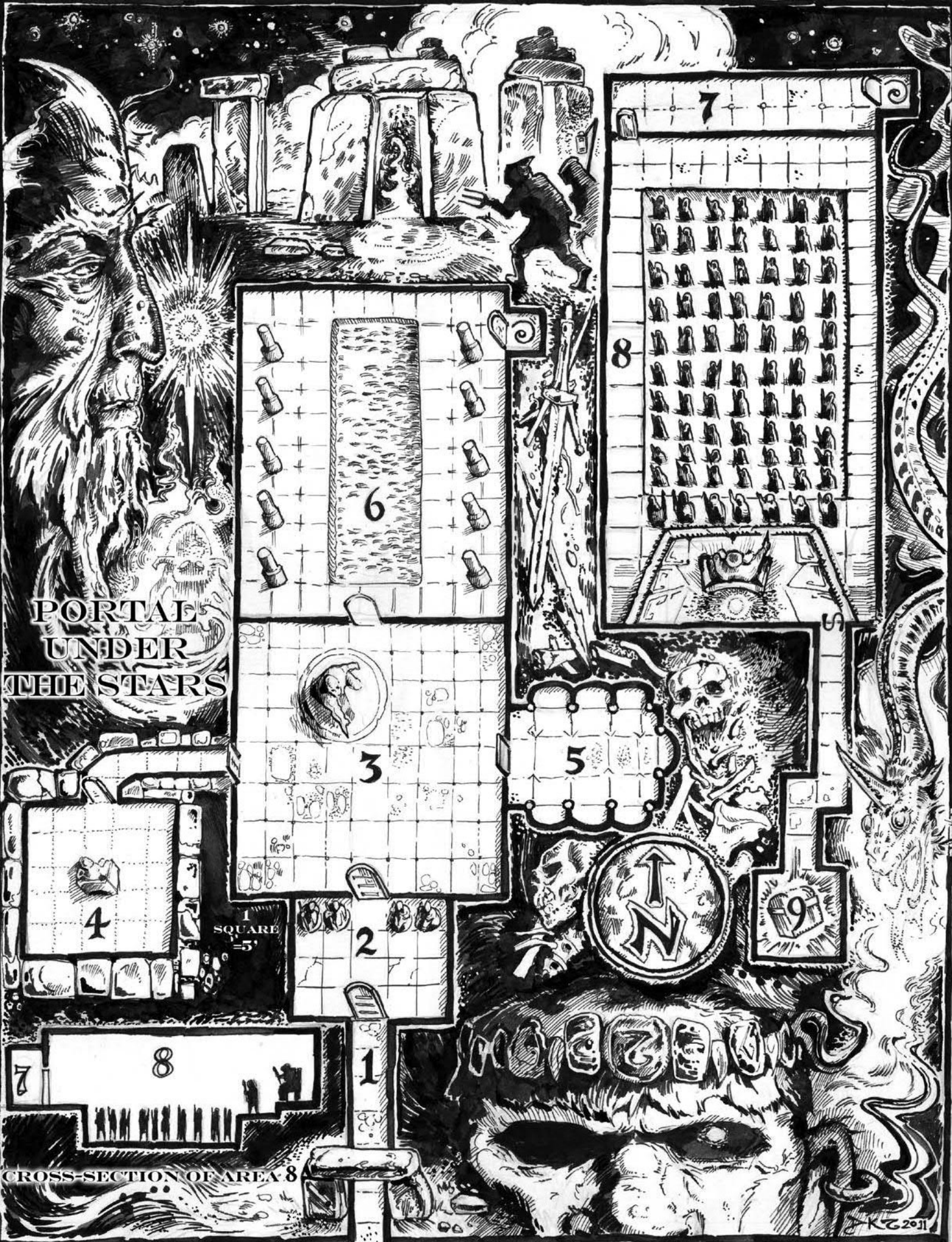
Area	Type	Encounter
1-1	T	Searing light trap
1-2	T	Spear-throwing statues
1-3	T	Flame-launching statue
1-4	C	Ssissuraaaaggg the immortal demon-snake
1-5	C	Seven piles of living bones
1-6	C	Six crystal statues
1-8	C	78 clay soldiers

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

For long years, you labored in the fields like all the peasants, sweating hot and dirty in the summer, only to shiver under threadbare hides when winter came. This year's harvest ended like all the rest, and autumn's work was hard on Old Man Roberts. When you visited his bedside at the end, he spoke in labored breaths of constellations that hadn't been seen since he was a young lad. The last time the Empty Star had risen in the sky, it was more than fifty winters past, he said. Under the light of that strange star a portal had opened by the old stone mounds. He'd seen jewels in there and fine steel spears and enameled armor, but he'd run when the iron men had attacked. Now, old and dying, he wishes he'd taken the chance on a life of adventure. The Empty Star is once more rising, and a young man with courage could be more than just another peasant – if only he'd take the chance Old Man Robert hadn't.

You're taking that chance. You stand before the monolithic rocks of the old stone mounds, under the dark light of a starry sky. The Empty Star is clear and bright above you. Three of the large stone blocks lean haphazardly together to form an upright rectangular portal about the size of a man. They seem to be placed directly beneath the star's path. As the Empty Star ascends to its brightest point, its light catches in the portal, and a shimmering stone-lined corridor is visible through the stones, but only from one side of the opening. Grasping your pitchfork with white knuckles, you step into the starlit portal which was not there before today, thoughts of jewels and scorching wheat fields foremost in your mind.

PORTAL UNDER THE STARS



CROSS-SECTION OF AREA 8

AREAS OF THE MAP

General Features: Unless otherwise noted, the dungeon is dark and dry. Doors are unlocked unless specified otherwise. Access to the tomb is restricted, so there are no wandering monsters.

Area 1-1 – Portal: *Even though the hallway is visible from only one side of the portal, you tread on solid flagstones. The starlight fades as it reaches into this hallway, which dead-ends ahead at a stout iron-banded door. Jewels or crystals in an odd assortment of star shapes are inscribed on the door.*

The hallway appears only under certain constellations related to the Empty Star. The star shapes on the door approximate the nighttime sky visible through the reverse end of the hallway.

If the characters wait two hours, movement of the nighttime sky makes the view back through the portal reveal the same star pattern as that inscribed on the door. (A character realizes this with a DC 14 Intelligence check.) The door swings open easily for this ten-minute interval.

Door: At any other time, the door will not budge. Treat as locked; DC 15 Strength check to break down; DC 15 Pick Lock check for a thief.

Trap: If the door is forced, a searing light burns from the star-shaped inscription. The character in the lead takes 1d8 damage (DC 10 Reflex save for half). The trap is detected with a DC 20 Search (PC notices arcane arrangement of the star-shaped inscriptions).

Area 1-2 – Guardian Hall: *Across from this room is another stout door. Four iron statues flank the door, two to a side. Each statue depicts a different fighting man in a round iron helmet and thick scaled armor holding a long spear in a throwing position. All the spear-tips are aimed at the door through which you just entered.*

The statues are mechanical creations of the war-wizard. They wait for an opportune moment, then suddenly hurl their spears at the characters. Four spear attacks: +2 to hit (additional +2 if characters stand in doorway bull's-eye), damage 1d8.

The jerky spear-throws are clearly mechanical. The statues remain in the post-throw position and make no further movement. They can be attacked but are made of solid iron and only damage weapons used against them. Their scale mail armor is beautifully enameled with shining black stone. The armor can be removed from the statues and worn or sold for twice the usual price.

The spears can be recovered. The door is unlocked and not trapped.

Area 1-3 – Monument Hall: *This spacious chamber has marbled floors and a door on each wall. At the far end is a towering granite statue of a barbarian, one hand outstretched, index finger pointed toward you. The muscular savage wears animal hides, but his eyes are intelligent and his engraved neckline sports amulets and charms. A grimoire hangs beside a broadsword on the hip of the thirty-foot-tall monument.*

Observant characters (DC 12 Intelligence check) notice many fine scorch marks on the marble floor, as if campfires had been started there.

The granite statue weighs many tons but rotates freely on a well-oiled (but concealed) base. With a deep bass groaning sound, it swivels to track the characters' movements. If the party splits up, it tracks the largest group. The extended hand marks its line of sight.

If any character moves to exit the room (including opening a door or leaving as they arrived), the statue sends forth a scorching burst of flame from its fingertip: +6 to hit, 1d6 damage, 1d6 additional burning damage each round thereafter until a DC 10 Reflex save is made to put out the fire. Once provoked, the statue launches flames continuously, once per round, for up to 5 rounds, at which point its fuel supply is exhausted.

Strong characters who remove the doors from their hinges in areas 1 and 2 can use them as a shield against the statue. This full-body shield increases AC by +4 but reduces movement to half.

The statue can be placated by uttering the name of the war-wizard in whose likeness it is carved. But that name is lost to time. Otherwise, it is so large as to be beyond the ability of the characters to damage.

All doors are unlocked.

Area 1-4 – Scrying Chamber: *A wide stone throne faces you from the center of this square room. The walls are hung with primitive clay tablets, head-high and inscribed with strange symbols. Each tablet is a few feet wide and there are dozens hanging on the four walls. However, your attention is riveted to the enormous snake that has crawled out from behind the throne. It is ringed in crimson bands the color of hellfire and has a demonic horn in the center of its fanged head.*

The immortal demon-snake guards this scrying chamber. It speaks in a sibilant hiss: "I am Ssissuraaaaggg, and you intrude on my guardianship." Then, without parley or hesitation, it attacks.

Ssissuraaaaggg, the immortal demon-snake: Init +0; Atk bite +6 melee; Dmg 1d8; AC 13; HP 20; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; AL L.

When Ssissuraaaaggg is killed, its body dissolves into ash, leaving only the demonic horn behind. The horn can be used to commune with a demon, and when meditated upon (DC 12 spell check), confers access to the spell *invoke patron*.

A magical portal hangs on the back of the entry door. If the door is shut, someone seated on the throne looks directly upon the portal, which shows stars unlike any seen before in the night sky. The constellations slowly move across the "sky" shown in the portal. A powerful wizard can use this portal to see far-away places (DC 25 spell check).

Anyone who studies the tablets can make out their story. They tell of an alien race that came from the stars to bring magical implements to a barbarian tribe, who in turn conquered many lands with their new powers. The aliens will

return when the stars are right. Many less significant events are foretold by the stars (and tablets) as well: droughts, plagues, the birth and death of kings, and so on.

Area 1-5 – Chieftains’ Burial: *This musty room is clearly a burial chamber. Seven shrouded alcoves hold piles of loose bones. Rusty arms and armor adorn the walls beside each alcove and funeral masks are mounted beneath the loose skulls.*

The funeral masks show primitive, almost simian features on stern faces. Examination of the bones shows they are not quite human: the limbs are too thick, the spines too short, and the beetled brows jut out too far.

Each of the seven skeletons was a general in the army of the war-wizard. If the skulls in this room are destroyed, the spirits that animate the warriors in area 8 are released to find peace.

The bones are living dead that have decayed over the eons. They shake and rattle as characters approach; however, they can no longer animate into cohesive skeletons. The skulls clack, clatter, and attempt to bite, but are easily avoided and

crushed through normal means.

Seven piles of living bones: Init -2; Atk bite +0 melee; Dmg 1d4-1; AC 8; HP 2; MV 5'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref -4, Will +1; AL C.

Most of the weaponry and armor in this room is rusted and worthless, but a hand axe, a battle axe, and a set of chain mail can be recovered. Due to their age and brittleness the two axes are at -1 to attack, and the chain mail offers only +4 armor class for similar reasons.

Area 1-6 – Gazing Pool: *This enormous chamber is filled with a large, rectangular pool of water running the entire length of the room. Diffused light shines upward from the pool, illuminating wide pillars lining the walls. Strangest of all, however, are the man-shaped crystal creatures visible in the shadows. They shuffle about slowly, their strange crystalline bodies sparkling like jewels whenever they catch the light from the pool. There is a door in the far corner of this chamber.*

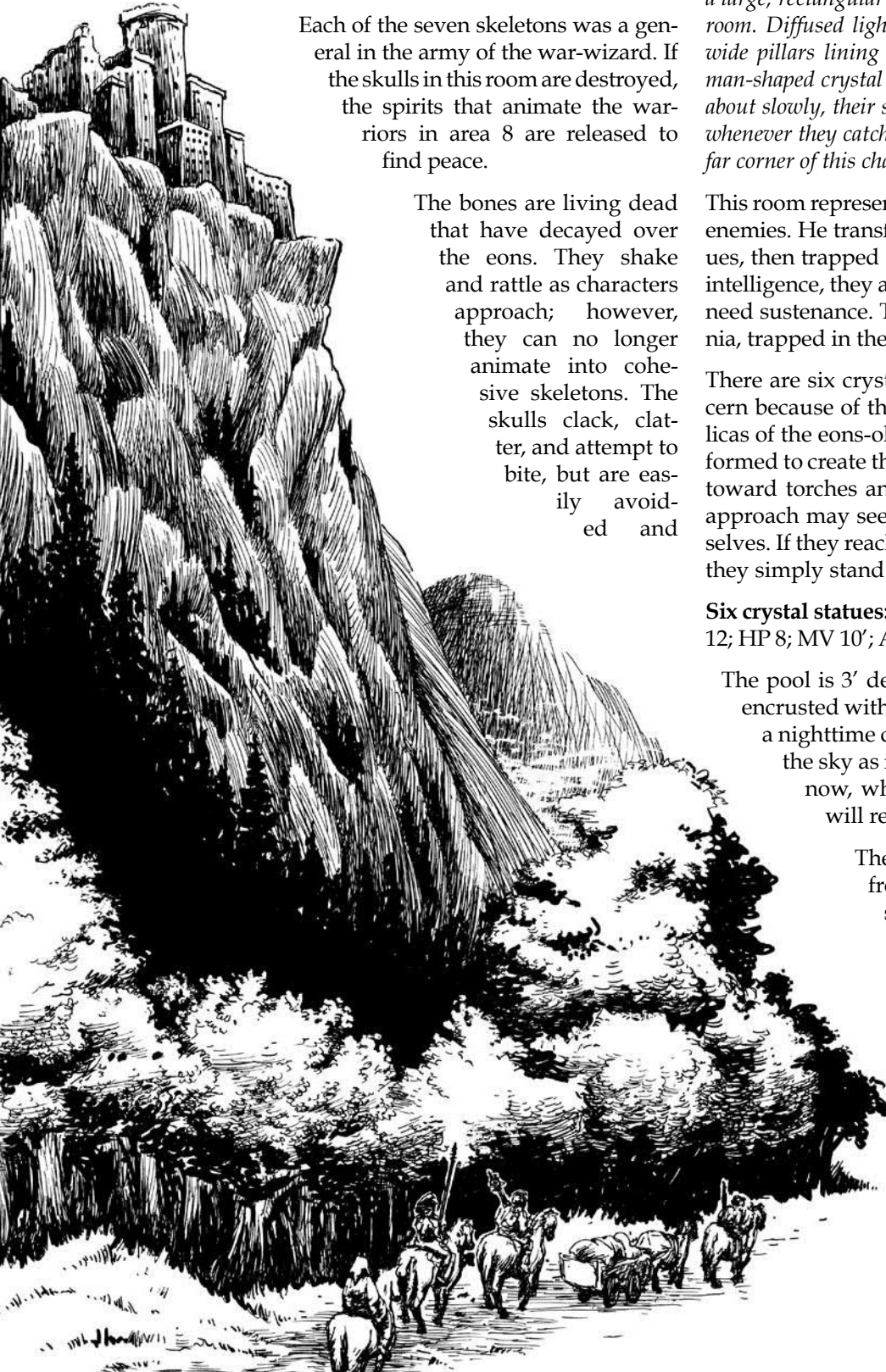
This room represents the war-wizard’s vengeance against his enemies. He transformed his foes into living crystalline statues, then trapped them here. Now possessed of only animal intelligence, they are no longer capable of speech nor do they need sustenance. They have wandered this room for millennia, trapped in the unending hell of their crystal bodies.

There are six crystal statues. Their features are hard to discern because of their translucency, but they are perfect replicas of the eons-old proto-human warriors who were transformed to create them. They are attracted to light and shuffle toward torches and lanterns. They do not attack, but their approach may seem menacing, and they will defend themselves. If they reach a torch or other light source unmolested, they simply stand next to it and absorb the warmth.

Six crystal statues: Init -2; Atk punch +2 melee; Dmg 1d4; AC 12; HP 8; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -2, Ref -2, Will +0; AL N.

The pool is 3' deep. Its bottom is painted pitch black and encrusted with thousands of crystals forming the stars of a nighttime constellation that is unfamiliar. (It is in fact the sky as it will appear twenty thousand years from now, when the war-wizard’s strange benefactors will return.)

The light shines through the crystal stars from area 8 below. Each crystal is worth 10 sp and takes 2 minutes to pry out. Prying out crystals causes the water in the pool to drain into area 8. Air bubbles rise, then a current starts, and after 10 crystals are pried out, the draining is obvious. After 50 crystals are removed, the floor buckles. After 100 crystals are removed, it collapses onto area 8, sending any characters within the pool crashing down into the room below in a sloshing mess (1d6 damage, DC 12 Ref save for half).



Area 1-7 – Strategy Room: *The spiral staircase leads to a long, narrow room with a door in the far wall. There are several ledges holding miniature clay soldiers and two tables with armies of opposing soldiers are laid out around buildings and hills.*

The war-wizard intended for this room to be a planning station for his afterlife conquests.

Four of the clay soldiers are solid silver. They are the generals, clearly the leaders of the four armies laid out on the two tables. DC 10 Search check; worth 20 gp each.

Area 1-8 – Clay Army: *The door opens upon a breathtaking scene. An enormous, three-tiered chamber spreads before you. An oversized throne rests upon a raised dais at the far end of the room. Seated on the throne is a clay warlord that resembles the giant statue you saw earlier. A pulsating light emanates from a crystal globe atop the throne.*

Below the dais at floor level seven statues of clay generals stand motionless. Below them, in a huge pit that runs the length of the room stands an army of clay soldiers. There are dozens of soldiers arrayed in marching formation, their clay armor and clay spears equipped for war.

A great stillness pervades the room. It is the stillness of death; the silence of a tomb. Then, suddenly, the stillness is broken as the clay warlord jerkily raises an arm toward his generals. Then, the entire army takes a lurching step forward, shattering the silence with the tramp of doom.

This is the warlord's elite guard, preserved and reanimated for eternity. The characters have no hope of defeating the 70 warriors, 7 generals, and warlord. All share these same stats: Init +0; Atk spear +4 melee; Dmg 1d8; AC 12; HP 9; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

However, there are several clever ways to win passage:

- If the clay army is submerged in water by removing crystals to sink the pool in area 6 all creatures in this room take 1d6 damage from falling debris as the ceiling collapses. Additionally, any surviving clay soldiers slowly turn to mud, taking an additional 1 point of damage each round until they dissolve into a puddle.
- The life force of the clay generals is linked to their skeletons in area 5. If the skulls there are destroyed, the clay generals' heads shatter to shards and dust. The characters may arrive to find the generals already destroyed.
- Smart characters may try to assassinate the warlord directly, which quickly ends the threat.

If the warlord and generals are alive, the warriors climb from the pit (1 action) and attack while the generals look on. If the generals are killed, the warriors lack organization and spend a few rounds milling about before moving forward to attack. If the warlord is killed, the entire army loses anima, becoming simply a set of clay statues.

The secret door is found with a DC 14 search.

The crystal globe emits an ongoing light. It is worth 200 gp as a work of art. A wizard who unlocks its secrets (DC 18 spell check plus study time and arcane consultation) under-

stands that he can use it as a scrying ball. Such a wizard can view a location he has seen or has reference to (e.g., can view a creature whose lock of hair he possesses); DC 18 spell check to activate for 1d6 rounds; -2 penalty for each consecutive use in a day. However, once every 1d8 days, an alien countenance appears in the ball to look *back* at the wizard. These are the extraplanar benefactors of the war-wizard, who taught him to use this crystal globe to guide his astral projection, and who occasionally use it to look upon the mortal realm. See also area 9.

Area 1-9 – Treasure Vault: *At the end of the long hallway is a spartanly appointed room containing simple wooden shelves, a camp chair, and a sleeping pallet. The wooden shelves hold a bronze rod, a copper brazier, fine weapons and armor, and a brass-bound tome. In the center of the floor is a large pentacle with a perfect crystal circle at its center. Inside the circle is a stone table on which rests a wrinkled ancient body whose countenance matches the war-wizards. At the head of the table is a concave depression.*

Here are stored the trappings of the war-wizard:

- The bronze rod of rulership is engraved with half of a demon's face. It is worth 150 gp, but read on.
- The copper brazier is worth 10 gp.
- The assortment of weapons includes a longsword, a long bow, 40 arrows with quiver, a mace, a spear, a battle axe, a dagger, and a hand axe.
- There is a suit of scale mail.
- The tome is written in a language so ancient it is indecipherable to modern man. A wizard who studies it may discover (with a DC 14 spell check) a spell of the judge's choosing.

If a character places the crystal ball in the depression on the table, he sees this:

Gazing into the crystal ball, you see an endless field of bright stars on a faint gray background. A ghostly image of the war-wizard drifts in the star-strewn ether, perfectly still. Then a harsh goat-like face fills the full sphere, staring intently at you. "I have waited a long time for someone to take the warlord's place," says the strange goat-man in a deep voice. "His astral voyage was cut short before he could rekindle the spark of his mortal coil. I am still in need of an ally on your world. Fill this copper brazier with wood from a dryad's tree and ignite it with the spark of a living fire. The blaze will reveal the location of the other half of the rulership rod. Find that for me, and you shall be rewarded." Then the globe dims to mere crystal.

They say a dryad has been seen in the forests east of here...

THE INFERNAL CRUCIBLE OF SEZREKAN THE MAD

A level 5 DCC RPG adventure
By Harley Stroh

INTRODUCTION



This adventure is designed for 4 to 8 5th-level characters. If this is your first exposure to DCC RPG, you can roll up 5th-level characters and use this scenario as a contrast to a preceding one to get a sense of low-level versus high-level play.

BACKGROUND



Infamous in the darker cycles of lore and legendry, Sezrekan the Mad was a notorious sage, diabolist, and warlock bent on a quest for immortality. His perilous quest played out over several hundred years, and none can say whether the Old One achieved deification or lost his soul vying with infernal powers.

Sezrekan's pursuit of lost secrets and forbidden lore spanned the face of Aereeth. In these far-flung cities and crumbling ruins, the wizard-sage created simple workshops and foundries to aid in his research. Here, amid frothing retorts and forbidden scrolls, the aging warlock plumbed the mysteries of life, death, and time. Every new discovery opened another line of inquiry, leading Sezrekan to abandon the workshop for another city or ruin, never to return.

An untold number of his abandoned workshops remain undiscovered to this day. One such laboratory is hidden in the ancient city of Punjar.

JUDGING NOTES



The *Infernal Crucible of Sezrekan the Mad* presents the adventurers with both a crafty villain and a deadly battle, but the most dangerous challenge is also the most subtle: Escaping Elzemon's trap requires that at least one foe is left alive. Adventurers given to scorched-earth style expeditions will be the instruments of their own demise. If the PCs slay both Elzemon and Sezrekan's Ape, they are left with a gruesome dilemma: Which of their own to leave behind? How the PCs go about making this decision may reveal more about true *character* than the players care to admit.

The adventure is located in sprawling, decadent Punjar. Specifically, the workshop is hidden in the sub-basement of a decaying manor in Smoke – the worst of Old Punjar's wards – where Dim Lane intersects the Shiv. Here, hidden among the crumbling tenements and foul night smokes, Sezrekan was free to pursue his mad experiments without fear of interruption.

Though nominally set in Punjar, the adventure can be easily placed in nearly any location. The PCs can discover the hidden portal in the floor of a musty tomb, in the cellar of their favorite pub or chapel, or even in a forgotten gallery of their own keep.

Elzemon the Forgotten: Unfortunately for those seeking to plunder the wizard's secrets, Sezrekan was notorious amid the infernal hierarchies for summoning demons and devils, and then simply refusing (or forgetting) to release them. One such being, a minor demon named Elzemon, remains imprisoned in this workshop to this day. And in a desperate bid for its own freedom, the demon has transformed the workshop into an elaborate trap.

Elzemon has free reign within the various areas of the laboratory, but cannot escape the complex until the sand in the hourglass (area 1-1) runs out. He begins the adventure in area 1-2 and is quickly drawn to any disturbance.

The demon's downfall is its delight in tormenting mortals. The pot-bellied demon follows the PCs through the chambers, invisible, doing its very best to egg the PCs into wasting precious minutes.

Elzemon the Quasit: Init +4; Atk claw +3 melee (dmg 1d6+2); AC 17; HP 23; MV 35' (fly); Act 2d20; SP Invisible at will; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +5; Immune to Will-effects unless true name is known; AL C.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Area	Type	Encounter
1-1	P	Puzzle
1-2	C	10 Glyph Worms
1-3	P/C	Sezrekan's Ape
Any	P/C	Elzemon

PLAYER INTRODUCTION



The adventure begins with the discovery – either by assiduous research or by accident – of the entrance to the workshop: a portal set into the floor. Read or paraphrase the following:

Eagerly you scrape away the mud to reveal a circular portal of dull gray metal set into the floor. Set into the center of the portal is a silver bas-relief depicting a two-legged serpent biting its own tail. Above the serpent, cast in gold, is a crown.

The portal is roughly 3 feet in diameter, though attempts at precise measurement hint its diameter to be the value of π . The portal is cast of lead to foil scrying and inter-dimensional travel. Wizards and thieves examining the portal are overcome by a powerful sense that something terrible lurks behind the lead portal.

The portal is three inches deep and can easily be pried free of the floor, revealing a narrow spiral staircase descending into darkness. The value of the raw silver is 15 gp; the value of the gold is 25 gp.

THE INFERNAL CRUCIBLE OF SEZREKAN THE MAD

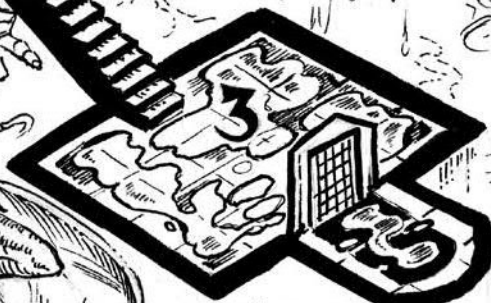
START



50'



◇ = 5'



AREAS OF THE MAP

Area 1-1 – The Magic Circle: *A thick coat of dust covers the floor, obscuring what appears to be a magic circle, carved in runes, circumscribing the entire chamber. Stone faces of tormented demons ring the ceiling, and a pit set into the center of the chamber pulses with a hellish crimson light. Beside the pit rests a tall golden hourglass.*

Inspection by cautious wizards reveals that the magic circle prevents the escape of demons. However, just inside the circle of runes is a pentagram, drawn in blood and hidden by dust, that traps any living creature entering the chamber. The pentagram was cast by the demon Elzemon. These two thaumaturgic inscriptions interact in strange, unpredictable ways.

The instant a PC crosses over the runes, read or paraphrase the following:

A thunderous crack echoes through the chamber and electric blue waves of tormented faces cascade through the air, revealing a sinister pentagram scrawled in blood across the floor of the chamber. The hourglass rotates in its base, and the sound of maniacal laughter echoes faintly from below.

No magic shy of a deific patron or infernal power can wrest the PCs from Elzemon's trap. From this moment forward, it is impossible to leave the chamber, save for the pit down.

Sezrekan's golden hourglass stands nearly three feet in height and weighs roughly 30 lbs. A minor relic discarded by the Old One, the hourglass keeps perfectly precise time of any duration, and grants a +2 bonus to spell checks for spells taking one turn or longer to cast. Destroying the hourglass has no effect other than to eliminate the PCs' means of tracking time.

The pit is 50' deep and runs to area 1-2. Given the opportunity, Elzemon flies up from area 1-2, eager for the chance to push a PC into the pit or cut an unattended rope.

Wizard, sages, or lucky thieves pausing to study the interaction between the magic circle and the pentagram can deduce the following principles:

- So long as the thaumaturgic inscriptions remain intact, no creature can be summoned into the crucible.
- At the end of the hour, both the magic circle and the Elzemon's pentagram part for an instant, permitting escape.
- No matter how many exit, at least one living creature must remain inside the circle.

One final principle applies that can only be inferred: The last creature left within the circle is trapped there for all eternity.

Area 1-2 – The Infernal Crucible: *The pit opens into a cluttered octagonal chamber. A sinister, crimson light emanates from web-laden globes that hang from the ceiling, casting a charnel glow over the chamber's contents.*

A large granite table dominates the chamber. It is laden with glass retorts and a series of skulls, ranging in size from a field mouse to that of a tusked giant. An open tome rests on a stand beside the table.

The walls are covered in sheets of hammered copper, stained with vile liquids and scored by acid. The top of each sheet is attached to a chain and counter weights that run to the ceiling and then descending to hang just above the stone table.

There are seven skulls in all: field mouse, monkey, goat, halfling, elf, human, ogre, and the giant. The cranium of each skull is sawn open, and the interior cavity is set with platinum spacers to accommodate a smaller brain.

The tome is open to a dusty page with a simple passage:

*a curse upon thieves that dare
to gaze upon the works
of mighty Sezrekan*

Beneath the passage is a large glyph inked in red and black. The quickest inspection of the page activates the glyph. It flashes brightly (Ref save, DC 15, or be blinded for 1d3 rounds), and then animates into inky black worms. With horrifying speed, the worms begin to consume every written word within the chamber.

In the first round, the glyph worms consume the tome. In the second and third round, they squiggle behind the copper sheets covering the walls and consume all the tomes and sheaves. On the fourth round, they move on to the PCs, and on the fifth round, the worms consume any spellbooks, maps, tomes, or scrolls in the PCs' possession. The glyphs die in writhing agony on the 8th round.

Glyph Worm (10): Init +2; Atk –; Dmg –; AC 15; HP 1; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SA consume written words; SV Fort -1, Ref +3, Will immune; AL N.

The copper sheets hanging on the walls function as primitive blast shields, protecting the valuables behind them from any explosions that might take place in the main chamber. Pulling on any one of the five hanging chains raises the corresponding metal sheets, revealing five sets of shelves:

The **first set of shelves** is heavy with the weight of time-blackened tomes, stacks of rolled vellum, and sheaves of worn parchment – Sezrekan's discarded research. If collected and studied by a wizard or sage, they yield 1d5 spells (to be determined by the judge or rolled randomly). The shelf also contains a scroll that holds the true name of Elzemon and details the demon's weakness: striking the demon with lead renders it visible and inflicts 1d4 points of damage per round of contact.

The **second set of shelves** is laden with retorts, strange flasks, and vials stoppered with wax. They once contained elixirs, potions, and concoctions resulting from the Old One's experiments. Time has reduced most of these mixtures to poison. Sages and wizards succeeding on a DC 13 Intelligence check can identify 1d5 vials of strong acids and bases; thieves succeeding on a DC 20 Handle Poison check can identify a similar number of poisons (efficacy to be determined by the judge).

The **third and fourth sets of shelves** are empty.

The **fifth set of shelves** is laden with the raw materials vital to Sezrekan's studies. Four coffers rest on the shelves. Inside the coffers are 10 silver bars (worth 30 gp each), 5 gold bars (worth 100 gp each), 2 platinum bars (worth 500 gp each), and a nondescript pouch containing lead dust shot through with flecks of adamantine (worth 1,000 gp).

Area 1-3 – The Chamber of the Ape: *Water drips in thin rivulets down the walls of this chamber, pooling on the floor. A trio of large clay vessels, each nearly 4' in height, stands against one wall. Beside the strange jars rest a trio of iron rods.*

At the far end of the chamber is heavy iron gate.

The gate is secured with a massive lock that is easily picked (DC 15). Inside the cell is the body of an enormous ape atop wooden planks. Unmoving and unresponsive, the ape is Sezrekan's unfortunate attempt to transplant a human mind into the body of an animal. Branded onto the ape's shaven scalp is the mark of Sezrekan.

The egg-like vessels are primitive batteries. The top of each jar is sealed with clay and pierced by a hole matching the width of the iron rods. If each of the three rods is inserted into a corresponding vessel, the circuit is completed, initiating a rapid series of events:

Arcs of electricity fan into the chamber, striking any PC standing in the pooled water. PCs in the water take 1d4 points of damage per round and must succeed on a DC 17 Fort save to make any actions. The semi-paralysis ends with the destruction of at least one of the vessels (AC 10, hp 10) or by escaping the pool. Other PCs can pull their paralyzed companions from the water, but if they step into the pool, they are also caught by the arcing current.

The current is sufficient to shock Sezrekan's Ape back to life. One round after awakening, it tears the iron gate free of its moorings and casts the twisted wreckage aside. On the third round, it proceeds to do the same with the PCs.

Due to its rage and Sezrekan's mind-altering magics, the ape is immune to the paralysis effect, as well as to any *charm*, *sleep* or mind-altering effect permitting a Will save.

Finally, if the PCs are loathe to experiment with the rods and vessels, an invisible Elzemon closes the circuit for them, waiting for the opportunity to paralyze the greatest number of PCs.

Sezrekan's Ape: Init +2; Atk fists +5 melee (dmg 1d12); AC 15; HP 65; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SA Rend for additional 1d16 dmg on natural 18 or 19; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will Immune; AL C.



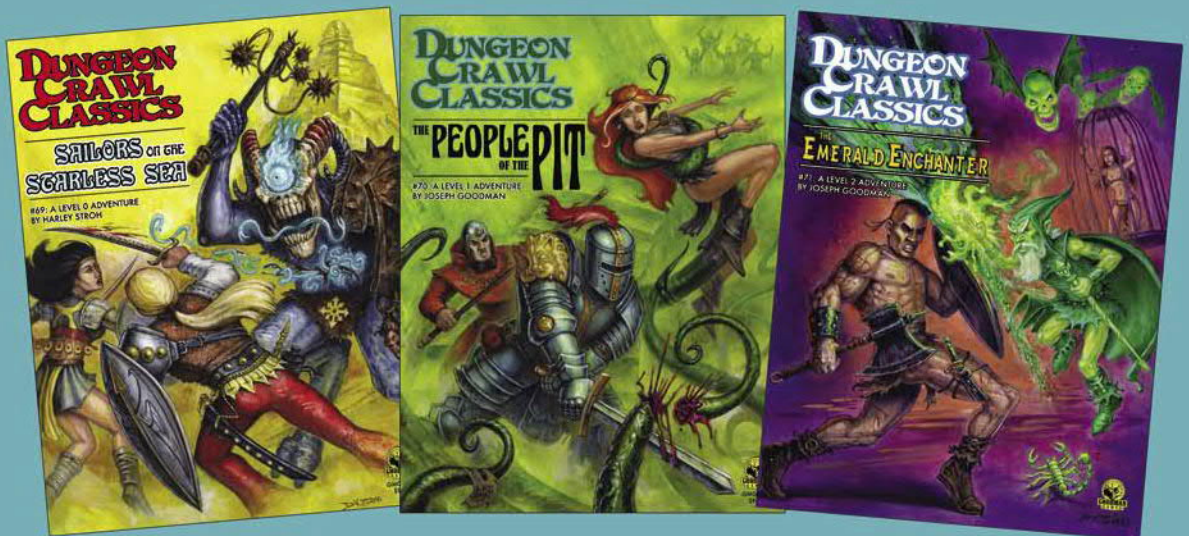
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