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Dungeon Crawl Classics #12.5

The Iron Crypt of the Heretics

by Harley Stroh

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 11-13



Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

Many centuries ago, a band of paladins fell from grace. These blackguards were defeated after a great battle and their grim fortress, the Iron Tower, was razed. A small abbey was established near the ruins, where generations of monks mixed ancient eldritch wards, mighty clockwork traps, and multiple failsafes to build the Iron Crypt of the Heretics. Three mighty vaults ensured that the blackguards' evils would be sealed for all eternity. But unbeknownst to the brotherhood, their impregnable crypt had a single weakness: the very monks that had built it, for they knew its secrets. When a devourer stole into their abbey, the profane beast forced the monks to lead it inside the Iron Crypt. It successfully broke into the first of three vaults, releasing an army of wights. The story of the devourer and his wight army is told in Dungeon Crawl Classics #12: The Blackguard's Revenge. Now, in Dungeon Crawl Classics #12.5: The Iron Crypt of the Heretics, the heroes must venture into a crypt designed by the world's greatest thieves, magicians, and seers, solve its puzzles and deadly traps, and seal it once more from the outside world.

If you enjoy this adventure, look for the rest of the Dungeon Crawl Classics series!

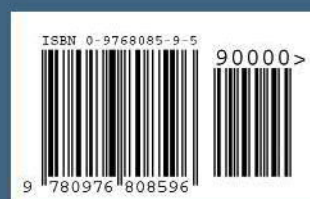


Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons Player's Handbook, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. This product utilizes updated material from the v.3.5 revision.



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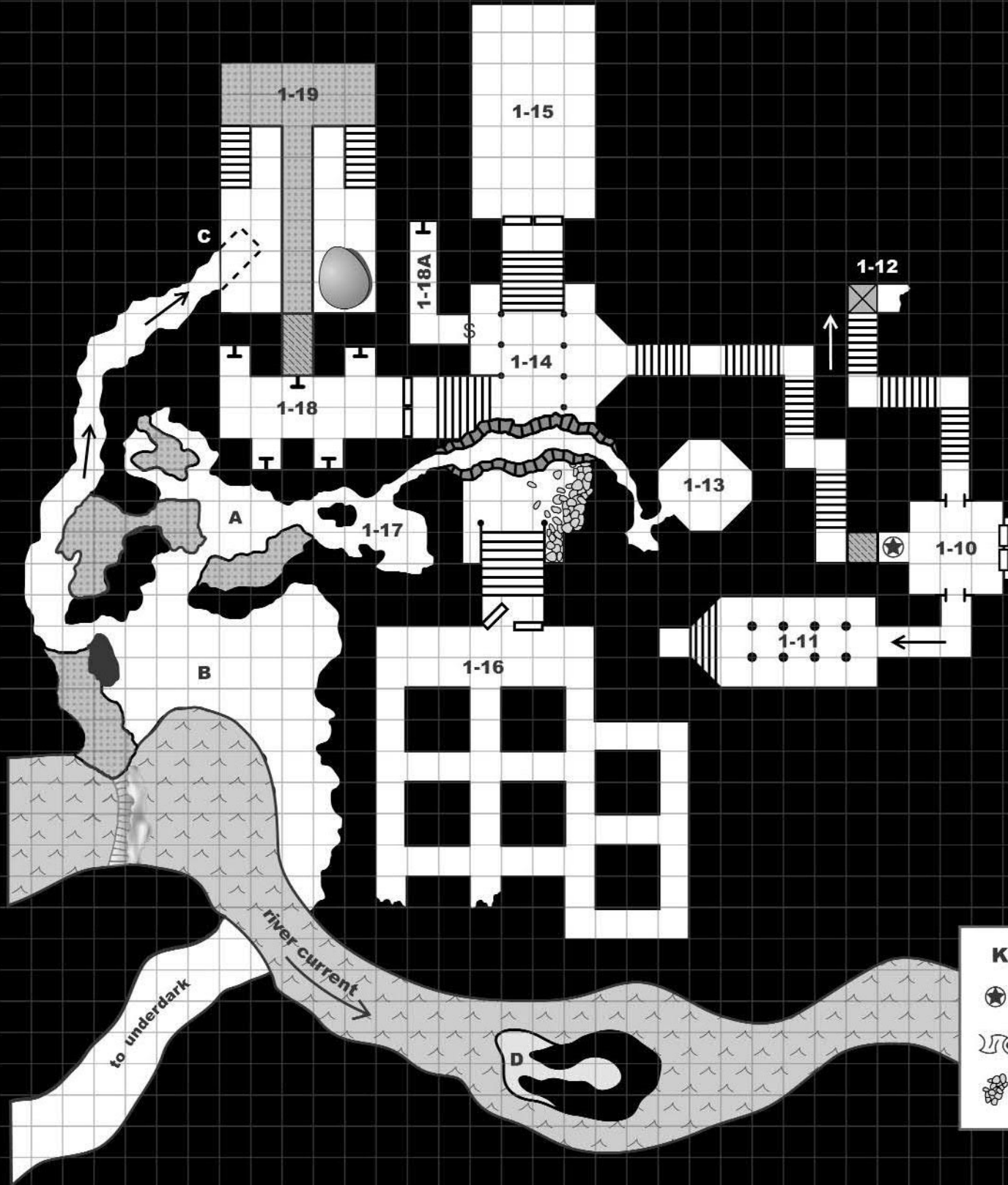
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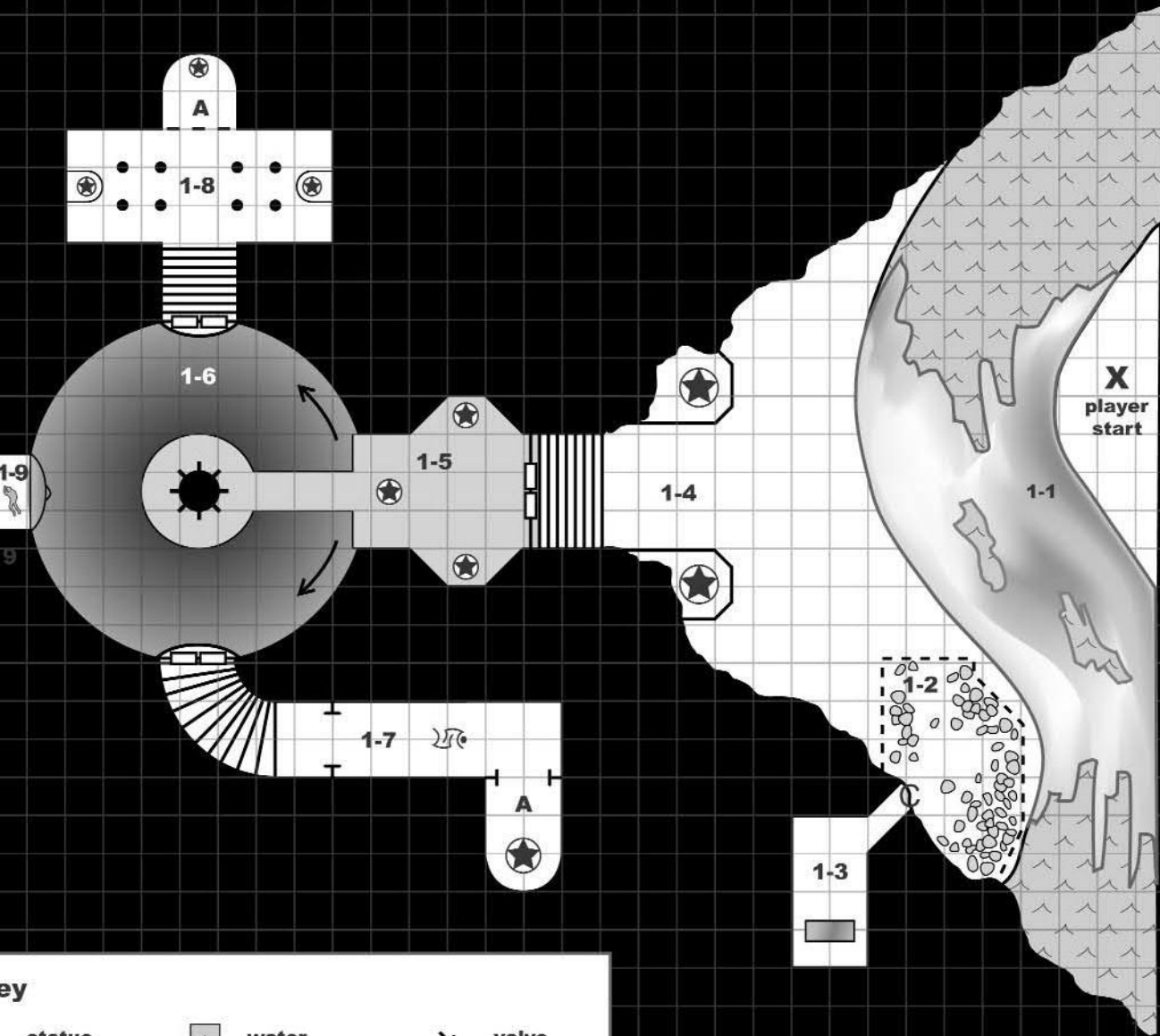
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The Iron Crypt



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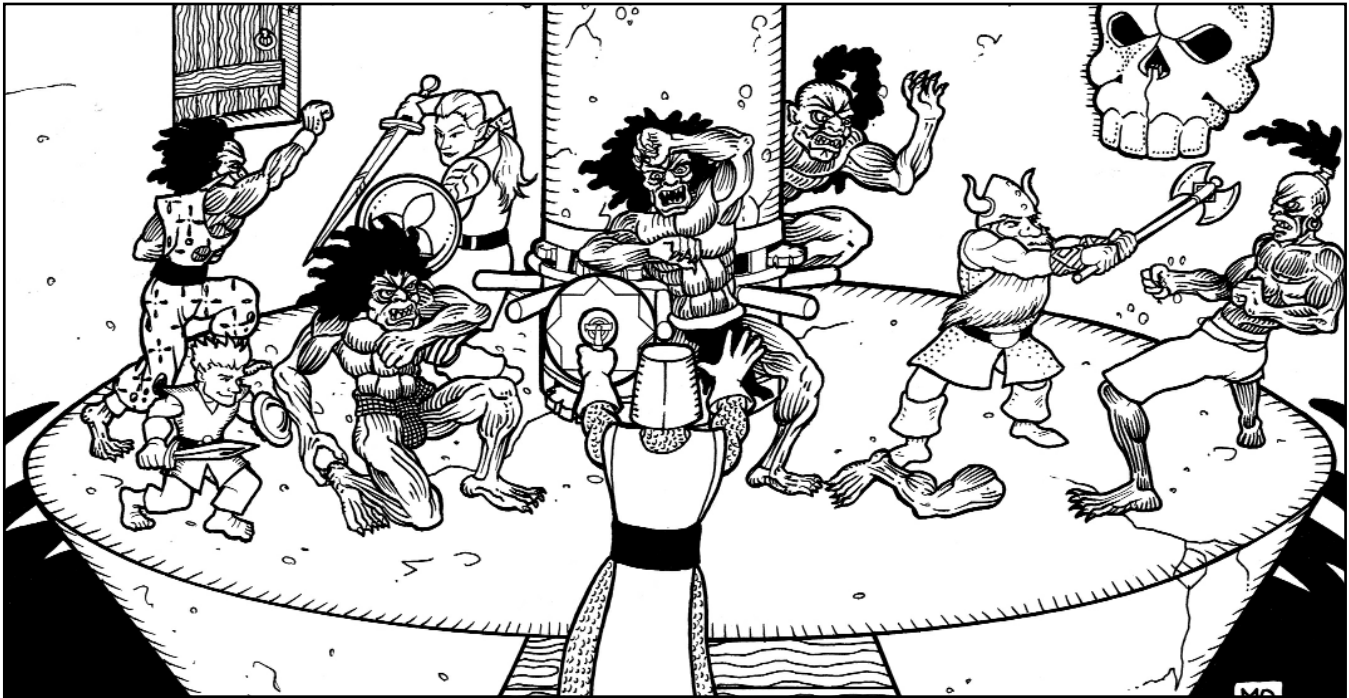
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| glyph marker | | elevated | | | |
| rubble/ruins | | moving section | | | |

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Credits

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Writer: Harley Stroh
Front Cover Artist: Leo Winstead
Back Cover Artist: William McAusland
Interior Artists: Jason Edwards, Doug Kovacs, Brad McDevitt, Jesse Mohn, Chris Watkins, Leo Winstead
Graphic Designer and Editor: Joseph Goodman
Proofreader: Liz Rich
Playtesters: Alex Anderegg, Phillip Cornett, Dan Downey, Regina Downey, Charles Fish, Lara Gose, Tei Ernstes, Jason Fields, Jacob Hulker, Dave Lankford, Tom Lee, Sean O'Leary, Randy Newton, Josh Stamper, Seth Watts

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For my brother and friend, the Saurus.



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Introduction

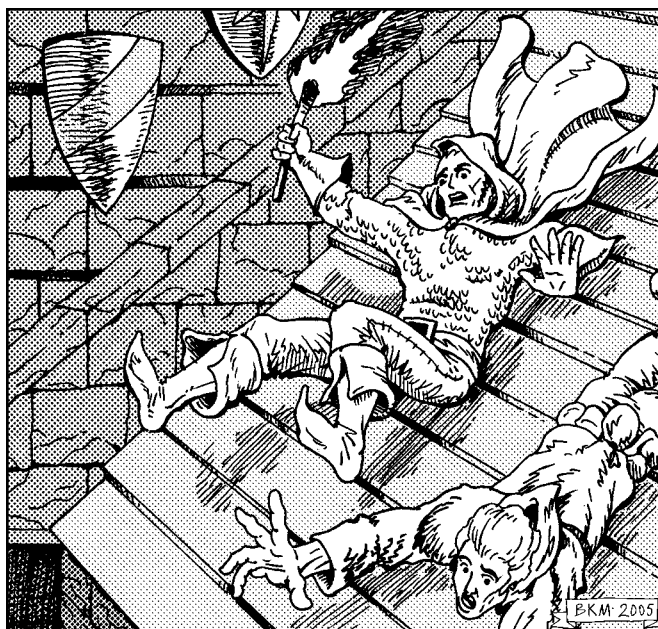
Remember the golden days of role playing, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Well, those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics feature bloody combat, intriguing dungeons, and no NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know must be there somewhere.

The Iron Crypt of the Heretics is designed for four to six characters of 11th to 13th level, with a total of 52-66 total character levels between party members. While the characters can be of any basic character class, skilled rogues and good-aligned clerics or paladins will be absolutely vital to a party's survival. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group's unique style of play.

The Iron Crypt of the Heretics is a complete, stand-alone adventure, but can also be played as a sequel to Dungeon Crawl Classics #12: The Blackguard's Revenge.

Adventure Summary

The characters arrive at the foot of the Saint's Blood Mountains only to find an ancient abbey in ruins. The unthinkable has happened: the Iron Crypt of the Heretics, long thought to be impregnable, has been sacked. The heroes must bypass deathtraps, guardians and puzzles to penetrate the deepest of the Iron Crypts. There, amidst the Crypt's secret vaults, they discover a demonic malevolence that must be destroyed before it grows to threaten the forces of good.



Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. Loc – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. Pg – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. Type – this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). Encounter – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in italics are classed NPCs. EL – the encounter level.

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-1	4	T	Ice bridge	3
1-4	5	T/C	Gargoyle trap 2 stone golems	13
1-6	7	C/P	12 wight monks	13
1-7	8	T	Deathblade scythes <i>Power word, stun</i> trap	11
1-8	8	T	Wide-mouth pit trap Acid fog trap	11
1-9	9	T	<i>Energy drain</i> trap <i>Chain lightning</i> trap	12
1-10	9	P	Statue puzzle	–
1-11	9	T	<i>Force cage/blade barrier</i>	10
1-12	10	T	Collapsing stairs <i>Teleport</i> trap	8
1-13	10	C/T	Advanced black pudding <i>Antimagic field</i> trap	10
1-15	11	C	The Master Tome 2 animated rugs 20 animated books	13
1-17A	12	C	8 driders	13
1-18	14	T/P	<i>Destruction</i> puzzle	8
1-19	15	C/P	5 driders The Ebon Egg	11 special

Scaling Information

The Iron Crypt of the Heretics is designed for 4-6 character of 11th-13th level, but it can be easily modified for parties of different sizes or levels.

Contrary to some dungeons, the traps in the Iron Crypt *are not intended to be survived*. PCs expecting to find convenient escapes from every deathtrap may be sorely disappointed. Parties may find themselves quickly

worn down, and those pressing themselves past the point of endurance will open themselves to disaster.

With this in mind consider the following suggestions:

Weaker parties (3 or fewer characters, or lower than 11th level): Remove 3 wights from encounter area 1-6. Reduce the DCs for all traps by 5. Replace the advanced black pudding in area 1-13 with a normal black pudding and remove the *antimagic field* entirely. Remove 3 driders from area 1-17.

Stronger parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 13th level): Add 5 wights to encounter area 1-6, and allow for a 1 in 4 chance of encountering 1d12 identical wights in encounter areas 1-10, 1-14, 1-15, and 1-16. Increase the DCs for all traps by 5. Add 5 additional driders to area 1-17. Most effectively, use a story line that requires the PCs to solve the Iron Crypt within 12 hours, before the Ebon Egg becomes sentient and mobile. (See page 3 for more information on the Ebon Egg.)

Getting the Players Involved

The adventure begins with the characters in the Vale of the Saint, at the foot of the Saint's Blood Mountains on the eastern edge of the known realms. The adventurers, having defeated the undead hordes in *The Blackguard's Revenge*, have come to clean out the Crypt and put an ancient evil to rest. If you haven't played DCC #12, use one of the following plot hooks to get the characters started:

- A mysterious stranger (a gold dragon in the guise of an elf) offers the party a king's ransom to do the impossible: break into the Iron Crypt of the Heretics and put to rest the mysterious evil that has awakened in the heart of the Crypt.
- A humble bondsman, bent with age, meekly approaches the PCs. Twenty years ago, his mistress Lady Shadron, heir to House Faerus, vanished into the Iron Crypt in a failed attempt to recover the remains of her ancestor. Now the bondsman is dying, and it is his last wish for the party to solve the mystery of Lady Shadron's fate. All he can offer as reward are his thanks, and the paltry remnants of the family fortune: a brilliant ruby worth 25,000 gp.
- Black Dougal, an infamous thief, has vanished into the Vale of the Saint. His guild hires the party to investigate his disappearance and bring back evidence of their guild master's demise.

Background Story

Many centuries ago, a band of paladins fell from grace, turning against their brethren. The blackguards were defeated after a great battle, and their grim fortress, the Iron Tower, was razed, and a crypt built from the ruins.

A small abbey was established nearby, and generations of monks dedicated their lives to the creation of three impregnable vaults that would stand through the ages. The world's greatest thieves, magicians, and seers were called together to design a series of puzzles and deadly traps. They mixed ancient eldritch wards, mighty clockwork traps, and multiple fail safes to ensure that the crypt would never be violated.

The Iron Crypt was built to serve a threefold purpose: first, to house the bodies of the heretical blackguards; second, to serve as a library for the religious tracts declared by the Church to be false beliefs; finally, as a storehouse for evil artifacts and cursed magic items brought back by questing paladins.

After several hundred years of dedication and labor, the Monks of the Saint had achieved their goal. Construction of the Iron Crypt was completed, and they sealed it and its wicked cargo for all eternity.

Unbeknownst to the brotherhood, their impregnable crypt had a single weakness: the very monks that had built it, for they knew its secrets. When a devourer stole into their abbey, the profane beast devoured the souls of half the faithful and terrorized the rest into submission. The devourer forced the remaining monks to help it inside the crypt and it successfully broke into the first of three vaults, releasing an army of wights. (See DCC #12 for more information on the devourer and its undead legions.)

While the remaining wights are terrible foes, an even graver danger lurks within the warded vaults. The collection of evil artifacts has created a nexus of great evil. The disruption caused by the devourer was enough to upset the delicate balance, allowing the nexus to birth a hitherto unknown gestalt of intelligence and malevolence: the Ebon Egg.

The Ebon Egg

When questing knights of the Ordocar discovered foul artifacts and cursed items of profane magic, they passed them over to the monks of the Iron Crypt for safe keeping. The monks in turn hid the evil magic within their deepest vault, ensuring that the magic items would never work their wickedness on the world again.

The monks meant well, but like many of the best made plans, theirs went horribly awry. The great concentration of black magic has given birth to a malevolent alien

intelligence known only as the Ebon Egg.

The Ebon Egg is an oval of absolute blackness, a void in the multiverse, thirty feet long and twenty feet at its widest. Any matter that comes into contact with the Egg is instantly sucked into the void, gone and utterly destroyed.

Any creature killed within 300 feet of the Egg rises in 1d4 rounds as a wight, retaining all of its previous class levels and abilities. If this wight is killed, it does not rise again.

Violence makes the Egg grow. GMs should track all hit points inflicted in combat within 100 ft. of the Egg. For every 10 points of damage done, the Egg grows in length and width by 1 foot. Every attack *aimed* at the Egg causes it to grow at double this rate.

Comprised of malevolent void, the Egg cannot be damaged by spells or weapons. It can only be destroyed by a *rod of cancellation* or similar items (such as the *hammer of cancellation* concealed in area 1-21D). Alternately, daring PCs may cast a *portable hole* (area 1-10) or a *bag of holding* (area 1-17B) into the Egg,

destroying both in the process. And – of course – PCs can be expected to come up with creative solutions of their own.

Left to its own devices, the Egg will grow at 5 ft. per month, until it is 100 ft. in diameter and has absorbed every magic item in the vault. At this point, the Egg will have achieved sentience and the ability to move itself at the rate of 60 ft. per round, consuming everything it encounters as it unleashes itself against the surface world.

Player Beginning

Icy wind whistles around you, stinging your lungs with every breath. Drifting snow swirls about your boots, obliterating your tracks and tearing at your cloaks and furs. Squinting through the gloom you can only barely make out the towering Saint's Blood Mountains. Millennia ago mighty glaciers carved deep ravines and cirques from the hard granite spires; now those same glaciers feed the thundering river that blocks your way. Across the river lies your goal: the legendary Iron Crypt of the Heretics, home to the monks of the Saint.

The Iron Crypt of the Heretics

The Iron Crypt is wrought almost entirely of iron, crust-red reddish-brown with rust. Where noted, traps and portals are operated by clockworks of a massive scale: gears, weights and cogs the size of a human or larger. Because of the magnitude and complexity of these traps and locks, they are not susceptible to Open Lock or Disable Device checks, even with their exposed mechanisms. Attempts to sabotage the clockworks by inserting objects into the gears simply result in crushing the items into dust.

The walls, ceilings, floors, clockworks and portals are all highly resistant to magic, with a +11 bonus to all saving throws.

Characters succeeding in a DC 20 Spellcraft check will recognize that the Iron Crypt is laden with powerful wards and eldritch wizardries that, taken together, create a zone that impairs the casting of certain spells. Spellcasters must succeed in a DC 30 Concentration check to cast any transmutation spell. Additionally, all *teleport* spells have an additional +33% chance of resulting in a mishap.

Reinforced Iron Door: 3" thick; Hardness 10; hp 75; Break DC 30.

Iron Wall: 5" thick; Hardness 10; hp 100; Break DC 40.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – The Ice Bridge (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

A narrow patch of ice forms a bridge across the stormy river. Past the river you can make out the faint silhouette of the abbey; further on, a dark ravine cut into the very heart of the mountain. A fierce wind screams about you, swirling fresh-fallen snow into tall drifts.

A successful DC 15 Survival check shows that the ice bridge is fragile. The bridge breaks if it is loaded with more than 200 pounds. Anyone failing a DC 20 Reflex save plummets into the icy flow, taking 1d6 points of cold damage per round until they are rescued from the swift current. Swimming in the icy river is difficult, requiring a DC 20 Swim check to stay afloat.

Area 1-2 – Ruins of the Abbey: Read or paraphrase the following:

The once-proud abbey is now nothing more than a burnt shell. Charred rafters lie fallen amid the banks of fresh snow. Everything within the abbey was destroyed by the blaze – even the altar was cracked by the furious heat.

A body lies sprawled atop the ruins, covered in a blanket of snow.

The devourer set fire to the abbey after torturing the monks into betraying their order. The fierce fire destroyed everything; charred bits of wood and ashes are all that remain.

The body belongs to a young priest, the sole survivor of the devourer's rampage. He escaped the Crypt only to be slain by wights returning from the events in DCC #12: The Blackguard's Revenge. The body was clearly killed by sword wounds, not fire (Heal DC 12 to identify the cause of death). The corpse is lying atop a rolled scrap of parchment. Blood has obscured much of the parchment. What's still legible reads as follows (show the players hand-out A):

...the devil beast enslaved my brothers and forced us to lead it into the Vault of Holies. There ... showed us That Which Cannot Be: the artifacts of Evil have else altogether! Then the devil let us attack the ... It cannot be slain! It cannot be hurt! And when we die we ...unholy! Who can cast it back into the Void? Saint preserve us!

The abbey's west wall still stands, resting against a granite outcropping. A DC 15 Search check reveals a small, iron door concealed in the fallen rubble. The door's lock was melted into slag by the fire, sealing the door closed. The door will have to be broken in order to pass.

Ruined Iron Door: 3" thick; Hardness 8; hp 50; Break DC 25.

Area 1-3 – Hidden Sanctuary: Read or paraphrase the following:

Protected from the heat of the flames, this sanctuary survived the fire that destroyed the abbey. The simple chamber has rough granite walls and a low ceiling now stained with smoke. Two marble pedestals stand in the room's dark corners. Atop the first is a collection of amber flasks; atop the second is a delicately wrought jade box.

At the far end of the room stands a statue of a woman carved from a single block of rose marble. She is arrayed as a warrior-maiden, a lance on one arm and a scroll in the other.

This small chamber survived the fire unscathed, except for slight smoke damage on the ceiling and walls. The monks built this sanctuary as a shrine to their patron, Aristemis, the Goddess of Strategy, and it is her statue that dominates the room.

A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that this particular goddess was instrumental in the creation of the Iron Crypt; it was her prophecy that inspired the monks to build an impregnable crypt to house the evils of the world.

A DC 15 Search check shows that there is text carved into the statue's scroll. This is the Prophecy of Aristemis, written in Old Common. If decoded by a DC 15 Decipher Script check or DC 20 Knowledge (history) check, show the players hand-out B.

Readers will know that this is a very loose translation. Old Common was a guttural tongue with no formalized grammar, lending to a number of plausible interpretations.

Treasure: The 5 flasks atop the first pedestal hold potions, oils and salves sanctified by the order. They are 3 salves of *cure serious wounds*, 1 *oil of magic vestment* +4, and 2 *potions of heroism*.

The jade box holds 7 mica prayer sheaves, each inscribed with a powerful divine spell. The thin mineral is extremely fragile: the sheaves have a hardness of 0, 1 hit point and will fail any saving throw. The spells on the mica scrolls are *atonement*, *death ward*, *mark of justice*, *raise dead*, *restoration*, *spell immunity*, and *spell resistance*.

Area 1-4 – Heretics' Gate (EL 13): Read or paraphrase the following:

A deep gorge cuts into the face of the mountain, steep cliffs rising high to either side. Above, ice and drifting snow form a roof, transforming the gorge into an ice cave. Two massive granite statues guard the entrance of the gorge, resting atop pedestals of black marble.

The ravine ends at a stone staircase that rises to a pair of enormous iron gates, mottled red and black from rust. Decorated with rusting gargoyles and pierced with sharpened iron spikes, the gates whisper doom to all who approach.

Three rotting corpses, horribly mangled beyond recognition, lie crumpled at the base of the stairs.

The gates are locked by heavy bolts that extend deep into the walls of the ravine, and are protected by powerful wards against damage by spells or weapons. This is the Crypt's first, and best, line of defense; short of divine intervention, the gates cannot be destroyed.

A cursory Search (DC 10) of the gates reveals a pair of gargoyles at the center of the gate, waist



high. Unlike the rest of the gate's decorations, the mouths of these gargoyles extend deep into the gate. If a good-aligned paladin, cleric or monk of 9th level or higher places a hand inside the mouth of one of the gargoyles, the bolts rattle and slide free, the earth trembles underfoot, and the gates open. A DC 16 bardic knowledge or Knowledge (history) check allows a character to remember hearing about this gate.

If anyone else places their hands inside the gates, the gargoyle's iron maws snap closed, trapping the unfortunate's hands inside unless they succeed in a DC 25 Reflex save. At the same instant, the golems awaken and attack.

The golems will pursue their prey as far as the river, but no further. If they succeed in killing or chasing off any would-be crypt robbers, the golems resume their watch from the pedestals.

Like the gate, the gargoyles cannot be damaged or destroyed. Trapped hands can be freed with a successful DC 25 Escape Artist check. Otherwise the iron maws open after 5 minutes.

The corpses belong to wights that attempted to break back into the Crypt. They are outfitted in ruined full plate armor, longswords, and heavy steel shields.

Stone Golem (2): CR 11; Large Construct; HD 14d10+30; hp 107; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +10; Grp +23; Atk Slam +18 melee (2d10+9); Full Atk 2 slams +18 melee (2d10+9); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Slow; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 29, Dex 9, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A stone golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below. A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows a stone golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure but negates its damage reduction and immunity to magic for 1 full round.

Slow (Su): A stone golem can use a *slow* effect, as the spell, as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a DC 17 Will save to negate. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Area 1-5 – Mysteries of the Ordocar: Read or paraphrase the following:

Three statues of kneeling knights dominate this room. The first is armored in chain and leather, and offers a footman's flail to the north. The second is armored in scale mail and offers a longsword to the south. The last statue is armored in full plate and faces west, but its hands – though raised – are empty, the offering missing.

Show the players handout C. The statues are carved from marble, but the weapons they hold are real masterwork items. Each weapon is a key to a puzzle that must be solved to enter the lower crypts.

In order to open the western portal in area 1-6, two things must happen: the footman's flail must be placed in the hands of the statue in area 1-8A; and the longsword must be placed in the hands of the statue in area 1-7A.

The missing offering, a magical shield, would have protected against the traps in area 1-9. Unfortunately, the devourer stole the shield and cast it into the oubliette (area 1-13).

Area 1-6 – Bridge of Nothingness (EL 13): Read or paraphrase the following:

Standing atop the balcony, you look out into an enormous circular room. A narrow wooden bridge arches out to a small platform suspended atop a tall granite column. To the north and south, level with the platform and bridge, are two doors; to the west, a massive iron skull.

Above is a complex series of enormous gears and cogs that take up the entire ceiling. Below is only darkness that seems to stretch on forever.

This is the Crypt's second line of defense, a puzzle that ensures that only several creatures working in unison can open the door to the lower vaults. Show the players handout D to help illustrate the area.

At the center of the platform is a turnstile. A DC 15 Craft (stonemasonry) or Craft (mining) check shows that the platform and bridge are meant to be rotated around the column, permitting access to the doors and the skulls. The turnstile stays in place; pulling on it rotates the bridge and simultaneously winds the gears and springs in the ceiling. A DC 25 Strength check is required to rotate the bridge. Up to eight Medium-sized creatures can help rotate the turnstile.

The doors to the north and south remain bolted until the bridge rotates to them. Then the mighty clock-

works groan into action, setting off a series of gears that unbolt the doors. If the bridge rotates away, the doors slide shut and the bolts fall back into place. The entire mechanism is hidden within the walls and cannot be picked or disabled.

The skull guarding the door to the west is a special case; it is guarded by the same wards as the gate in area 1-4 and cannot be destroyed. However, when both the longsword and flail from area 1-5 are placed with the proper statues, and the bridge is rotated to the west, the skull is drawn open by the clockworks, revealing the hall beyond.

Lurking in the clockworks are 12 wights, once monks. They hide amid the gears until the bridge and platform are moved from the starting position. Then they drop down from above, trying to knock the PCs from the platform.

From the platform it is a 300 foot fall to the chamber floor. The walls of the chamber and the column are extremely smooth and difficult to climb (Climb DC 25).

Wight Mnk2 (12): CR 5; Medium Undead; HD 6d12; hp 32 each; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk unarmed +5 melee (1d6); SA create spawn, energy drain, evasion, flurry of blows; SQ darkvision 60ft., undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +10; Str 14, Dex 14, Con -, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Hide +15, Listen +8, Move Silently +16, Spot +9; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Deflect Arrows, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Flurry of Blows (Ex): When unarmored, the monks may strike with a flurry of blows at the expense of accuracy. When doing so, they may make one extra attack in a round at their highest base attack bonus, but this attack takes a –2 penalty, as does each other attack made that round. A monk must use a full attack action to strike with a flurry of blows. Each blow delivers the wight's energy drain attack.

Area 1-7 – Hall of Blades (EL 11): Read or paraphrase the following:

A long hall stretches into darkness. The walls are made of iron panels, and the floor is crusted with a mix of rust and dried blood. The ceiling is a chaotic clockwork maze of enormous iron gears, springs, pendulums and wheels, all spattered with dried blood.

This hallway is trapped with six deathblade scythe traps spaced evenly along the course of the hall. If the traps detect anyone moving down the hall, the panels swivel and the deathblades lash out. A DC 15 Spot check shows deep grooves worn into the floor where the panels open.

A *power word, stun* trap is placed on the floor 20 ft. short of the end of the hall. Anyone triggering the *power word* will be stopped directly before a scythe.

The blades reset automatically. Victims standing in place – or *stunned* – will be struck by the same blade once every round.

Deathblade Wall Scythe (6): CR 8; mechanical; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; Atk +16 melee (2d4+8 plus poison, scythe); poison (deathblade, DC 20 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 19.

Power Word Stun Trap: CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*power word stun*, 13th-level wizard), Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

Area 1-7A – The Lord of Blades: Read or paraphrase the following:

The hall ends before a small shrine. A marble statue stands within, depicting a gaunt warrior armored in spiked full plate. The warrior's arms are raised, as if to strike with a weapon, but the statue's hands are empty.

A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check shows that this statue is the Lord of Blades, whose chosen weapon is the longsword. The longsword from area 1-5 should be placed in the statue's hands. If he holds the longsword while the statue in area 1-8A holds the flail, the skull in area 1-6 slides open, revealing the western door.

Area 1-8 – False Choices (EL 11): Read or paraphrase the following:

Two marble statues stand at each end of this wide hall. Both depict men atop rearing chargers, their arms raised as if to strike. The only difference is that one statue is carved from black marble, the other from white marble. Strangely, neither rider has a weapon.

PCs might be tempted to place the footman's flail into the hands of one of these riders, but neither is the right choice. The correct statue rests behind an illusory wall to the north, in area 1-8A.

If either statue is disturbed, the floor of the room falls away. Only those succeeding in leaping onto the room's pillars (DC 25 Reflex save) will avoid falling into the pit. The trapdoors close the very next round and cannot be opened from below except by a DC 30 Strength check, or a DC 20 Disable Device check.

The 100 foot pit is unusual in that the sides are smooth but not perfectly vertical (see diagram). Instead, the sides channel victims into a narrow 5 foot by 5 foot wide shaft that is another 40 feet deep. The sloped pit inflicts only 8d6 points of falling damage, but if multiple victims fall into the pit, they end up slamming into one another at the bottom. Determine randomly in what order the victims land in the smaller pit; each one after the first has the damage for the second fall reduced to 3d6 but also inflicts the same damage to those beneath it (divide the damage equally among all those below).

Striking the narrow pit triggers an *acid fog* spell that fills the trap. Any creature attempting to climb (DC 20) from the fog-filled pit moves at a speed of 5 feet per round. Each round the fog deals 2d6 points of acid damage to each creature and object within it.

Wide-Mouth Pit Trap: CR 6; mechanical; location trigger, automatic reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 100 ft. deep (8d6, fall) plus 40 ft. deep (4d6, fall); multiple targets (all targets within a 80-ft.-by-30-ft. area); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 25.

Acid Fog Trap: CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*acid fog*, 11th-level wizard, 2d6/round acid for 11 rounds); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Area 1-8A – Reliquary of Duframe: This area is hidden by a *permanent image* of a wall. A DC 20 Will save permits a PC to disbelieve in the wall, revealing the hidden shrine. Read or paraphrase the following:

Inside this shrine kneels a statue of a war-torn paladin. The marble statue raises a single hand, as if to present a weapon, but the hand is strangely empty.

A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check determines that this statue is the legendary paladin Duframe, whose principal weapon is the footman's flail.

The flail from area 1-5 should be placed in the statue's hands. If this is done at the same time the longsword is placed with the statue in area 1-7A, the skull in area 1-6 slides open, revealing the western door.

Area 1-9 – Gate of Brass (EL 10, 7): Read or paraphrase the following:

The walls of this small chamber are decorated with ornate castings. This entire west wall of this chamber is occupied up by a pair of brass doors. Lying before the gate is a moldering body – instantly you are struck by the stench of rotting flesh.

Entering this chamber triggers an *energy drain* trap. The trap resets after three rounds; if it hasn't been disabled in that time the trap goes off again. If there are multiple targets in the room, the trap affects the creature closest to the Gate of Brass.

The Gate's lock is made up of a complicated series of tumblers. Anyone with 5 or more ranks in Open Lock will immediately know that picking the lock will be very difficult (DC 35). The *chain lightning* trap is triggered when anyone tries to pick the lock.

The castings on the walls depict knights riding out from a mountain valley, defeating monsters in distant lands, and then returning with foul artifacts and evil magics.

The body lying on the ground is the corpse of the infamous rogue Black Dougal. The master thief succeeded in penetrating the crypt this far, even going so far as to bypass the magical wards on the skull door at 1-6, but was struck by the *energy drain* trap. Crippled by negative levels, he was killed by the *chain lightning* trap. His corpse, though scorched by lightning, still carries his equipment and magic items, as well as a crude map (give players handout E).

Treasure: *Bracers of armor +4, ring of protection +2, +2 short sword of frost, +1 shortbow, 20 arrows, a portable hole, thieves' tools +3, and 3 potions of cure serious wounds* in steel flasks.

Energy Drain Trap: CR 10; magic device; visual trigger (*true seeing*); automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged touch; spell effect (*energy drain*, 17th-level wizard, 2d4 negative levels for 24 hours, DC 23 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

Chain Lightning Trap: CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*chain lightning*, 11th-level wizard, 11d6 electricity to target nearest center of trigger area plus 5d6 electricity to each of up to eleven secondary targets, DC 19 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

The Gate of Brass: 12" thick; Hardness 8; hp 200; Break DC 40; Open Lock DC 35.

Area 1-10 – The Secret of Valor: Read or paraphrase the following:

At the back of this room, sheltered in a small alcove, stands a statue of a beautiful maiden. The lady is swathed in robes; in one hand she holds a scale, in the other an hourglass. Two exits lead from the chamber, both decorated with ornate arches.

A *magic mouth* is triggered as the PCs enter the room, causing the statue to speak in soft, gentle tones:

"Which do you pray for?"

Engraved in the arch above the north exit is the word *Duty*. Engraved in the arch above the south exit is the word *Honor*. These seem to be the only exits from the room, but the choices offered by the statue are actually a puzzle. Neither choice presented by the statue is correct, and both exits lead to death.

If the proper answer, *Wisdom*, is spoken, the statue slides to one side, revealing a passageway to the west. A DC 25 Spot check reveals faint grooves worn into the floor from the moving statue.

A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes that the statue is an iconic representation of the Wisdom aspect of Aristemis, the Goddess of Strategy.

Area 1-11 – The Price of Courage (EL 10): Read or paraphrase the following:

The sloping corridor opens into a long hall, with vaulted ceilings supported by columns cast in the shape of armed knights. At the far end of the hall is an elevated alcove. Within the alcove is a shining golden crown.

If the PCs enter the room, a *programmed illusion* is activated. There is a great groaning noise, the sounds of chattering gears, and the alcove and crown seem to sink slowly into a hole in the floor. Clearly, if the PCs hesitate for a round or more, the crown will be lost!

This is, of course, a trap. If PCs come within 10 feet of the alcove they set off a *forcecage*. A *blade barrier* spell follows, crafted to fit within the 10 foot by 10 foot cage. It inflicts 13d6 damage per round to anyone trapped inside the cage for 13 minutes. The spells are independent; the *blade barrier* will still function even if the *forcecage* fails.

A DC 20 Will save permits a PC to disbelieve in the crown.

Forcecage and Blade Barrier trap: CR 10; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; multiple traps (one *forcecage* trap and one *blade barrier* trap); spell effect (*forcecage*, 13th-level wizard), spell effect (*blade barrier*, 13th-level cleric, 13d6/round for 13 minutes); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

Area 1-12 – Steps of No Return (EL 11): These steps appear no different than the flights before them, but when weight is placed halfway down the flight they collapse to form a steep slope of polished iron. Anyone failing a DC 25 Reflex save is pitched down the slope and into the pit trap waiting below.

The pit is 100 feet deep. At the base is a *circle of teleportation* that transports falling PCs to area 1-13, where they complete their fall, taking 10d6 falling damage as they crash into the enormous black pudding.

Well-Camouflaged Collapsing Stairs Trap: CR 9; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; multiple targets (any target on the stairs); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 18.

Wide-Mouth Pit Trap: CR 9; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; no save; 100 ft. deep (10d6, fall); multiple targets (all targets falling in the pit); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25.

Area 1-13 – The Oubliette (EL 10): Read or paraphrase the following:

The walls of this dark room are pitted and scarred, and stink as if seared by acid. The floor is hidden by a shimmering amorphous ebon ooze...that threatens to devour you as it rises to the attack!

The floor of this chamber is entirely covered with an exceptionally large black ooze. PCs falling into this chamber from area 1-12 plummet directly into the five foot deep ooze, taking acid damage for themselves and their possessions.

Entering the room from area 1-12 triggers an *anti-magic field* trap that blankets the entire room.

There is nowhere to stand in the room that doesn't place a PC in contact with the ooze. Those seeking escape will have to climb. The ooze can climb as well, and continues to attack PCs as long as they remain in the room.

There is a single exit from the room: a narrow fissure hidden 20 feet up the western wall. This fissure can be found with a DC 15 Spot check by standing on the floor of the room or climbing on the *eastern* wall. Otherwise, the fissure is nearly impossible to spot (DC 30).

Enlarged Antimagic Field Trap: CR 10; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*, 10-ft. area); automatic reset; spell effect (*antimagic field*, 18th-level cleric); Search DC 33; Disable Device 33.

Advanced Black Pudding: CR 9; Huge Ooze; HD 15d10+60; hp 156; Init -5; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 3, touch 3, flat-footed 3; Base Atk +8; Grp +20; Atk/Full Atk Slam +10 melee (2d6+5 plus 2d6 acid); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Acid, constrict 2d6+4 plus 2d6 acid, improved grab; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., split, ooze traits; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref -2, Will -2; Str 18, Dex 1, Con 22, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1

Skills: Climb +12

Constrict (Ex): A black pudding deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor take a -4 penalty on Reflex saves against the acid.

Acid (Ex): The creature secretes a digestive acid that dissolves organic material and metal quickly, but does not affect stone. Any melee hit or constrict attack deals acid damage, and the opponent's armor and clothing dissolve and become useless immediately unless they succeed on DC 21 Reflex saves. A metal or wooden weapon that strikes a black pudding also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds on a DC 21 Reflex save. The save DCs are Constitution-based. The pudding's acidic touch deals 21 points of damage per round to wooden or metal objects, but the ooze must remain in contact with the object for 1 full round to deal this damage.

Split (Ex): Slashing and piercing weapons deal no damage to a black pudding. Instead the creature splits into two identical puddings, each with half of the original's current hit points (round down). A pudding with 10 hit points or less cannot be further split and dies if reduced to 0 hit points.

Area 1-14 – Broken Hall: Read or paraphrase the following:

This vaulted hall is dominated by a trio of identical staircases that rise to towering iron portals to the north, west and south. At some point in the recent past, a powerful force shattered the hall, opening a deep fissure that split the hall in two and collapsed the southeastern corner. Once-mighty pillars now stand at awkward angles, and portions of the ceiling have fallen, scattering rubble across the floor.

The devourer released the wights from area 1-16 by forcing one of the brothers of Ordocar to cast an *earthquake* spell. The resulting quake burst the iron portals, caused the collapse on the southwestern half of the room, and opened the fissure that splits the hall.

A DC 20 Profession (mining) or Craft (stonemasonry) check shows that the walls of the fissure are very unstable. If anyone weighing 50 pounds or more comes within 5 feet of the fissure, the edge collapses. A DC 20 Reflex save allows the PC to grab the fissure's edge. Otherwise the victim falls 40 feet to the rocky chasm floor, taking 4d6 points of falling damage.

Area 1-15 – Library of Heresies: These iron doors are locked and made up of a complex mesh of interlocking gears and release devices (Open Lock DC 30; Hardness 10; hp 75; Break DC 30). If the lock is picked, the gears spring to life, rolling back the doors to reveal:

Before you stretches a dark hall that once must have been a library. Dark rugs covered in eldritch sigils line the floors and empty shelves line the walls. Thousands upon thousands of ancient texts are heaped into an enormous mountain in the center of the library. Atop the pile, nested in cobwebs and deep shadows, is a single, enormous tome.

The gold-bound covers open as if turned by a ghost, and the pages begin to slowly flip past.

Show the players handout F. This library contains records of the Order's debates, some dating back several hundred years. So close to the Ebon Egg, the library has been steeped in the Egg's evil influence. The rugs and books have all been transformed into animated objects that violently attack any intruders.

Fortunately, nearly all of the tomes have rotted away to moldy husks, and only a handful can launch a meaningful attack. Unfortunately, the largest of the librams, the Master Tome, was once a spellbook and has now mastered the spells contained in its own pages. The Master Tome can cast spells as if it were a 12th-level wizard, as indicated in its stat block below.

The Master Tome uses its spells to the best of its ability, summoning monsters and training attack spells on spellcasters while the rugs and lesser tomes distract the PCs.

Treasure: Texts pertinent to the PCs are listed below. Each is worth 5,000 gp to a good-aligned church. GMs are invited to use this library to introduce plots and schemes that are specific to their own campaign world. Perhaps the paladins uncovered some truth that was too terrible to be brought to light, or perhaps the library contains documents recording an ancient curse pertaining back to a PC's own ancestors.

Heresy of Mercy (6 tomes bound in red dragon scales): debates arguing that the disobedient knights of the Ordocar should have been accepted back into the Order.

Heresy of Honor (9 tomes bound in gold leaf): a collection of theories arguing that warriors willing to die for prideful honor are shirking their higher duty to their liege and their god.

Heresy of the Good War (2 tomes bound in platinum): a collection of theories hypothesizing that violent acts, even those committed in the name of good, can only result in more violence. Readers encountering the Ebon Egg are granted a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check to realize that violence feeds the Egg, and that attacking it will only cause it to grow.

Heresy of Truth (1 tome bound in leather): a brief treatise arguing against hiding evil deeds and evil artifacts in the Crypt. The tome theorizes that if enough evil is brought together, it will begin to implode upon itself. Readers encountering the Ebon Egg are granted a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check to realize the origins of the Ebon Egg.

Anyone taking the time to read and consider all of the surviving tomes will gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (religion) and Knowledge (arcana) checks. The tomes are heavy reading, requiring 24 months of study, minus 1 month for every point of the reader's Intelligence bonus.

The Master Tome: CR 12; Small Construct; HD 4d10+30; hp 52; Init +0; Spd 20 ft., fly 15 ft. (clumsy), AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +10; Atk/Full Atk Slam +5 melee (1d8+4); SA Spells; SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, spells; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con -, Int 10, Wis 1, Cha 1

Spells Available (each 1/day; caster level 12; save DC 10 + spell level): 1st-level – *color spray, hold portal, magic missile, silent image, summon monster I*; 2nd-level – *magic mouth, slow, summon monster II, summon swarm, web*; 3rd-level – *lightning bolt, ray of exhaustion, summon monster III*; 4th-level – *black tentacles, globe of invulnerability (lesser), ice storm*; 5th-level – *dominate person, summon monster V, symbol of sleep*; 6th-level – *chain lightning, disintegrate*.

Animated Rugs (2): CR 7; Gargantuan Construct; HD 16d10+60; hp 168; Init -2; Spd 10 ft.; AC 12, touch 4, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +12; Grp +31; Atk/Full Atk Slam +15 melee (2d8+10); Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft.; SA Constrict; SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 24, Dex 6,

Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Constrict (Ex): A flexible animated object such as a rug deals damage equal to its slam damage value plus 1-1/2 times its Strength bonus with a successful grapple check against a creature up to one size larger than itself. A rug can make constriction attacks against multiple creatures at once, if they all are at least two sizes smaller than the object and can fit under it.

Animated Books (20): CR 1; Small Construct; HD 1d10+10; hp 15; Init +1; Spd fly 15 ft. (clumsy); AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk Slam +1 melee (1d4); SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL Neutral; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1

Area 1-16 – Iron Crypt of the Heretics: Read or paraphrase the following:

These tall iron doors are both covered in a maze of gears, tumblers, pendulums and rusty levers. One of the doors hangs from its hinges, as if cracked by a titanic force. Peering inside you can discern a vaulted hall with dozens – no, hundreds – of sepulchers bored into the iron walls. The coppery scent of death is strong here, mixed with a sickly sweet scent of herbs.

This is where the blackguards were entombed. Now all but one of the sepulchers are empty.

A successful DC 20 Search will discover the single remaining corpse. This was once Draco Faerus, a paladin who was wrongly entombed along with the blackguards. A DC 25 Knowledge (history) or DC 20 Knowledge (nobility) check reveals the identity of the corpse; those familiar with the legend also know that House Faerus expended all of its resources trying to recover the remains of Draco. The House's sole heir, Lady Shadron, vanished on such a quest twenty years ago. She and her party were never seen again. (Their corpses can be found in area 1-17C.)

Area 1-17 – Chamber of Webs (EL 14): Read or paraphrase the following:

The narrow cleft in the rock widens to reveal a natural cave chamber. The ceiling is obscured by a thick weave of silver webs. Half a dozen large bundles dangle from the ceiling, wrapped in the same silvery threads, trembling softly in the cool air. You can hear a loud droning in the distance.

This is the lair of a clan of driders. The bundles are dead humanoid slaves: orcs, drow, and duergar. The desiccated corpses weight the ceiling webs so that they transmit vibrations through the rest of the

area 1-17 cave system. The slightest noise or disturbance in this chamber will alert the driders in areas 1-17A.

Area 1-17A – Lost Clan of Ereluc (EL 13): Read or paraphrase the following:

The walls and ceiling of this chamber are entirely covered in silvery threads. Towering, flat-topped stalagmites, draped in webs, stop just short of the ceiling. A thunderous roaring drowns out all but the loudest sounds, and the silvery webs scintillate with condensation.

Eight driders lurk here atop the stalagmites. All have been on edge ever since five of their number vanished into the Vault of the Egg (area 1-19) after a *teleport* scroll went awry. If they have been alerted by PCs passing through area 1-17, the driders launch surprise attacks, dousing the chamber floor with attack spells.

These driders were once drow sorcerers of House Ereluc. They failed their dark goddess and were condemned to live out the remainder of their days as horrid aberrations. Forced to wander the underdark, the driders discovered the peculiar properties of the metal that makes up the Iron Crypt, and have begun experimenting with bits of iron “mined” from the Crypt's walls.

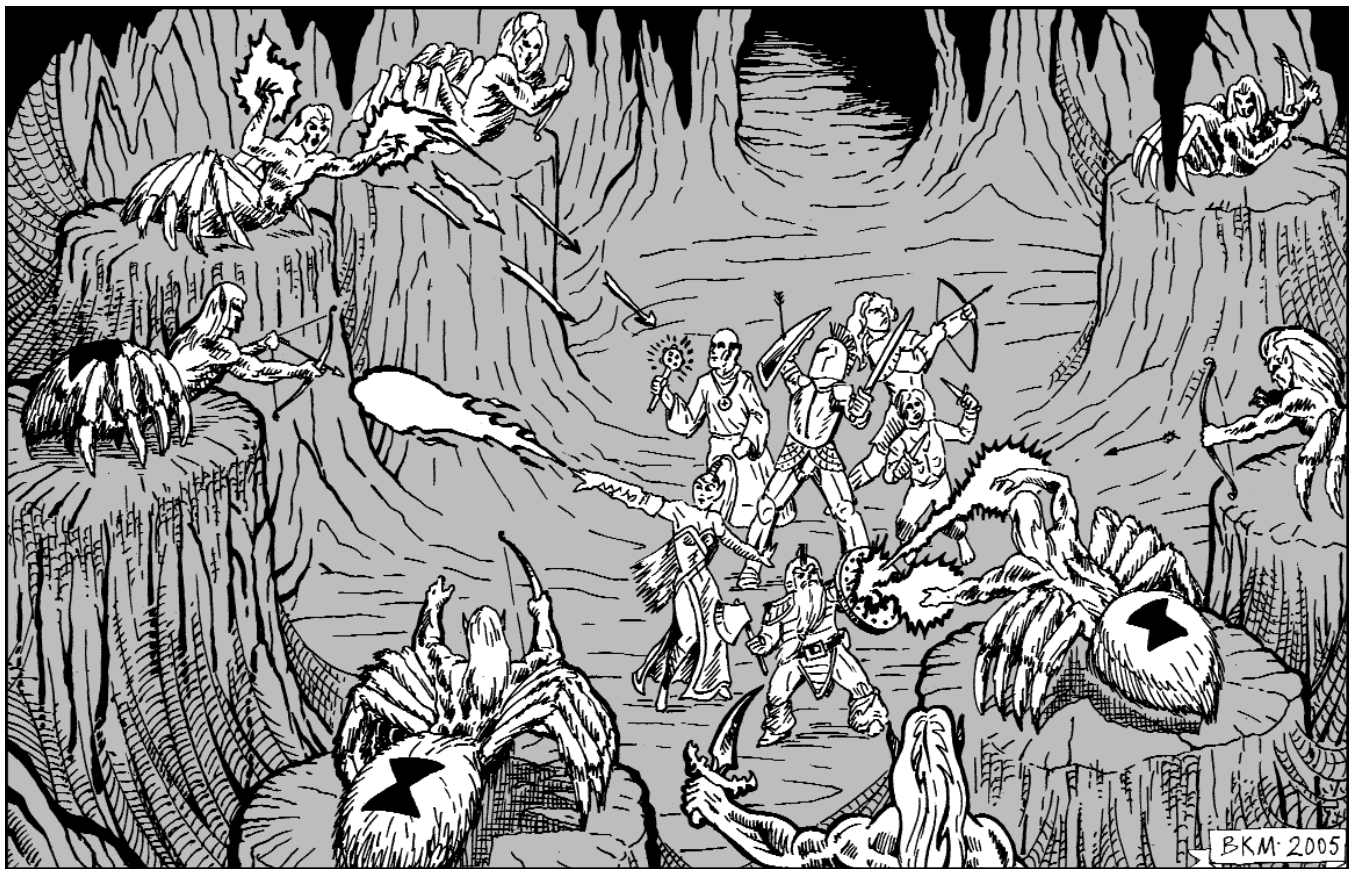
Tactics: The driders have one-quarter cover from atop the stalagmites, granting them a +2 cover AC bonus and a +1 cover Reflex save bonus. The driders use this to their advantage, directing attack spells and arrows at obvious spellcasters. Each round one will hold a readied *dispel magic*, waiting to counterspell an offensive spellcaster. They rotate through their number as each uses up his ability.

If the battle begins to go badly, the driders retreat to area 1-17B along the sheet webs that cover the roof of the chamber. There they make their final stand, threatening to kill the slaves unless the PCs cease their attacks.

The roar from the waterfall in area 1-17B gives a +10 circumstance bonus to any Move Silently checks.

Note: These driders are within the Ebon Egg's sphere of influence. If they are killed, they rise in 1d4 rounds as wights, retaining all of their previous class abilities.

Dridr (8): CR 7; Large Aberration; HD 6d8+18; hp 45 each; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +10; Atk Dagger +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20) or bite +6 melee (1d4+1 plus poison) or shortbow +5 ranged (1d8/x3); Full Atk 2 daggers +3 melee (1d6+2/19-



20, 1d6+1/19-20) and bite +1 melee (1d4+1 plus poison), or shortbow +5 ranged (1d8/x3); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Spells, spell-like abilities, poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 17; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Concentration +9, Hide +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Spot +9; Combat Casting, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (bite).

Skills: A drider can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 16, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution based.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day – *dancing lights* (DC 13), *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *darkness*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *faerie fire*, *levitate*, *suggestion* (DC 16). Caster level 6th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/6/4, base save DC 13 + spell level): 0 – *daze*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st-level – *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *silent image*; 2nd-level – *invisibility*, *web*; 3rd-level – *lightning bolt*.

Possessions: 2 daggers, short bow, 20 arrows.

Area 1-17B – Slave Chamber: Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is dominated by a thundering wall of water that tumbles from the high ceiling, before crashing into a wide pool that feeds a dark river. The roof of the cavern is concealed in thick webs that shimmer and dance with beads of water.

A dozen miserable figures huddle around a sputtering fire near the river's shore, warming their hands by the meager flames.

This chamber is used to house the slaves that mine the iron from the walls of the Iron Crypt in area 1-17C. The group is composed of 6 orcs, 3 duergar, 2 goblins, and a single miserable one-eyed kobold. Each of the slaves is shackled around the neck, and connected to his fellows by a thick chain that is anchored to the cavern floor. All are terrified of their captors, and will do nothing to aid the PCs. If given the chance, the slaves flee for their lives.

Treasure: Woven into the 40 foot high ceiling is the collective treasure of the driders: a *bag of holding* (type III) containing 2,350 gp and 350 pp, a *bead of force* kept in a small teak box, *gloves of arrow snaring*, and a +3 *two-bladed sword of flaming burst*.

Area 1-17C – Mine Shaft: Read or paraphrase the following:

The natural, water-worn worn cave quickly gives way to a mining shaft hewn from the dark stone. The slope climbs sharply and bits of tailings underfoot make the going treacherous.

This mine shaft was dug by the slaves in area 1-17B. The driders, detecting the powerful auras cast by the Ebon Egg, mistakenly believe that the walls and floors of area 1-19 posses powerful magics of their own. They have directed their slaves to “mine” the iron floor from beneath area 1-19, and have begun experimenting with the ore’s properties.

A DC 15 Profession (mining) check will reveal that there is no real ore here to speak of, and that the shaft heads back into the Iron Crypt. The miners have nearly broken through to area 1-19. If more than 25 hit points of damage are done to the roof at the end of the shaft, the thin iron gives way, opening a narrow fissure into area 1-19.

Area 1-17D – Heir of the Faerus: Read or paraphrase the following:

The river widens here and slows, winding its way around a long sandbar. A single ancient stalagmite thrusts its way through the sandbar. A dark cleft is worn into the heart of the stalagmite, and it looks as if flotsam and debris from the river has been trapped there over the ages.

If the party investigates further, read or paraphrase the following:

Upon closer investigation, the cleft is revealed to be a narrow cave. What you first mistook for flotsam is actually pale bones and corroded bits of armor, half-buried in the sand.

Almost a decade ago, Lady Shadron, sole heir of House Faerus, organized an expedition to recover the remains of her ancestor, the legendary paladin

Draco Faerus. The expedition ended in tragedy when the party’s mage attempted to *teleport* the survivors to safety. The spell failed, hurling Shadron and the others into the underground river. Shadron dragged her fellows to safety atop the island, only to watch them all die of starvation.

The corpses of the ill-fated party remain on the island, nearly buried in the sand. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (nobility) check will allow PCs to identify the corpse of the Heir of Faerus. Shadron’s last days are recorded on a sheaf of vellum rolled inside a pale scroll case; unless the PCs succeed in a DC 20 Spot check, they mistake the scroll case for another bone.

Treasure: A small portion of the party’s equipment has survived. A DC 10 Search will uncover the following items from the sand: +1 *bastard sword*, *bracers of armor* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, +2 *full plate*, +1 *heavy steel shield*, 12 flasks containing ruined potions, and *Nightbringer* (a +4 *warhammer of cancellation* that functions as the rod of the same name).

Area 1-18 – Hall of the Five Seals (EL 8): The western entrance to this room is locked by a complex mesh of gears and release devices (Open Lock DC 30; Hardness 10; hp 75; Break DC 30). If the lock is picked, the gears spring to life, rolling back the doors to reveal:

A curious hall beckons you to enter. The walls, ceiling and floors are made entirely of intermeshed gears and cogs, with but a single narrow catwalk running along the floor. At the center of the hall stands a ruby skull, supported by an iron rod extending from the wall, and running into the maze of clockworks. The catwalk leads to four alcoves, each with a smaller gem-skull supported by an iron rod. Strangely, all but one of the five skulls is turned upside down.

Show the players handout G. These skulls make up

Skull Positions				
Location	Material	Starting Position	Current Position	Corresponding Skull
Central skull	Ruby	Upside down	_____	–
Northwest alcove	Emerald	Rightside up	_____	Bloodstone
Southwest alcove	Black Sapphire	Upside down	_____	Jade
Northeast alcove	Jade	Upside down	_____	Diamond
Southeast alcove	Bloodstone	Upside down	_____	Black Sapphire
Area 1-18A	Diamond	Upside down	_____	Ruby

the last puzzle protecting the Iron Crypt; each is meant to be grasped and rotated. A DC 20 Spot check will reveal scratches on the iron rods indicating that they were turned in the past.

When the PCs first enter the chamber, all except the emerald skull (in the northwest alcove) are rotated so that they are upside down. The large, central skull is protected by a *destruction* trap that is triggered any time the ruby skull is touched. The trap instantly slays any target that fails a DC 20 Fortitude save. Those succeeding take 10d6 points of damage instead.

In order to deactivate the trap and open the way to the north, the skulls must be turned in the proper order. When one skull is grasped and rotated 180 degrees, the great clockworks groan into motion, turning the corresponding skull 180 degrees. The jade skull will seem to not turn any skull, since its partner is hidden in area 1-18A; the trick to the puzzle is knowing the existence of this diamond skull.

Use the table in the sidebar to keep track of which way each skull faces. This isn't important to the puzzle (the solution is based on the order they're turned in, not which way they face), but the PCs don't know that!

The correct order is: emerald, bloodstone, black sapphire, jade, diamond. When the diamond skull is turned in the proper order, the ruby skull rotates and the clockworks draw open to reveal a passageway into area 1-19. Any time the *destruction* trap is triggered, all the skulls reset, leaving the emerald skull facing rightside up.

Each of the gems is a near-perfect specimen. The massive ruby is worth 20,000 gp, and each of the smaller skulls is worth half as much. Removing the gems breaks the clockworks, locking them in position.

Destruction trap: CR 8; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*destruction*, 13th-level wizard, death, DC 20 Fort save 10d6 damage); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 40.

Area 1-18A – The Last Seal: This corridor is hidden by a secret door that can be found with a DC 25 Search check.

The secret door opens to a winding corridor that ends in an abrupt wall. A diamond skull is suspended at chest level by an iron rod that extends from the wall. Strangely, the skull is upside down.

A DC 20 Spot check will reveal scratches on the iron rod indicates that it was turned in the past. See area 1-18 for more information on the seals and opening area 1-19.



Area 1-19 – Vault of the Egg (EL 11/special): Read or paraphrase the following:

Massive clockworks whirl and spin around you, parting to reveal a corridor stretching into darkness. The air is thick with the pulsing aura of palpable evil. At the floor of the corridor, to your right, the darkness seems denser than natural shadow. You are unable to make out any details of the rounded bulge, almost as if nothing was there at all. A wave of nausea and anxiety washes over you, and your mouth is tinged with the taste of copper. Suddenly you spot five spider-like creatures scuttling toward you from the distance.

The “bubble” in the lower eastern corner of the corridor is the furthest edge of the Ebon Egg; the remainder of the Egg rests in the room below. Anything or anyone touching the Egg is obliterated from existence as if by a *sphere of annihilation*. (See page 3 for more important information on the Ebon Egg.)

At the end of the hall are 5 driders. The aberrations mistakenly teleported into the vault 3 days ago and have been unable to escape. The driders are desperate and ferocious, and willing to slaughter anything standing in their way as they attempt to escape.

Like the driders in area 1-17A, these driders rise as wights after being slain. Each time a drider (or PC) rises as a wight, the Ebon Egg pulses with power, signaling the connection between the Egg and the wights. As the Egg grows, it eats into the suspending corridor. 150 hp of cumulative damage is enough to cause the Egg to grow large enough that it devours the supports of the corridor, sending it crashing down into the vault below. Anything standing in the corridor falls with it, taking 4d6 points of damage from the falling rubble (DC 25 Reflex save for half), sending up a choking plume of dust, and obscuring sight beyond 5 feet.

The vault below is filled with orderly stacks and racks of books, scrolls, steel-flasked potions, sinister weapons and armors of all sort, wicked-looking chalices, obsidian orbs – indeed, nearly any evil magic item imaginable can be found here. They have all been drained of magic, their powers absorbed into the pulsing seed of nothingness that occupies the entire southeastern corner of the vault.

As soon as PCs enter the vault, they feel the Egg's attention turn towards them. If the Egg has achieved sentience and mobility, it will begin to creep towards them, eager to devour its first living prey. If the Egg has not yet "awakened," the PCs have a chance to destroy the abomination. See page 3 for details on combat with the Egg, and its influence over living things.

Treasure: There is no longer anything of worth here. While the drained magic items still appear to be masterwork creations, touching them reveals the truth: each has been reduced to ash, covered by only a thin skin of its original material.

Drider (5): CR 7; Large Aberration; HD 6d8+18; hp 45 each; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +10; Atk Dagger +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20) or bite +6 melee (1d4+1 plus poison) or shortbow +5 ranged (1d8/x3); Full Atk 2 daggers +3 melee (1d6+2/19-20, 1d6+1/19-20) and bite +1 melee (1d4+1 plus poison), or shortbow +5 ranged (1d8/x3); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Spells, spell-like abilities, poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 17; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Concentration +9, Hide +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Spot +9; Combat Casting, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (bite).

Skills: A drider can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 16, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Str. The save DC is

Constitution based.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day – *dancing lights* (DC 13), *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *darkness*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *faerie fire*, *levitate*, *suggestion* (DC 16). Caster level 6th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/6/4, base save DC 13 + spell level): 0-level – *daze*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st-level – *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *silent image*; 2nd-level – *invisibility*, *web*; 3rd-level – *lightning bolt*.

Possessions: 2 daggers, short bow, 20 arrows.

Conclusion

After what has seemed like ages, you step from the Iron Crypt, shielding your eyes in the bright sunlight. The storm has passed, leaving a blanket of fresh snowfall that covers the high valley. The snow shines brilliantly beneath the bright blue sky and the horror of the Iron Crypt fades like a child's nightmare upon waking. The bards will sing of your heroism, no doubt, but for now you take simple solace in a beautiful world born anew.

You fill your lungs with the fresh, crisp air and start down the valley back towards civilization.

THUS ENDS THE HORROR OF THE IRON CRYPT

Rewards

Reward experience normally for combat and traps in the Iron Crypt. In addition, you may elect to award bonus XP to the PCs for exceptional action and heroic accomplishments. Use the list below as a guideline for awarding bonus experience points.

Action	XP Bonus
Performing final rites for wight monks (area 1-6)	1,000 XP
Recovering the corpse of Draco Faerus (area 1-16) or Shadron Faerus (area 1-17D) for proper burial by their family	750 XP per corpse
Destroying the Ebon Egg	8,000 XP



Appendix I: Pregenerated Characters

Basic Stats

Character	Karn	Saembl	Fingers	Ergard	Kas'ra
Sex	M	F	M	M	F
Race	dwarf	1/2 elf	halfling	human	human
Class/Level	Cleric 12	Bard 12	Rogue 12	Paladin 12	Wizard 12
CR	12	12	12	12	12
Size	Medium	Medium	Small	Medium	Medium
Height	4' 4"	5' 1"	3' 9"	6' 1"	5' 10"
Weight	147 lb.	89 lb.	45 lb.	215 lb.	145 lb.
Alignment	LG	NG	CG	LG	NG
AC	24	19	20	24	16
Touch AC	10	13	14	9	12
Flat-footed AC	24	16	16	24	14
Hit Points	123	42	64	107	61
Speed	20 ft.	30 ft.	20 ft.	30 ft.	30 ft.
Initiative	+0	+7	+7	-1	+6
Strength	15	10	8	16	9
Dexterity	10	16	17	9	15
Constitution	19	9	12	13	16
Intelligence	9	15	16	9	19
Wisdom	16	9	9	14	10
Charisma	7	17	15	16	9
Fort Save	+14	+3	+6	+9	+7
Ref Save	+4	+11	+12	+5	+6
Will Save	+13	+7	+4	+8	+8
Armor	<i>full plate +1, heavy steel shield +2, ring of protection +1</i>	<i>amulet of natural armor +2, bracers of armor +3, ring of protection +1</i>	<i>amulet of natural armor +2, bracers of armor +2, buckler +2</i>	<i>full plate +2, heavy steel shield +2</i>	<i>amulet of natural armor +2, ring of protection +2</i>
Spells Per Day	6/6+1/5+1/5+1/3+1/3+1/2+1	3/3/3/3/2	none	2/2/1	4/5/5/5/4/3/2
Melee Bonus	+11	+12	+9	+15	+5
Ranged Bonus	+9	+12	+13	+11	+8
Damage Adj	+2	+0	-1	+3	-1
Base Atk	+9	+9	+9	+12	+6
Grapple	+11	+9	+8	+15	+5
Number of Attk	2	2	2 (see feats)	3	2



Domains & Spellbooks

Karn	Healing, Good
Saabl	0-level – <i>dancing lights, detect magic, flare, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic</i> ; 1st-level – <i>charm person, cure light wounds, mage armor, magic weapon</i> ; 2nd-level – <i>cat’s grace, cure moderate wounds, invisibility, summon monster II</i> ; 3rd-level – <i>cure serious wounds, dispel magic, haste, keen edge</i> ; 4th-level – <i>cure critical wounds, hold monster, legend lore</i> .
Kas’ra	0-level – <i>arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, message, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance</i> ; 1st-level – <i>animate rope, cause fear, charm person, color spray, comprehend languages, hold portal, identify, magic missile, mage armor, obscuring mist, sleep, summon monster I, true strike</i> ; 2nd-level – <i>acid arrow, arcane lock, blur, flaming sphere, invisibility, levitate, resist elements, scare, summon monster II, whispering wind</i> ; 3rd-level – <i>blink, dispel magic, displacement, explosive runes, fireball, flame arrow, fly, invisibility sphere, keen edge, wind wall</i> ; 4th-level – <i>detect scrying, dimensional anchor, enervation, fire shield, secure shelter, minor globe of invulnerability, phantasmal killer, polymorph self, wall of fire</i> ; 5th-level – <i>cloudkill, dominate person, faithful hound, sending, summon monster V, telekinesis</i> ; 6th-level – <i>acid fog, legend lore, mass haste, stone to flesh, transformation</i> .

Skills & Feats

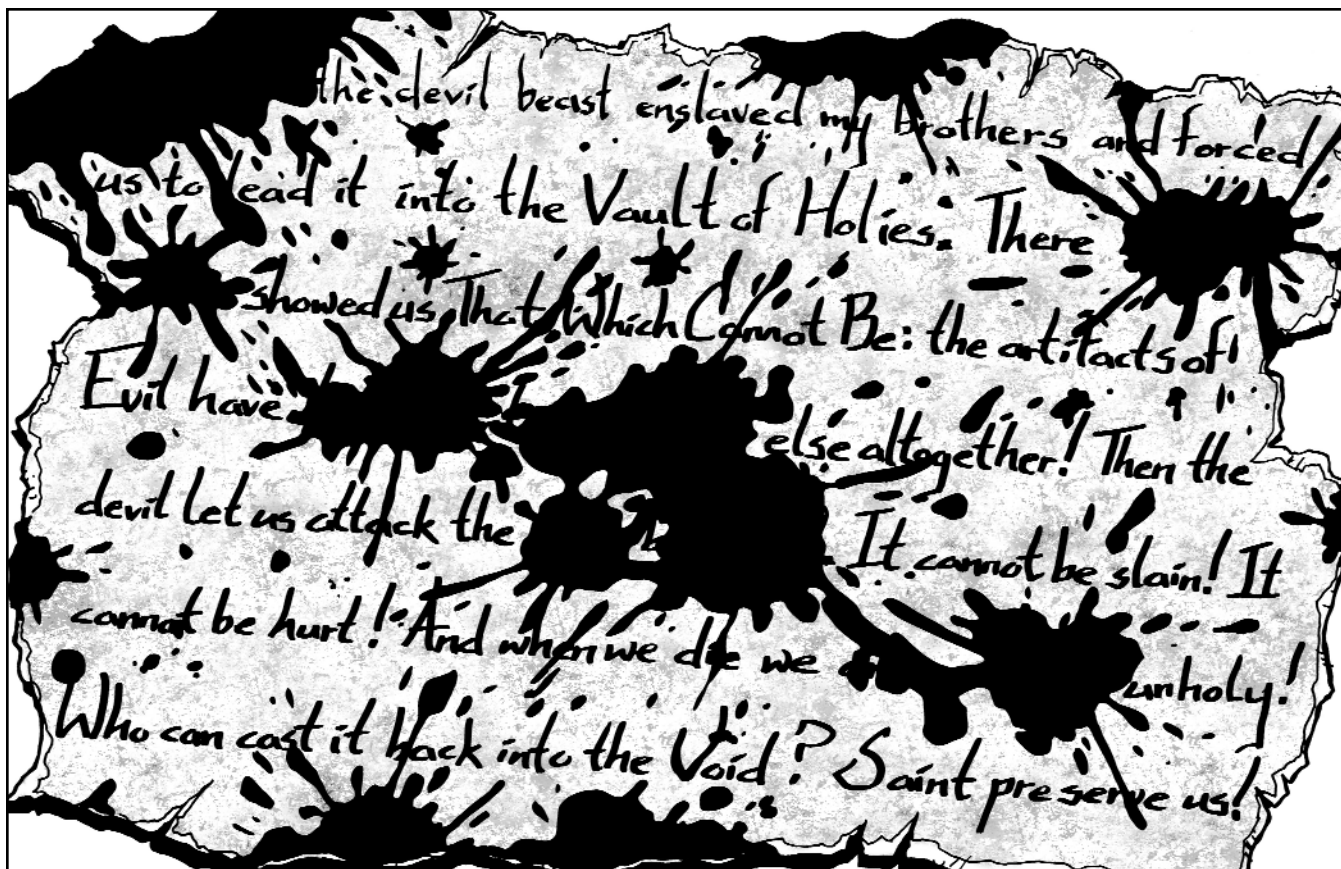
	Skills	Feats
Karn	Balance -8, Climb -6, Concentration +10, Escape Artist -8, Heal +3, Hide -8, Jump -6, Knowledge (religion) +8, Move Silently -8, Spellcraft -1, Spot +3, Search -1, Swim -6	Combat Casting, Extra Turning (x2), Great Fortitude, Iron Will
Saabl	Appraise +2, Climb +11, Concentration +4, Decipher Script +13, Diplomacy +9, Disable Device +2, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +13, Gather Information +9, Hide +14, Jump +8, Knowledge (nobility) +12, Listen +10, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +3, Search +3, Spot +0, Swim +0	Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse
Fingers	Appraise +5, Balance +7, Bluff +6, Climb +9, Decipher Script +8, Disable Device +18, Escape Artist +7, Gather Information +6, Hide +22, Jump +4, Listen +16, Move Silently +20, Open Lock +18, Search +18, Spot +14, Swim +6, Tumble +10, Use Magical Device +4, Use Rope +10	Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Many Shot
Ergard	Balance -9, Climb -1, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +7, Handle Animal +6, Hide -9, Jump -5, Knowledge (nobility) +4, Listen +2, Move Silently -9, Ride +4	Cleave, Improved Critical (Longsword), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Longsword)
Kas’ra	Balance +2, Climb +1, Concentration +15, Decipher Script +15, Hide +4, Jump -1, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Knowledge (religion) +9, Move Silently -9, Search +10	Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Initiative, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Maximize Spell, Widen Spell, Two-Weapon Fighting



Weapons & Equipment

	Weapons	Magic Items	Other Items
Karn	+2 <i>heavy mace</i> , heavy crossbow, 10 <i>bolts</i> +1, 20 bolts	<i>Staff of healing</i> (25 charges)	Backpack with water-skin, one week's trail rations, bedroll, flint and steel, holy symbol
Saebi	+2 <i>rapier</i> , 4 daggers, shortbow, 10 <i>arrows</i> +1, 20 arrows	<i>Boots of speed</i>	Backpack with water-skin, one week's trail rations, bedroll, flute, thieves' tools
Fingers	+2 <i>keen shortsword</i> , shortbow, 10 <i>arrows</i> +1, 5 <i>arrows</i> +2, 20 arrows	<i>Bag of holding</i> (type I)	Waterskin, one week's trail rations, bedroll, flint and steel, thieves' tools
Ergard	+3 <i>longsword</i> , masterwork composite longbow (+3), 20 arrows	<i>Ring of the ram</i> (23 charges)	Backpack with water-skin, one week's trail rations, bedroll, flint and steel, holy symbol, 10 torches
Kas'ra	+2 <i>spiked chain</i> , dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts	<i>Crown of intellect</i> +2	Backpack with water-skin, one week's trail rations, bedroll, flint and steel, 10 candles, spell component pouch, spellbook, 10 torches

Players' Handout A



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Players' Handout B

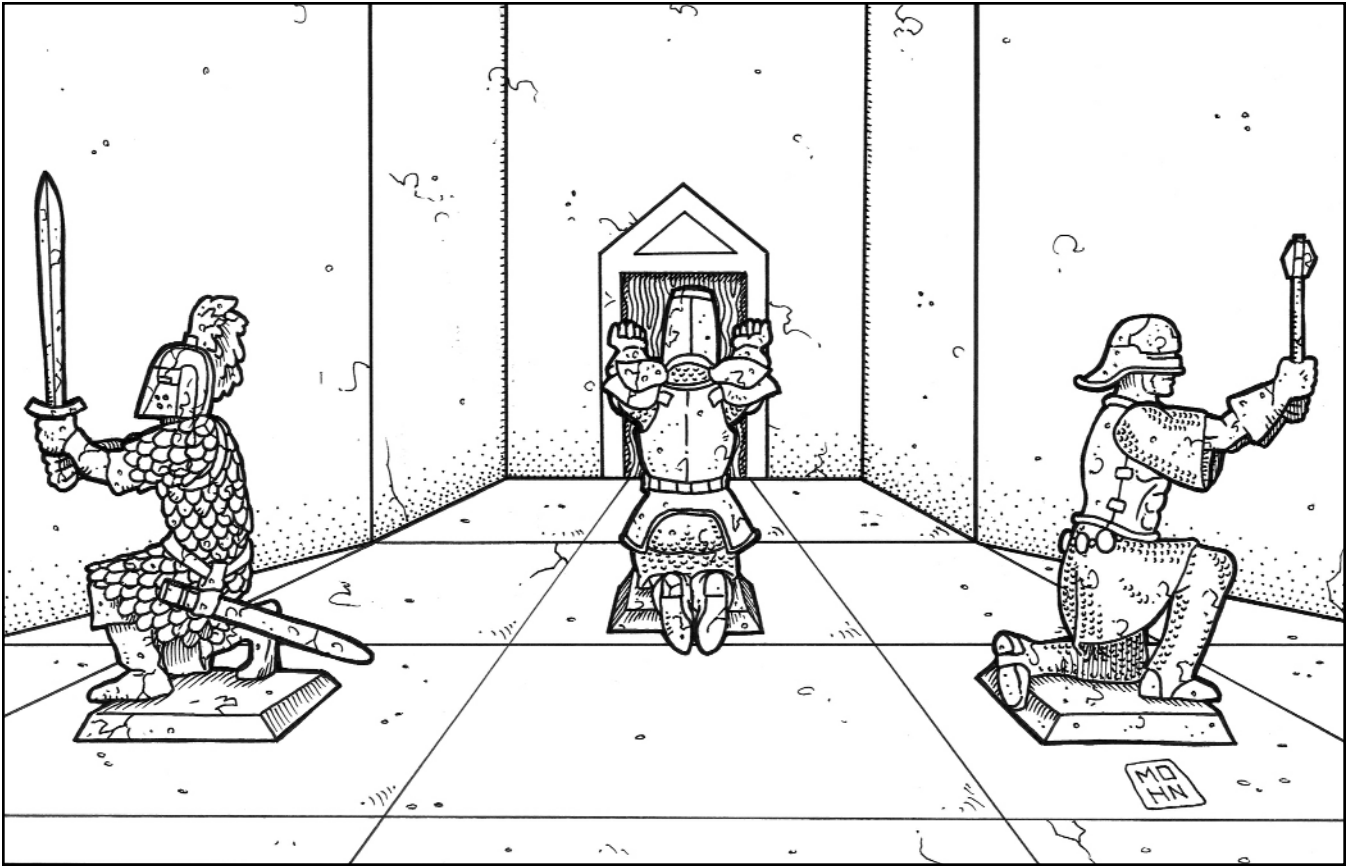
Past the Gate of Blood-Forged Ore,
Across the Bridge of the Ordocar.
To Gain our sect's Forbidden Lore
Align the Mysteries of the Thrice
Shone Star.

'Ware the Gate of Brass and Vice,
Shun the Steps of no Return.
Wisdom is the mortal price,
'less Glory and Honor spurned.

Forbidden Deed, Magic and Word
Vaults three, we defend.
Ye' when Lord Death from slumber
stirred

All Worm's meat, in the End.

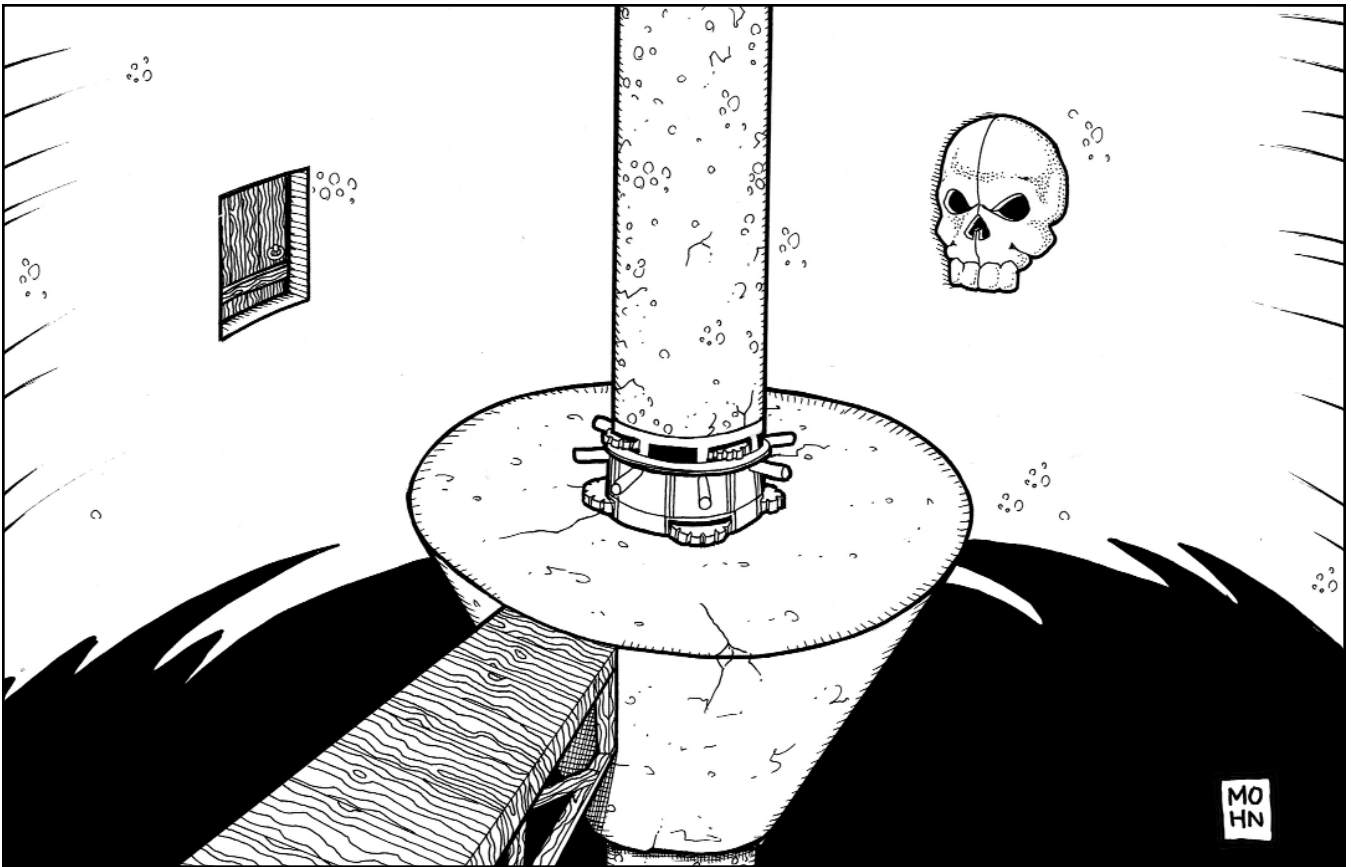
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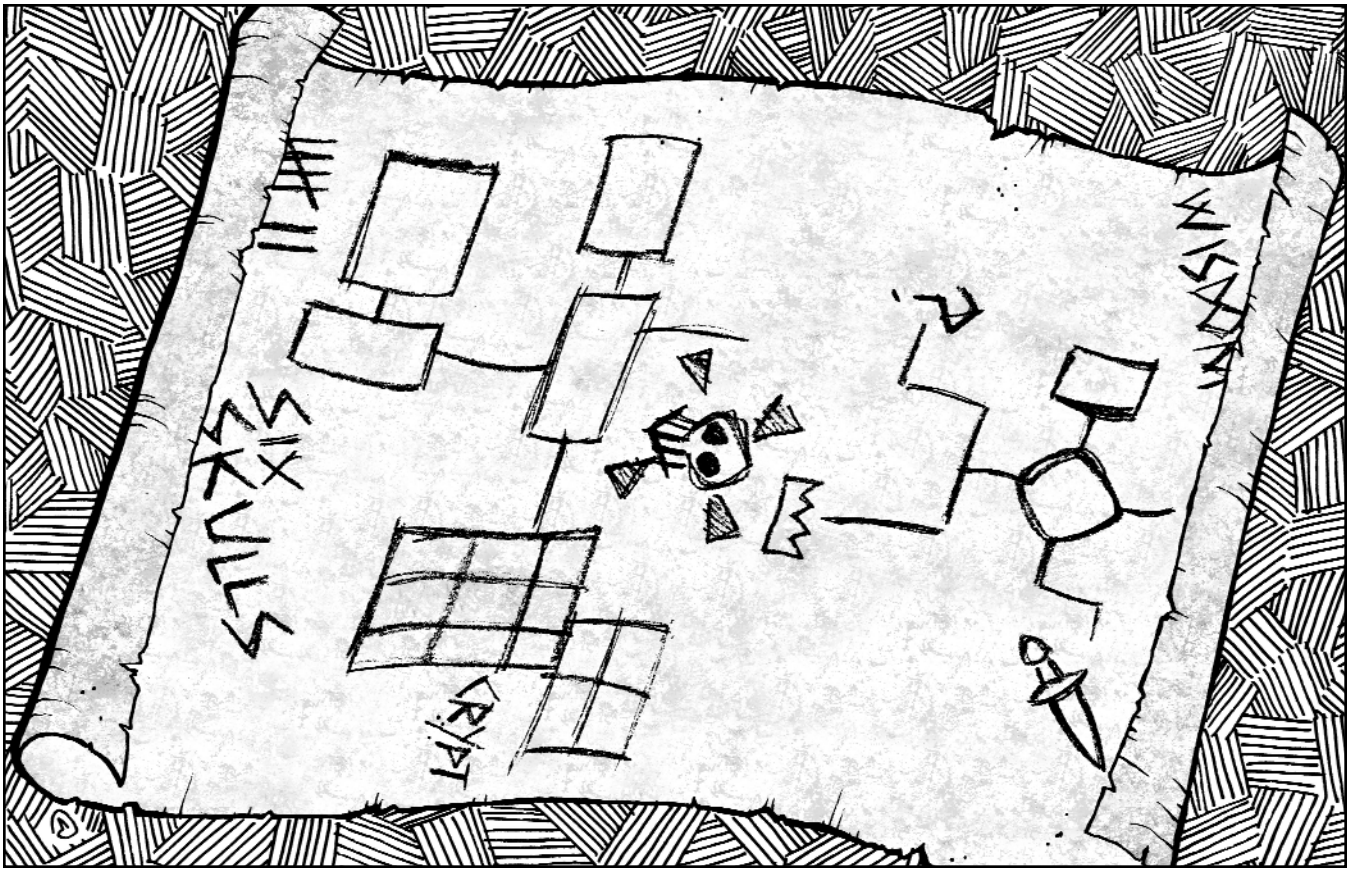
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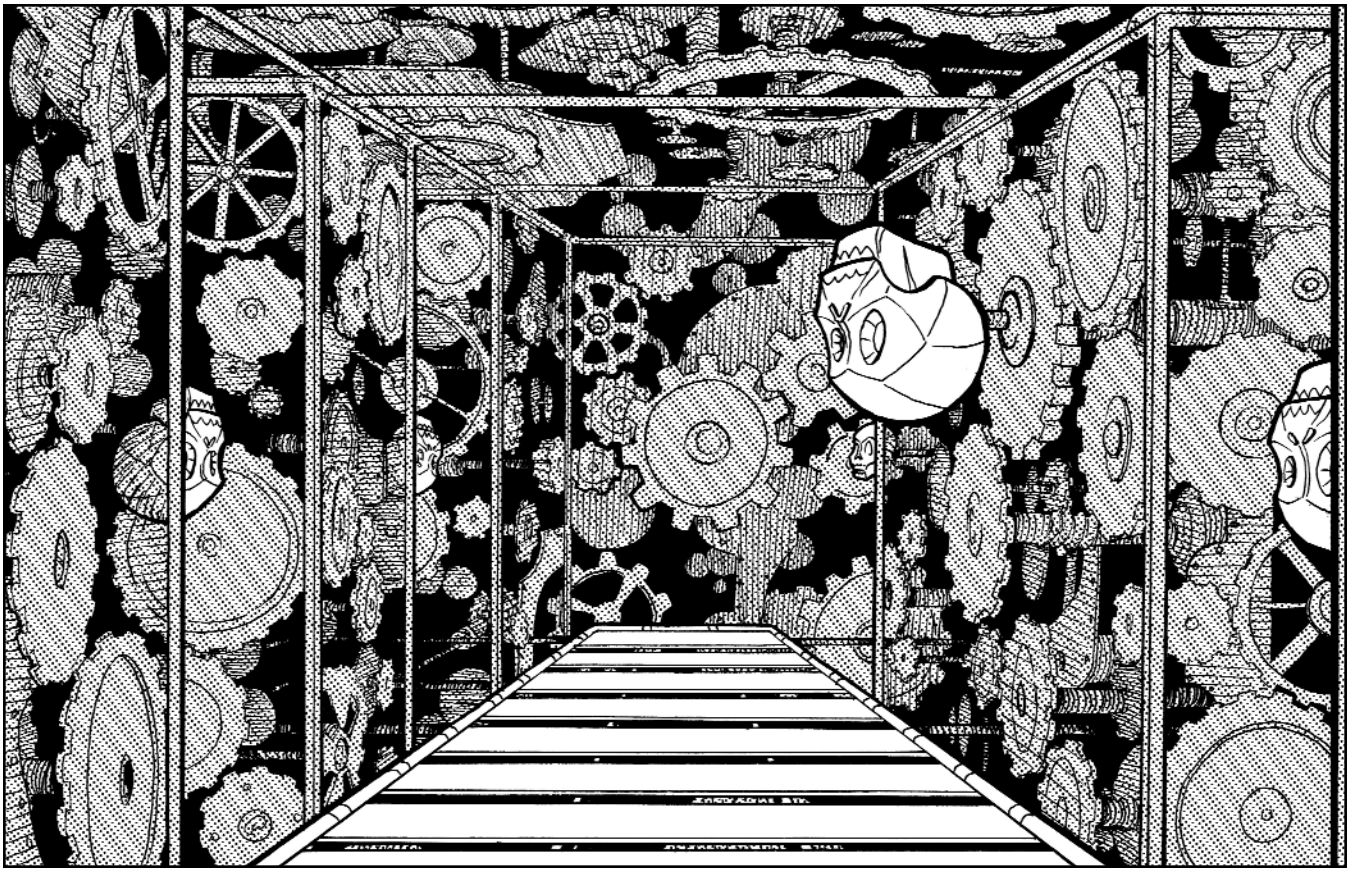


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Players' Handout F





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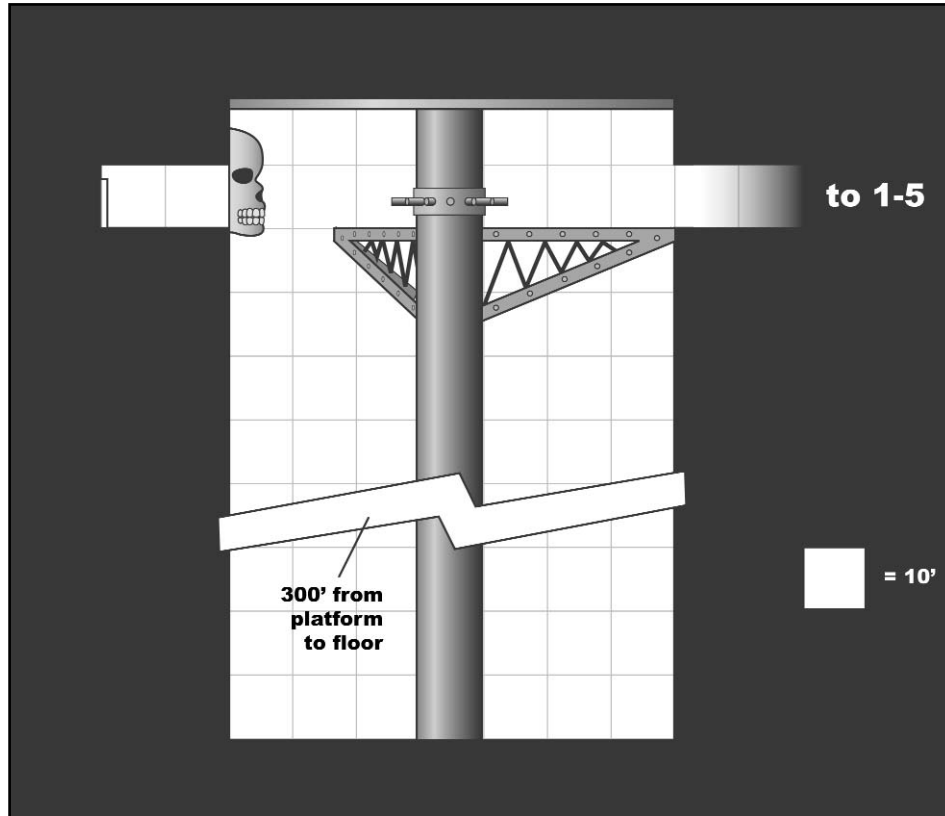
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Side View of Area 1-6



Side View of Area 1-8

