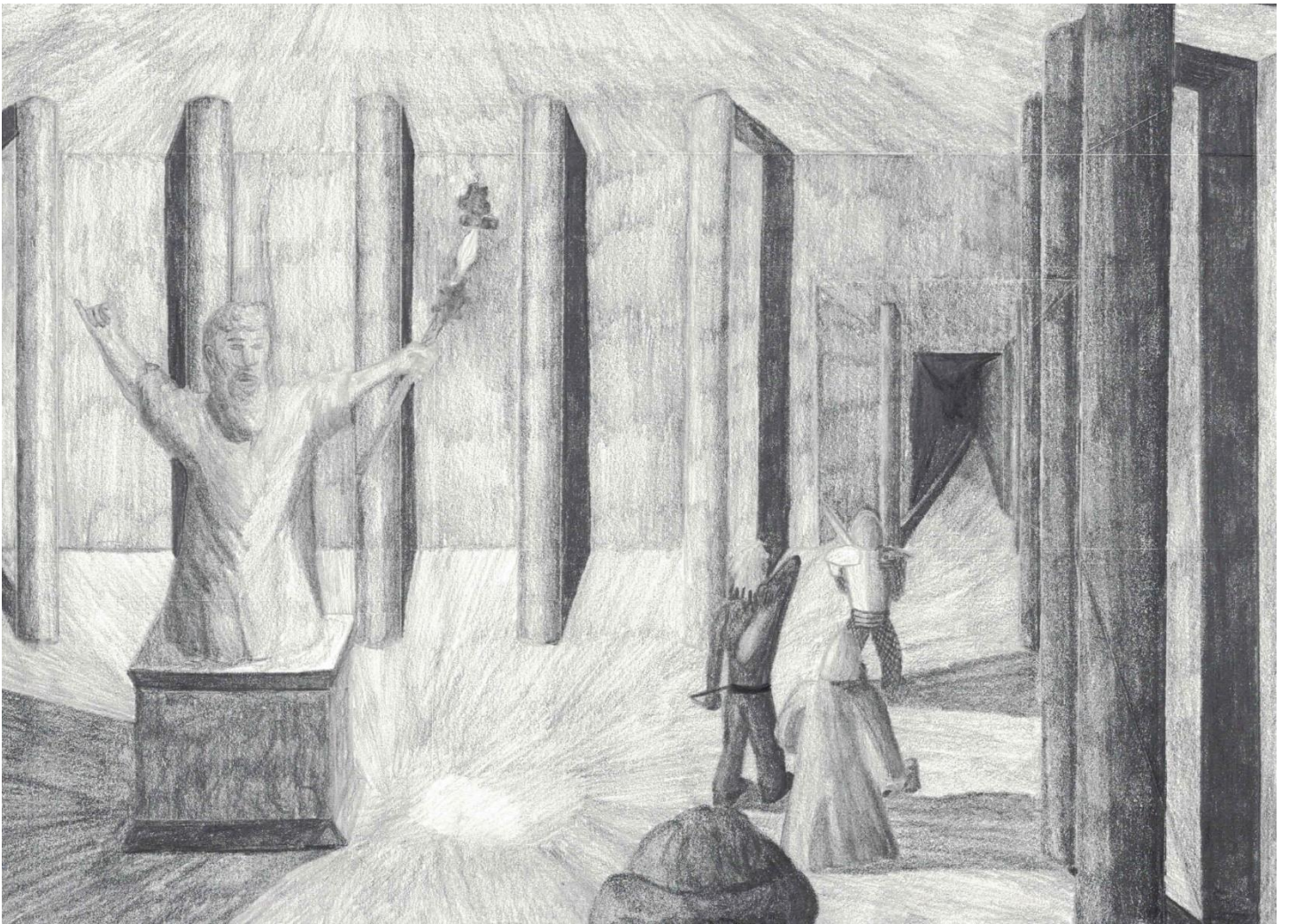


THE ROTATING LABYRINTH

Prison without Guard



By James Eck

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I. THE PURPOSE

I have written this document as an aide to GMs running the Rotating Labyrinth. Though my intention is for this treatment to be useful to GMs using any tabletop RPG system, where I do give system-dependent numbers they are based in the 5e SRD rule set and are intended for a party of 4 members at around level 5.

The Rotating Labyrinth is suitable as a lengthy one-shot dungeon taking 3-6 hours with run time depending on luck and player ingenuity, but also controllable by GM decisions to share information and/or manipulate the maze to help or hinder the players.

The experience is tailored toward players who enjoy puzzles, particularly of spatial awareness and situational cognizance. While there are combat opportunities in the dungeon, they are mostly of a narrative nature and intended to provide a sense of the power of the devil trapped within while throwing a wrench in maze-solving efforts.

The final battle with the imprisoned devil is intended to be difficult, perhaps resulting in the death of one or more of the party members. It is meant to feel desperate and epic as a culmination of the dungeon crawl.

II. BACKGROUND

Dug into the Southern slope of Mount Kore is the Rotating Labyrinth—or Ravenous Maze, as it is known by those living nearby in Tripik, for it takes in more than it sends out. The Rotating Labyrinth was built by Dwarves of the Axelwrought clan, worshipers of the god of Machinations, Korganan.

They built it to trap a devil released into the world by the wizards of the manor near Mount Durn. The devil and his summoned hosts killed the wizards and laid waste to the nearby village before the Axelwrought Dwarves from Mount Boor and the Calldinkel Gnomes from Mount

Call were able to arrive and intervene. Even with their intervention, the war raged long as they drove the devils West and South to Mt Kore. It was there the dwarves trapped the leader, in a labyrinth complex enough that evil and reckless men would never again be able to release that devil on the world, but close enough that it could serve as a reminder to those who visited of what such reckless men can do with power. The war had cost them dearly and they returned to rebuild their clan. The Calldinkel Gnomes never quite recovered from the drain it had been on them and their kingdom dissolved as a result. The labyrinth remains, a warning of the cost of men's ambition.

III. PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Whether the Rotating Labyrinth is used as a one-shot dungeon crawl or a feature in an ongoing campaign, the players should have access to some or all of the following information and be able to equip themselves accordingly:

- ❖ There are no sources of light within the dungeon beyond the light of the greeting statue.
- ❖ There is a rumored fount of fresh water within the dungeon, but many have returned mad with thirst unable to find their way to it.
- ❖ Attempts to map the maze have been completely unfruitful. Groups using maps drawn by previous explorers have found them to be fully inaccurate, and it is clear the maze changes regularly.
- ❖ The devils within the maze (yes, it seems there are more than only the prisoner) seem to be of an arcane variety.
- ❖ A rival or even enemy group of explorers may be entering with similar or different intentions.

These and other details can be shared or withheld at the GMs discretion.

IV. LABYRINTH FEATURES

There are several common features in the maze including interlocking circles that rotate mechanically, four types of doors, iron bars, switches, portals, pressure-plate-triggered sliding stone slabs, solid diamond windows, a speaking statue of immense size, and chests.

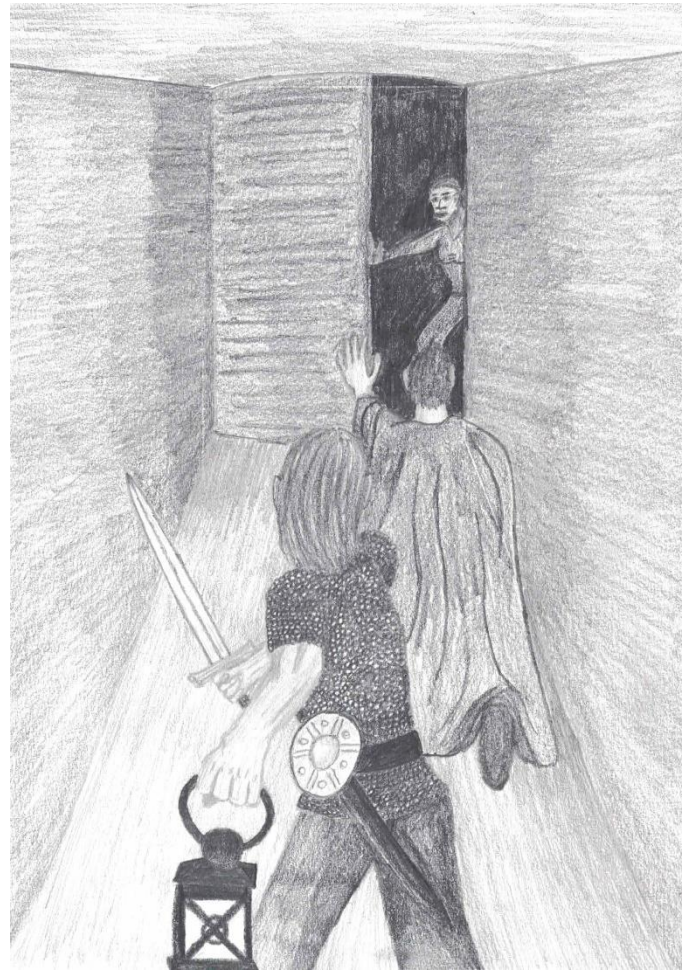
This section will examine each of these features in detail, including implications and descriptions of how they can be used as a GM to create tension and fun moments.

A. THE ROTATING CIRCLES

The Rotating Labyrinth gets its name from seven interlocking circles that rotate mechanically about their centers (marked with a letter “A” on the map). These circles have four different sizes. Some of these circle centers will move away from parts of their circles and incorporate other parts of the maze when a larger, overlapping circle moves.

The GM should rotate a random circle from time to time. For a completely unpredictable experience (arguably the most fun for the players and the GM) use a timer and rotate a circle every 10 minutes of real time during regular game play. Choose a random circle using 1d10. On a 1 or 2, rotate the largest circle (A₁). On a 3 or 4, rotate the second largest circle (A₂). On a 5 or 6, rotate the circle that contains the key to the demon door (A₃). On 7, 8, 9, or 10, rotate one of the other four circles (A₄, A₅, A₆, and A₇).

This works fine when players are talking or moving about the maze normally, but when they stop for meals or to sleep it is important to keep the labyrinth moving on a game time schedule. Each hour of delay in game, make 1d3 rotations. This means that the maze may change 15 or more times while the players get a long rest. Despite being cumbersome, I recommend doing the changes in order one by one because each change can have a significant impact and order matters. Not to mention, the conditions changed by rotation may also interrupt their sleep. It is also fun to tell the players or at least the one on watch how close the changes are or if they are happening around them.



Another possible scenario is that the players want to wait, on the edge of a known circle for example, and explore by riding the circle. The only issue with this is that it may be important to know how long it takes to determine how much other groups in the maze move and whether the characters get hungry and use their food stores. Roll 1d10 to determine what rotates and 5d6 to determine how many in-game minutes pass between each rotation and continue like this (explaining what they see if they see changes happen near them) until they determine they want to get moving again.

Obviously, there are other ways to choose which circle rotates and how often. Whatever method you choose should work fine.

The edges of the circles can be seen as cracks in the stone crossing the corridors. For smaller circles the curvature may even be apparent. These cracks are noticed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check or DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check in the area.

B. THE GREEN DOORS

Most of the doors in the Rotating Labyrinth are made of a hard, green material, harder than the granite of the maze and more durable (DC 25 Strength Check to break). These doors have a key hole which is fitted by any of the magical green keys distributed throughout the maze. When a key is used, it vanishes and reappears in the chest from which it came. The doors cannot be picked, as they are locked with powerful magic.

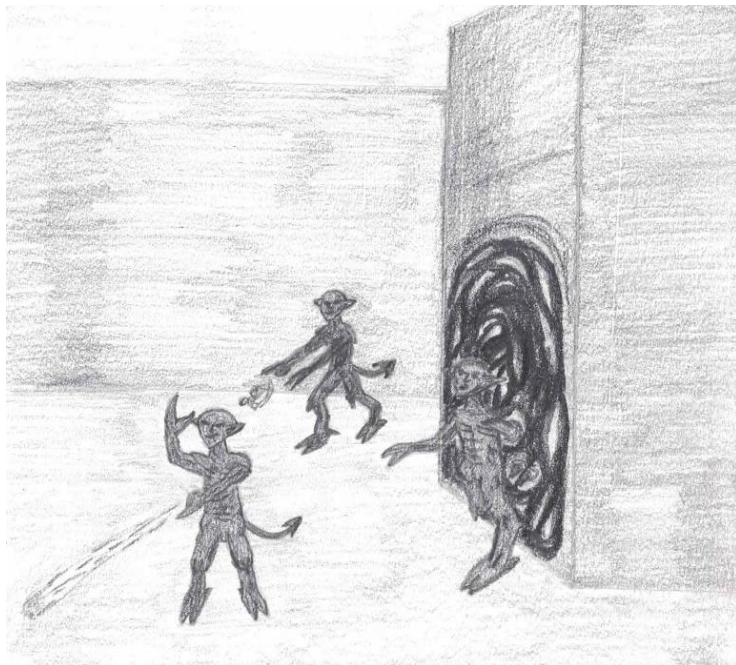
These doors immediately lock when closed and will close on their own weight unless carefully propped open.

These doors are indicated on the map with a letter "B".

C. SECRET DOORS

Secret doors are in a few places and are shown as a letter "S" over a section of wall. These can be opened easily from either side when found. DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check or DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice. These doors are nearly indiscernible from the granite walls, but swing with only a little effort into the larger of the rooms they connect.

These doors also close on their own weight if not propped open. If they are allowed to close and move into another part of the maze, they are just as difficult to find again.



D. UNLOCKED DOORS

In some sections of the maze, there are common pine doors which do not lock. They can be opened easily. DC 18 Strength check to break if barred.

E. THE DEVIL DOOR

The door to the chamber where the devil is trapped is made of a similar material to the magical green doors and is decorated with a massive frieze depicting the battle to imprison the devil within. DC 35 Strength check to break.

The door requires the unique key in a chest nearby to open. Like the green doors, it is locked with powerful magic and cannot be picked. The key vanishes and reappears in the chest nearby when used. The door is marked with a letter "C" and the chest holding the key with a letter "D" on the map.

F. IRON BARS AND SWITCHES

Iron bars that block access to corridors are indicated by a line of dots. The bars are of 2" iron (DC 20 Strength Check to bend).

Some sections of iron bars have a dotted oval like those indicating doors. These sections will always have a switch nearby which when pulled lowers those bars into the floor and allows passage, though only for 15 minutes. These bars and switches are marked on the map with a letter "E" with a subscript number indicating the grouping of the bars to a particular switch.

G. THE DARK PORTALS

The dark portals emanate evil magical energy of the Conjuration school. These portals are represented by dark blobs in the walls throughout the labyrinth. They are generally in clusters.

The dark portals have been created by the occupant of the maze in order to summon imps of the occult caste to help him escape the maze. When the players enter a room with portals, there is a 90% chance that imps will come through the portals. If this is the case, each portal produces an imp. If the PCs only linger nearby without entering the room, there is a 10% chance that the portals produce imps.

H. SLIDING STONE SLABS

There are three sliding stone slabs in the labyrinth marked on the map with a letter "F". The slabs and their receiving notches themselves are discovered with a DC 6 Intelligence (Investigation) check or passive Perception over 14. They are associated with floor plate triggers that are noticed with a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check or passive Perception over 20. Each person passing over the plate unaware (unless expressly hugging a wall) has a 50% chance of triggering the floor plate. When a floor plate is triggered, the stone slab slides into place, blocking the way.

They are pushed into place by giant springs, which can be cranked back from the small access room. These access rooms are either hidden or on the opposite side of the trigger from the closed slab. Cranking a spring back is a DC 12 Strength check. Moving the stone slab without the crank is a DC 24 Strength check. The sliding mechanism can be disabled with DC 18 Dexterity check. The slabs are 2-foot-thick granite.

It is a DC 15 Dexterity save if in the path when triggered, else take 2d8 blunt damage.

I. SOLID DIAMOND WINDOWS

Two windows of solid diamond look in on the chamber of the devil, allowing visitors to observe his malice. The diamond is 6 inches thick. It is virtually unbreakable and warded against magical destruction.

The windows are marked on the map with a letter "G".

J. THE GREAT SPEAKING STATUE

A great, bronze statue of a bearded figure stands on a 4-foot pedestal in the center of the entry (marked on the map with a letter "H"). He wears a flowing robe of metal and holds his right hand in a gesture recognizable as representing order. The staff in his left hand is decorated with gears and a bright light. The statue is larger than life and dwarf-like at 10 feet tall and broad-shouldered. It greets visitors to the maze and explains that the purpose of the maze is to contain a great evil and that they are welcome to witness it but must not let it free.

The statue is willing to answer questions posed by visitors to the maze, but generally answers briefly and cryptically. For example, "What is the best way to arrive at the evil?" may receive an answer of "Left," "Right," or "It does not matter at this time which way you go." Nonetheless, it should be willing to answer most questions honestly. It does not abide evil and will vigorously question those it suspects of evil and will attack if it does not like the answers (treat as a Stone Golem).

K. THE KEYS OF THE LABYRINTH

There are two kinds of keys in the labyrinth. There are several small green keys distributed in chests and the one key to the devil door.

The green keys are used to open the green doors throughout the maze. They are found in chests marked with a letter "I". When used, the key dissolves and reappears in the chest from which it came. The chests weigh 40 lbs and can be carried in order to repeatedly access the key, which takes 15 minutes to return to the chest. There are more green doors than green key chests, but because most of the doors only introduce an alternate path and the keys can be reused, this is not a problem.

The devil door key is large, dark, and intricate. It is in a chest marked with a letter "D" on a small rotating circle near the devil door. However, when it is nearest the devil door, both door and key are mostly inaccessible.

L. THE TREASURE ROOM

The treasure room (marked on the map with a letter "J") is set up to trap those who enter with a sliding stone slab whose mechanism is only accessible through a secret door.

The treasure room contains as many chests as there are party members entering the room. Each chest magically contains an item specifically chosen for one of the party members entering the room. This is a good

opportunity to fulfill player wish list items or show appreciation for the character's backstory with a character-appropriate item.

V. SPECIAL MAZE ITEMS

There are three chests in the maze that contain items useful to navigating the maze or defeating the evil locked within. These items cannot be taken from the maze and return to their chests when taken through the outer doors or left unattended.

A. HELMET OF MOTION

The Helmet of Motion is in the chest down in the bottom left corner of the map (always; it is outside the circles). It is marked with a letter “K” on the map.

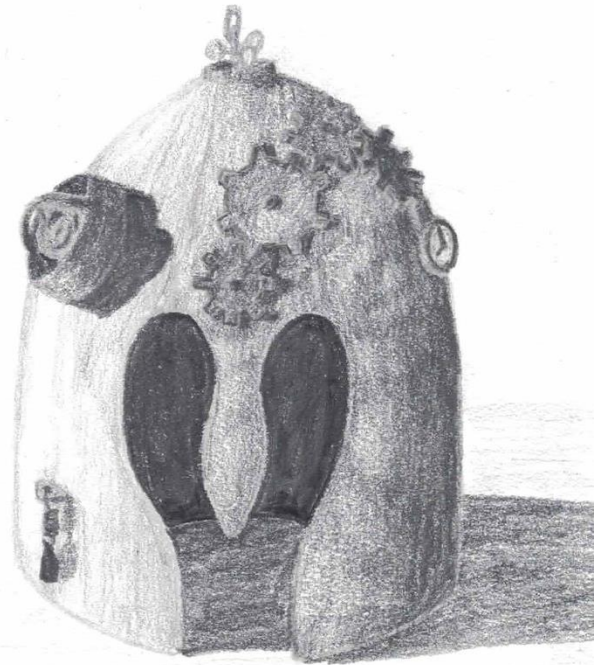
The Helmet of Motion makes the wearer very sensitive to motion. This includes all motion: the rotation of the planet, the orbit of the planet, the motion of the solar system through its galaxy and so on. It is useful for detecting speed and direction of motion in a maze like the Rotating Labyrinth. However, the wearer is dizzy after 2 minutes of wearing it, fighting off nausea after 5 minutes, and passes out after 8 minutes. While unconscious, the wearer is unaffected by the helmet. Each stage of dizziness can be delayed by another 3 minutes with a DC 10 Constitution save, plus 2 for each prior successful save in the same stage.

B. STAFF OF STILLING

The Staff of Stilling is in a chest behind a green door in one of the small circles near the Devil Door marked with a letter “L”. The staff of stilling is specific to the Rotating Labyrinth. When pointed directly at the center of a circle, it can be used to stop the circle for 6 hours. If this circle is randomly selected to rotate during that time, then it is simply stopped; do not reroll for another circle.

C. LIGHT BOMBS

A chest in one of the crescents of the second largest circle, near the room with a single pillar and marked with a letter “M”, contains 6 of these bombs. These light bombs are thrown weapons. They do not do physical damage but release a burst of potentially blinding light at 50,000 lumens (from 4 feet away, this is like



looking at the sun). This is bright enough that in a dark room it can blind from far away. Like sunlight, dispels the Lucifugi's (the imprisoned devil) shroud of darkness if detonated within 10 feet and could harm it if the shroud is gone. In this and other ways, it behaves like a round of direct sunlight.

VI. LABYRINTH DENIZENS

Though there are few combative encounters in the Rotating Labyrinth, those that do exist are intended for narrative and largely involve creatures unique to the maze, namely Mage Imps and the Lucifugi.

A. THE MAGE IMPS

Tiny fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class: 12

Hit Points: 10 (3d6)

Speed: 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Insight +3, Arcana +4, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered.

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages: Infernal, Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the mage imp's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. The mage imp has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effect.

Actions

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 4 (1d6+1) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Invisibility. The imp magically turns invisible until it attacks or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the mage imp wears or carries is invisible with it.

Spellcasting. The mage imp is a 3rd-level 3, its spellcasting ability is intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks), with 3 cantrips known and 6 spells prepared castable with 4 first level slots and 2 second level slots. The cantrips known and spells prepared can be chosen or determined randomly.

Mage Imps are devils beginning their magical training. The magic of Mage Imps can be represented in 5e by the spell list of a level 3 Wizard. Below are 6 possible imp variations that can be chosen from on a 1d6 roll:

1. Combat

- ❖ Cantrips: Fire Bolt, Poison Spray, Ray of Frost
- ❖ Level 1: Burning Hands, Magic Missile, Sleep, Thunderwave
- ❖ Level 2: Flaming Sphere, Scorching Ray

2. Distraction

- ❖ Cantrips: Dancing Lights, Minor Illusion, Prestidigitation
- ❖ Level 1: Color Spray, Fog Cloud, Hideous Laughter, Silent Image
- ❖ Level 2: Blindness/Deafness, Mirror Image

3. Survival

- ❖ Cantrips: Acid Splash, Mage Hand, Message
- ❖ Level 1: Alarm, Expeditious Retreat, Mage Armor, Shield
- ❖ Level 2: Blur, Invisibility

4. Battle

- ❖ Cantrips: Acid Splash, Chill Touch, True Strike
- ❖ Level 1: Burning Hands, Magic Missile, Thunderwave, Shield
- ❖ Level 2: Continual Flame, Shatter

5. Hindering

- ❖ Cantrips: Chill Touch, Mage Hand, Ray of Frost
- ❖ Level 1: Charm Person, Fog Cloud, Grease, Hideous Laughter
- ❖ Level 2: Darkness, Ray of Enfeeblement

6. Support

- ❖ Cantrips: Light, Mending, True Strike
- ❖ Level 1: Feather Fall, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Protection from Evil and Good
- ❖ Level 2: Enlarge/Reduce, Magic Weapon

Roll 1d6 for each imp to determine its type.

These imps are used to being outmatched and those with spells to hide or to hinder the party will use them first. They will usually do their best to get burst damage otherwise. If clearly overwhelmed, they may use their available tools to flee the battle, hoping to return at a more opportune moment, following the party in the hope that they will open the doors to the Lucifugi, giving them an opportunity to aid their master and attempt to free him. Count escaped imps and give each an 80% chance of returning as a complication to the Lucifugi battle.

B. THE LUCIFUGI

Large Fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class: 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 71 (11d8+22)

Speed: 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws: Dex +6, Wis +6, Cha +2

Damage Resistances: cold, fire, lightning; bludgesoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities: poison

Condition Immunities: poisoned

Senses: blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages: Infernal, Common, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge Rating: 8 (3,900 XP)

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the lucifugi's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. The mage imp has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effect.

Shroud of Darkness. The spaces within 5 ft. of the lucifugi are shrouded in a dark fog that blocks even dark vision (but not Devil's Sight). While the shroud is active, attacks against the Lucifugi are at disadvantage. When not in sunlight, the shroud reforms at the start of the Lucifugi's turn.

Sun Weakness. Direct sunlight or the equivalent (such as *sunbeam* or *sunburst* or the light bombs) dispels the *Shroud of Darkness*. If the shroud is not present, the lucifugi takes 4 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight.

Spellcasting. The lucifugi is an 8th-level spellcaster, its spellcasting ability is intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). The lucifugi has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mage hand, message, shocking grasp*

1st Level (4 slots): *magic missile, shield, sleep, thunderwave*

2nd Level (3 slots): *darkness, flaming sphere, hold person*

3rd Level (3 slots): *bestow curse, fireball, stinking cloud*

4th Level (2 slots): *ice storm, wall of fire*

Actions

Multiattack. The lucifugi makes two claw attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4+2) slashing damage.

The principle occupant of the maze, imprisoned in a large room marked with the letter “N” on the map, is a Lucifugi. The Lucifugi is so evil that direct sunlight or similarly bright light harms it directly if allowed to penetrate its protective shroud. It is quite comfortable in the dark of the maze, but given the chance it would gladly escape to again wreak havoc on the world.

If it's prison is opened, the Lucifugi will first try to kill those responsible unless immediately convinced their intention is to aid him his rise to power on the material plane. From the first sounds of the key in the door, he will begin preparations to strike.

C. OTHER POSSIBLE FOES

To keep things interesting, rivals, enemies, or even just other treasure hunters can also be in the maze, whether preceding the PCs or following them. These can come from the PCs' back stories, from earlier in the campaign, or simply from the surrounding area. The statue will be willing to share information about the other party, and it can be moved around the map, collecting keys and other items much like the PCs. If they are hunting the PCs, they should make an effort to engage on favorable footing.

VII. DESCRIBING THE LABYRINTH

This section discusses some of the sensory inputs the PCs might experience in the Rotating Labyrinth.

A. SIGHTS

There are no lights in the labyrinth except the torches surrounding the pedestal of the great speaking statue. This means PCs travel in the dark if they do not have their own light source. It also means that down long corridors they see nothing but darkness unless the entrance is at the end of the corridor, in which a light in the distance can be described. The stone walls of the Labyrinth are smooth granite, probably produced by magic. Some of the doors are bright, unpainted pine wood, but others are a green, smooth metal.

B. SOUNDS

Sometimes the roars of the Lucifugi can be heard, if near his chamber. Otherwise the maze is mostly in eerie silence, echoing any noise made by intruders upon the stillness. The exception to this is when a circle turns, rumbling in the distance or all around as the case may be.

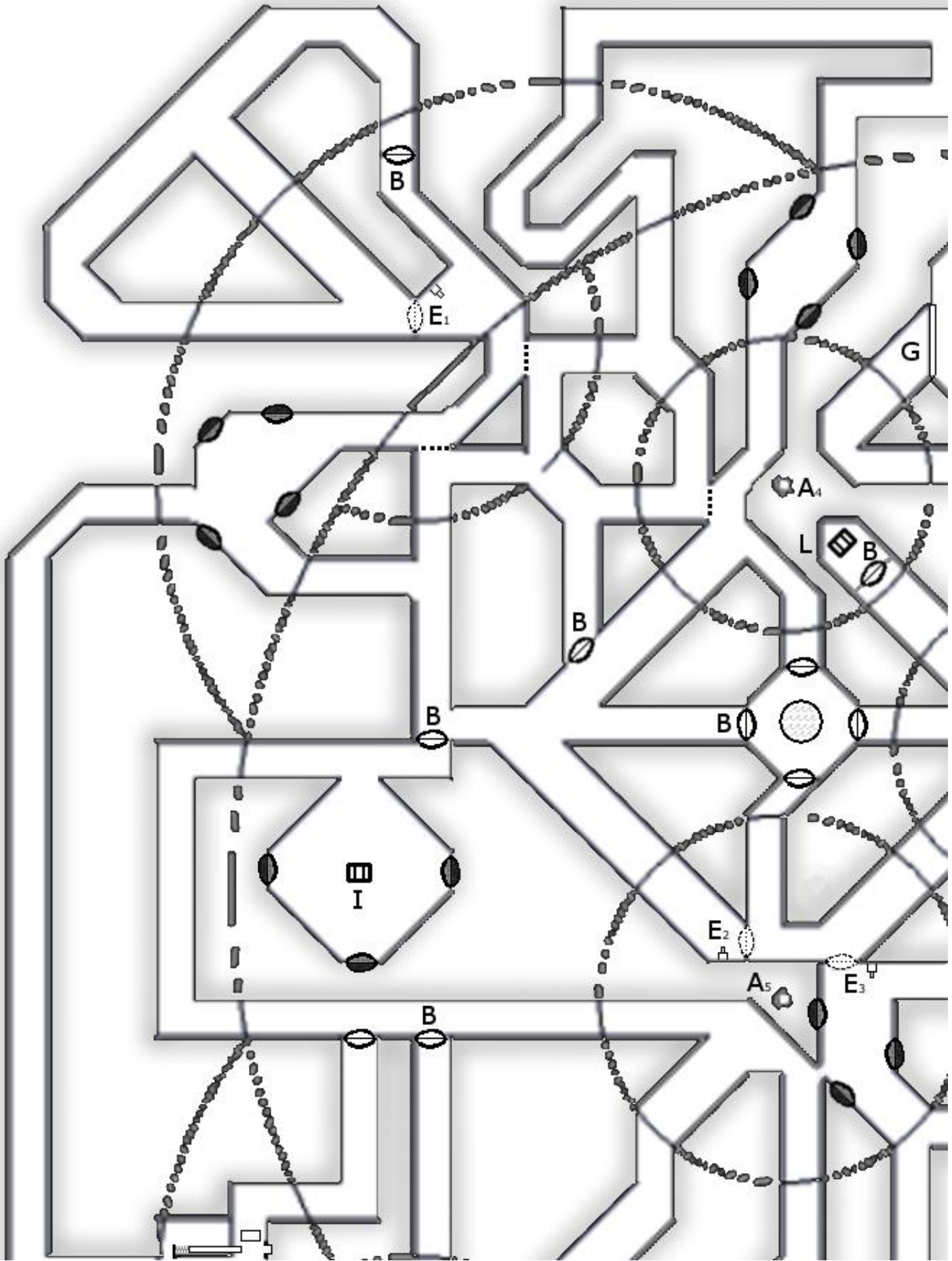
C. OTHER

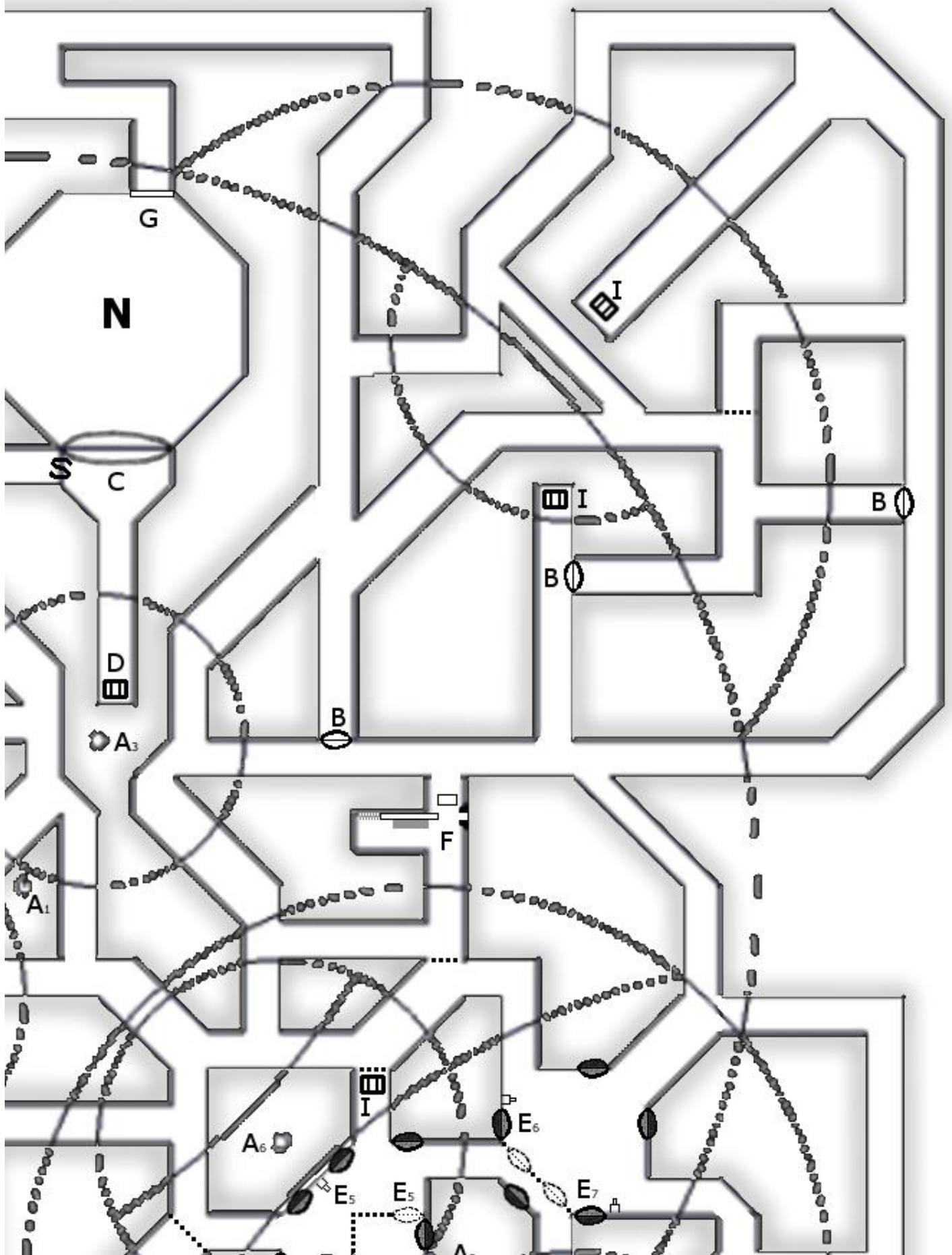
The corridors are dry, but cold. There is a slight smell of decay and the air is heavy. Those with the sense can feel evil when near the portals.

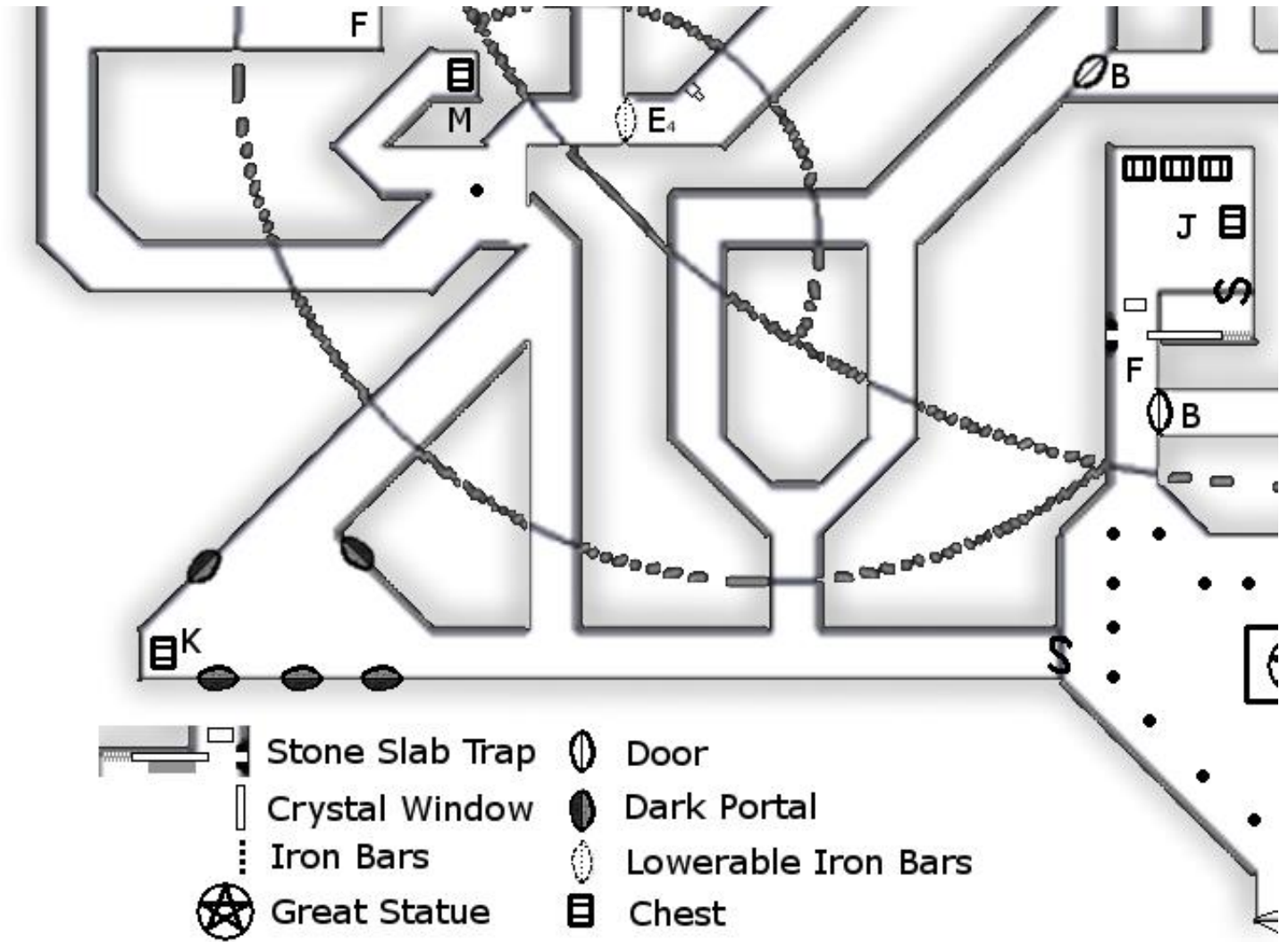


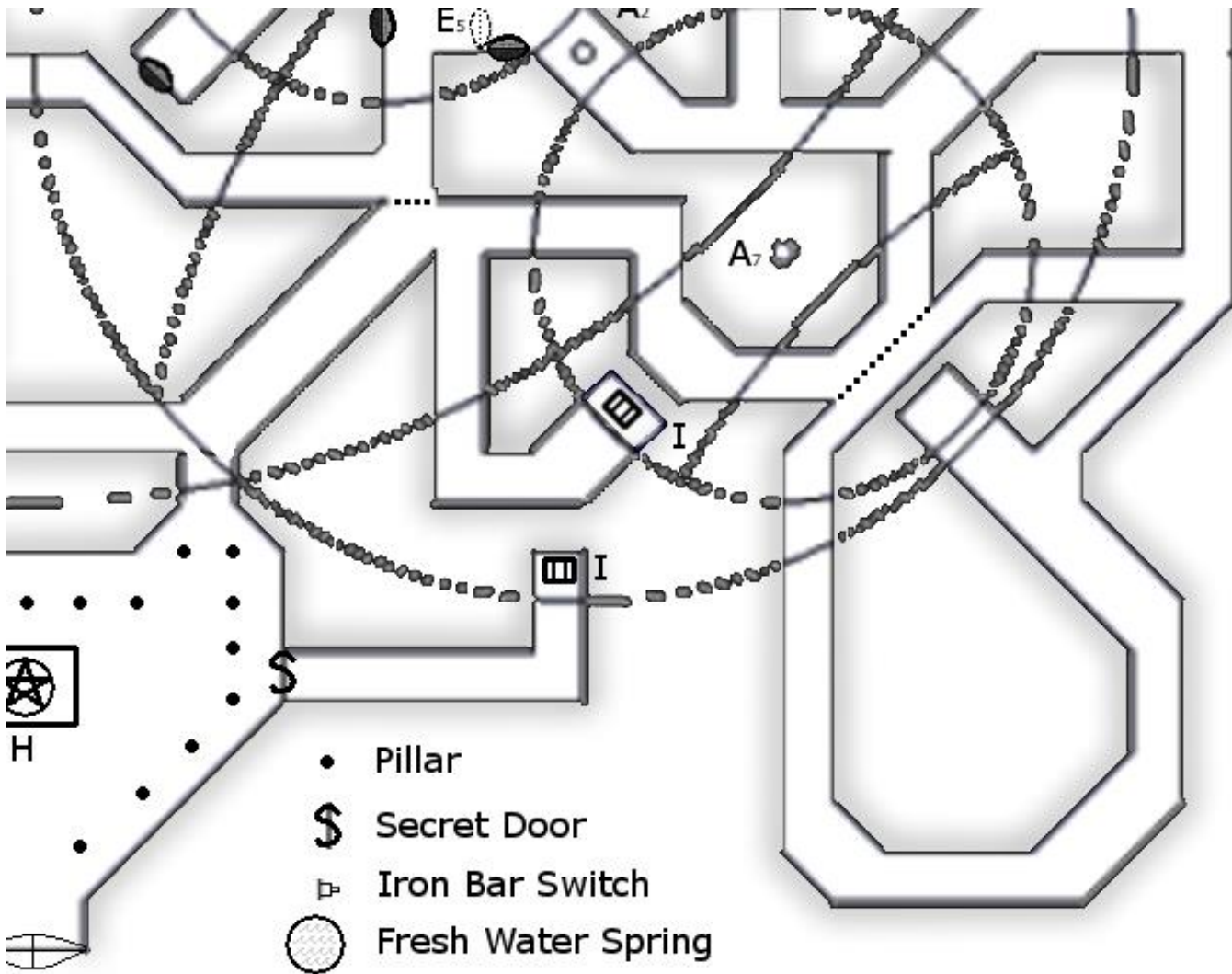
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Model Building Instructions:

1. Print out pages 9-12 of this document.
2. Cut out the images, being especially careful with inner edges where corridors will connect page to page.
3. Glue the images to a solid piece of cardboard, the corridors should line up.
4. Using a serrated knife, cut out the full maze.
5. Cut out the 5 smallest circles and the 3 small circle fragments.
6. Glue the Swiss-cheesed cardboard without the cutout pieces to another piece of cardboard.
7. Cut out the 2 larger circles including the 3 fragments of the smaller.
8. Cut small holes behind the 3 full small circles to make them easy to remove.
9. Reassemble by putting all of the circles and fragments back in their places. The pieces can go back in any order, but the smallest circle with the chest marked "D" should go nearest the center. Any fragmented circles should be on the edge or enclosed in the second largest circle. Consider setting the labyrinth in an initial state suitable to exposing your players to the maze (Do you want them to find the treasure room immediately? Should they get an immediate glimpse of the devil? Should they be introduced to the complexity of the second largest circle early?)

