

THE LOST CRYPT

By Bill Silvey

NECROMANCER GAMES



5TH EDITION
COMPATIBLE



THE LOST CRYPT

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INTRODUCTION

“Wow, is this really Gary Gygax?”

This was the first time I had ever communicated with Gary. Up until this point, the total sum of my knowledge of him was one or two grainy black-and-white photos from *Dragon Magazine* and a handful of tales, and his name on the cover of my favorite D&D books. This last detail, however, felt like enough. If anyone has ever read any of Gary’s work in the body of *Dungeons & Dragons*’ material, be it rules, modules, supplementary material in the *From The Sorcerer’s Scroll* articles in the aforementioned magazine, then they have parsed “high Gygaxian.” Gary’s writing style has a convivial — and to gamemasters — conspiratorial tone. Gary’s writing style invites the likeminded gamer into the world of role-playing games and shows them around, making them comfortable with his verbose and engaging style. Some people accused him of being baroque with his speech and putting on airs, but to me in the 1980s, it felt as if I was joining an honored organization of likeminded folks who enjoyed a higher form of entertainment. That engaging writing style came across as a sort of “Let’s you and me get those players, shall we? Here’s a list of underhanded tricks you can play during the game ...”

I loved every minute of it.

In later years, while table-top gaming was still a hobby about which I was very enthusiastic, my love for *Dungeons & Dragons*, introduced through Basic and Advanced D&D during the 1980s, had cooled quite a bit. My gaming circles revolved around different tastes: superheroes, horror “investigators,” giant-robot piloting, spies, and so on, but most fantasy took a backseat to other games. Indeed, by 1998, I had all but given up D&D. My sole remaining item from my childhood for that game was my copy of *Keep on the Borderlands* (and even that one wasn’t the *original* copy, meant to be played with the *Dungeons & Dragons* set edited by J. Eric Holmes, designed to dovetail into Advanced D&D; rather, it was the slightly altered copy for the edition later edited by Tom Moldvay).

When I heard that a *new* edition of D&D was to be released, and that the creators of *Magic: The Gathering* had purchased TSR, I was intrigued. I looked at the books in stores, and read them eagerly. It *seemed* like they were returning to formula, yet there was a certain *je ne sais quoi* that was missing. I had the itch to play D&D again, but it seemed as though *this* D&D wasn’t going to scratch it.

Despite the old saw, I found (fortunately) that you could go home again and step in the same river for the first time twice. Through perseverance, I found my dogeared copies of the Advanced D&D rulebooks, the classic modules, and so on again. TSR’s last gasp was a four CD-ROM compilation of *Dragon Magazine* (as well as *The Strategic Review* that preceded it) in PDF format. So armed, by 1999 I was ready to restart my gaming right where I’d left off in the mid-1980s.

That’s when curiosity got the better of me, and searching the internet (courtesy of AltaVista; this was a simpler time, dear reader!), I found an e-mail address: ggygax@genevaonline.com. Could it be ... ? I fired off my first e-mail to Gary Gygax and received a near immediate reply.

I was over the moon: I’d never sent a “fan letter” to anyone, so this was quite a treat. And at the time, all I could think to ask was, “Is this really Gary Gygax?” To which he replied: *Yep! It’s me.*

I copied the email and sent it to friends. There I was, talking to the guy whose name graced the books I had (re)acquired! I took that as a positive omen and pressed on with my rejuvenated D&D hobby. Over the ensuing few years, I started my own AD&D fan-site and started writing my own adventures. I was, as far as I can tell, the first person to produce modules that had that classic TSR trade dress to them (I will leave it to others

to determine whether or not my writing efforts fit the mold, however). I’d put them together painstakingly in Microsoft Word using clip-art, doctored photographs of miniatures, and so on, to create something like artwork (although later I did get some fantastic donations from some really great artists for module covers). The simple thanks I got from my fellow diehard AD&D gamers was enough at the time to suit me.

Gary was, as I found out, active on the web in discussion forums, so beyond a simple “Hey is this you?” I was able to interact with him or at the very least read the musings and comments he would have on different questions. He answered questions about D&D’s history with aplomb, never hesitating to direct rules questions to individual Dungeon Masters, and when questions of what was good and new would come up, he’d pitch his ongoing efforts with *Legendary Adventure*.

Realizing how accessible Gary was and wanting to promote my website, I asked if he’d be interested in an interview Q&A, to which he agreed. We talked for about 90 minutes; he held court and graciously answered my questions, and that was that. I recorded the session with his permission and posted a transcript on my website.

I kept up with Gary; as I said, he was always happy to interact with his fans online. In the early 2000s, a couple of events happened that would bring our paths together again.

At that time, there was no real hope of an actual reprint or continuation of AD&D (or any older D&D) from Wizards of the Coast. The closest, it seemed, was the required-parody of *Hackmaster* as part of a settlement with Kenzer & Co. due to rights to the *Knights of the Dinner Table* comic strip that had been reprinted in the aforementioned *Dragon Magazine* Archive set, but that was it. However, another group of gamers, particularly those of Troll Lord Games, began work on *Castles & Crusades*, their “light” d20-based game. The observant reader will note that this is the same name held by the Lake Geneva wargames society. I signed up to playtest the game, and while it wasn’t exactly AD&D, the feel was there. I felt it had a great potential, so I stuck with it. In 2004, Gary announced he was going to be at the Milwaukee Gamefest Convention. Not wanting to miss out on a chance to meet the *man*, the *legend*, I traveled up and met him and the excellent guys from Troll Lord Games. Briefly, yes, we played *Castles & Crusades*, and between himself and Rob Kuntz, they wiped out the lot of us in the upper works of Castle Zaggy.

At that time, Gary had years of work on the World of Greyhawk, now owned fully by Wizards of the Coast. But Greyhawk was Gary’s creation, regardless of who owned the name, and as any old-school gamer can tell you, the idea of seeing the famous dungeons of Castle Greyhawk released in a playable form was an exciting prospect! But it wasn’t *just* the castle and dungeon: Gary wanted to create a living, breathing world around it. The effort required to create such a world would be more than a single person could be expected to write in a reasonable amount of time.

That was when the call for volunteers went out: Gary asked in online forums he frequented who would like to take a crack, under his direction, at helping to fully realize Yggsburgh, the modern-day vision of the World of Greyhawk.

Well, I don’t have to tell you that I jumped in with both feet. The story of the bulk of my writing for Gary would take up the rest of this manuscript, but as the years went on, from 2005 forward (and, sadly, none of us knew how very few we’d have left to work with him), and we completed manuscript after manuscript, he asked again for volunteers for another project.

By now I was working on three city districts and had my sights set on two separate modules for *Legendary Adventures*, tentatively titled *The Maladict* and *The Key of Sand*. But this project Gary had in mind was something a little closer to my heart. It was titled *The Teeth of the Barkash-Nour*.

If you have a *Dungeon Master's Guide* for 1st Edition Advanced D&D, in the section covering treasure (*artifacts & relics*) on Page 161, second column, you'll find the *teeth of the Dahlver-Nar*, a set of magical teeth (actual teeth, not dentures). Even if one is found and set in a character's jaw in place of one of their own teeth, it bestows a minor miraculous ability. The more that are so inserted only increases the power. If all are found and (presumably) replace all of that character's teeth, truly otherworldly powers are bestowed.

The teeth of the Barkash-Nour is the genesis of that item. *The Quest for the Teeth of the Barkash-Nour* concerned an adventure into a strange demiplane accessible only through a sealed portal (a "Gate of Horn" as Gary described it) in the uttermost depths of Castle Greyhawk. Therein, a party had a chance to locate all the teeth, but they had a limited time (24 hours), and had a host of puzzles and foes to solve and overcome to finally realize the extraordinary goal.

Gary wanted someone to take his notes and flesh out a full, complete adventure. I volunteered (among others, I suppose) and was chosen. The highlight of the vetting process was when I showed Gary the other adventures I had written and talked to him about my DMing style, to which he said, "That's nearly exactly how I run my games."

I received scans of the notes. They were brief, in "Gary Shorthand" that required back-and-forth e-mails about what "24dx 1r 3ogr x10 norm trs, wll nt lv rm" might mean. The fascinating thing about the notes was that they were created for Original Dungeons & Dragons yet were introducing certain concepts such as multi-classed characters (although one could argue that this was done already in *Supplement I: Greyhawk*) and classes (a ranger exists in the pre-generated classes).

I threw myself into the project again, as I said, working with Gary via e-mail and the occasional rare phone call to complete the project. There were encounters and areas Gary would absolutely forbid me to change. For example, the "Great Goblin Hall" (Hi, Paul!) consisting of a huge room with 400 goblins and a goblin king within. I wanted to scatter them out through a dungeon complex I'd come up with; Gary said, no, don't change that, leave it exactly as it is.

But other areas I was allowed to create from whole cloth as long as they didn't detract from the overall feel of the module. Sending these to Gary and getting his stamp of approval on them was a thrill. You see, I'll tell you a little secret: This wasn't the first time (nor even the fifth or sixth) that I'd written something "for Gary Gyax." When I had first started playing D&D at the tender age of 11, I took the advice to "create your own adventures" very seriously. I created a mazy mess of a dungeon that I mailed to TSR. Not only did I never hear back from Gary, I didn't hear back from TSR. I imagine that my first magnum opus lies moldering in the bottom of a landfill near Lake Geneva. So to get Gary's okay on my additions and changes was a great time for me. Some kids want to grow up to be baseball players, race-car drivers, or rock stars and so on. Me? I wanted to write *Dungeons & Dragons*' modules for Gary Gyax, and there I was, doing the job. Of course, it was for *Castles & Crusades*, but I let my love for Advanced D&D inform me during the writing process with all projects for Gary that I worked on.

There was a lot of work being written by the folks working on *Castles & Crusades* in the pipeline to be released. I knew *The Quest for the Teeth of the Barkash Nour* wasn't going to be published *immediately*, but of course (like all of us working for Gary at the time), I was sure it would see the light of day. I fired it off in March of 2007, and later that spring, when my wife and I attended the fifth Lake Geneva Gaming Convention, I handed him a CD-ROM copy of it as well.

I went back to my work on the rest of the Yggsburgh material once I got home.

Gary passed away almost exactly one year after the final manuscript for *The Quest for the Teeth of the Barkash Nour* was sent to the editors. Shortly thereafter, Gary's widow elected to terminate the publishing agreement with Troll Lord Games, and with that, the ride came to an end.

I was left with "my" manuscript, a large adventure built on Gary's framework, and none of my material published. I thought many times about bundling it up and self-publishing it, but for several reasons (not the least of which was the rather sticky legal issues that could arise, as well as honoring Gary's widow's wishes and intellectual property), I elected to just sit on it. I dribbled out such hints and scraps as I could over the years. I would occasionally get a question about its publication. Indeed, archived on the back of the Troll Lord Games' website is a "coming soon!" indication and placeholder artwork. But it all seemed to have come to nothing.

So where does that leave us? A sad tale of something you, dear reader, can never have? Not exactly. I wouldn't offer for sale Gary's works — I couldn't at any rate — but there's enough of *me* in that module, of things that Gary blessed and wanted in the context of the module, that I have decided to share, and this is the adventure you hold in your hands.

This area consists of an Egyptian tomb-like area located at the border of a grasslands/savannah area. Its place in the original module was to serve as a location of one or more of the teeth; in the larger module it would have been a mere side-adventure, but as I have run the module (rather, parts of it) at convention settings, the tomb seems to draw the most attention from adventurers who seem to want to plumb its entire depths.

The module — as I ran it, inspired by but containing none of Gary's signature works — drew lots of players, and they all seemed to gravitate to the tomb area. Maybe I'd done too good a job by half of creating an inviting dungeon to explore! The whole of the module is written, as noted, for Original D&D (but has now been translated for 5e —*Ed.*), which means it should convert quite nicely to a myriad of systems now available which, sadly, were not when it was originally written for inclusion with the whole *teeth of the Barkash Nour* quest.

That then is now what you hold in your hands, dear reader. A fragment of what might have been (and what could be someday, perhaps), the tomb and its environs. So, if you would like, please come and explore for a spell.



THE LOST CRYPT

BY BILL SILVEY

A FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE FOR TIER 2 CHARACTERS

A realm not terribly unlike our own exists in a strange and mostly hospitable nearby plane. While planar travel might overlook this small pocket of reality, an entrance into it exists at the deepest depths of the most storied dungeon complex in the known realms. To enter into it is to step into a world at once familiar and yet more bizarre than our own. Herein is rumored to lie artifacts of great power and treasure beyond imagination. Having explored the uttermost depths and found the entrance, a group of adventurers can thus traverse this place in search of fame and fortune!

The Lost Crypt can be used as a standalone *Fifth Edition* adventure or incorporated into a larger dungeon complex or campaign. The adventure is suited for a group of Tier 2 characters, and should include a good mix of rogues, fighters, and arcane spellcasters. Clerics could prove useful to cope with the number of undead.

GETTING STARTED

You should arrange for the characters to find the portal that leads to the realm where the crypt lies. You can easily place the crypt close by the exit of this portal if you do not wish the party to explore the realm outside the dungeon itself. The harsh environs of this alien plane are left to your imagination, but you will have to make up such details to flesh out the world yourself if you choose to allow characters to wander.

The denizens of this place are guardians of old, and do *not* retreat from intruders. Rather, they fight to the death (or undeath) against those who violate the crypt. However, many are not mere automata;

if the party is unwise or incautious, the guardians take advantage of their foolishness! Setting up camp within the crypt is certainly an *option*, but nearby beings won't simply allow characters to set up residence and rest for a while, particularly if they are looting the place and usurping the guardians.

BACKGROUND

Two suns hang in the sky over the grassy, scrub savannah that rolls out before you. One sun is swollen and violet, while the other is small and golden. The heat is oppressive, making you gasp. Fortunately, succor seems near at hand. A cool, shaded opening is cut into a nearby hill!

Characters who approach the opening see massive, worked and weather-worn stone blocks covered in equally impressively large glyphs — or rather, the remains of them. Time erased what information they might have conveyed even if the strange language could be deciphered. Huge bronze doors set deep within the opening are slightly ajar, and through them can be spied a large gallery beyond ...

Feel free to play up the flares from the suns and the increasing heat if you don't want characters to wander away from the crypt's entrance. Steadily increasing damage or levels of exhaustion could lead them to enter the tomb to get away from the deadly heat.

CRYPT ENTRANCE

The broken stones in the entry are scattered. The roof sags somewhat, and steps curve sharply to the right as they descend. A few shards of bone are scattered on the landing.

The entryway to the crypt is very dangerous. Loud noises or hard probing at the wall or ceiling (such as incautiously searching for secret or concealed doors) causes the walls and ceiling to collapse inward. Each creature in the area must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 25 (10d4) bludgeoning damage on a failure or half as much on a success. A character who fails the saving throw has a 25% chance of having any potions or other delicate items destroyed by the falling stones. If the walls collapse, dust and rubble choke this entrance, but not so much that the party cannot easily dig their way out. Daylight still filters through the fallen blocks and heaps of earth.

1. THE STONE GUARDIAN

Three tall stone statues on each side line this dusty, 20-foot-wide entry hall. Each statue bears the proud visage of some forgotten king or sage. Corroded bronze doors stand to the east.

The third statue on the northern wall bellows a challenge when interlopers approach: "Speak the name of the great and mighty sage or face your destruction!" The **stone golem** speaks in a strange tongue, although *comprehend languages* can be cast to understand its words. The correct answer to its question is "Bourekshnar," although it is unlikely the characters will chance upon this solution. If the party does not answer within five minutes, the golem steps off its pedestal and attacks.

If the correct answer is given during battle, the statue halts its attacks and returns to the pedestal. It becomes inanimate once again. It does not challenge those leaving through this area.

Hidden in a secret compartment with the pedestal are three diamonds worth 1,000 gp each. They can be discovered with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check while searching only if the statue is off the pedestal.

2. UNSAFE HALLWAY

Beyond the bronze door, the floors are done in a parquet tile. To the right, the carved and fitted wooden inserts sag and look thoroughly rotted. To the left, however, they appear completely safe and firm.

Tapping on the floor on the right (south) side of the corridor causes chunks to fall away, and the wood creaks ominously. The left (north) side appears totally sound. This is an illusion; a fully equipped party could jump up and down on the south side of the hallway and do little more than cause the floor to groan somewhat. However, the north side of the hall has a 10-foot-by-10-foot trapdoor covering a 30-foot-deep pit trap. Iron spikes line the bottom of the pit. The illusion can be seen through with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation)

check. A character who steps on the trap door must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or fall in the pit. Anyone falling into the pit lands on 1d4 spikes and takes 3 (1d6) piercing damage from each along with the 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

3. FALSE ENTRANCE TO THE CRYPTS

An elaborate bronze door in this hallway is less corroded than those found in the foyer. Light sources play across the heavy relief sculpted in the bronze plates and reflect a golden glow throughout the chamber.

A false door at the northern end of this elaborately decorated hallway opens into a room filled with poison gas. Characters opening the door must make a successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw to leap out of the way of the gout of noxious vapors or else be blinded and nauseated for ten minutes. While nauseated, a character has disadvantage on all attacks rolls and skill checks. The real door is carefully hidden behind a thin block of stone on the right-hand wall. It can be found with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

4. SERVANTS' TOMBS

Whatever agency built this place, they believed in taking their slaves with them into the afterlife. Four tombs, three of which have open doors, are filled with the bones of many beings. Tattered ropes are still tied around the arms and legs of most of them.

The servants entombed here faced gruesome deaths, eventually starving or suffocating. However, not all died so quickly: The fourth chamber contains 10 **ghouls**. They fell on the corpses of their fellows and consumed them long ago, but they hunger for more. If the fourth chamber is opened carelessly, the ghouls gain a round of surprise attacks on the unfortunate character who opened the door.

At the back of the ghouls' lair are 800 gp, seven pieces of carved jade worth 12 gp each, and a devotional book containing a *spell scroll of cure wounds*. This last item is befouled with mold and mildew and may easily be dismissed as trash unless it is read thoroughly.

5. PRAYER CHAMBER

Dust smelling faintly of sandalwood and other fragrances fills this room. Bits of wood and trash lie in the corners and around several pillars.

Those visiting their ancestors once meditated and prayed for the departed in this chamber. The chamber is filled with piles of potsherds, broken boxes, and so forth. A single black rock is a *luckstone* that may be found by carefully searching the detritus and getting a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check. However, the room is also the home of 12 **giant scorpions** that attack if disturbed. The scorpions are not fully grown yet, measuring about a foot long each.

6. THE SHRINE

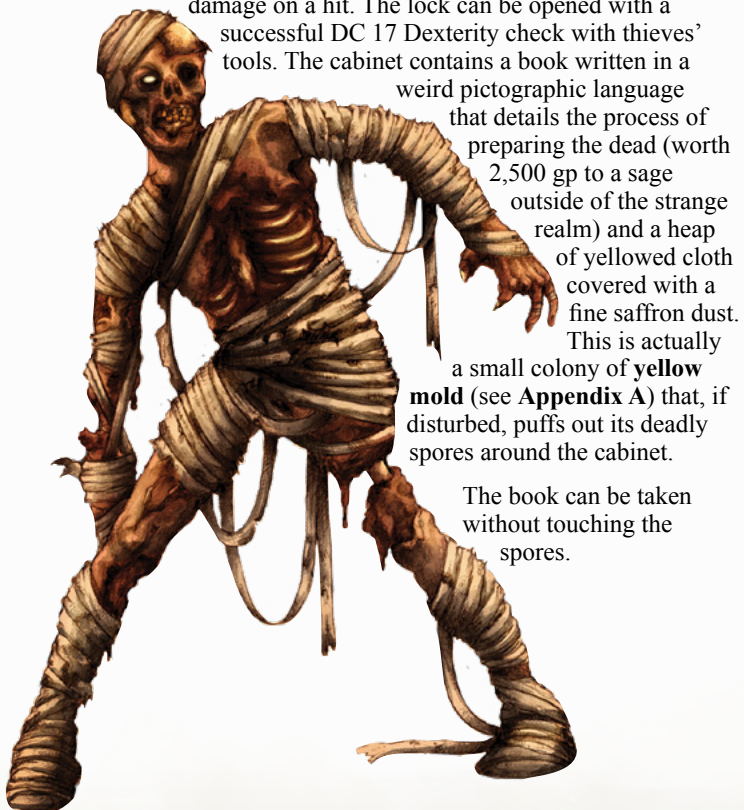
The rotting remains of once-opulent tapestries hang on the walls. More detritus litters the floor. A raised platform along the northeastern wall is carved with strange symbols. Rusty red spots discolor the outer circumference of the dais. A few items — cups and a tarnished dagger — lie on the altar.

Priests and ritual-masters once paid homage to whatever gods they worshipped at this inner temple. Although the rusty stains on the altar are blood (easily identifiable, if examined), it is sheep's blood. Still, the altar retains a tinge of evil (*detect evil and good* shows a faint halo around the altar). The cups are of fine silver traced with gold, as is the dagger (although all are bloodstained and tarnished). Any character who takes the cups or the dagger is affected by a mild curse. They make all attack rolls and saving throws with a -1 penalty until such time as they replace the items *and* receive a *bles*s spell cast on them and them alone. The items are worth a total of 650 gp.

7. FUNERARY PREPARATION CHAMBER

Jars, worktables, and tools are all scattered haphazardly around this room. Tatters of cloth and leather lie on tables and benches. A cabinet stands in the southwest corner.

The bodies of the deceased were prepared for burial in this chamber. The jars are sacred vessels for vital organs such as the liver, heart, and brain of the deceased. None of the jars has any real value. The cabinet is locked and trapped with a **scything blade trap**. The trap can be noted with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check and disarmed with a successful DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. If not disarmed, it strikes at a creature attempting to open the cabinet within 5 feet at +7 to hit, doing 4 (1d4+2) slashing damage on a hit. The lock can be opened with a successful DC 17 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. The cabinet contains a book written in a



weird pictographic language that details the process of preparing the dead (worth 2,500 gp to a sage outside of the strange realm) and a heap of yellowed cloth covered with a fine saffron dust. This is actually a small colony of **yellow mold** (see **Appendix A**) that, if disturbed, puffs out its deadly spores around the cabinet.

The book can be taken without touching the spores.

8. PRIESTS' MAUSOLEUM

The door to this room is covered in more obscure glyphs. There are no apparent hinges, but the glyphs are in high relief.

A nearby bird-like sculpture acts as a lever to move the door to the side. Inside the room, six sarcophagi stand upright against opposite walls. All are carved with the same intricate detail as seen in the previous chambers. One sarcophagus in the middle of the room is open, its lid broken and cast aside.

High priests of the tombs were laid here upon their death. The richest of them was clearly in the middle. The spirits of the deceased, lesser priests are still enraged at the desecration of their brothers' tomb and wait to attack the next intruders who disturb this chamber. The 6 **mummies** open their standing sarcophagi and try to kill any interlopers who enter.

A great deal of treasure is divided among the six upright sarcophagi. Coins, gems, and jewelry totaling 14,430 gp in value are in the coffins. In addition, six *spell scrolls* and a vial containing a *potion of gaseous form* can be found. The scrolls have one spell each: *commune*, *cure wounds*, *dispel magic*, *raise dead*, *remove curse*, and *conjure animals*.

9. MOLD FARM

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this rough chamber are covered in mold; caps and sprouts of all shapes and sizes spring up everywhere. Giant ants scurry around the room tending to the mold. The room is unusually cool. Jars, chests, cabinets, and perhaps a skeleton can be seen beneath the layers of saffron-colored mold.

Worker **giant ants** (with half hit points) overseen by a few warrior **giant ants** (**Area 10**) tend this huge patch of **yellow mold** (see **Appendix A**). The ants generally ignore the party if they aren't disturbed. The ants cultivate the yellow mold without harm, moving among the caps and stalks effortlessly. However, a **brown mold** (see **Appendix A**) has also begun to grow in one corner. The brown mold can be seen in the upper northeastern corner by entering the room, being careful to step on bare patches on the floor without disturbing the mold.

If the yellow mold is disturbed, spores fill the air within the room and 30 feet out in the narrow confines of the tunnel.

If fire is used to destroy the yellow mold, the brown mold immediately grows as it absorbs heat. Anyone who remains within 10 feet of the room takes 9 (2d8) cold damage every round from the freezing cold. The ants move at one-quarter normal speed due to the cold, in addition to the damage they take each round.

Nothing of interest remains beneath the yellow mold. The ants carried any items of value to **Area 10**.



13. CRYPT OF THE WIGHTS

Four unadorned stone sarcophagi sit on the floor here. The lid of one is slightly ajar; the rest are sealed tightly.

This hidden room is northwest of **Area 12**, behind a sliding panel secret door. The open sarcophagus is a ruse, seemingly filled with gems and treasure. In reality, the items are worthless quartz and fool's gold. If the characters stop to pick over the items, the other sarcophagi soundlessly open as 3 **wights** creep out to attack. Each wears an unholy amulet that grants the undead creature immunity to one attempt to turn it; the amulets glow violet and then fade and are useless thereafter. The most powerful wight wields a *+1 longsword*. The sounds of fighting in **Area 12** alerts the wights to approaching intruders.

A concealed door is to the south. It can be found with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check.

14. FALSE TREASURE ROOM

A great wealth of treasure lies before you in this chamber. Piles of gold coins, stacks of fine weapons and armor, jewel-adorned goods, scrolls, clothes, and decanters and jars line the walls and floor.

Like the treasure in the wights' crypt (**Area 13**), these items are all fake, although the falsehood is much more difficult to detect. The gold coins, for instance, are really gold — but just a wash of gold over a lead slug. Some 12,000 gold pieces are loose, in sacks and chests, or on similarly appointed plates and bowls. The real value is less than 50 gp, however. The gems are of the type that they appear to be, but wholly inferior and flawed. Some 500 or more gems are in costume jewelry settings, although their total value is 100 gp. Likewise, the scrolls and books are valueless. The first few pages of each volume is beautifully illuminated in seemingly cryptic and magical glyphs, but it is all gibberish. Five scrolls are actually *cursed* and perusing a single line inscribed there damns the bearer! (You can choose whatever curse is appropriate, or simply impose disadvantage to attack rolls and saving throws until *remove curse* is cast.) The false value of the items can be discerned with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

A well-hidden secret door leads due north out of this chamber. It can be found with a successful DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check. The secret door is trapped; only careful inspection and a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveal that the whole panel is perforated with hundreds of tiny holes. The trap can be disarmed with a successful DC 19 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. Opening the door without first disarming the trap or failing the check to disarm it by 5 or more causes a hail of poisoned thorns to be fired in a 45-degree arc. Each creature in the room must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or be struck by darts. A creature hit by the darts takes 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be dropped to 0 hit points by the poison coating them.

10. GIANT ANT LAIR

Giant ants fill this chamber. Some scuttle in and out with fungus or rotting debris, while others are apparently patching tunnels.

Some 20 worker **giant ants** (with half hit points) toil away in the soft sandy floors and walls of this area. Most are drones, but 6 warrior ants (as **giant ants**) roam among them.

The **giant ant queen** remains in her lair 12 feet under the sand surrounded by the treasures brought here by the warriors and workers. Characters can find four gemstones worth a total of 175 gp.

11. CHARNEL CHAMBER

Crypts line the walls of this room. All are open, and each contains a body. The smell here is terrible.

These are the bodies of well-to-do commoner types who had an allegiance to whichever lord or king was buried here. A malevolent force animated all of the dead as 35 **zombies** that climb out of their chambers to attack. While slow, the sheer press of numbers should more than make up for such a disadvantage!

12. GLOOMY CHAMBER

The walls of this shrine are bare. Massive stone pillars stretch up into the high, vaulted ceiling.

This chamber is similar in design to **Area 6** but is stripped of any ornamentation. Lurking in their webs near the ceiling are 6 **giant spiders**. They wait for parties to walk in and then leap onto them. They have fed only on rats and are hungry! While not generally intelligent, they share an evil cunning. No treasure is caught in the spiders' webs, which are high in the vaulted ceiling. A secret door leads to the northwest. It can be found with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check.

15. CHAMBER OF SPECTRES

This is a strange room indeed, for unlike the gloomy crypts and tombs elsewhere, this one is brightly lit (apparently by *continual flame* spells), well-appointed, and richly furnished. A few comfortable chairs are arranged around a low, sturdy-looking table in the center of the room. A shelf lined with books stands along one wall. It is almost as if this chamber was prepared recently for guests.

Closer examination of the finery in the room and a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveal that all of it is old and suffering from dry rot, and faded by layers of dust. Nonetheless, it is — or at least was — once expensive.

The room is the resting place of 2 **specters** that wait here for those who would violate their tomb. While not the spirits of those originally buried in the tomb, they were drawn here by the presence of death and decay. They gathered the best treasures for themselves and keep the items in a chest in the middle of the room. The chest is securely locked and trapped. The trap can be noted with a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check and disarmed with a successful DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. Failure to detect and disarm the trap releases a cloud of green poisonous gas that fills a five-foot sphere when it is released and the entire chamber the next round. Anyone within the cloud must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or take 55 (10d10) poison damage and be poisoned for one minute. The gas cloud dissipates in 10 minutes. The chest can be unlocked with a successful DC 18 Dexterity check with thieves' tools.

The treasure chest contains a total of 14,214 gp. Buried under the coins is a *decanter of endless water*, a *potion of heroism*, a huge jacinth worth 5,000 gp, a slab of jade worth 140 gp, a fine spinel worth 500 gp, and a carnelian valued at 600 gp.

16. STORAGE ROOM

Bare tables are pushed against the walls in this room. Rolls of cloth, empty and broken jars, and other common items can be found here.

This room was used for storing various items necessary in preparing bodies for burial. Nothing of interest remains here.

17. BURIAL ALCOVE

More niches line the walls. Some are empty; all are despoiled in one way or another.

This is another room for burying those of lower status. The chamber has been (almost) thoroughly looted. Clutched in the bony hand of one of the corpses is a *spell scroll of remove curse* and a platinum holy symbol worth 275 gp.

18. UNSAFE FLOOR

The floor in the hallway shows several fine cracks, none wide enough to admit even a sheet of parchment. The stones here are otherwise as smooth and polished as those throughout the tomb.

The fine cracks belie a serious flaw in the construction: a hollow has formed beneath the stones due to shifting soil and water erosion. A 60-foot-deep shaft now lies beneath the floor. The unsafe floor can be noted with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A creature with Stonecunning has advantage on the check. Every character stepping across the 20-foot section of hallway has a 20% chance of the floor giving way beneath them. They must then succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the pit. Anyone who falls plunges into darkness and takes 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage. Note that this is not a trap *per se* but a natural occurrence that mimics a trap.

19. CHAMBER OF FALLING BLOCKS

The mosaic floor here is a wonder to behold. Each thin tile seems ideally fit to its neighbor, and the whole is visually sumptuous. The tiles form pictograms and glyphs that seem to spiral outward from the center of the room.

Unlike **Area 18**, this chamber *is* deliberately trapped. The pictograms and glyphs tell a heroic epic that can be read with a *comprehend languages* spell. While interesting reading, the story has little bearing on the real history of the place. One tantalizing passage mentions the “great cleric-saint” but there are no more details.

The real secret of the room is that the stone blocks in the ceiling are rigged to pressure plates in the tiles below; the unwary who enter this room might find themselves trapped beneath tons of crushing stone! Each of the four falling stone blocks (marked on the map with a “T”) does 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage to anyone who fails a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw to jump out of the way.

20. TRASH ROOM

Piled up broken crates, potsherds, and other garbage fill this room nearly to the door. Was that a glint of gold among the detritus?

A nest of 9 **giant ticks** (see **Appendix A**) is in the chamber. They are voracious and hungry as little prey is to be found in the tomb save rats. They immediately attack if the trash is disturbed or if warm-blooded creatures stand in the room for more than one round. No treasure can be found here.



21. ALCHEMIST'S CHAMBER

Old corroded alchemical tools sit on benches in the middle of this room. Opaque, cloudy jars dot the shelves along the wall. A book of some kind lies on the workbench alongside the tools. A skeleton in tattered robes lies just under the edge of the table.

A half-mad alchemist/sage with the improbable name of Crony Ylap created this chamber long after the larger crypt area was forgotten. The book on the bench is his diary, which is filled with the musings of a fellow obsessed with the discovery of new and more powerful potions. The volume is written in an unfamiliar language spoken only in this realm and requires a *comprehend languages* spell to understand. Most of the entries speak of his various attempts to create new potions. The last passage may be of some interest to adventurers:

“Solstice 21–22. My decision to move my lab here was fortuitous. Not only am I afforded the privacy I so desire, but the presence of several deceased persons provides me with many essential salts that I would find difficult to acquire in quantity elsewhere. The thieves who helped me come thus far have left, paid handsomely for their efforts. Soon I will explore some hidden chambers here further, but before I do, I will imbibe my latest creation, an elixir that will render me immune to the deadly touch of spectre, lich, wight, and ghoul! Soon I shall unlock the secrets of this tomb and then I am sure I will find clues about the whereabouts of the fabled artifact ...”

The diary ends there. The skeleton under the table holds an empty bottle in its hand. Lying near it is a leather pouch containing three potions. Two are *potions of greater healing*, but the third is a thick black sludge that smells faintly of grave dust (if it's opened). This last potion, like the healing elixirs, detects as magical. However, it is a horrible failure, the first (and last) vial of Ylap's "potion of protection from undead." Drinking the potion results in a horrible, agonizing death over the course of 10 seconds for the imbiber. No saving throw is permitted.

22. RATS' NEST

An ominous squeaking and chittering sound can be heard from this chamber. The noises grow louder as you approach the door.

A large colony of 36 **giant rats** lives here. If the door is touched, it bursts asunder as a tidal wave of wriggling black bodies struggle out to strip the flesh off of any creature they encounter. A coffer in the room holds 1,156 sp.

23. STAIRWELL

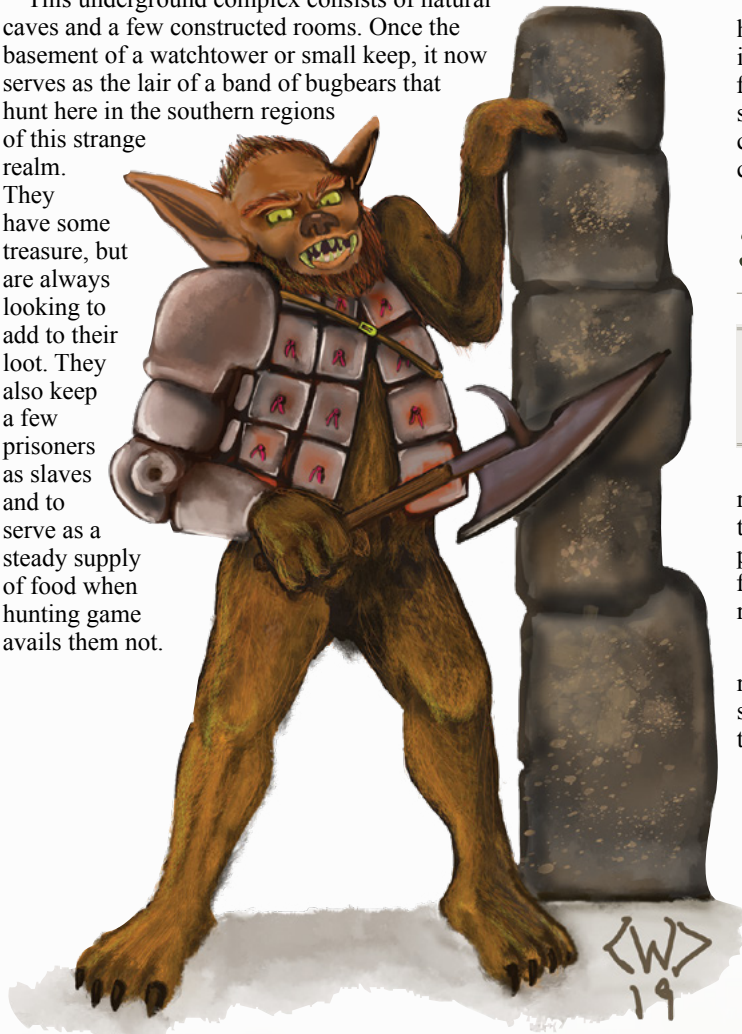
This stairwell leads down to a roughhewn passage that stretches away to the northeast.

All is as it appears here; the passage is a nearly two-mile journey to the northeast and leads to an underground bugbear's complex.

BUGBEARS' LAIR

This underground complex consists of natural caves and a few constructed rooms. Once the basement of a watchtower or small keep, it now serves as the lair of a band of bugbears that hunt here in the southern regions of this strange realm.

They have some treasure, but are always looking to add to their loot. They also keep a few prisoners as slaves and to serve as a steady supply of food when hunting game avails them not.



1. UPPER GUARD ROOM

A number of large, hairy humanoids are lounging here. They jabber among themselves as they pick at bits of food.

The 8 **bugbears** are set to guard against any intruders and to keep an eye on the plain below for possible travelers to attack and loot. A shield hangs from a rack nearby; if the party attacks and it appears the guards are to be overcome, one leaps to the shield and bangs it with a mace hanging from a cord to alert his fellows in **Areas 2, 3** and **4**. Help arrives in the form of 10 bugbears from **Area 2** in one round.

2. BARRACKS

This room is strewn with straw mats, and a dung fire gutters in a copper brazier in the middle of the floor. The place is filthy, and potsherds, discarded weapons, and other equipment and food scraps litter the floor.

Ten bugbears are in this room eating, sleeping, gambling, and so forth. If the alarm in **Area 1** is raised, they grab their weapons and move cautiously to that area and attack any intruders.

Three bugbears have heavy crossbows (and Armor Class 14), three have flails, and three have pikes (and Armor Class 14). They are intelligent, wily creatures. The leader and three bugbears armed with flails immediately attack the party while the pike-wielding bugbears strike from behind the skirmish line. The bugbears armed with crossbows shoot bolts at any obvious spellcasters. The leader of the crew uses a flail and has jeweled armbands worth 60 gp.

3. COMMON ROOM

A large group of the hairy humanoids are in this chamber. Most are eating or relaxing at long tables.

The bulk of the bugbear tribe dwells in this 20-foot-by-40-foot room, with nearly 30 of the creatures being found here at any given time. If the alarm is raised in **Area 1**, the bugbears flip the tables to provide cover before the characters arrive. Otherwise, the bugbears flip the tables as soon as the characters are spotted. The bugbears receive half cover while hiding behind the overturned tables.

The bugbears hurl darts, throwing knives, and spears for a single round. After that, 10 **bugbears** rush the party with clubs and short swords. As the bugbears attack, 17 noncombatant bugbears flee and try to escape. Another three leave to alert the bugbear chief (**Area 7**).

4. ARMORY

Weapon racks hang on the walls, and a small forge — recently used, as you can feel the heat from across the room — sits in the corner. The weapons are all crude iron and low steel but still very effective. Iron rungs are hammered into the north wall of this cave, leading to a broad opening in the ceiling above. An enormous creature sits near the furnace. It smiles evilly when you come in.

The **bugbear** (with Strength 18 and 45 hit points) is the weaponsmith for the entire tribe. He is an incredibly tough, old creature, as hardy as the chief.

The bugbear hides his treasure beneath a loose flagstone in the corner of the room opposite the forge. The loose stone can be found with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check made while searching the area. The stash consists of two diamonds worth 1,000 gp each and a bag of 81 gp.

Beneath the coals in the forge is a *ring of resistance* (fire) dropped there and forgotten by his predecessor years ago. Digging it out requires magic or some kind of implement to avoid being burned. The flames deal 3 (1d6) fire damage per round to anyone attempting to reach into the forge (even if wearing thick gloves or gauntlets).

The iron rungs lead to a wide junction in the upper hallway that connects the Treasure Vault, Evil Temple, Forgotten Cave, Dungeon, and the Chieftain's Quarters (q.v.); characters climbing this ladder will find themselves in a poorly lit hallway, the occasional torch guttering in a sconce along the walls.

5. EVIL TEMPLE

This foul place is covered in rude symbols and icons to some unholy god. A bloodstained altar sits at the end of the room. A robed figure keels at the altar.

The robed figure is the **bugbear's shaman** (see **Appendix A**). He is likely aware of the party's entry into the chamber by this point. Two **bugbear acolytes** (see **Appendix A**) behind the altar watch through a mesh curtain. As the party approaches, the acolytes rush out and attack the party from the flanks. They strike at spellcasters first and look for holy symbols or magic items to identify those characters.

6. THE TREASURE VAULT

This small cave reeks of filth and dung. Puddles of the disgusting stuff are everywhere.

The bugbears use this cave as a latrine ... and more. Hidden beneath one of the foul pools is a locked strongbox containing the bugbears' collected treasure: 3,522 cp and 3,927 ep. The box is trapped with a poison needle. The trap can be found with a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check and disarmed with a successful DC

14 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. A creature who opens the chest without disarming the trap is hit by the needle. The creature takes 1 piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 55 (10d10) poison damage. The chest can be unlocked with a successful DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. The bugbear chief at **Area 7** has the key. Fishing in the mess for any reason is 25% likely to infect a character with a disease (maximum hit points decrease by 3 [1d6] each day until healed with *lesser restoration*).

7. CHIEFTAINS' LAIR

The room before you is opulent — if a scattering of looted fine goods (now tattered and stained) can be called “opulent.” A large wooden table, obviously hacked apart so it could fit through the door when it was brought here, sits in the middle of the room. A once-fine bed, now broken and sprung, is in one corner.

The bugbear chief (as **bugbear** with AC 18 from a *ring of greater protection* [see Side Box], Strength 19, Constitution 16, and 55 hit points) and his assistants (**2 bugbears**, one with a *+1 dagger*) are here discussing plans to raid other nearby encampments. If an alarm has been raised, survivors may (or may not) have come here, but the chief and his guards are definitely ready. The bugbears fight savagely, hooting and yelling for help all the while. Any assistance that can come arrives in 1d4 rounds. The chief has a *potion of greater healing* available and does not hesitate to use it on himself. He also has 2d6 gp., an emerald worth 180 gp, and a key to the strongbox in **Area 6**.

RING OF PROTECTION

Wondrous item, rarity varies (requires attunement)

While wearing this ring, you gain a bonus to your AC and saving throws. The amount of the bonus depends on the ring's rarity.

Ring of...	Rarity	Bonus
Protection	rare	+1
Greater protection	very rare	+2
Superior protection	legendary	+3

8. THE DUNGEON

Barred cells line the perimeter of this chamber. A few forlorn humans and humanoids sit in the cages.

The dungeon is overseen by 4 **bugbears** put on watch for brawling. They take their resentment out on their charges, brutalizing the folk they keep trapped here. If the bugbears move near the cells, the occupants within grab them and try to hold them for the characters (providing a helping action with can give the characters advantage on attacks against the bugbears).

The humans and humanoids are the latest victims of the bugbear raids. Two elves, two humans, and a halfling are here. All are **commoners** with 2 hit points. They are grateful to any who rescue them. They know little of this area, but they describe it as enchanted and very dangerous. Their lands are located far to the west. If the party helps them get “started on their journey,” they express their gratitude by telling the characters that they are welcome in their homes. If the party provides them with horses (**Area 11**), they return home in a few days without any trouble. A horse can carry two prisoners.

9. THE ABANDONED CAVE

The air here is dry and stale. A slithering sound can be heard in one corner behind a rock formation.

This cave is the lair of a dreaded **behir**, a wormlike creature that has the ability to spit lightning. It is of low intellect and speaks only a smattering of bugbear. It is voracious and attacks the party if they try to pass through the southern tunnel.

10. WESTERN WATCHPOST

This is a round room, some 30 feet in diameter.

Pacing around the room are 8 nervous **bugbears**. They appear puzzled if intruders enter, but then move to attack. The bugbears watch the western tunnel that leads to the distant crypts to the southwest. They fear whatever lives in those crypts, however. A group of bugbears tried to invade and loot the crypts, but none returned.

If forced to surrender, the bugbears try to fool the characters by directing them to the “main treasure cave” in **Area 9**. They hope to let the behir deal with the powerful characters.

11. WILD HORSES

Six stout draft horses stand in a meadow atop a flat hill near the exit from the cave system. They are docile and seem to accept the presence of humans and demi-humans well.

The bugbears stole these **riding horses** for use as food. They were kept fed and healthy, and the animals mill around near the bugbear lair waiting for grain or hay. They accept riders and/or baggage, as they were owned by merchants until the bugbears took them.

APPENDIX A: NEW CREATURES

BUGBEAR SHAMAN

Medium humanoid (bugbear), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (hide armor and *ring of protection*)
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +4, Cha +6
Skills Intimidation +7, Perception +4, Religion +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Draconic, Goblin
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Keen Smell. The bugbear shaman has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Ring of Protection. The bugbear shaman has a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws while wearing the *ring of protection* (included above).

Spellcasting. The bugbear shaman is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, mending, resistance, spare the dying*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, cure wounds, detect magic, inflict wounds*

2nd level (3 slots): *aid, hold person, silence, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (2 slots): *animate dead, bestow curse*

Surprise Attack. If the bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Unholy Strike. Once on each of the bugbear shamans's turns when it hits a creature with a weapon attack, it can cause the attack to deal an extra 9 (2d8) necrotic damage to the target.

Actions

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

BUGBEAR ACOLYTE

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (hide armor)
Hit Points 27 (5d8+5)
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Stealth +6, Survival +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Goblin
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Surprise Attack. If the bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Spellcasting. The bugbear acolyte is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The acolyte has following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (3 slots): *bles, inflict wounds, sanctuary*

Actions

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

GIANT TICK

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8+3)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Disease Carrier. A creature hit by a tick's Blood Drain attack contracts a disease. Every 24-hours, a creature struck by the disease must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature gains a level of exhaustion. The exhaustion is not removed with resting. The disease can be removed with *lesser restoration*. It can be diagnosed with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check after the first level of exhaustion has set in.

Actions

Blood Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the tick attaches to the target. While attached, the tick doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the tick's turns, the target loses 5 (1d6 + 2) hit points due to blood loss. The tick can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 10 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the stirge.

MOLD, BROWN

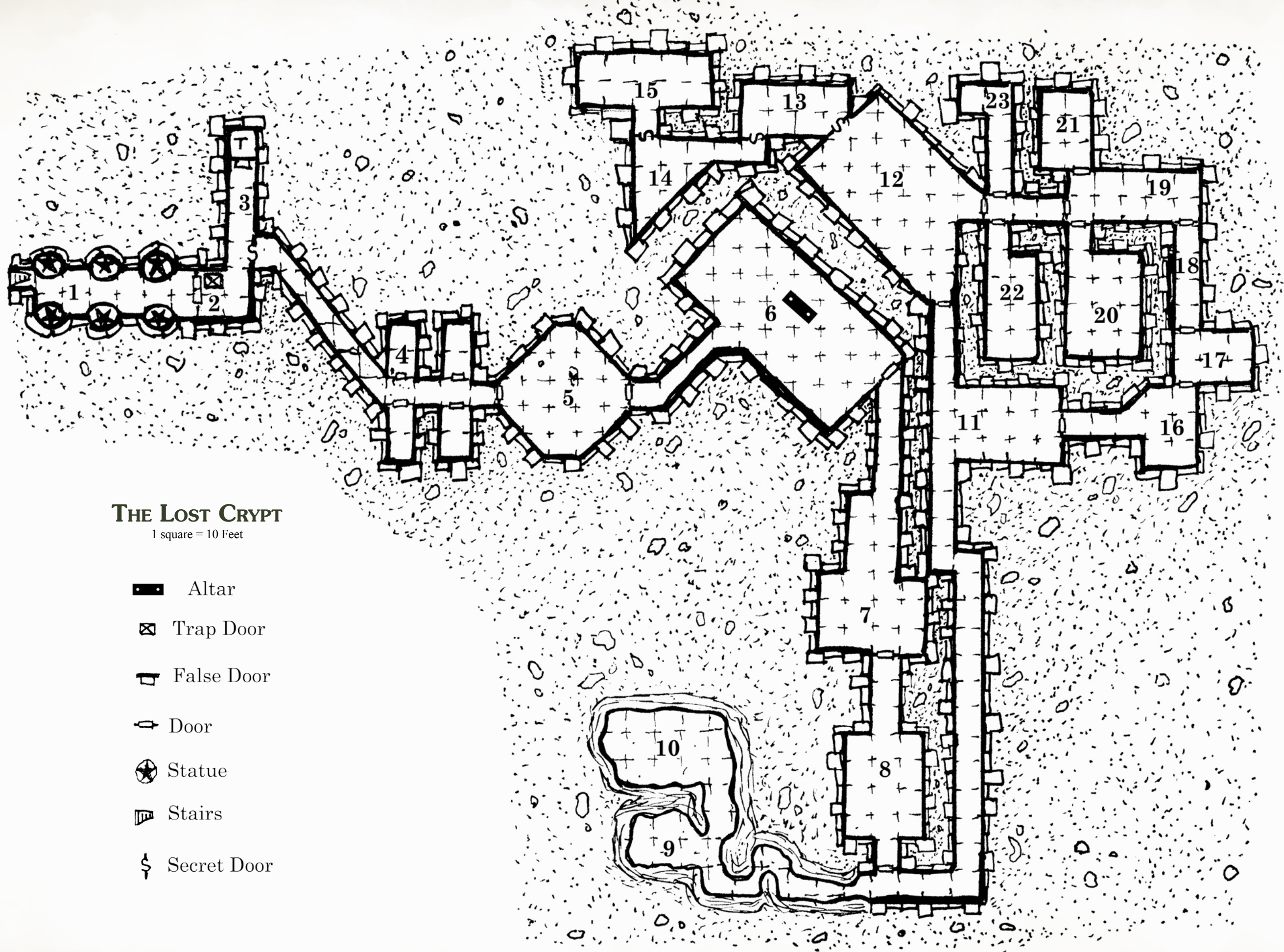
Brown mold is an ectotherm and feeds on the warmth of the environment surrounding it. When within 30 feet of brown mold, the temperature is noticeably colder, often to the point of freezing depending on the size of the brown mold patch. It is common for brown mold to cover a 10-foot square, but it isn't unusual for patches to be much larger.

Creatures that come within 10 feet of brown mold, or start their turn within 10 feet of the mold must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. A failed save results in 22 (4d10) cold damage, or half as much on a successful saving throw.

MOLD, YELLOW

Patches of yellow mold are most commonly encountered in dark, damp locations, and grows in 5-foot square and larger patches. If disturbed, the yellow mold releases a cloud of spores in a 10-foot radius around itself. Creatures caught in the spore cloud take 11 (2d10) poison damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The creature takes an additional 5 (1d10) poison damage at the start of each of its turns and can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a successful save.

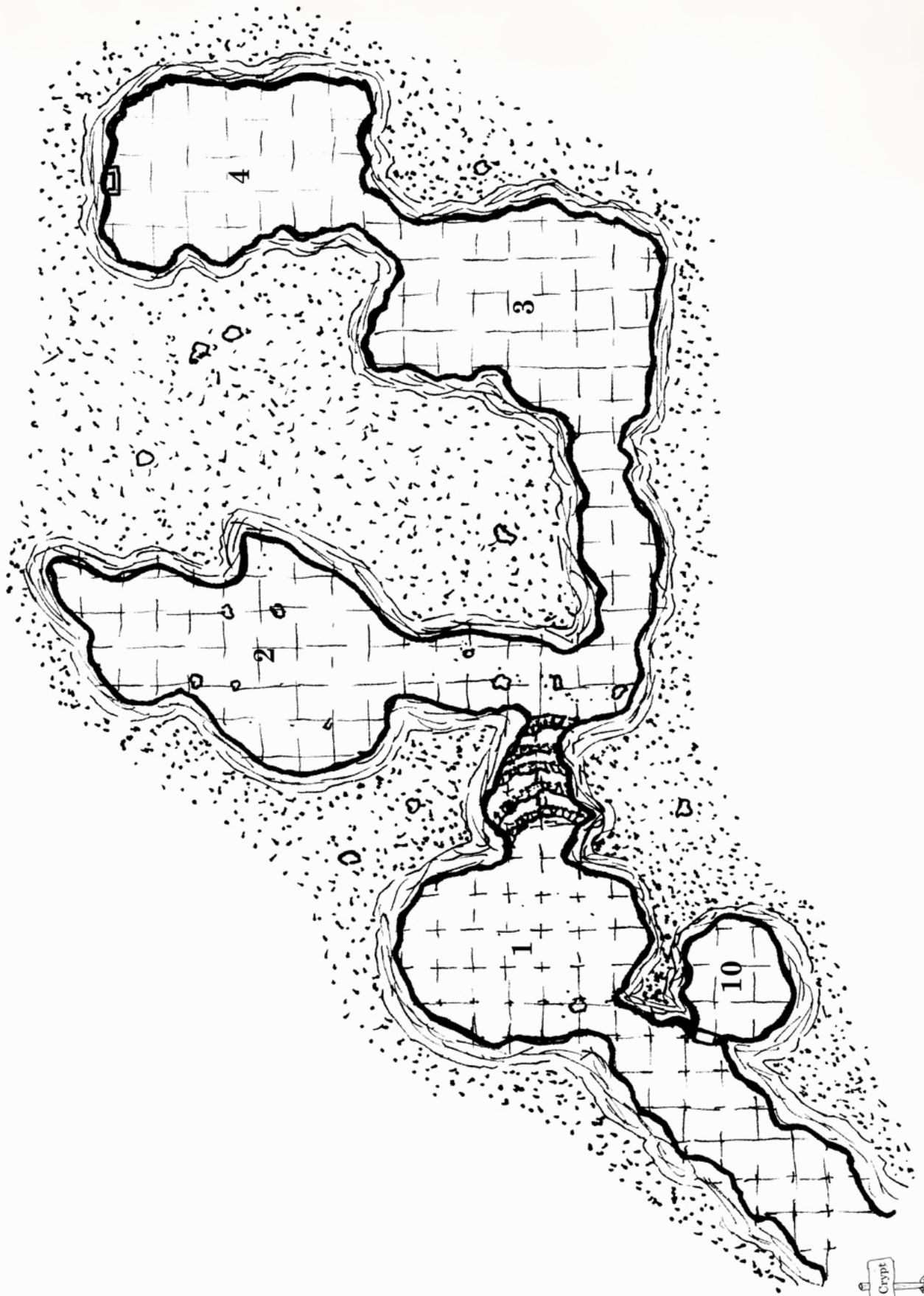
Yellow mold is instantly destroyed by fire damage or sunlight.



THE LOST CRYPT

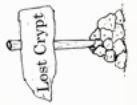
1 square = 10 Feet

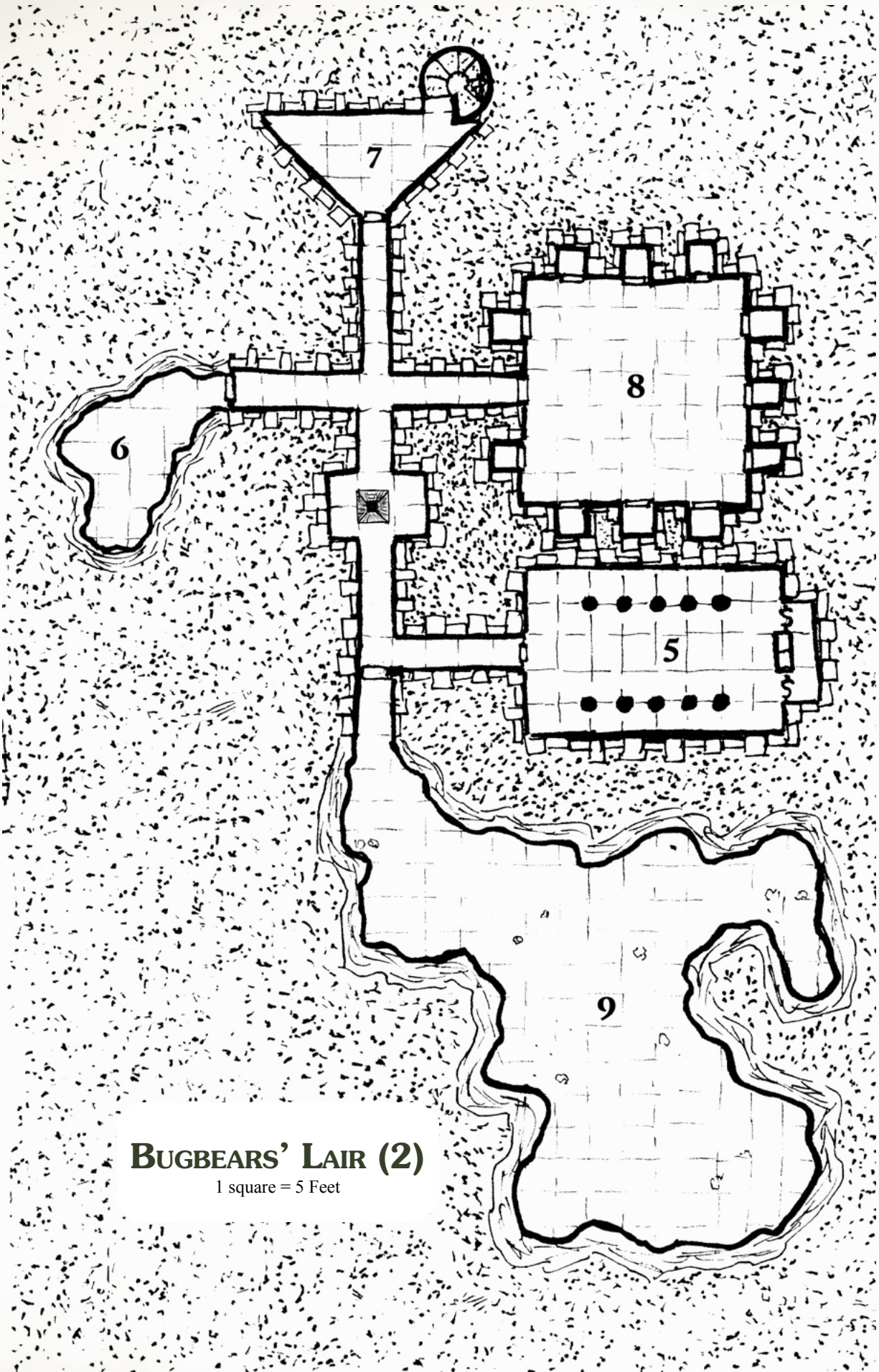
- Altar
- ⊗ Trap Door
- ▭ False Door
- ▭ Door
- ⊛ Statue
- ▭ Stairs
- ⋈ Secret Door



BUGBEARS' LAIR (1)

1 square = 10 Feet





BUGBEARS' LAIR (2)

1 square = 5 Feet

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**Necromancer
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THE LOST CRYPT

Written by veteran RPG scholar and scribe Bill Silvey, *The Lost Crypt* is an old-school style romp through an ancient tomb and hidden lairs filled with clever monsters. This is the Bill-created portion of a joint project with Gary Gygax, designed to be a challenge for veteran characters of 7-8th level.

A realm not terribly unlike our own exists in a strange and mostly-hospitable nearby plane of existence. While planar travel might overlook this small pocket of reality, an entrance into it exists at the deepest depths of the most storied dungeon complex in the known world.

To enter this planar region is to step into a world at once familiar and yet more bizarre than our own. Herein there are rumored to lie artifacts of great power, and treasure beyond imagination. Having explored the uttermost depths of the dungeon and found the entrance, a group of adventurers can make their way beyond the boundaries of reality itself in search of fame and fortune!

