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# Dungeon Crawl Classics #35A

## Halls of the Minotaur

by Harley Stroh  
AN ADVENTURE FOR 0-LEVEL CHARACTERS

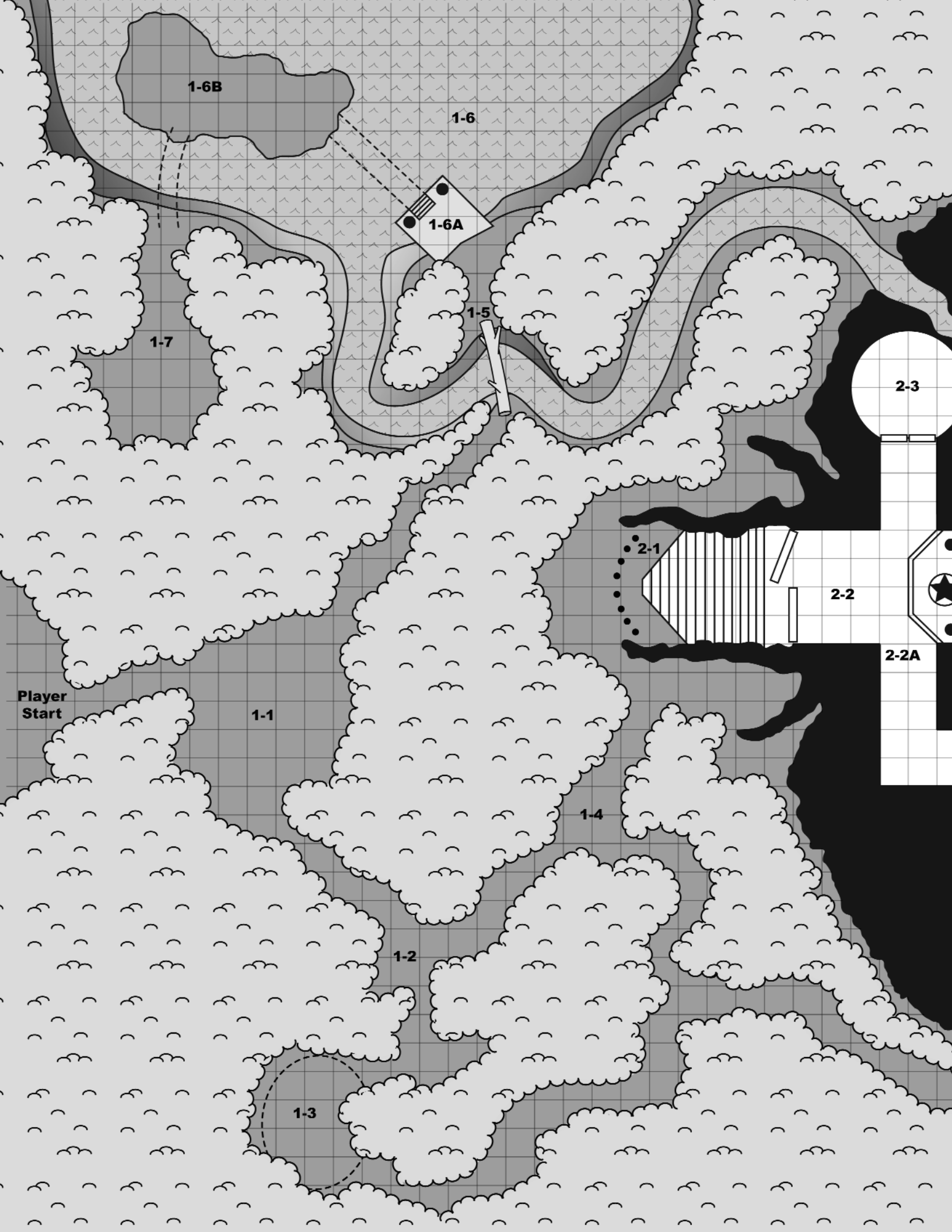


Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't 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.

A villainous minotaur has been terrorizing the village for months, slaying villagers at random and slipping away with stolen children. A heroic paladin comes to the rescue, pursuing the minotaur to its lair in the Thornswild Forest. When the paladin fails to return, it falls to the village farmers, mere commoners, to discover his fate and to save the village from the minotaur's depredations. The trail of the knight leads the heroes past deadly kobold traps, natural dangers, packs of feral dogs, and to the foot of a mysterious basalt tower in the heart of the woods...

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





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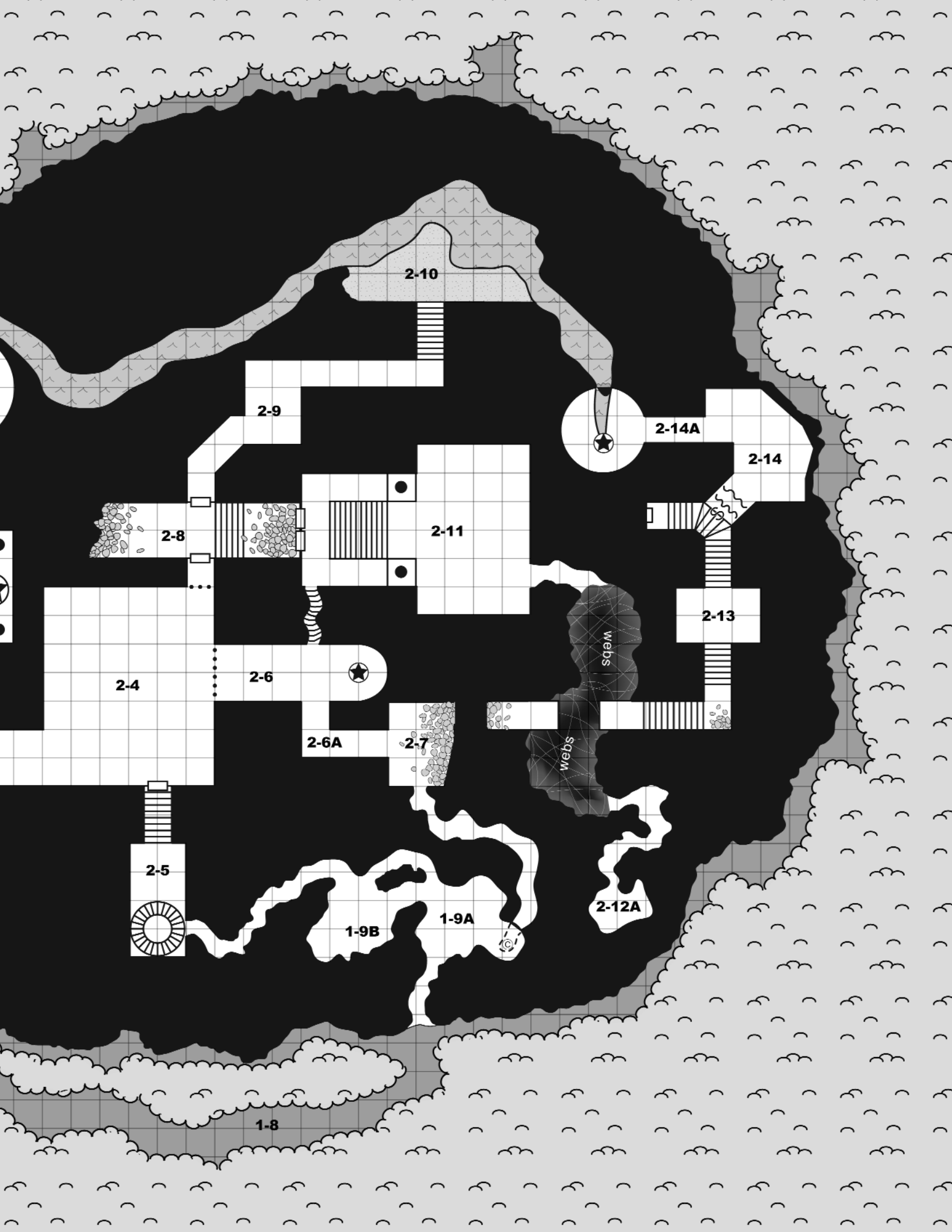
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### Credits

**Writer:** Harley Stroh  
**Front Cover Artist:** Doug Kovacs  
**Back Cover Artist:** Eric Lofgren  
**Interior Artist:** Stefan Poag  
**Cartographer:** Jeremy Simmons  
**Graphic Designer and Developer:** Joseph Goodman  
**Editors:** Ken Hart, Liz Rich  
**Playtesters:** Robbie, Joe, Laurel, "Goober" Tom, William, Fred, Dave

*"There are two ways we can go about this:  
We can either go out there and die,  
Or we can stay in here...  
...and die."  
– Spackle*

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If you enjoy this adventure, be sure to look for the rest of the Dungeon Crawl Classics series at your local game store.

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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.

Halls of the Minotaur is designed for four to six 1st-level NPC-classed PCs (also known as zero-level characters), or six total character levels. Note that the adventurers should have NPC classes, so their total challenge rating should only be 3. The adventure assumes the PCs are all townsfolk, and Appendix 2 contains pregenerated PCs intended for use with the adventure. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to regular PC classes, or your group's size and unique style of play.

### Adventure Summary

Toth-Ror, a villainous minotaur, has been terrorizing the heroes' village for months, slaying villagers at random and slipping away with stolen children. A heroic paladin comes to the rescue, pursuing the minotaur to its lair in the Thornswild Forest. When the paladin fails to return, it falls to the heroes, mere commoners, to discover his fate and to save the village from the minotaur's depredations. The trail of the knight leads the heroes past deadly kobold traps, natural dangers, packs of feral dogs, and to the foot of a mysterious basalt tower in the heart of the woods.

Investigating the caves at the base of the rocky tower, the heroes skulk their way past a host of deadly traps, a fearsome kobold tribe, and up through the heart of the spire. There, amid the eldritch ruins of an ancient citadel, the heroes face off against the terrible Toth-Ror, ending the beast's reign of terror.



## Game Master's Section

### Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. The abbreviations used are: **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.

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	5	C	3 wild dogs	1
1-2	6	C	5 ravens	2
1-3	6	T	Quicksand	1
1-4	7	T/C	Net trap Captive bugbear, kobolds	2 3
1-5	7	T	Log trap	1/2
1-6A	8	P	Mist puzzle	1/2
1-7	9	P	Shrine puzzle	1
1-9	9	C	Wild dog	1/2
1-9A	9	C	3 wild dogs	1
1-9B	10	C	She-wolf	1
2-1	11	C/T	4 kobolds Portcullis trap	2 1/2
2-2A	12	P	Rusted gate alarm	1/2
2-3	12	P/C	8 skeletons	1
2-4	13	C	<i>Kih-koth</i> , kobold Sor1 8 kobolds	2
2-5	13	P/C	3 rats Monstrous centipede, Medium	1
2-6A	14	T	Crossbow trap	1
2-7	15	C	Kobold smith, War1/Exp1 Dire weasel	3
2-8	15	T	Serpent head trap	1
		T	Poison needle trap	1
2-9	16	C	5 kobold honor guard	2
2-10	16	C	<i>Witchdoctor</i> , kobold Adp3 3 ravens	2
2-11	17	C	<i>Kobold King</i> , Ftr1/Sor1 Monstrous spider, Medium 3 kobolds	3

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
2-12	18	C	6 monstrous spiders, Tiny	2
2-13	19	T	Fake skeleton trap	1
2-14	19	C	Homunculus	1
		P	Three pools puzzle	2
3-1	21	T/C	Tripwire alarm Bat swarm	2
3-2	21	T	Rotting bridge	2
3-3	22	T	Rust monster dust trap	1
3-5	22	C	Monstrous spider, Medium	1
3-6	23	C	Giant eagle	3
3-7	23	P	Rune gate Beastgod trap	4
3-8	24	T	Falling block trap	1/2
3-13	26	T	Oil trap	1/2
		C	<i>Toth-Ror</i> , minotaur	3

## Scaling Information

Halls of the Minotaur is designed for four to six NPC-classed characters of 1st level, but can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure using any of the following suggestions:

**Weaker parties (3 or fewer characters):** Allow the PCs to recruit one or more men-at-arms to their cause. Crude ruffians and uncouth warriors, the men-at-arms follow orders well enough, but offer nothing in the way of problem solving or heroics. Each spearman demands two shares of all loot, or first pick of any magic items. The NPCs' stats are included here for easy reference.

**Spearman, male human War1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 9; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; Atk Spear +3 melee (1d8+1/x3); AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3, Intimidate +1, Jump +3, Ride +1, Swim +2; Toughness, Weapon Focus (spear).

*Possessions:* Padded armor, spear, waterskin, 5 days of trail rations.

**Stronger parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 1st level, or regular PC classes of 1st level):** Increase the DCs of all traps by +2. Add 3 additional kobolds to encounters 1-4, 2-1, and 2-11. Increase the levels of Kih-Koth (area 2-4), the kobold smith (area 2-7), the Witchdoctor (area 2-10) and the Kobold King (area 2-11) by +1. Allow Toth-Ror (area 3-13) to heal up to 35 or even 45 hit points.

## Getting the Players Involved

The adventure begins with the characters in a small village on the outskirts of the Thornswild Wood. Use one of the following plot hooks to get the characters started:

- A PC's family member was slain by Toth-Ror one week ago. The PCs have sworn to avenge the killing, or die trying.
- One of the PCs once served as Sir Galwaith's squire. The paladin has vanished into the Thornswild Wood, and the squire has been sent to determine the fate of his old master.
- The village elders call the entire village to council. Lots are drawn and the PCs all draw short straws. The elders send them into the Thornswild Wood with an impossible mission: Slay the beast that has been terrorizing their village.
- One of the PCs is mistaken for a relative of the lord of the province. Desperate villagers haul the PCs before the council of elders, demanding that the party slay Toth-Ror.

## Background Story

Many centuries ago, a band of warriors, mages, and rogues calling themselves the Order of the Beastmen established a fortress atop – and inside – a towering spire of black basalt. The brotherhood was dedicated to the pursuit of blending the cunning of man with the strength of beasts. Their experiments resulted in unholy abominations, half-man and half-beast, that were invariably driven to madness by the perversity of their existence.

The Beastmen's tampering drew the attention of the archmage Sezrakan (see *Tower of the Black Pearl in DCC #29: The Adventure Begins*). The wizard approached the order, demanding the sum of their knowledge and research in exchange for their petty lives. The Order of the Beastmen responded with violence, and the archmage systematically slew the masters of the order, scattering the survivors to the four winds.

The dungeon and citadel fell into disrepair and ruin. The unusual spire frightened off most explorers, and was left undisturbed until a tribe of kobolds moved into the area. The kobolds dug dens into the side of the spire, accidentally breaking into the corridors of the dungeon. The kobolds quickly moved into the dungeon, adapting some areas to suit their purpose, while avoiding the more dangerous rooms and corridors.

This kobolds' autonomy came to an abrupt end with the arrival of Toth-Ror. A giant among his kind, the violent minotaur terrorized the kobolds into submission, quickly taking charge of the tribe. Toth-Ror's rule was reinforced by the kobolds' understanding of the dungeon; the mino-

taur seemed like a beast torn directly from the murals depicting man-beasts.

But Toth-Ror was a villain with a history. On the run from the noble paladin Sir Galwaith, Toth-Ror came to the spire seeking sanctuary. Marshalling the kobolds, Toth-Ror instructed the trapmakers to design a series of death traps to dissuade (or outright slay) all challengers. When Sir Galwaith finally tracked Toth-Ror back to the spire, he was caught in a series of kobold traps, culminating in his death at the hands of the minotaur. The minotaur was wounded grievously in the battle, and has sworn revenge on the nearby village.

With Sir Galwaith slain, all that stands between Toth-Ror and the destruction of the village is the party of PCs.

## Playing Zero-Level Characters

Zero-level characters – represented by player characters with one level of an NPC class – offer a special challenge to beginning and experienced players alike. The risks and dangers are greater than at any other time in an adventurer’s career, requiring true heroism, cunning, and courage in the face of mortal danger. Playing a character from zero level to epic levels, rising from humble beginnings to world-spanning might, captures the soul of fantasy roleplaying.

The PCs of Halls of the Minotaur are assumed to be mere peasants and serfs, but humble beginnings often presage lives of renown and greatness!

## Adventure Prelude

Begin the prelude by reading or paraphrasing the following:

*Gomjol the Elder waves you toward the fire, her white eyes staring blindly out into the flames.*

*“Our hamlet’s savior has vanished into the Thornswild. The runes have chosen you to rescue him. See? The runes declare you to be heroes.” Her crooked finger points to each of you in turn. The old crone casts a handful of herbs into the fire, sending up a shower of embers. “And the runes never lie.*

*“We are a humble folk, but you may have your choice of our meager stores. Blessings on you,” the toothless hag smiles with a trace of sadness, “for you will need it.”*

To outfit PCs for the adventure, the village elders have gathered the finest of their weapons and equipment. The players may decide for themselves how they divide the equipment, or they can resort to the time-tested practice of “dicing for the loot.” To dice off, instruct each player to roll one d20. The player with the highest roll gets first pick of the spoils, followed by the next highest roll and so on until all the equipment has been chosen.

Following is a list of the equipment available to the PCs. Note that many of the items are not designed for combat and perform poorly compared to true weapons.

Dagger, pitted with rust  
Pitchfork (simple, two-handed, 1d6/x2)  
Blacksmithing hammer (simple, one-handed, 1d6/x3)  
Farmer’s sickle (simple, one-handed, 1d4/x2)  
Spear  
Woodsmen’s axe (simple, one-handed, 1d6/x3)  
Hide armor, lice-infested  
“Orc-Slayer,” a greatclub carved from an ogre femur  
Sling with 15 bullets  
Shield, light steel, rusted  
Padded armor, rotting  
Short bow and quiver with 12 arrows  
Field scythe (simple, two-handed, 1d6/x3)

Each PC may also take any item from the following equipment list: waterskin, 1 week of rations, 10 torches, hide sack, 10-foot pole, 1 flask of oil, flint and steel.

Once all the gear is selected, start the adventure.

## Player Beginning

Start the adventure by reading the following:

*You and your companions come to a halt in the center of the forest clearing. The old crone always warned of the dangers of Thornswild Wood, but standing before the dark, foreboding forest you know that her tales fell short of the truth.*

*The trees are all overgrown with ropey, thorn-encrusted vines. Three skulls hang half a dozen feet off the ground – the vines have wormed their way through the vacant eye sockets to hoist them from the moist, rotting soil. Those same vines edge toward you, thirsting for fresh blood.*

*Somewhere within this fell wood is Sir Galwaith and the minotaur he swore to kill. Steeling your courage, you grip your feeble weapons tighter and wonder if you’ll ever see the light of day again.*

*A raven flaps overhead, wheeling toward the towering cliffs at the heart of the forest. Even from a distance you can make out the ancient ruins high atop the cliffs. The crow caws from the distance, beckoning you into the wicked wood.*



# Encounter Area 1: Thornswild Forest

Thornswild Wood is a thick, temperate forest overrun by the predatory bloodthorn vine (see Appendix 1). The vine infests the entire forest shown on the map – any PC moving into the undergrowth is attacked by the vine. Those attempting to bushwhack through the forest have to fight their way through the weave of bloodthorns, a very slow and painful experience; one vine must be killed for every 10 feet cut through the woods.

The vines possess only limited mobility. At night, they grow toward sleeping PCs, but unless the heroes sleep within 3 feet of the forest's edge, the vines won't reach them before dawn.

The paths through the forest are covered in a blanket of dead, molding leaves. Those staying on the paths are safe from the bloodthorn vines. The wet ground provides a +1 circumstance bonus to tracking and Move Silently checks.

**Climbing to the Ruins:** The cliffs are several hundred feet high and worn by the wind and rain, making them challenging to climb (DC 25 Climb check). At 0-level, a fall from any distance is a serious danger and this alone should dissuade parties from attempting to scale the cliffs. GMs are encouraged to allow falling PCs to tumble into soft tree boughs, breaking their fall and inflicting only a mere 1d4-1 points of damage for every 10 feet of falling distance. The proper route to the cliff top ruins is through the dungeons within the cliffs.

**Wild Dogs:** While the dogs of the Thornswild Forest are not evil, they are entirely feral and regard humanoids as prey. As described in the following text, the animals attack on sight and unless otherwise noted, fight to the death.

**Bloodthorn Vine:** CR 1/2; Large plant; HD 1d8+3; hp 11; Init -5; Spd 3 ft. per 8 hours; AC 6, touch 4, flat-footed 6; Atk/Full Atk Slam +3 melee (1d4+2); SA Improved grab, constrict 1d4+2; SQ Blindsight, immune to poison; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref -5, Will +2; Str 15, Dex -, Con 17, Int -, Wis 15, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide -1.

## Areas of the Map

**Area 1-1 – The Fallen Knight (EL 1):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The narrow forest path opens into a small glade. A trio of mongrel dogs clusters together in the center of the glade, feasting on the corpse of a once-mighty warhorse. The dogs look up and advance on you hungrily, their lips curling into toothy snarls.*

The mongrels were once domesticated farm pets,

but have reverted to a wild, feral state. All three are ferocious with hunger and have no fear of humans or fire. A DC 17 Handle Animal check drives the dogs away into the woods; otherwise they attack. If two are slain, the third flees toward its lair (area 1-9).

This clearing is where Sir Galwaith died fighting the minotaur Toth-Ror. The knight's corpse was carried by the kobolds to the dungeons beneath the spire.

The corpse was once Sir Galwaith's stallion. The horse's chain barding has been torn, and a DC 10 Spot check discovers a broken spear lodged in its breast. A DC 10 Heal check determines that the horse died of sword and spear wounds.

The ground around the corpse is torn and furrowed, and dried blood litters the leaves. A DC 15 Survival check shows that two combatants battled here. One was carried off by small humanoids (kobolds) while another was dragged away.

The tracks and trail of blood lead back to area 1-2; the trail can be followed with a DC 10 Survival (Track) check, or a DC 15 Search check.

**Treasure:** If retrieved, the broken spear buried in the corpse of the warhorse can be used as a short spear.

The warhorse still bears leather saddlebags. Inside the bags are 3 *potions of cure light wounds* in steel vials, a crushed lantern, two broken glass flasks that once held oil, a ceramic flask of holy water, 50 feet of silk rope, flint and steel, and six days of trail rations.

A DC 15 Search check uncovers the hilt of a broken sword beneath the corpse of the horse. This is half of *Fiendsplitter*, Sir Galwaith's *holy avenger*. The sword was shattered in the battle with Toth-Ror; the tip of the sword is still lodged in the minotaur's chest. While the broken blade has lost nearly all of the avenger's qualities, it can still be used as a +1 *cold iron short sword*.

**Wild Dogs (3):** CR 1/3; Small animal; HD 1d8+2; hp 6 each; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d4+1); SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Jump +7, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +1\*; Alertness, Track. \*Dogs have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.



**Area 1-2 – Court of the Rook (EL 2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*Ahead, the trail branches off in two directions. Before you can decide which path to take, the flap of wings fills your ears and hundreds of ravens descend upon the trees about you.*

*A single raven, larger than the rest, regards you with ancient black orbs. The raven caws twice. He is answered by deafening chorus.*

The flock has been sent by the kobold Witchdoctor (see area 2-10). Five of the ravens have been trained to attack, and the claws of these five have been painted with a pasty white poison. A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check determines the nature of the poison. Once this is determined, an antidote of herbs can be made with a successful DC 15 Heal check.

The ravens have been sent to herd the PCs toward the kobold ambush (area 1-4). If the PCs try to go in any direction but east, the five ravens descend on the party, attacking ferociously.

The remainder of the flock is not trained to attack, but if a PC should fall unconscious or dead during combat, 1d4 ravens drop from the trees to pick at the body. These ravens will not fight, and flee if attacked.

A DC 10 Survival (Track) check, or a DC 15 Search check, reveals the trail of blood leading east to area 1-4.

**Treasure:** The king crow wears a curious ring about its leg. A gold ring with a gaudy, cat's-eye stone, this is the *Eye of Tsathzar*, a unique magic item created by the legendary mage Tsathzar Rho (see *DCC #2: The Lost Vault of Tsathzar Rho*). The item is keyed to the rook's master, the kobold Witchdoctor, and allows the kobold to view anything within 30 feet of the ring. If the PCs carry the ring in the open (for instance, wearing it), it alerts the kobolds in levels 1 and 2, making surprise impossible. If the ring is destroyed, the Witchdoctor suffers 1d6+3 points of damage. See the sidebar for more information.

**Ravens (5):** CR 1/6; Tiny animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1 each; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk/Full Atk Claws +4 melee (1d2-5); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +3, Spot +5; Weapon Finesse.

**Poison:** Injury, Fort save DC 11; initial and secondary damage 1d4 Con.

**Area 1-3 – Quicksand (EL 1):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The forest is strangely quiet here. Even the birds and insects are hushed, as if mourning some awful secret. The oppressive smell of death lingers in the air, smothering you and your companions like a heavy blanket.*

The clearing is actually a pool of quicksand covered by dead leaves. The pool is 10 feet deep and 13 feet across. A PC approaching the pool at a normal pace may make a DC 8 Survival check to spot the danger before stepping in, but charging or running characters don't have a chance to detect the quicksand before blundering into it.

Characters in quicksand must make a DC 10 Swim check every round to simply tread water in place, or a DC 15 Swim check to move 5 feet in whatever direction is desired. If a trapped character fails this check by 5 or more, he sinks below the surface and begins to drown whenever he can no longer hold his breath (see sidebar).

Characters below the surface may swim back to the surface with a successful Swim check (DC 15, +1 per consecutive round of being under the surface).

To rescue a PC caught in the quagmire, a rescuer needs a rope, branch, or similar tool that enables him to reach the victim with one end of it. Then he must make a DC 15 Strength check to successfully pull the victim, and the victim must make a DC 10 Strength

## Eye of Tsathzar

A gold ring with a gaudy, cat's-eye stone, the *Eye of Tsathzar* was an attempt by the legendary mage Tsathzar Rho to create a magic item that would allow him keep watch over his far-flung interests.

The ring is activated by feeding the ring 8 hit points worth of blood drawn from the one who would be its master. Like a hungry grub, the cat's eye devours the blood, soaking up every last drop. Once the eye is sated, the master can see through the stone as if the cat's eye were his own eye. This power is not limited by distance, but is cut off once the ring crosses into another plane, or is sealed inside a lead vault.

If the ring is destroyed, its master suffers 1d6+3 points of damage. The ring has a hardness of 5 and 1 hit point. If the ring's master is destroyed, the cat's eye goes white until it is keyed to another master.

Minor evocation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *scrying*; Price 1,000 gp; Weight –.

check to hold on. If the victim fails to hold on, he must make a DC 15 Swim check immediately to stay above the surface. If both checks succeed, the victim is pulled 5 feet closer to safety.

**Treasure:** At the bottom of the pool is an ancient ceremonial scythe stolen from area 1-7 by the kobolds and cast into the quicksand. The golden blade is a +1 *scythe*. The scythe can only be found by those searching the bottom of the pool (DC 15 Search). See area 1-7 for more information on the scythe's legacy.

**Area 1-4 – Is it Dead? (EL 2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The forest path opens into a small clearing, the scene of a recent battle. The furry, blood-soaked body of a massive goblinoid lies in the center of the path. The forest floor is rutted, and broken weapons litter the clearing.*

The bugbear lying in the center of the clearing is only pretending to be dead. A captive of the kobolds, the mangy bugbear has been forced to lie in the center of a hidden net, acting as bait. If a PC comes within 5 feet of the bugbear, the hiding kobolds pull a hidden cord, drawing up the net and hoisting any creature struck by the attack 10 feet into the air. The bugbear is caught as well. The kobolds aren't entirely heartless – they've given the bugbear a dagger to fight with.

As soon as the trap is sprung, the bugbear begins stabbing at anyone caught in the net and crying out for the kobolds. Three kobolds arrive on the second round, first attacking anyone that escaped the trap, and then finishing off those caught in the netting.

The netting of the rope is weak; the net tears open on a DC 20 Strength check, or after taking 6 points of cutting damage. Those caught in the net can only cut with small weapons. If the bugbear is the only one caught in the net, it cuts itself free and flees into the woods.

## Drowning

Any character can hold her breath for a number of rounds equal to twice her Constitution score. After this period of time, the character must make a DC 10 Constitution check every round in order to continue holding her breath. Each round, the DC increases by 1.

When the character finally fails her Constitution check, she begins to drown. In the first round, she falls unconscious (0 hp). In the following round, she drops to –1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, she drowns.

**Avoiding the Trap:** There are a number of ways the PCs can detect or avoid the trap. The bugbear's ruse can be detected by a DC 10 Heal check or a DC 10 Sense Motive check. A successful DC 17 Search or Spot check notices the netting hidden beneath the cover of leaves and dirt. Note that the bugbear still springs the trap if any of these investigations bring a PC within 5 feet.

**Treasure:** Each kobold wears a small gold pendant crudely shaped in the form of a three-fingered hand. Each of these pendants is worth 5 gp for the gold from which they are crafted. One of the kobolds carries a wineskin containing two *potions of cure light wounds*.

**Net Trap:** CR 1/2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 melee (entangle); multiple targets (targets in three adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 17; Disable Device DC 22.

**Captive Bugbear:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d8+3; hp 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk Dagger +4 melee (1d4+2); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., scent; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3, Hide +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

*Possessions:* Dagger.

**Kobolds (3):** CR 1/4; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 4 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp –4; Atk/Full Atk Spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will –1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

*Light Sensitivity (Ex):* Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, spear, crude gold pendant (worth 5 gp).

**Area 1-5 – Log Bridge (EL 1/2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A rushing brook cuts a deep notch across the forest path, tumbling down a series of steep falls. A mossy log has been laid across the brook; the path continues on the far side.*

The log was trapped by kobolds hoping to deter those trying to reach the Healer's Shrine (area 1-6B). The center of the log has been carefully sawn through, so that the log collapses if it is weighted down by more than 20 pounds. Anyone failing a DC 15 Reflex check is dropped into the brook, taking 1d4-2 points of damage.

Climbing up or downstream in the brook requires a DC 15 Strength check each round, permitting PCs to move at half their movement rate.

**Rigged Log Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 15 Reflex save avoids; 6 ft. deep (1d4-2, fall); multiple targets (any target on log); Search DC 16; Disable Device DC 25.

**Area 1-6 – Lake of Mists:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The forest parts to reveal short cliffs descending to a lake shore. The lake is perfectly still and preternaturally blue. A thick gray mist hangs over the surface of the lake, obscuring sight beyond a few dozens yards.*

*As you watch, the mists swirl and twist. You catch glimpses of gray figures in the mists – knights astride chargers, fierce dragons, and magnificent castles. Each shape holds for a moment before vanishing back into the swirling gray.*

*Out over the lake you spot the tops of fir trees. There must be an island in the mist, but is it real or just another phantasm? Real or not, at the base of the cliff below you rests an ancient stone dock.*

The enchanted lake is the remnant of an earlier age, when the kingdoms of the fae ruled the wild places. While the might of the fae has passed, the wild places still retain much of their old powers.

The cliffs are rough and easy to climb (DC 10), but getting to the isle is more challenging.

The lake is uniformly 15 feet deep, the water clear and cool. Swimming to the island (area 1-6B) is impossible – the longer one swims, the farther away the island becomes. (This can turn into a dangerous situation for stubborn heroes: If a PC swims 5 rounds out, they still need to swim 5 rounds back.) The only way to the island, short of magic or flying, is through the dock at area 1-6A.

**Area 1-6A – Path of the Fae (EL 1/2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The stone dock is made from marbled stone that has been polished, cut, and expertly fit. An empty stone brazier stands on either side of the dock. Between the braziers, a staircase descends into the still waters.*

The instant anyone steps onto the dock, the braziers flare to life, lit by continual flame.

A DC 10 Search check reveals an inscription carved into the marble. Years of dirt and moss have obscured the writing, but if the inscription is cleaned out, the words read:

*Warriors Sworn, Prophets True*

*Seekers of Lore & Canting Crew:*

*Never Stray From The Path*

The staircase in the dock is the only way to the island in the mist (area 1-6B). Those descending the staircase don't fall into the lake – instead they walk along the top of the lake, just as if there were a walkway made of stone. So long as the PCs walk directly to the island and don't deviate from their course, they remain suspended above the water.

Those turning away from the path plunge into the water and must immediately begin to make Swim checks. They can be pulled back on to the path by their companions, but cannot climb back on by themselves.

**Area 1-6B – Isle in the Mist:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The isle is small, scarcely a stone's throw across at its widest, but the foliage is strangely lush and full. The tall fir trees make a sheltering canopy, and verdant moss and ferns carpet the rest of the isle. Three mighty black obelisks stand in a crude circle in the center of the time-forgotten island.*

The island was once a portal employed by the druids to access the realms of the fae, and it still acts as a conduit to the curious powers of faerie-kind. Those spending more than 10 minutes on the island must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or fall into a powerful sleep lasting 1d6 hours.

Those who pass this slumber uninterrupted on the island awaken magically healed of 1d12 points of damage. Those who sleep an entire 8 hours on the island are recipients of a *bless* spell (duration 6 hours).

A thorough search of the isle (DC 13 Search) turns up a beached longship hidden in the rushes. The hull of the ship has long since rotted out, leaving only traces of the boat and a massive dragon-head prow. A human skeleton, swabbed in embroidered cloth, rests where the hull once lay. The skeleton clutches a massive masterwork greatsword with a silvered blade.

Those on the isle at dusk or dawn hear (and may be awakened by) laughter like the sound of silver bells. The laughter comes from the south of the isle. Those investigating discover a sparkling silver bridge arching to area 1-7. The Gloaming Bridge exists for only the 15 minutes immediately prior to and following sunrise and sunset.

**Area 1-7 – Shrine of the Healer (EL 1):** This area can only be reached by crossing the Gloaming Bridge. See area 1-6 for more details. Read or paraphrase the following:

*Two mossy statues stand in the forest glade. The first depicts a robed woman with braided hair and a garland of flowers; the second portrays a mighty unicorn. The woman has a raised hand, as if holding a weapon or tool, but the statue's fist is empty.*

The statue is an ancient shrine dedicated to the goddess Ildavir. PCs succeeding on a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check or DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check recognize the goddess; any druids instantly recognize the deity. Druids sleeping in the grove for 8 hours or more are granted two extra 1st-level spells the following day.

The bloodthorn vine that pervades the rest of the forest is absent here, and the forest is healthy and verdant. The statue once held a magical golden scythe, now hidden in the quicksand of area 1-3.

If the scythe is returned to the shrine, read or paraphrase the following.

*The statues are engulfed by a white glow that grows until it rivals the sun. Slowly, the brightness begins to fade, revealing a polished wooden wand resting before you in the grass.*

The wand is a fully charged *wand of cure light wounds*, the PCs' reward for returning the sacred scythe. Once the scythe is placed with the statue, it cannot be removed. Furthermore, if any of the PCs attempt to steal the scythe, the wand becomes instantly and irrevocably powerless, and the would-be thief is afflicted by a *bane* spell with a duration of 24 hours.

**Area 1-8 – Wild Trail:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The trail is densely packed here, and tufts of fur and hair cling to the thorny vines that line the trail's edge. A long, mournful howl interrupts your thoughts. The wail is answered by a chorus of howls. Echoing off the granite cliffs, the howls seem to come from every side.*

A DC 15 Survival (Track) check successfully identifies the tracks of seven wild dogs and a single larger, wolf-sized creature. All have passed along the trail in the last 24 hours.

The howling is coming from the wild dogs of area 1-9.

**Area 1-9 – Cave of Fangs (EL 1/2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The matted trail takes a sharp turn and climbs out of the forest, terminating at the base of the*

*towering cliffs. A small cave entrance, no more than three feet wide and tall, is burrowed into the cliff.*

This cave is the home to the pack of wild dogs that roams the Thornwood. The grass and soil around the entrance of the cave is packed and matted from the tramp of many paws.

A successful DC 13 Knowledge (dungeoneering) or Profession (miner) check reveals that while the tunnel is crude, it was dug by humanoids, not wild dogs. This cave complex (area 1-9 through 1-9B) was built by kobolds, who used the caves as a lair before moving into the dungeon proper.

The entrance to the lair is extremely small; Medium- and Small-sized PCs have to crawl in order to enter the cave. Note that PCs on their hands and knees are unable to wield two-handed weapons. PCs crawling through the tunnel are also considered flat-footed, and suffer a –1 to their attack and damage rolls.

A wild dog waits in the darkness, hackles raised and fangs bared. The dog ferociously attacks intruders, alerting its pack-mates in area 1-9A. The dog suffers no penalties to fighting in the narrow tunnel, but the dog can be lured out of the tunnel by feigning retreat.

**Wild Dog:** CR 1/3; Small animal; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp –3; Atk/Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d4+1); SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Jump +7, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +1\*; Alertness, Track. \*Dogs have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

**Area 1-9A – Den (EL 1):** As the PCs press further into the den, the cave grows to a 7-foot-tall ceiling, allowing Medium- and Small-sized adventurers to stand upright.

Read or paraphrase the following:

*The tunnel widens into a small den, and finally there is room to stand up. The floor is dirt, packed from the passage of hundreds of paws. Tufts of fur litter the dusty floor, alongside splinters of shattered bones. A pair of narrow tunnels breaks from the den, wending further into the spire.*

*Three snarling dogs stand against the far wall, growling in anger. Slowly they advance, lips curled, fangs gleaming in the dim light.*

The dogs hurl themselves into combat, defending their lair to the death. The dogs concentrate their attacks on their largest foe, trying to bring the target down before

moving on to the others. If any of the dogs takes damage from another target, the dog turns on the new target, effectively breaking the tactic.

A narrow hole is dug into the ceiling of the southwest corner of the den. Climbing into the hole reveals a narrow tunnel leading to area 2-7. This tunnel was dug by the kobolds in their exploration of level 2.

**Wild Dogs (3):** CR 1/3; Small animal; HD 1d8+2; hp 6 each; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d4+1); SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Jump +7, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +1\*; Alertness, Track. \*Dogs have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

**Area 1-9B – The Old Queen (EL 1):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The tunnel climbs to a raised ledge that wends back into darkness. Stretched out on the ledge is an enormous, silver-back wolf. Its paws are as large as clubs, and its jaws could easily crush a skull. The beast pulls itself up, a thunderous growl growing in its belly.*

The she-wolf is ancient and far from her prime. But what the old queen lacks in strength and speed, she makes up in cunning. The she-wolf uses her trip to

great advantage: On any trip attempt that succeeds by 2 or more, the wolf trips the victim over the lip of the ledge, causing an additional 1d4-1 points of falling damage. This tactic is thwarted if the she-wolf is forced more than 5 feet away from the ledge.

If the she-wolf is reduced to 5 hp or less, she flees into the woods.

The tunnel to the west leads to area 2-5. The tunnel was dug by the kobolds in their exploration of level 2.

**Treasure:** PCs succeeding on a DC 15 Survival or Profession (hunter) check note that the silver-haired pelt of the massive she-wolf is worth 50 gp. This is reduced to 15 gp if the she-wolf is slain by piercing or slashing weapons.

**She-Wolf:** CR 1; Medium animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +0; Spd 50 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6); SA Trip; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Survival +1\*; Track, Weapon Focus (bite). \*Wolves have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

*Trip (Ex):* A wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+1 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.

## Encounter Area 2: Dungeons of the Beastmen

The dungeons beneath the spire were built by dwarf miners hired by the Order of the Beastmen. The corridors and rooms are examples of expert stonework. Since the mysterious disappearance of the Order, the dungeons have fallen into neglect and disrepair. Cobwebs coat the ceilings and corners of the rooms, the flagstone floors are coated in grime and mud, and the stink of kobolds permeates the air.

Unless noted otherwise, the arched ceilings are 10 feet tall. All walls and doors in this level have the following statistics:

**Superior Masonry:** 2 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 180; Break DC 35; Climb DC 20.

**Good Wooden Door:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 16 (stuck), 18 (locked).

### Wandering Monsters

There is a 1 in 12 chance per hour that the characters come across a random encounter while on this level.

Note that unless otherwise noted, loud combat will draw intelligent creatures within hearing range. Randomly determine the nature of the encounter by rolling 1d6:

1d6	Encounter
1-3	1d2 kobolds
4-5	1d4 rats
6	1 Medium monstrous centipede

The following statistics are provided for easy reference.

**Kobold:** CR 1/4; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk Spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3) or spear +3 ranged (1d6-1/x3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

*Possessions:* Spear, crude gold pendant (5 gp).

*Light Sensitivity (Ex):* Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.



**Rat:** CR 1/8; Tiny animal; HD 1/4 d8; hp 1; Init +2; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d3-4); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse.

**Monstrous Centipede:** CR 1/2; Medium vermin; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk/Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6-1 plus poison); SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 9, Dex 15, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +10, Hide +10, Spot +4; Weapon Finesse.

*Poison (Ex):* A monstrous centipede has a poisonous bite (injury, Fort DC 10, initial and secondary damage 1d3 Dex).

## Areas of the Map

**Area 2-1 – Maw of the Dragon (EL 2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The forest opens to reveal the base of the towering spire. Here the rock has been carved into the head of a roaring dragon, its jaws thrown wide in roaring triumph, its sharp horns arching high above. The carving is true down to the scales and the hundreds of sharp fangs filling the dragon's maw.*

*Peering inside – down the dragon's throat – you spy a staircase rising into darkness.*

Show the players handout A. Four kobolds lurk in the shadows at the top of the stairs. As the PCs enter, roll Spot checks, opposed by the kobolds' Hide checks. If the PCs fail to notice the hidden kobolds, the lizard-kin wait for the PCs to trigger the trap, then fire their crossbows. On the second round, the kobolds flee through the doors to area 2-2.

A DC 15 Spot check notices a charcoal X scratched onto the seventh stair. Stepping on the sixth, seventh, or eighth stair triggers a portcullis trap: The teeth of the dragon slide closed, spearing those caught beneath them. The mark was left by the kobolds as a reminder; the teeth recede in 10 rounds, resetting the trap. The dragon teeth can also be lifted off a victim with a DC 20 Strength check.

**Kobolds (4):** CR 1/4; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 4 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk Spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3) or light crossbow +3 ranged (1d6/19-20); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.



*Skills and Feats:* Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

*Light Sensitivity (Ex):* Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, light crossbow, 5 bolts, spear, crude gold pendant (5 gp).

**Dragon Teeth Portcullis Trap:** CR 1/2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +7 melee (1d12); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. Note: Damage applies only to those underneath the portcullis.

**Aged Wooden Doors:** 2 in. thick; hardness 3; hp 8; Break DC 13.

**Area 2-2 – Shrine of Tsath-Azaro:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A pair of mighty, ironbound doors guards the entrance to the inner sanctum. Past the portal stands a great hall decorated with arches sculpted in the likeness of mighty serpents. Tile mosaics cover the walls, depicting scenes of war and battle.*

*At the head of the hall, atop a marble dais, stands an odd addition to the hall. A giant humanoid, crafted out of bound reeds, thatch, and mud, dominates the hall like a crude scarecrow. Easily twelve feet tall, the thing's horns scratch the very roof of the sanctum, and its tail curls about the back of the dais.*

*Inverted shields filled with oil rest atop piles of stone on either side of the thatch statue, approximating crude braziers.*

Kobolds escaping area 2-1 attempt to close the doors before the PCs arrive. The doors are heavy and stuck from neglect; a DC 18 Strength check is required to close the portal. (Surviving kobolds may work together, as per the aid another rules in the PHB.) Once the doors are closed, it takes the kobolds 2 rounds to bar the doors, locking them closed.

The thatch statue was built by the kobolds in honor of their false god, Tsath-Azaro. The statue is poorly balanced; if the statue is disturbed by the slightest touch, it pitches forward. Those in the 4 squares directly before the statue must make DC 15 Reflex saves or be caught under the tumbling statue. Anyone caught under the falling statue takes 1d4 points of crushing damage.

**Reinforced Doors:** 3 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 25; Break DC 18 (stuck), 25 (locked).

**Area 2-2A – Rusted Gate (EL 1/2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A closed iron gate blocks the corridor. The gate is coated in rust, staining the floor, ceilings and walls. Beyond the gate, the corridor makes a sharp left turn. You hear yapping dogs in the distance.*

The gate is locked with a simple lock. (The key is kept by the King of Kobolds in area 2-11.) Years of neglect have rendered the gate difficult to open – the kobolds have intentionally contributed to the gate's decline – and a DC 15 Strength check is necessary to open the gate.

Opening the gate causes the hinges to shriek, alerting the kobolds in area 2-4. A successful DC 15 Profession (locksmith) check or a DC 17 Search check reveals that the hinges have been abused to create noise. A DC 15 Disable Device check, or a few dribbles of oil, are enough to silence the kobold's alarm.

The noise of "yapping dogs" is the jabbering of the kobolds in area 2-4.

**Iron Gate:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 45; Open Lock (DC 10); Break DC 15 (stuck), 30 (locked).

**Area 2-3 – Hall of Death and Might (EL 1):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*Before you stands a circular room with a high, vaulted ceiling. Eight alcoves are built into the walls. Inside each alcove stands a suit of rusting scale mail armor with helms cast in the likeness*

*of lion heads. On the far side of the room hangs a polished wooden weapons rack. Hanging from the rack are five weapons: a great sword, a morningstar, an orc double axe, a long sword, and a scimitar. Though covered with a thick coat of cobwebs and dust, the weapons gleam in the dim light.*

*A blood-black rune is inscribed in the floor, depicting a great dragon devouring itself. The fresh corpse of a kobold is lying in the rune, its body being consumed by maggots. Above, the chamber's ceiling has been painted night black; six sigils, marked by glowing gems set into the ceiling, twinkle like stars in the night sky.*

*The smell of death hovers in the air.*

When the Beastmen ruled the Dragonspire, this chamber exhibited masterwork relics dedicated to the cause of the order. While the cultists are long gone, the weapons remain. The majority of kobolds have shunned the room, but the few foolish enough to dare the chamber have all died violent deaths.

Entering the room triggers a *magic mouth* that speaks in a deep, booming voice:

*"What foolish mortal claims the might of the Beastmen?"*

Regardless of the PC's answer, the *magic mouth* responds:

*"Choose a weapon, and prove yourself worthy of the name."*

If the PC moves to take a weapon, a suit of armor steps from an alcove, blocking retreat from the room. The armor, gauntlets, and visor completely conceal the occupant: an animated skeleton. The undead creature battles any PC taking a weapon from the chamber, fighting to the death, or until the PC surrenders the weapon.

If any PCs come to their companion's aid, additional skeletons joins the melee, evenly matching the heroes' numbers, one to one.

PCs examining the ceiling and succeeding on a DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check realize that the sigils placed on the ceiling correspond to constellations in the night sky. The constellations correspond to their proper place in the night sky on summer solstice. In clockwise order, the sequence is: dragon, snake, hawk, lion, horse, spider. This sequence is the key to opening the rune gate in area 3-7.

**Treasure:** The weapons hanging from the rack are all masterwork items. Each bears the sigil of a dragon devouring its own tail. The sigil grants a +1 circumstance bonus to Intimidation checks used

against locals who still whisper tales of the Order of the Beastmen.

The glowing gems placed in the ceiling are quartz crystals enchanted with *permanent dancing lights*. There are 61 gems in all, each worth 5 gp. If removed from the ceiling, a gem clearly illuminates a 10-foot radius, and provides shadowy illumination out to a 20-foot radius.

**Skeleton (8):** CR 1/3; Medium Undead; HD 1d12; hp 8 each; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk Glaive +1 melee (1d10/x3); SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Improved Initiative.

*Possessions:* Glaive, scale mail.

**Area 2-4 – Common Room (EL 2):** If the PCs bypassed area 2-2A without setting off the alarm, the kobolds are lounging about the room, unprepared for combat. Otherwise, read or paraphrase the following:

*A pitched war cry fills the air and a mob of kobolds swarms from hiding. A quick glance about the room is all you have time for. You note a mess of rotting pelts, stacked crates, scattered cooking fires... and an enormous ogre wielding a mighty sword, watching you with quiet, deadly eyes!*

Nine kobolds occupy the common room. Eight are the average warriors swarming the PCs; the ninth is Kih-koth, a sorcerer hidden beside the iron gate to area 2-6. The ogre is Kih-koth's creation, a *silent image* cast to distract and intimidate the PCs. Kih-koth will direct the *image* within its range of effect, doing his best to imitate true movements. Thus the ogre will narrowly escape PC attacks, and always have its own attack barely thwarted.

The common kobolds fight to the death in the defense of their lair, but Kih-koth is an unrepentant coward. As soon as PCs discover his illusion or begin to get the better of his comrades, the kobold sorcerer flees. Kih-koth runs to area 2-6A, only to die, slain by the crossbow trap. See area 2-6A for more information on the trap that takes Kih-koth's life.

The common room is a mess of kobold bedding, discarded trash, and half-eaten meals. Rotten pelts, moldy rags, animal skulls, and bits of rope and cord litter the room.

**Treasure:** A DC 13 Search check reveals a canvas sack hidden in the southeast corner of the room. Grubs and mold have rendered the sack nearly useless, but inside are 5 cp, a silver dagger, and a small book with a cover of beaten copper and closed with

a silver clasp. The book is worth 5 gp, but to the PCs its contents will prove priceless. The book belonged to Sir Galwaith, and contains his notes on the minotaur, Toth-Ror. Most of the pages have been ruined, but the last page remains decipherable, written in Sir Galwaith's "secret" script. Show players handout B. Thinking himself clever, Galwaith wrote in mirror-script.

**Kih-koth, kobold Sor1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (reptilian) (4 ft. 6 in.); HD 1d4; hp 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp –2; Atk/Full Atk Spear –2 melee (1d6-2/x3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL NE; SV Fort 0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +3, Craft (trapmaking) +1, Hide +4, Move Silently +4; Stealthy.

*Light Sensitivity (Ex):* Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

*Spells Known (5/4; save DC = 12 + spell level):* 0-level – *acid splash, dancing lights, ghost sound, read magic*; 1st-level – *cause fear, silent image*.

*Possessions:* Spear, tattered red cape, crude gold pendant (5 gp).

**Kobolds (8):** CR 1/4; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 4 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp –4; Atk/Full Atk Spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3) or throwing rock +3 ranged (1d3-1); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will –1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

*Light Sensitivity (Ex):* Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

*Possessions:* Spear, 4 throwing rocks, crude gold pendant (5 gp).

**Area 2-5 – Trash Well (EL 1):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The foul stench of rot, feces, and worse wafts up from the black pit before you. A wet, sucking sound echoes up from inside the well, like a giant, ancient creature pulling itself from a muddy lair.*

The well is 40 feet deep. The Order of the Beastmen placed a gelatinous cube in the pit and used it to dispose of refuse and trash. Remnants of scattered trash still litter the room above. Bits of dried food stain the floor and encrust the lip and walls of the well.

The cube has long since died, but that hasn't stopped the kobolds from filling the well with waste. Now a monstrous centipede makes its lair at the

base of the well, surviving on carrion and rats lured by the trash. The centipede ignores most noises, but is awakened by the sound of squealing rats.

When the kobolds began to explore the spire, their tunnel broke into the well. The kobold's tunnel intersects the well 20 feet below the lip of the well (see map).

Ten feet above the kobold tunnel and 10 feet below the lip of the well is a rusted iron grate built across the well. The grate can be lifted with a DC 13 Strength check. Three rats lurk atop the grate nipping at anyone attempting to move it. If the rats are injured, the monstrous centipede comes to investigate, looking for a meal. The centipede expects to eat rat, but will settle for hero.

**Climbing in the Well:** Ascending the well is possible, but not easy (Climb DC 15), and adventurers would do well to rope themselves in. The kobold trash has begun to accumulate in the base of the well, and softens any fall. Those falling while climbing in the well take only 1d4 points of damage for every 10 feet fallen.

**Treasure:** Searching the trash is a disgusting act requiring a DC 10 Fortitude save for every round spent searching. Those failing the save are nauseated for 1d12 minutes. A successful DC 15 Search check reveals a bone-white scroll case containing a divine scroll. The scroll holds the spells *command*, *cure light wounds*, and *hide from undead*. The scroll is wrapped around a ruby-tipped *wand of magic missiles* (3rd) with 7 charges remaining.

**Rats (3):** CR 1/8; Tiny animal; HD 1/4 d8; hp 1 each; Init +2; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk Bite +4 melee (1d3-4); Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d3-4); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse.

**Monstrous Centipede:** CR 1/2; Medium vermin; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk/Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6-1 plus poison); SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 9, Dex 15, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +10, Hide +10, Spot +4; Weapon Finesse.

*Poison (Ex):* A monstrous centipede has a poisonous bite (injury, Fort DC 10, initial and secondary damage 1d3 Dex).

**Iron Grate:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; Lift DC 13, Break 20.

**Area 2-6 – Fane of the Beastman:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A heavy iron gate walls off the chamber. Past the rusted metal bars you spy a short hallway. The walls of the grim place are decorated with bas-relief skeletons that leer at you through the darkness.*

*A statue stares at you from the far end of the hall. The statue depicts a wolf-headed humanoid armored in studded leather. The beastman carries a massive executioner's axe over one shoulder, and presents a head with his other hand.*

While the gate has a lock, it is unlocked. Kih-koth, the kobold sorcerer, flees through this room in his attempt to escape the PCs, turning south only to die by a trap in area 2-6A.

The statue represents a warrior-saint sacred to the Beastmen. The name and significance of the saint is lost to the ages, but time has not diminished the statue's magic. Any PCs examining the head presented by the executioner must make a DC 13 Will save. A PC who *succeeds* in the save sees his own head in the place of the presented head; the decapitated head speaks a dire riddle:

*Astride the stones, nei'r up nor down,*

*Is hidden, the eldritch fane.*

*Shun the Warlock's Token Crown*

*To find the Bull Lord's Bane.*

The head speaks the riddle, then reverts to its statue form. The riddle refers to area 2-14 and the magic items hidden in the room.

**Iron Gate:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 45; Break DC 15 (stuck), 30 (locked).

**Area 2-6A – Crossbow Trap (EL 1):** If Kih-koth succeeded in escaping area 2-4, read or paraphrase the following:

*A kobold lies on the floor of the corridor, collapsed in a pool of its own blood.*

If Kih-koth didn't escape, the PCs may have no forewarning of the trap.

Three cords are stretched across the corridor at knee-level; if Kih-koth's body is here, the kobold has triggered one. The cords have all been brushed with charcoal, but a DC 15 Search or Spot check notices a tripwire before triggering the trap. If any one of the three threads is tripped, a repeating crossbow fires out of the darkness at the end of the hall. The trap resets automatically and can be triggered a total of three times.

The crossbow is mounted in an alcove at the end of the corridor. The light repeating crossbow can be removed from the alcove and detached from the mechanism. The crossbow has three bolts.

**Repeating Crossbow Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged (1d8/19-20, repeating light crossbow); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 15.

**Area 2-7 – Old Armory (EL 3):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*Half this chamber has collapsed, scattering tiles and rubble about the floor. Some of the debris has been cleared and collected into piles, and rough beams support the ceiling. Racks line the walls, holding crude armor and makeshift weapons. Glowing embers smolder in a fire pit in the far corner of the room.*

Before its collapse, this chamber served as an armory. Now the kobolds' smith and chief trapmaker works here, digging weapons and armor out of the rubble and retrofitting them for his clanmates.

The wooden racks hold the smith's work: 14 spears, 4 suits of small-sized leather armor, 32 crossbow bolts. Piled in the southeast corner of the room are 2 medium-sized chain shirts. Behind the pile is a tunnel running southeast to area 1-9A.

**Tactics:** The smith is a burley old kobold, scarred from years of battle. His companion is a trained dire weasel; they fight as a pair, defending each other, and if either takes more than half his hit points, both retreat toward area 1-9A.

The smith leads off combat by firing his crossbow, then enters melee, fighting with a masterwork longsword wielded in two hands. The sword's pommel is wrapped in black leather, concealing a set of thieves' tools.

**Treasure:** After Sir Galwaith was slain, his shield was brought here as a trophy. The medium steel +1 shield still bears the knight's heraldic sign, a rampant red griffon. The shield has been inverted and filled with water to serve as a water trough for the dire weasel.

**Kobold Smith, War1/Exp1:** CR 1; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8+1d6+4; hp 18; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Base Atk +1; Grp -1; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Atk/Full Atk Longsword +4 melee (1d8+1/19-20) or light crossbow +2 ranged (1d8/19-20); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref 0, Will 0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 7, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft (trapmaking) +8, Craft (weaponsmithing) +6, Hide +1, Profession (mining)

+4, Search +6; Toughness.

*Light Sensitivity (Ex):* Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

*Possessions:* Spiked buckler, chain shirt, light crossbow, masterwork longsword.

**Dire Weasel:** CR 2; Medium animal; HD 3d8; hp 11; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk Bite +6 melee (1d6+3); SA Attach, blood drain; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +8, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +5; Alertness, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse.

*Attach (Ex):* A dire weasel that hits with its bite attack latches onto the opponent's body with its powerful jaws. An attached dire weasel loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and thus has an AC of 12. An attached dire weasel can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached dire weasel through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the creature.

*Blood Drain (Ex):* A dire weasel drains blood for 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round it remains attached.

**Area 2-8 – Portal of Serpents (EL 2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The long hall has been ruined by a series of cave-ins. To one side, a series of short stairs rise to pile of debris. In the other direction, a collection of fallen boulders fill the hall. Across the hall stands a stone door, adorned with the carving of twin serpents, each devouring the other.*

While the collapse to the east was natural, the collapse of the west was caused by the kobolds to cover the statue of an enormous metallic serpent. A DC 15 Search check reveals the tip of the serpent's forked tongue. Four man-hours of work unearths the head of the serpent.

The metal snake was once an elaborate trap, and freeing it from the rubble permits the trap to reset. After unearthing the snake, alert PCs may notice the sound of falling sand (DC 13 Listen check) as the trap's mechanism begins to reset. After 3 rounds, the snake retracts. The snake head strikes out at any creature coming within 10 feet of the serpent's head.

The door has no visible means of opening. On closer inspection (DC 15 Search), it is evident that the heads of both snakes are designed to be twisted. Rotating the right snake triggers a poison needle trap. Rotating the left snake trips a lever, causing the door to recede into the wall.

**Treasure:** The body of a human cultist is hidden in the debris of the eastern cave-in (DC 15 Search). The cultist wears a suit of chainmail and carries a





long sword, but both the armor and weapon are ruined by rust. Hidden in the cultist's rotting leather boot are 11 sp, and a single copper coin embossed with the image of a serpent devouring itself. The coin is actually a token of the serpent's favor, and bestows a +1 resistance bonus to Fortitude saves. (Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, resistance; price 375 gp.)

**Serpent Head Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +8 melee (1d8/x3); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 20.

**Poison Needle Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged (1 plus blue whinnis poison); poison (blue whinnis, injury, DC 14, initial 1 Con, secondary unconsciousness); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 20.

**Area 2-9 – Honor Guard (EL 2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A gang of motley kobolds guards the chamber before you, clutching their weapons and whispering back and forth in fierce hisses. These lizard-kin are markedly different from the others you have encountered thus far. Their spears are wickedly serrated, and the kobolds carry black bucklers hung with shiny, black raven feathers. The kobolds wear the crudely tanned hides of wolves and cougars, and have painted their faces white as bone.*

*Snarling fiercely, the kobolds advance!*

The kobolds quickly close with PCs, attempting to hold the PCs in the corridor before the heroes can spread out into the guard room. The kobolds have sworn themselves to death before dishonor, and hurl themselves into battle, howling with abandon.

The honor guard is devoted to the defense of the tribe's Witchdoctor. They believe that the shaman is an incarnated dragon, and the chamber is strewn with small clay icons fashioned in the likeness of crude dragons. There are 33 icons in all.

A small clay kiln is located in northwest corner of the room. Inside the kiln are six unfired dragon figurines. Outside the oven is a pile of wet clay.

**Treasure:** Hidden inside each icon is a gold coin. There are 39 gold coins in all.

A careful search of the room (DC 20 Search) reveals a cache of coins hidden in a hole beneath a loose flagstone. The hole contains 23 cp, 11 sp, 4 gp, and 1 pp in a loose pile.

**Kobold Honor Guard (5):** CR 1/4; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 4 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk Spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +2, Listen +2, Move Silently -2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

**Light Sensitivity (Ex):** Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

**Possessions:** Spear, buckler, hide armor, crude gold pendant (5 gp).

**Area 2-10 – Cave of the Dragon Totem (EL 3):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*Rough stairs descend to a rocky beach. A swift river cuts through the center of the cave, feeding a pool that covers the back half of the cavern. A solemn, dragon-headed totem stands in the center of the pool, watching you with dull carved eyes.*

*The rotting corpse of a beast lies on the beach to your left. Three black ravens sit atop the corpse, cawing madly at the foreigners in their midst.*

The cavern is home to a filthy one-eyed kobold, the tribe's Witchdoctor. Painted with spiraling runes and sigils, the kobold lurks in the shadows on the east side of the cavern, hidden among the stalagmites.

The Witchdoctor has raised a flock of trained ravens and poisoned their claws. The ravens attack any intruders entering the cavern. A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check determines the nature of the poison.

Once this is determined, an antidote of herbs can be made with a successful DC 15 Heal check.

While the ravens distract the PCs, the Witchdoctor casts spells and hurls darts from the darkness. Given the chance, the kobold sprints to the totem and depresses the first pressure plate (see below).

The Witchdoctor carries the *beast key*, a golden scepter decorated with six runes (dragon, lion, horse on one side; hawk, snake, spider on the other). The *beast key* is worth 100 gp for its craftsmanship, and magically opens the rune gate (see area 3-7). If met with overwhelming odds, the shaman hurls the *beast key* into the river, then falls to his knees, pleading for mercy. The current catches the *beast key* and sweeps it downstream and out of the room in 2 rounds. The scepter can be caught by leaping into the water and succeeding on a DC 15 Swim check. After 2 rounds, the key is swept into the dark tunnel where the current picks up speed, carrying both the key and any swimmers downstream, increasing the difficulty of catching the scepter by +5. Note that PCs carried down the rapids in area 1-5 suffer damage according to the area's description.

PCs inspecting the rotting corpse and succeeding on a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check recognize it as the dismembered body of a rust monster. The "rusting" parts of the beast have all been carefully removed, powdered, and turned into the trap in area 3-3.

**Treasure:** The dragon-totem resting in the sand is a relic of the Beastmen, now sacred to the kobold tribe. It emits chilling waves that radiate throughout the room. Anyone coming within 10 feet of the totem can feel the unnaturally cold waves coming from it, and those standing within 5 feet of the totem are subject to a great unease, as if some maleficent force were watching from over their shoulders. Those praying before the fell totem will be struck by a powerful vision of an ancient black dragon; neutral and good-aligned PCs will sense a seething enmity and hatred, while evil PCs will feel compelled to placate the foul being. Whether the creature actually exists, and any role it might play in the campaign, is left entirely up to the GM.

**The Totem:** Close inspection of the totem (DC 15 Search) discovers three pressure plates hidden on the spine of the dragon. The plates are disguised as scales, and are key to the shaman's control over the tribe.

Depressing the first plate triggers a *programmed illusion* of a fearsome black dragon rising out of the center of the lake; the dragons casts its head about and roars for 4 rounds before sinking below the surface of the lake.

Depressing the second plate springs a poison needle trap (see below).

Depressing the third plate causes the panel to slide away, revealing a hidden compartment. Inside is the kobold's cache of treasure: 14 gp, 137 cp, a pot of white paste (4 doses of medium spider poison), a *potion of cure light wounds*, and a *pearl of power* (1st).

**Kobold Witchdoctor, Adp3:** CR 2; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 3d6+3; hp 16; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk Morningstar +1 melee (1d6-1) or dart +4 ranged (1d3-1); Full Atk Morningstar +1 melee (1d6-1) or dart +2/+2 ranged (1d3-1); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity, summon familiar; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +7, Craft (alchemy) +4, Heal +8, Hide +10, Search +6; Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

*Spells Known* (3/3; save DC = 12 + spell level): 0-level – *cure minor wounds* (x3); 1st-level – *protection from good*, *obscuring mists*, *sleep*.

*Possessions:* 10 darts, morningstar, jade dragon worn as a necklace (holy symbol, worth 7 gp), *beast key*.

**Ravens (3):** CR 1/6; Tiny animal; HD 1/4 d8; hp 1 each; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk/Full Atk Claws +4 melee (1d2-5 plus poison); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +3, Spot +5; Weapon Finesse.

*Poison:* Injury, Fort DC 11; initial and secondary damage 1d4 Con.

**Poison Needle Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +8 ranged (1 plus poison); poison (bloodroot, DC 12 Fortitude save resists, initial -, secondary 1d4 Con plus 1d3 Wis); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 18.

**Area 2-11 – Rain of Kings (EL 3):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The crude stairway opens to a vast great hall. A wide staircase, flanked by flaming braziers, rises to a grisly scene.*

*The body of a fallen knight lies at the foot of a wooden throne, flanked by two fierce kobold warriors armed with glinting spears. Atop the crude throne rests a kobold arrayed in a shimmering robe of scales and wearing an elaborate dragon mask.*

*The masked kobold roars with disdain, daring you to enter.*

The kobold wearing the dragon mask is a decoy posing as the kobold king. He taunts and mocks the PCs in an attempt to lure them into the room. The true kobold king is astride a monstrous spider, hanging from the ceiling directly above the southwest corner of the room. In order to spot the king and his mount, PCs must make a contested Spot check against the spider's Hide check. The king and his spider mount drop onto PCs as they enter, the spider attacking the last rank of the marching order, while the king casts spells at PC warriors. Meanwhile the three kobold guards charge down the stairs, attempting to break the party's ranks and add to the chaos.

The kobold guards fight to the death, but the king retreats when the tide of battle turns against him.

The body lying in the center of the floor is the corpse of Sir Galwaith. The body is bloated and is infested with maggots, but still wears the knight's ornamented half-plate armor.

A search of the room (DC 10) turns up Galwaith's leather backpack, discarded in the northeast corner of the room. The backpack has been emptied of valuables, but the kobolds missed a secret pocket sewn into the inside of the pack. If the PCs think to examine the backpack (DC 15 Search), they discover the secret pocket and its contents: a sparkling emerald worth 50 gp.

**Treasure:** 11 crates, 4 barrels, and 2 coffers are stacked on either side of the throne. The crates all contain rotting foodstuffs that are edible to kobolds but poisonous to non-monstrous humanoids. The barrels contain diluted wine. Hidden beneath one barrel (DC 15 Search) is a silver necklace worth 10 gp. The first coffer holds 1 longsword, 2 short swords, and 4 daggers packed with straw. The second coffer contains 40 arrows and 20 bolts packed with straw.

The shimmering robe of scales and the dragon's head mask are decorated with mica, worth 5 gp each.

**Kobold King, male kobold Ftr1/Sor1:** CR 2; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d10+1d4+2; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk +1 glaive +3 melee (1d8+1/x3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity, summon familiar; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +4, Ride +4; Combat Casting, Iron Will.

*Spells Known* (5/4; save DC = 12 + spell level; spell failure 25%): 0-level – *acid splash*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st-level – *magic missile*, *cause fear*.

*Possessions:* Buckler, chain shirt, dragon head mask, key (to area 2-2A), +1 glaive.

**Monstrous Spider, Medium:** CR 1; Medium vermin; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d6 plus poison); SA Poison, web; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11, Hide +7\*, Jump +0\*, Spot +4\*; Weapon Finesse.

*Poison (Ex):* A monstrous spider has a poisonous bite (injury, Fort DC 12, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Str).

*Tremorsense (Ex):* A monstrous spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the spider's webs.

*Web (Ex):* The spider can throw a web eight times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 12) or burst it with a Strength check (DC 16). Each 5-foot section has 6 hp.

**Kobolds (3):** CR 1/4; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8; hp 4 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk Spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

*Light Sensitivity (Ex):* Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

*Possessions:* Spear, crude gold pendant (5 gp).

**Area 2-12 – The Webbed Chasm (EL 2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The rough-hewn corridor opens to the lip of a yawning chasm. The chasm is filled with thick, gray webs that stretch from wall to wall, ceiling to floor, obscuring the depths of the canyon. High above the center of the canyon looms an enormous eight-legged shape, obscured by webs and the darkness.*

This chasm is home to the monstrous spider of area 2-11 and its arachnid progeny. The monstrous shape lurking in the webs is only the husk of a dead monstrous spider; the body has been sucked dry by six recently hatched spiders. If the dead spider is struck for any damage, the dried husk splits open, spilling six tiny monstrous spiders. The spiders swarm toward the nearest PC, eager for fresh prey.

The chasm is only 20 feet deep and is infested with webs. The strands can be burnt (releasing the six spiders), or cut through (6 hp per 5 feet). Those

falling into the webbing can escape with an Escape Artist check (DC 12) or burst the webs with a Strength check (DC 16).

The walls of the chasm are rough and can be climbed with a DC 15 Climb check.

**Monstrous Spider, Tiny (6):** CR 1/4; Tiny vermin; HD 1/2 d8; hp 2 each; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk/Full Atk Bite +5 melee (1d3-4 plus poison); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Poison, web; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 3, Dex 17, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11, Hide +15\*, Jump -4\*, Spot +4\*; Weapon Finesse.

*Poison (Ex):* A monstrous spider has a poisonous bite (injury, Fort DC 10, initial and secondary damage 1d2 Str).

*Tremorsense (Ex):* A monstrous spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the spider's webs.

**Area 2-12A – Fallen Longbeard:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The narrow crevice ends in a small nook. Through the dim light, you can see the dusty corpse of a humanoid, armored in scale mail and clutching a waraxe. The air is cool and still.*

Upon closer inspection, the corpse is revealed to be the body of a dwarven warrior. The dwarf belonged to a party of adventurers who succeeded in fighting their way to area 2-11 before they were overcome by kobolds. The dwarf fled into the chasm, and collapsed here, dead of spider bites.

The dwarf's items are dusty but otherwise no worse for the wear. The waraxe is a masterwork item and bears the stamp of three towers (the mark of the *Holdfast of the Steel Overlord*). The scale mail is forged of mithril and has the following properties: armor bonus +4, maximum Dex bonus +5, armor check penalty -1, arcane spell failure 15%, weight 15 pounds. It is considered light armor, so it does not reduce the wearer's base speed.

**Area 2-13 – Dancing Bones (EL 1):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The stairs climb further into the spire, terminating at a stout wooden door. The steps are slick with slime here, and the air is cool and wet.*

The door is swollen with moisture and difficult to open (Break DC 16). Once opened, read or paraphrase the following:

*The door bursts open with a crack, showering*

*you with splinters and dust. Past the door is a dusty guard room. Three towering, horned skeletons leap toward you, their mighty greatswords cleaving the air!*

Roll for surprise and initiative as normal, calling for actions. Any PC attempting to retreat back down the stairs must make a DC 15 Reflex save or slip on the slime and tumble to the base of the stairs, taking 1d6 points of damage from the fall.

The weird skeletons are painted paper maché, suspended by wires tied into a series of counterweights and the door. The dancing skeletons can cause no damage other than frightening the PCs into retreating back down the stairs. The greatswords are painted wood (treat as quarterstaves if used in combat).

A DC 15 Search check notes a trail of blood running from the entrance of the room to area 2-15. This is the blood left by the wounded minotaur Toth-Ror when he was carried back to the citadel.

**Fake Skeleton Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 15 Reflex save avoids; fall (1d6); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 15.

**Good Wooden Door:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 16 (stuck), 18 (locked).

**Area 2-14 – Eldritch Wizardry (EL 1, 2):** The entrance to the secret library is hidden by a secret door that can be found with a DC 20 Search check. The door's latch is triggered by depressing a small stone pressure plate in the opposite wall. Otherwise, the stone door can be broken down or destroyed.

Read or paraphrase the following:

*Peering past the secret door, you spy a shadowed workshop with shelf upon shelf of ancient tomes, dusty scrolls, and weird artifacts. Something deep inside the workshop glows warmly, casting a devilish pall over the chamber.*

The laboratory was once the secret workshop of a powerful mage who served the beast cult. The mage has long since vanished, and the workshop hasn't been disturbed since. The magician's homunculus still remains in the room, doing its feeble best to keep the laboratory ready for its master's return.

The mage's long absence has driven the homunculus insane. In its desperation, it flies toward the most powerful arcane spellcaster in the party, wrongly believing the spellcaster to be its master. This is not an attack, but PCs may be hard pressed to discern the homunculus' intentions. As soon as the homunculus realizes that the PC is *not* its master, the homunculus' fragile mind collapses; the homunculus retreats back inside the laboratory and begins hurling flasks of acid at the PCs (see Pool A below).

Three pools occupy the center of the workshop. The pools once served as aids in the creation of magic items, but their powers have long since faded. Each pool is surrounded by a low, stone wall, and is filled with 5 feet of clear liquid.

**Pool A:** At the base of the pool rests a golden crown. The clear liquid filling the pool is a powerful acid; reaching into the pool inflicts 2d4 points of acid damage to any substance other than stone or metal. The golden crown is an illusion that vanishes when disturbed. The acid is magic in nature and loses its qualities 1d4 rounds after being removed from the pool.

Several dozen flasks rest on the wall of the pool; the homunculus can fill a flask and hurl it in the same round. A flask of acid inflicts 1d4 points of damage.

**Pool B:** The liquid in this pool glows with a hellish red light; resting at the base of the pool is a silver-bladed stiletto. If but a single drop of the liquid touches a PC's skin, a powerful transformation takes place: The PC's highest stat is raised by 1, and the PC's 2 lowest stats are reduced by 1. This exchange may take place but once per PC, and the liquid loses all its properties 1d6 hours after being removed from the pool.

The stiletto is a +1 *dagger of piercing*. The powerful relic disregards nonmagical armor bonuses, sliding through armor as if it were cloth.

**Pool C:** The liquid in this pool is water. Resting at the base of the pool are 3 black arrows distinguished by their broad, serrated heads. The head of each arrow is inscribed with the same mystic rune. A DC 15 Spellcraft, Knowledge (arcana), or bardic knowledge check reveals the arrows' power and the rune's meaning: "Death." The arrows are unfinished *arrows of bane* that have yet to be keyed to a specific monster type. If blood (dried or otherwise) is rubbed into the rune, the arrow flares, becoming an appropriate *arrow of bane*. For instance, if elf blood is rubbed into the rune, the arrow becomes an *arrow of elfbane*.

**Treasure:** The laboratory was not the mage's primary workshop, but it still holds a considerable store of eldritch lore. While most of the tomes and scrolls are outdated and useless to modern spell casters, a thorough search can uncover powerful secrets. Those searching through the sheaves of scrolls and dusty tomes must make successful Search, Knowledge (arcana), or Spellcraft checks (DC 10 for each skill). For each successful pair of rolls (Search and Knowledge, Search and Spellcraft, or Knowledge and Spellcraft), a searcher discovers one of the following: an arcane scroll of *shocking grasp*; a page from a spellbook containing the spell *mirror image*; a page of handwritten notes explaining the final step in the keying of the *arrows of bane* (see

above); an arcane scroll of *mage armor*; or a page from a spellbook containing the spell *explosive runes*. (Roll a d10 and assign two numbers to each item to determine which item is discovered.) Each item can be found only once.

Note that since the mage's homunculus remains, the creator mage must also still live. It is up to the GM to decide if the mage returns, seeking revenge for its slain creation.

**Mad Homunculus:** CR 1; Tiny construct; HD 2d10; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (good); AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp -8; Atk/Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d4-1 plus poison); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 15, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +14, Listen +4, Spot +4; Lightning Reflexes.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fort DC 13, initial damage sleep for 1 minute, secondary damage sleep for another 5d6 minutes.

**Secret Door:** 1 inch thick; hardness 8; hp 23; Search DC 16, Break DC 15 (locked).

**Area 2-14A – The Nymph and the Urn:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A life-sized statue of a female elf stands atop a short pedestal, pouring out a wide-mouthed urn. The urn veritably gushes water. The rushing water exits the chamber through a hole in the far side of the alcove.*

This room was created by the spire's original designers to provide a constant supply of fresh water in time of siege. The urn is a *decanter of endless water* built directly into the statue. Chiseling the urn free or otherwise removing it from the nymph statue destroys all the *decanter's* magical properties.

The decanter is set to "geyser." If the nymph and the urn are somehow removed from the dungeon as a single unit, they are worth 10,500 gp to the right buyer.

**Area 2-15 – Iron Ladder:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The tunnel terminates before a series of rusted iron rungs. The ladder ascends a rocky chimney up into darkness.*

The chimney climbs five hundred feet to the trapdoor in area 3-1. A DC 10 Search or Spot check notices the pool of dried blood collected on the ground. This is the blood left by the minotaur as he was hoisted by the kobolds up the ladder.



## Encounter Area 3: Citadel of the Beastmen

The keep atop the spire was once the pride of the cult of Beastmen. Nearly impregnable both above and below, the castle was built to withstand the collected might of several armies. The citadel has since fallen into ruin, but the remains still whisper dreams of might and power.

Originally, the keep and all of its towers each had multiple floors. All of the upper levels have collapsed, leaving only the first floor. While the minotaur Toth-Ror has adopted the keep as his own, he has done little to clear out the ruins. Dangers still abound amongst the overgrown walls and fallen towers.

There are no wandering monsters on this level.

Unless noted otherwise, the walls and doors in this level have the following statistics:

**Superior Masonry:** 2 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 180; Break DC 35; Climb DC 20.

**Aging Wooden Door:** 1 in. thick; hardness 3; hp 6; Break DC 10 (stuck), 13 (locked).

### Areas of the Map

**Area 3-1 – Spire Tower (EL 2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The trapdoor opens to a square chamber; regular arrow slits are cut into the walls of the chamber. Judging from the whistling wind and the crisp air, you must be in some sort of tower several hundred feet in the air!*

Investigating the tower, the PCs quickly confirm that they are indeed in the keep atop the spire. From the arrow slits they can see hundreds of miles in every direction.

A slim tripwire is stretched before the doors at knee level. A DC 15 Search check notices the wire, and a DC 10 Disable Device check disarms the alarm. If the PCs fail to notice the wire, it pulls down a rotting beam. The beam causes no damage, but fills the room with termite dust and angers the swarm of bats roosting in the roof of the tower. The bats swarm the PCs for 1d6 rounds, or until slain.

Three barrels stand atop a crate in the northeast corner of the tower. The barrels are empty, but the crate holds 6 ballista bolts (treat as spears).

A DC 10 Search or Spot check detects the trail of dried blood leading west, across the drawbridge toward the keep.

**Bat Swarm:** CR 2; Diminutive animal (swarm); HD 3d8; hp 10; Init +2; Spd 5 ft. (1 square), fly 40 ft.

(good); AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp –; Atk/Full Atk Swarm (1d6); Space/Reach 10 ft./0 ft.; SA Distraction, wounding; SQ Blindsight 20 ft., half damage from slashing and piercing, low-light vision, swarm traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +11, Spot +11; Alertness, Lightning Reflexes.

**Blindsight (Ex):** A bat swarm notices and locates creatures within 20 feet. Opponents still have total concealment against the bat swarm (but swarm attacks ignore concealment).

**Distraction (Ex):** Any living creature that begins its turn with a swarm in its space must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Wounding (Ex):** Any living creature damaged by a bat swarm continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds do not result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check or the application of a *cure* spell or some other healing magic.

**Area 3-2 – Rotting Drawbridge (EL 2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A decaying wooden drawbridge stretches between the tower and the foreboding castle. The bridge is rotten through in places, and you can see the ground, several hundred feet below, through holes in the planking. The entire bridge seems ready to collapse.*

*At the far end of the bridge, near the gatehouse, rests an enormous pile of thick rope.*

The drawbridge is decrepit and decaying to the point of collapse. The pile of rope is the rope ladder used by Toth-Ror to climb up and down the spire, a quicker proposition than negotiating the trap-laden levels of the dungeon. There is several hundred feet of rope piled five feet high, and the far end of the rope is tied through the gatehouse portcullis (area 3-3).

PCs succeeding on a DC 13 Search or Spot check notice that the weight of the rope has weakened the bridge. PCs moving the rope or climbing atop the pile cause the planking beneath the rope to give way, pitching the rope and PCs through a hole in the bridge, tumbling to a ledge on the spire 40 feet below.

PCs have only two chances to escape near-certain death: A DC 15 Reflex save allows the hero to leap clear of the trap; PCs plunging through the hole may also attempt a second DC 15 Reflex save to grab hold of the rope, arresting their fall.

A DC 10 Search or Spot check detects the trail of dried blood leading west, toward the gatehouse and courtyard.

**Rotting Drawbridge Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; DC 15 Reflex save avoids; 40 ft. deep (4d6, fall); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC –.

**Area 3-3 – Gatehouse (EL 1):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The ancient gatehouse has partially collapsed, but a pair of roaring stone lions still watch from atop the battlements. A narrow path picks its way through the fallen rubble, beneath the dilapidated arches, to the open courtyard on the far side.*

The gatehouse once served in the citadel's defense, allowing defenders to pour burning oil and worse down on invaders. The gatehouse's original defenses have all been lost, but Toth-Ror and the kobolds have added their own special touch.

Beneath the arches, halfway through the gatehouse, a rusted portcullis bars the pathway. Toth-Ror bent the bars with his bare hands, making space between the bars for Large and smaller creatures to pass. Just beyond the portcullis, a crude pressure plate has been built into the floor. A DC 15 Search check notices the faint outlines of the plate, but if the trap isn't discovered, the first PC to step on the plate releases a cloud of rust monster dust. The cloud covers a 5-foot-by-5-foot area centered on the tripwire. Any nonmagical metal item caught within the cloud must make a DC 15 Reflex save or be dissolved. The rust dust is weak and does not affect magical metal items.

A DC 10 Search or Spot check detects the trail of dried blood leading west, crossing the courtyard toward the keep.

**Rust Monster Dust Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; gas; never miss; poison (cloud of rust monster dust, DC 15 item Reflex save resists, destruction of metallic items); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. cloud); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 10.

**Area 3-4 – Courtyard:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A narrow courtyard separates the citadel from the outer wall. The air is still, and a chill pall hangs above the dead grass. The walls of the citadel are lined with skulls spitted on wooden spikes, a grim portent of what lies ahead.*

All of the major races are represented in the collection of skulls – humans, halflings, elves, dwarves, half-orcs, half-elves and gnomes. All of the skulls bear signs of violence. Some have been crushed, others pierced, and others simply split in two. The

skulls are the remnants of heroes foolish enough to challenge the mighty Toth-Ror.

A DC 10 Search or Spot check detects the trail of dried blood leading across the courtyard and into the citadel.

**Area 3-5 – Tower of Arachnia (EL 1):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The entrance to the tower is a stone arch carved to depict an enormous spider hovering over four humanoids bundled in silken threads. The interior of the tower has collapsed, leaving skeletal stone walls that pierce the sky. Rotten wooden beams and broken clay shingles are scattered about the base of the walls. Old siege weapons and ruined furnishings are covered by the rubble and cobwebs.*

This tower was once dedicated to the study of monstrous arachnids. Hidden in the shadows of the upper tower is a remnant of those studies, a monstrous wolf spider with a fanged, human head – a woman's head, with long locks of blond hair. Despite the head and the spider's cackling wail, the spider has only vermin intelligence. The enormous hairy creature launches itself at the first PC to enter the tower. The creature retreats to the top of the tower after taking more than half its hit points in damage.

**Treasure:** A thorough inspection of the rubble (DC 15 Search) reveals an old ballista buried amongst debris. Clever PCs may try to use the siege weapon against Toth-Ror. The ballista's cord rotted away years ago, but if it is replaced by another cord (found in area 3-9) or by an impromptu cord fashioned by a rope, the ballista is returned to working order. The weapon inflicts 3d8 points of damage on a successful hit, and threatens a critical on a 19-20.

The ballista, essentially a huge heavy crossbow, is too large for most creatures to aim easily. A Medium creature takes a –4 penalty on attack rolls when using a ballista, and a Small creature takes a –6 penalty. It takes a creature smaller than Large two full-round actions to reload the ballista after firing. The ballista takes up a space 5 feet across.

**Monstrous Wolf Spider, Medium:** CR 1; Medium vermin; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d6 plus poison); SA Poison, web; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11, Hide +7, Jump +10, Spot +12; Weapon Finesse.

*Poison (Ex):* A monstrous spider has a poisonous bite (injury, Fort DC 12, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Str).

*Tremorsense (Ex):* A monstrous spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the spider's webs.

**Area 3-6 – Tower of the Eagle (EL 3):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The entrance to the tower is a stone arch carved to depict two dragons locked in mortal combat. Past the arch, the ruined tower seems filled with branches and fallen trees. High above, more debris pokes out from the top of the tower, woven into an enormous nest.*

The nest is home to a giant eagle with midnight blue feathers and razor sharp talons. The eagle is circling the sky, high above the nest. If the nest is disturbed in any way, the eagle dives out of the sky, fighting to the death in defense of its offspring.

The nest is a dense weave of dead boughs and large debris, and takes up the entire interior of the tower. The nest can be entered from below by clearing the debris. This takes 30 minutes for every 5 feet cleared. The nest can also be reached by ascending the sides of the tower (DC 15 Climb).

A DC 20 Search reveals two items woven into the nest: a wand of *cure light wounds* carved from rosewood, with 12 charges remaining; and a *Standard of the Sable March (lesser)*, a battle standard carried by the Knights of the Sable March when riding into battle. The standard is decorated with three silver stars over a field of sable. The standard conveys a magical +1 circumstance bonus to riding checks and a +1 attack bonus while mounted.

A blue-speckled egg rests in the center of the nest. The giant eagle egg is worth 2,500 gp on the open market. But the egg is fragile and must be kept incubated. If kept warm, the egg will hatch a large and very hungry giant eagle chick in 2d12+4 days.

**Eagle, Giant:** CR 3; Large magical beast; HD 4d10+4; hp 26; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +12; Atk Claw +7 melee (1d6+4); Full Atk 2 claws +7 melee (1d6+4) and bite +2 melee (1d8+2); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SQ Low-light vision, evasion; AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Knowledge (nature) +2, Listen +6, Sense Motive +4, Spot +15, Survival +3; Alertness, Flyby Attack.

*Evasion (Ex):* With a successful Reflex save against an attack that allows a Reflex save for half damage, a giant eagle takes no damage.



**Area 3-7 – Hall of the Beastgod (EL 4):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A tall stone portal bars entry to the citadel. The portal is formed of two half-moon stones, each adorned with three runes. The entire portal is ringed in a circlet of polished bronze, bright as the day it was cast.*

The runes adorning the gate are identical to the runes found throughout the dungeons of the beastmen. From top to bottom, on the left gate, the runes read: dragon, lion, horse. From top to bottom, on the right gate, the runes read: hawk, snake, spider.

There are three ways to open the gate. The first is to touch it with the key wand, carried by the Witchdoctor in area 2-10. The runes flare brightly and the half-moons roll away to reveal the hall beyond.

The second way to open the gate is by touching the runes in the proper order. The order is dictated by the cycle of constellations revolving in the night sky; this order is shown in area 2-3. The proper order is dragon, snake, hawk, lion, horse, spider. If touched in the proper order, the runes flare brightly and the half-moons roll away to reveal the hall beyond.

Any PC examining the gate is permitted a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check. Those succeeding recognize that the sigils correspond to constellations in the night sky. A DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check recalls the order of the constellations. Failing this, PCs can simply wait until nightfall and read the sky for themselves.

Finally, the gate can simply be destroyed by brute force.

Once the rune gate is bypassed, read or paraphrase the following:

*Past the tall portal is a long trophy hall. A thick rug molders on the floor, and the scent of rot hangs in the air. The far end of the hall is decorated with a bas-relief that stretches from floor to ceiling. The relief depicts a human head adorned with ram's horns and serpent's fangs. The head is thrown back, as if about to roar in triumph.*

*The walls of the trophy hall are decorated with heads – human, elf, halfling, and dwarf. The preserved heads watch the hall with dull, dead stares.*

The fell creature depicted on the far end of the hall is the Beastgod, the animal-human archetype exalted by the cult. The heads on the wall of the hall were placed there by the kobolds.

If any good-aligned PC comes closer than 15 feet to the Beastgod relief, the fanged maw opens, revealing a gaping black void. A howling wind sweeps into the void, carrying everything in the room with it. Any PC in the area failing a DC 15 Strength check is pulled toward the void, at a rate of 5 feet per round. Any PC swept into the maw of the Beastgod takes 1d8+3 points of damage (DC 13 Will save for half damage) for every round spent in contact with the maw, as the life is drained from his soul.

If all good-aligned PCs succeeds in moving at least 15 feet from the Beastgod, the maw closes and the wind ceases.

A DC 10 Search or Spot check detects the trail of dried blood leading from the courtyard, through the great hall, and through the south door.

**Rune Gate:** 1 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 23; Break DC 50.

**Beastgod Trap:** CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger (*detect good*); automatic reset; spell effect (*inflict light wounds*, 3rd-level cleric, 1d8+3 damage, DC 13 Will save for half damage); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

**Area 3-8 – Barracks (EL 1/2):** The door jam above the southern door is weak. Opening the door triggers a collapse, spilling stone blocks onto either side of the door (see damage below).

Read or paraphrase the following:

*A long, rectangular room stands in ruin before you. Fallen timbers and granite blocks litter the room, obscuring a dozen or more bunks. The bedding – straw and sack cloth – is rotten and*

*black. An intact door stands at the far end of the room.*

This room was once the citadel's barracks. Fallen debris and water damage has ruined most of the room's original contents, but a DC 15 Search check uncovers a small iron bound chest. Hidden beneath the chest (DC 13 Search) is an oilskin wrap containing two pristine masterwork longswords.

The chest is locked with a crude mechanism (DC 15 Open Lock). Alternately, the lock can be broken (hardness 5, hp 2, Break DC 15), but this crude technique likely damages or destroys the chest's fragile contents.

Inside the small chest are 6 fragile ceramic flasks labeled with letters scrawled in Common. (If the chest is broken open by force, there is a 35% chance that each of the flasks is broken.) Four of the flasks hold *potions of cure light wounds*, and are labeled "HLNG." The fifth flask contains *oil of bless weapon*, marked "SWRD." The final flask holds a *potion of shield of faith +3*, labeled "SHLD."

**Falling Block Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +5 melee (1d8, stone block); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 20.

**Area 3-9 – Armory:** This door's lock is rusted closed and cannot be picked. To enter area 3-9, the door must be broken open. Once the door is bypassed, read or paraphrase the following:

*Racks of weapons line the dusty walls. Swords, spears, yew bows, and shirts of chain are draped in cobwebs and shadows. Several barrels stand stacked in one corner. A metallic, acrid scent hangs on the still, dry air.*

The armory contains a stockpile of weapons. On the racks are 17 longswords, 10 shortspears, 5 spears, and 5 Medium-sized shirts of chain. There are 12 unstrung longbows, but time and the arid atmosphere have nearly destroyed the bows. Each time a bow is drawn, roll 1d6. On a roll of a 1 or 2, the bow breaks, wasting the archer's action.

Four barrels are stacked along the south wall. Three of the barrels hold arrows, 43 in all. The fourth barrel is sealed in wax, and contains 20 bow strings and one ballista cord (which can be used with the siege weapon hidden in area 3-5).

**Aging Wooden Door:** 1-1/2 in. thick; hardness 3; hp 6; Break DC 13 (locked).

**Area 3-10 – Beast Hall:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*The walls of this chamber are lined with ragged, moth-eaten black tapestries that stretch from*

*ceiling to floor. The tapestries are emblazoned with spiraling runes sewn in crimson thread.*

*The tapestries frame stone mosaics set into the chamber's wall. There are six mosaics in all, each depicting the face of a half-beast, half-man amalgamation. The aberrations have wild eyes, as if reveling in their perverse existence.*

*Beneath each beast-head is a shallow basin, stained a dull brown. Before each basin is a granite pew, polished smooth.*

*The smell of animal sweat is strong here. You can hear a distant rumble, like the sound of labored breathing.*

The mosaics are made of colored tiles, mortared into the wall. In clockwise order the half-man aberrations are: man-snake, man-horse, man-dragon, man-hawk, man-lion, man-spider.

The basins are part of a ritual used by the Order to induct its members into the experience of the beast-man. A DC 10 Search or Spot check notices soot stains on the ceiling of the chamber. When oil or other flammable liquid is placed in a basin and set aflame, the eyes of the mosaic glow, the smoke is drawn into the mosaic's mouth, and then exhaled through the mosaic's nose. If this smoke is inhaled by those standing – or kneeling in prayer – before the mosaic, miraculous effects take place. Note that the process of the Beastman initiation has both benefits and drawbacks, as detailed below.

**Man-Snake:** Anyone inhaling the smoke exhaled by the man-snake gains 1 point of Dexterity for the next hour, at the cost of one point of Strength for the next hour. The effects of the smoke can be negated by a DC 15 Fortitude save.

**Man-Horse:** Anyone inhaling the smoke exhaled by the man-horse gains 1 point of Constitution for the next hour, at the cost of one point of Dexterity for the next hour. The effects of the smoke can be negated by a DC 15 Reflex save.

**Man-Dragon:** The man-dragon mosaic doesn't exhale smoke. Instead, lighting the fire triggers a hidden latch and the mosaic slides away, revealing area 3-10A.

**Man-Hawk:** Anyone inhaling the smoke exhaled by the man-hawk gains the ability to *levitate*, as per the spell, at will for the next 10 rounds, at the price of 2 points of Strength for 10 rounds. The effects of the smoke can be negated by a DC 20 Fortitude save.

**Man-Lion:** Anyone inhaling the smoke exhaled by the man-lion is effected as if the target of a *rage* spell with a duration of 10 rounds. For those 10 rounds, the target suffers the additional loss of 2 points of

Dexterity (cumulative with the AC penalty of the *rage* spell). The effects of the smoke can be negated by a DC 20 Will save.

**Man-Spider:** Anyone inhaling the smoke exhaled by the man-spider gains the ability to *spider climb*, as per the spell, at will for the next 10 rounds, while losing 2 points of Constitution for 10 rounds. The effects of the smoke can be negated by a DC 20 Reflex save.

A PC can only be affected by one mosaic at a time and the effects are never cumulative.

The secret door on the south wall can be detected with a DC 15 Search check, but it can only be opened by burning oil in the man-dragon basin or by breaking down the door.

A DC 15 Listen check confirms the rumbling as breathing, and the location as coming from the direction of area 3-13.

**Secret Door:** 1-1/2 in. thick; hardness 3; hp 6; Search DC 15.

**Area 3-10A – Hidden Shrine:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A small, simple altar rests against the back wall of the chamber. Atop the altar rests a fur cloak, a two-foot-long fang, and a helmet decorated with a pair of curling horns.*

*A single pew stands before the shrine.*

The shrine is the inner sanctum of the Order of the Beastmen, undisturbed in all the years since the cult abandoned their citadel. The items atop the altar are relics sacred to the Order.

**Pelt of the Lupine:** Anyone wearing the heavy wolf pelt gains the ability to transform into a wolf 1/day (as per the druid power *wild shape*). The effect lasts for 1 hour per character level, and the PC can transform back into her original form at will. Changing form (to animal or back) is a standard action that doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity.

**Fang of the Serpent:** The tip of the two-foot-long fang is surprisingly sharp. The base of the fang is wrapped in cured leather and adjusts to fit the hand of the wielder. The fang functions as +1 short sword that inflicts only piercing damage.

**Helm of the Wyrms:** The *Helm* grants the wearer a breath weapon attack, 1/day, that inflicts 1d12 points of energy damage. The energy type depends on the PC's alignment, but the attack's statistics are identical for each type: casting time 1 standard action; range 50 feet; area 50-foot line; saving throw DC 15 Reflex half; spell resistance applies. Good-aligned characters gain a lightning (electricity) breath

weapon. Neutral-aligned characters gain an ice (cold) breath weapon. Evil-aligned characters gain a fire breath weapon.

**Area 3-11 – Gauntlet of Dragonfire (EL 1/2):** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A thick, rancid odor fills the hall. The corridor turns a corner, then passes beneath an elaborate bronze arch cast in the shape of two arched dragons, frozen in mid-roar. A low, heavy rumble reverberates through the room, coming from beyond the door just past the arch.*

The series of flagstones directly beneath the arch are carefully balanced pressure plates. Unless the plates are detected and avoided, those stepping on the plates trigger a spray of oil that fills the 4 squares immediately adjacent to the archway, coating any PCs in the target area with fine beads of oil.

Once upon a time the spraying dragons also set fire to those caught in the trap, but the trap hasn't functioned properly in decades. Instead, the trap sets up the PCs for a potentially deadly fight: Unless the affected PCs take a half-hour to clean the oil from their skin, clothes, and armor, they and their belongings are dangerously flammable for the next 24 hours. Toth-Ror is aware of this, and takes advantage of the PCs' weakness (see area 3-13). PCs misted with oil and set aflame take 1d4 points of fire damage for 2 rounds.

A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check determines the smell in the air to be the scent of pine sap and pig fat, two primary ingredients of the oil trap.

**Oil Spray Trap:** CR 1/2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; gas; never miss; oil (cloud of oil vapor); multiple targets (all targets in the 4 squares adjacent to the archway); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 20; Jump DC 10 to bypass.

**Area 3-12 – Ruined Stairs:** Read or paraphrase the following:

*A wooden staircase once stood here, rising to the upper levels of the citadel. Now the staircase lies in ruin, cluttering the base of the stairs.*

The piles of debris make climbing an easy task, and PCs can reach the ruined second level of the citadel with a DC 15 Climb check. The second level is nothing but ruins, the stone walls standing in silent testament to the citadel's majestic past.

**Area 3-13 – Lair of the Bull Lord (EL 3):** The doors to this area are not locked, but the Bull Lord has stacked a pile of debris behind the doors. PCs need to succeed on a DC 15 Strength check to force open the door. Otherwise, the door can be broken down. PCs succeeding on a DC 10 Listen check hear rum-

bling, labored breathing coming from behind the door.

Once the doors are opened, read or paraphrase the following:

*Past the tall doors, you see another ruined chamber. A smoldering fire spits and hisses in the center of the room, fed by fallen beams and other debris. In the far, shadowed reaches of the room stands a beastman: a giant humanoid with the head of a bull and armed with a terrible greatsword. The enormous creature's scale armor is torn and crushed from battle, the blade of a broken sword protruding from its muscular chest.*

*This bull-man reaches down and takes a crackling brand from the fire. Illuminated in the ghastly flames, the minotaur roars in fierce defiance!*

The bull lord is none other than the mighty Toth-Ror, the same fell beast that terrorized the PCs' home and slew the knight Sir Galwaith. Toth-Ror is still wounded from his titanic battle with the knight; the beast's armor is torn to shreds, and the tip of the knight's *holy avenger* remains lodged in the minotaur's chest. Slowed by his armor and hampered by wounds, the minotaur can no longer make full attacks, but even with near-incapacitating wounds, the minotaur is a deadly opponent. Toth-Ror knows his end has come, and cares only to take the heroes with him.

Toth-Ror leads off battle by hurling the flaming brand at the lead PC as a ranged touch attack; if the brand hits a PC who was misted by the oil trap in area 3-12, the poor soul is set on fire, taking 1d4 points of fire damage for 2 rounds.

The following round, the minotaur strides forward into the light, striking the smoldering bonfire with his greatsword and scattering flaming embers about the room. The coals cause no damage, but set aflame any PC within a 10-foot radius that was misted by the oil trap (DC 15 Reflex save to avoid).

On the following rounds, the minotaur stumbles into melee, striking terrible blows with its greatsword.

**The Final Battle:** The battle with Toth-Ror is an all-or-nothing high-stakes combat. A blow from the minotaur is enough to sideline many PCs and a single critical hit spells certain doom for any PC. In order to defeat the bull lord, the PCs need a plan.

By exploring the dungeons of the spire and the ruins of the citadel, the PCs have stumbled across a number of weapons and tactics that can be turned against Toth-Ror. The fate of the party and their village rests squarely on the shoulders of the PCs.

GMs should not expect (or encourage) a long melee

battle between the PCs and the minotaur. Dramatic as it might be, heroes expecting to slug it out with the beast are opening themselves up for a total party kill.

For the GM's ease, here are the most obvious weapons and tactics that can be turned against Toth-Ror. Clever and ruthless PCs will likely come up with even more devious plans.

- *Arrows of Minotaur Bane*: These can be obtained by completing the creation of the *arrows of bane*, found in the wizard's laboratory (area 2-14). The arrows need to be smeared with the blood of their target, which – luckily – can be found in any of the trails leading to area 3-13.
- *Ballista*: Using a siege weapon on the bull lord is an excellent way to bring the monster down, but it will require a good deal of work and planning. The ballista is found in the ruins of area 3-5. The bolts are found in area 3-1. The cord is found in area 3-9. The weapon inflicts 3d8 points of damage on a successful hit, and threatens a critical on 19-20. A Medium creature takes a –4 penalty on attack rolls when using a ballista, and a Small creature takes a –6 penalty. It takes a creature smaller than Large two full-round actions to reload the ballista after firing.
- *Oil Trap*: The oil trap in area 3-11 is just as deadly to Toth-Ror as the PCs. If the PCs can lure the raging beast through the arch, the minotaur triggers the trap, setting himself up for a flame-based attack by the PCs. Those misted with oil and set aflame take 1d4 points of damage for 2 rounds.
- *The Beast's Weakness*: As detailed in the notes found in area 2-4, Toth-Ror is blind in his left eye. PCs can notice on their own with a DC 15 Spot check. The minotaur suffers a –4 penalty when attacking those to its left. Note that if given the chance, the minotaur will turn to face any opponent to his left, removing the penalty. PCs can make best use of the beast's blindness by threatening on three or more sides; those to Toth-Ror's right and front fight defensively as a full-round action (–4 to attacks, +2 dodge bonus), while those to the beast's left make full attacks.

**Treasure**: A dozen poorly tanned hides are stacked in the far recess of the room. The hides serve as Toth-Ror's bed and reek with minotaur sweat. Hidden beneath the hides (DC 13 Search) are two canvas sacks. In the first sack are 311 sp and 25 gp coins. In the second sack are 6 rough cut bloodstones (worth 30 gp each) and 11 paste emeralds (appearing to be worth 1,000 gp each, but actually worthless). The hides covering the treasure are soiled and worthless.

Hidden and forgotten in a crack in the south wall (DC 22 Search) is a *ring of protection* +1.

**Toth-Ror, Minotaur**: CR 4; Large monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+12; hp 25 (wounded from max of 51); Init –2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed –; Base Atk +6; Grp +14; Atk/Full Atk Greatsword +9 melee (2d6+6/x2) or gore +9 melee (1d8+4) or thrown torch +2 ranged (1d2+5 plus possible flame damage, see area 3-12); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., natural cunning, scent, partial blindness; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats*: Intimidate +2, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +7; Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Track.

*Natural Cunning (Ex)*: Although minotaurs are not especially intelligent, they possess innate cunning and logical ability. This gives them immunity to maze spells, prevents them from ever becoming lost, and enables them to track enemies. Further, they are never caught flat-footed.

*Possessions*: Greatsword, ruined scalemail.

**Agging Wooden Door**: 1-1/2 in. thick; hardness 3; hp 6; Break DC 15 (blocked).

## Wrapping Up

Read or paraphrase the following:

*The citadel stands in silence, the corpse of the Bull Lord is at your feet. You and your companions began this adventure as frightened commoners: cowherds, woodsmen, and healers. How long ago and far away your old lives seem. Now your weapons are bloodied, your eyes have stared into the heart of evil, and your scarred bodies bear testament to the ordeals you have overcome.*

*Now you stand as champions.*

*Looking down from atop the high citadel, the land stretches out before you, wild and mysterious. Dark valleys, rolling dales, and high mountains: a world of adventure. A raw fire burns in your belly, a hunger for danger, triumph and rewards, hard won. Grinning, you shoulder your sacks of treasure, tighten your grip on your weapons, and step into a new life.*

### THUS ENDS THE REIGN OF THE BULL LORD





# Appendix 1: New Monsters

## BLOODTHORN VINE

	<b>Large Plant</b>
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	1d8+3 (11 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	-5
<b>Speed:</b>	3 ft. per 8 hours
<b>AC:</b>	6 (-5 Dex, -1 size, +2 natural)
<b>Base Atk/Grp:</b>	+1/+7
<b>Attack:</b>	Slam +3 melee (1d4+2)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Slam +3 melee (1d4+2)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Improved grab, constrict 1d4+2
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Immune to poison, blindsight
<b>Feats:</b>	-
<b>Skills:</b>	Hide -1
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +5, Ref -5, Will +2
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 15, Dex -, Con 17, Int -, Wis 15, Cha 8
<b>Environment:</b>	Temperate and warm forest
<b>Organization:</b>	Patch (1-200)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	1/2
<b>Treasure:</b>	Incidental
<b>Alignment:</b>	Always neutral

*A mass of thick vines hangs over the dead trees like a funeral shroud. Each vine is covered in dozens of sharp, blood-red thorns. Old skulls, bleached white with age, hang in the air, impaled on the green and brown tendrils.*

*As if sensing you, the vines slowly rise, creeping toward you with infinite patience and certainty.*

Bloodthorn vines are a less-dangerous cousin of the assassin vine. The bloodthorns have a very limited movement measured in hours and days, but what the vine lacks in mobility it makes up in strength and numbers. The vines grow in dense patches, rapidly overgrowing native woods. Deprived of sunlight, the native flora slowly dies off, resulting in the typical scene associated with the bloodthorn: dead trees covered in ropy, sinister-looking vines.

The bloodthorn produces light blue berries, but these are a lure for prey, not a means of reproduction. The vines reproduce like ferns, sending out shoots that grow into mature vines in two to three years. While treated as individual creatures, a patch of bloodthorn is really a single massive plant with hundreds, or sometimes thousands, of sprawling vines. Wiping out an established bloodthorn patch is a herculean task, requiring years of diligence and labor.

Those attempting to bushwhack through a patch of bloodthorns forest have to fight their way through the weave of vines, a very slow and painful experience. One vine must be killed for every 5 feet cut through the woods.



## COMBAT

Unlike the assassin vine, bloodthorn vines rarely initiate combat. Bloodthorns lie in wait on the edge of clearings and along game trails, slowly creeping up on lame or sleeping victims. The vines possess a strong recoil reflex that is triggered when the thorns are brushed. The vines curl violently, whipping and ensnaring victims on the numerous thorns. Once caught, victims are simultaneously crushed and bled to death.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a bloodthorn vine must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

*Constrict (Ex):* A bloodthorn vine deals 1d4+2 points of damage with a successful grapple check against Medium-size or smaller creatures.



## Appendix 2: Pregenerated Characters

Character	Moran	Zak	Squire Finser	Wren	Syl the Blackhand
<b>Sex</b>	F	M	M	F	F
<b>Race</b>	Human	Halfling	Human	Half-elf	Elf
<b>Class/Level</b>	War1	Exp1	Ari1	War1	Adp1
<b>Size</b>	Medium	Small	Medium	Medium	Medium
<b>Height</b>	5'8"	3'6"	6'6"	5'2"	4'11"
<b>Weight</b>	135 lbs.	37 lbs.	190 lbs.	110 lbs.	85 lbs.
<b>Alignment</b>	NG	CG	LG	NG	CG
<b>AC</b>	12	15	10	13	13
<b>Touch AC</b>	12	15	10	13	13
<b>Flat-Footed AC</b>	10	11	10	10	10
<b>Hit Points</b>	11	8	10	9	8
<b>Speed</b>	30 ft.	20 ft.	30 ft.	30 ft.	30 ft.
<b>Initiative</b>	+2	+4	0	3	3
<b>Strength</b>	17	8	16	16	8
<b>Dexterity</b>	14	19	10	17	17
<b>Constitution</b>	16	14	15	13	8
<b>Intelligence</b>	8	16	9	10	17
<b>Wisdom</b>	9	9	8	9	16
<b>Charisma</b>	10	10	17	11	10
<b>Fort Save</b>	5	3	2	3	-1
<b>Ref Save</b>	2	5	0	3	3
<b>Will Save</b>	-1	2	1	-1	5
<b>Spells Per Day</b>	-	-	-	-	3/1+1
<b>Melee Bonus</b>	+3	-1	+3	+3	-1
<b>Ranged Bonus</b>	+2	+4	+0	+3	+3
<b>Damage Adj</b>	+3	-1	+3	+3	-1
<b>Base Atk</b>	+1	+0	+0	+1	+0
<b>Grapple</b>	+4	-2	+3	+4	-1
<b>Number of Atks</b>	1	1	1	1	1

### Domains & Spells Known

**Syl the Blackhand:** (save DC = 13 + spell level): 0-level – *create water, cure minor wounds, ghost sound, guidance, light, mending, purify food and drink, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st-level – *bless, burning hands, cause fear, command, comprehend languages, cure light wounds, detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, endure elements, obscuring mist, protection from chaos, protection from evil, protection from good, protection from law, sleep*.

### Skills & Feats

**Moran:** Climb +5, Intimidate +1, Jump +5, Swim +5; Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

**Zak:** Climb +5, Disable Device +7, Hide +12, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +8, Search +7, Spot +3, Tumble +8

**Squire Finser:** Bluff +4, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +4, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +0, Listen +2, Sense Motive +1, Spot +1, Survival +1, Swim +4; Power Attack, Track

**Wren:** Climb +4, Handle Animal +1, Jump +4, Knowledge (nature) +2, Swim +4; Point Blank Shot

**Syl the Blackhand:** Concentration +3, Handle Animal +4, Heal +7, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +4, Knowledge (nature) +7, Spellcraft +4, Survival +4; Toughness

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14-16	#22: The Stormbringer Juggernaut † #32: Golden Palace of Zahadran **
15	#13: Crypt of the Devil Lich
21-24	#33: Belly of the Great Beast

\* Urban \*\* Desert † Aquatic/Coastal

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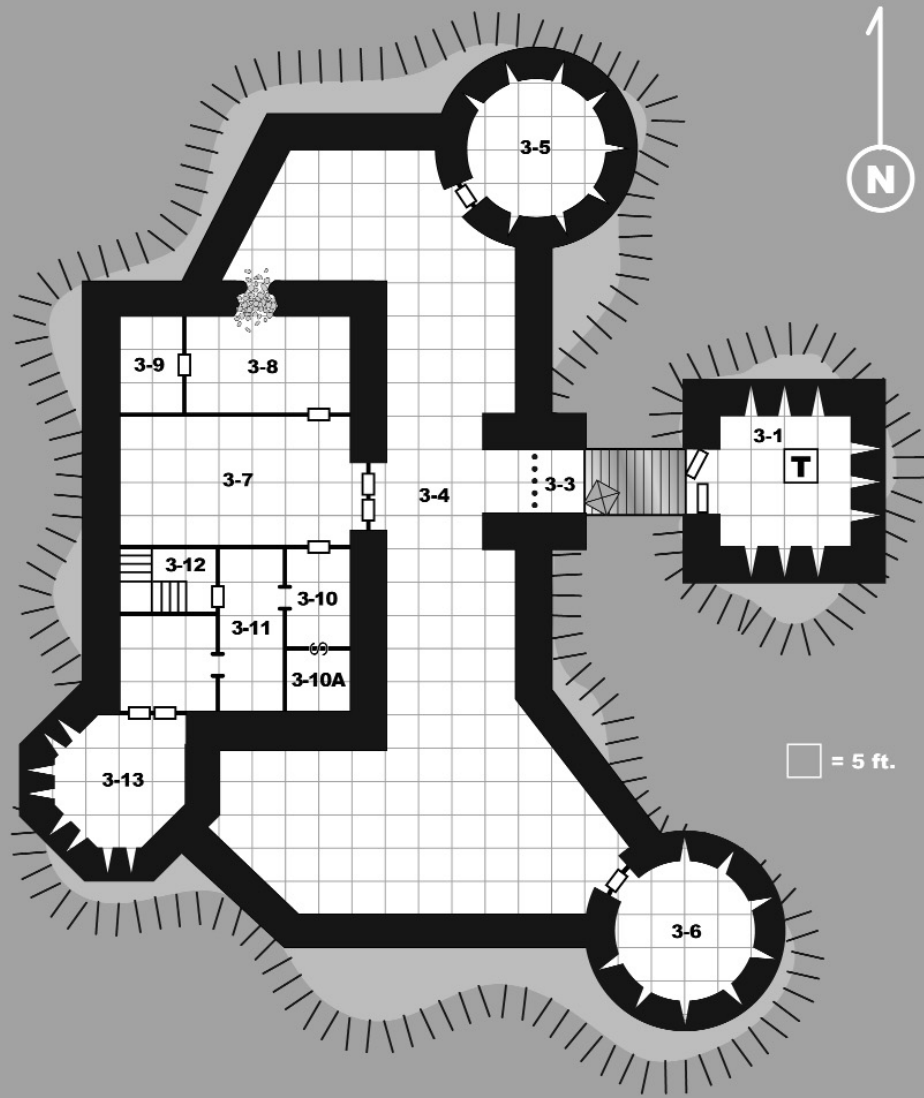
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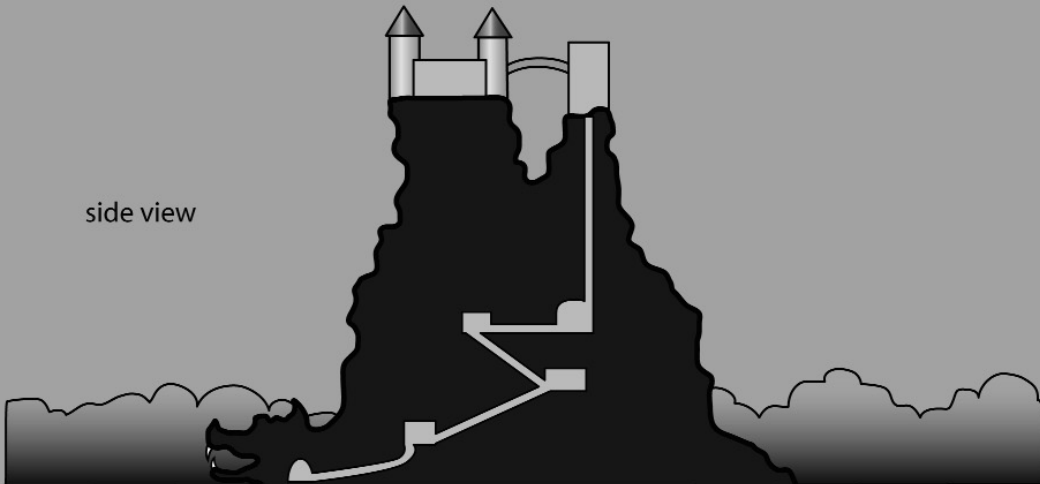
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