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Dungeon Crawl Classics #35B

The Thief Lord's Vault

by Harley Stroh

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 4-6



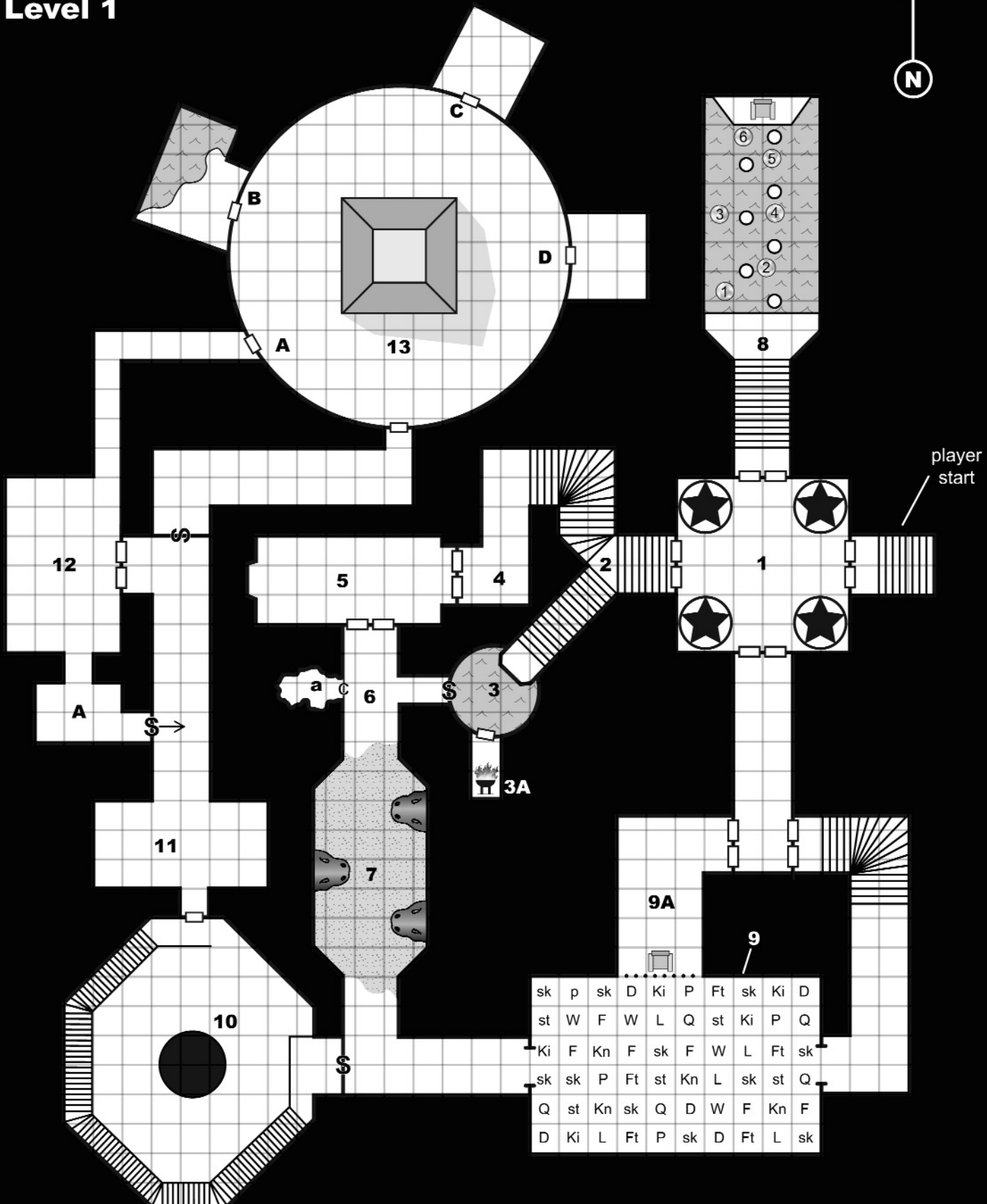
Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't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

The dungeons beneath Punjar have a history as old as the city itself. The first tunnels were dug by smugglers, which were enlarged by successive bands of rogues, an evolution that culminated in the formation of the first Thieves Guild of Punjar. When it came time to fill the growing dungeon with traps, the Guild hired the legendary dwarf Prester "Trapmaster" Ungart. To ensure that the dungeon's secrets were never revealed, the guild sent a team of eleven assassins to Prester's residence. In the morning, all eleven assassins were found dead. The Trapmaster and the tome containing the dungeon's secrets had vanished. Now, years later, the thief lord Cazül the Chaotic has seized control of the Guild, and his eyes are on the prizes in the tunnels...

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

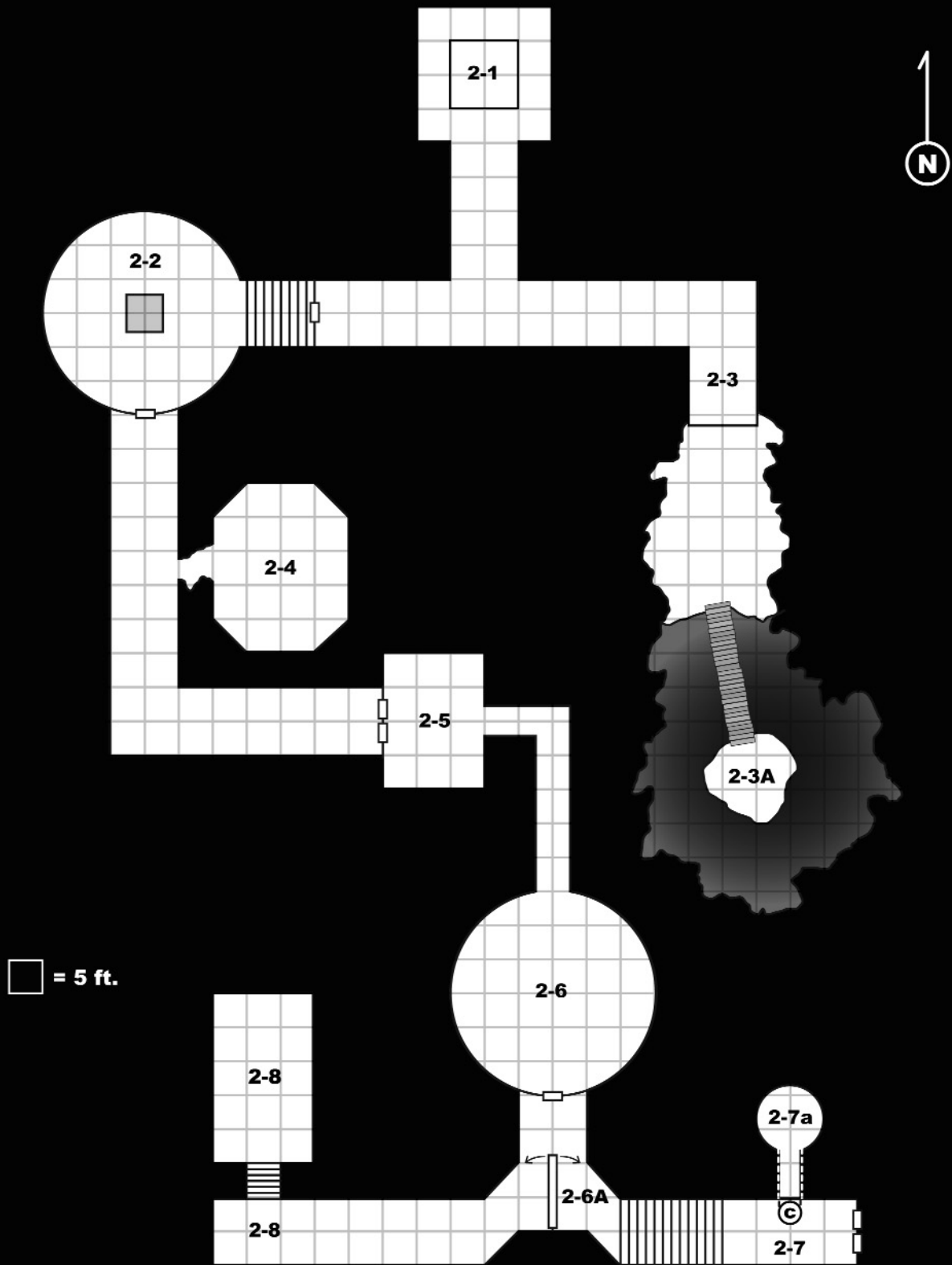


Level 1



□ = 5 ft.

Level 2



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Dedicated to Akil "AK Skilz" Muse

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Introduction

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

The Thief Lord's Vault is designed for four to six characters of 4th to 6th level, with a total of 24-32 total character levels between party members. While the characters can be of any class, skilled rogues and spellcasters will be valuable to a party's survival. See the Scaling Information section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group's unique style of play.

Adventure Summary

Descending into the undercity of Punjar, the PCs enter the infamous Vault of Yasif Cazül, the Lord of Thieves. Venturing into Cazül's Maze, the heroes are faced with a series of puzzles, monstrous challenges, and grand traps, each designed to confound, hinder, and harm Cazül's enemies.

But all is not as it seems. Hidden from the prying eyes of explorers is a secret complex of rooms that permit passage to another level. Here the heroes are subjected to a series of four challenges – tests and riddles that, if solved incorrectly, place the PCs in mortal danger. Surviving the series of Cazül's Tests, the PCs are subjected to one last puzzle, and a choice: One corridor leads to certain death, and the other to the legendary Thief Lord's Vault.

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. **EL** – the encounter level.



<u>Loc</u>	<u>Pg</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	6	T	Thief Lord traps	6
1-2	6	T	Collapsing stairs/ razor trap	3
1-3	7	C	Blood leech swarm	3
1-3A	7	T	Flaming oil trap	3
1-4	7	P/C/T	Dance of Globes puzzle Air elemental, Medium Shadow Poison needle trap	5
1-5	9	C	2 ogres	7
1-6A	10	T	<i>Flame trap</i>	3
1-7	11	C	Spirit naga skeleton	5
		T	Rotting staircase	3
		T	Poison needle trap	
		P	Geysers	7
1-9	13	P/C	King's Watch	Variable
1-10	15	C	Troll	6
1-11	16	T/C	Id moss cheese Lich dust bread 2 ochre jellies	6
1-12	16	C	<i>Reswythe</i> , human Ftr6	6
1-12A	18	C	<i>Black Samarkin</i> , half-orc Rog5	5
1-13	18	P	Door puzzle	3
1-13B	19	C	Manticore	5
1-13C	19	C	4 vargouille	5
1-13D	20	C	Owlbear	4
2-2	21	T	Test of Might trap	4
2-3A	22	T	Rotating bridge trap Honor Among Thieves trap	7
2-4	23	T	Test of Faith trap	6
2-5	23	T	Test of the Magi trap	5
2-6	24	P	Riddle cross puzzle	3
2-7	25	T	<i>Symbol of Sleep</i> trap Compacting hallway trap	8
2-8	26	T	King's Ransom trap Dropping ceiling trap	11

Scaling Information

The Thief Lord's Vault is designed for four to six characters of 4th-6th level, but it can be easily modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Parties without skilled rogues – or spellcasters capable of approximating the skills of a talented thief – will be sorely tested by the Thief Lord's traps, and encounters should be adjusted appropriately.

With this in mind, consider the following suggestions:

Weaker parties (3 or fewer characters, or lower than 4th level): Reduce the DCs of all traps by 5. Ignore any encounters with wandering monsters. Remove one of the ogres from area 1-5. In area 1-8, allow a 25% chance each round that none of the geysers erupt. Reduce the levels of Reswythe and Black Samarkin by 2.

Stronger parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 6th level): Increase the DCs of all traps by 3. Double the odds of encountering a wandering monster, and use the wandering monster table from level 1 on level 2 as well. Add one additional ogre to area 1-5. Increase the levels of Reswythe and Black Samarkin by 1.

Getting the Players Involved

The adventure begins with the characters venturing into the undercity beneath the slums of Punjar. Having discovered the dungeon's entrance, the PCs are preparing to enter the Thief Lord's Vault. Use one of the following plot hooks to get the characters started:

- The party is approached by a trio of turbaned strangers who request a meeting. The strangers, ostensibly mere traders, have come upon a partial map providing directions to a treasure vault hidden directly beneath the streets of Punjar! The traders offer the PCs half of the treasure plus first pick of any magic items found in the vault.
- The party's rogue is approached by an agent of a thieves' guild. The council of guildmasters is interested in hiring a team of discrete adventurers who are daring and skilled enough to explore a dungeon discovered beneath the guildhouse: the infamous Thief Lord's Vault. PCs returning alive will have earned one third of all the treasure taken, first pick of the magic items, and the guild's gratitude.
- A young elven scholar approaches the PCs, looking to hire a party of explorers that can venture into Thief Lord's Vault and return with a crude map. The PCs will be permitted to keep all treasure discovered, in addition to the 5,000 gp the elf is willing to pay for a serviceable map. In truth, the elf is a naga sorcerer looking to make its lair in the depths of the Vault. The naga ambushes the PCs upon their return to the surface, leaving key members of the party alive for later interrogation.
- The party's cleric is summoned before her superiors. It has come to the church's attention that several powerful, but wicked, idols have been secreted in a vault beneath the streets of Punjar. The church assembles a team of adventurers to descend into the vault and return with the wicked idols.
- A PC (or a friend of one of the PCs) is caught by one of Punjar's various thieves' guilds. The crime: robbing from a Punjar merchant lord who had paid the guild for protection. The punishment is simple and

direct: execution, followed by *disintegration*. Pleading for the court's mercy, the PCs are offered an alternative: If the PCs can survive the Thief Lord's Vault, and return with one of the relics kept in the lower vaults, the thief's crimes will be pardoned.

Background Story

The dungeons beneath Punjar have a history as long as the city itself. The first tunnels were dug by smugglers when Punjar was still a mere coastal town. The smugglers' tunnels were adopted and enlarged by successive bands of rogues, an evolution that culminated in the formation of the first Thieves Guild of Punjar.

When it came time for the guild to fill the growing dungeon with traps, it hired none other than the legendary dwarf Prester "Trapmaster" Ungart. Prester altered the dungeon to its present layout, and built the majority of the traps that presently inhabit the dungeon. In addition, Prester created an elaborate coded tome that explained how to bypass each of the traps.

To ensure that the dungeon's secrets were never revealed, the guild sent a team of eleven assassins to Prester's residence. In the morning, bodies belonging to ten of the assassins were found in the alley outside the guildhouse, and the hand of the last assassin was found above the sleeping guildmaster's bed, pinned to the wall with a dagger.

The Trapmaster and the tome containing the dungeon's secrets had vanished.

The Thieves Guild splintered into a dozen factions soon after, and in the ensuing guild war, the trapped vault was neglected and finally forgotten.

The vault seemed destined for insignificance, until Cazül the Chaotic seized control of the guild. At some point in his adventures in the North, Cazül had acquired a partial translation of Prester's original codex. Over a series of several months (and at least two *resurrections*), Cazül succeeded in mapping the entirety of the dungeon. In short order, Cazül set himself up as master of the Vault, outfitting the upper level with caretakers, and secreting a portion of his guild's enormous wealth in the lower vaults.

Cazül is careful to keep his use of the Vault to a minimum, knowing that openly celebrating his mastery of the dungeon would only draw the attention of those who would prefer that the Vault's secrets remained in the past. Toward this end, Cazül avoids the use of the Vault's usual entrance by *teleporting* his minions in and out of the dungeon. This also permits Cazül to protect the majority of the Vault's secrets; his minions – having never exited or entered the Vault by mundane means – cannot reveal the safe way to access the Vault. That secret is known to Cazül alone, who intends to carry it to his grave.

Cazül the Chaotic, Lord of Thieves

While the villain Cazül does not appear in this adventure, his presence is felt throughout the dungeon. Every cunning trap, devious trick, and merciless foe bears Cazül's trademark cruelty. Simply put, the Thief Lord has no interest in being fair or just, and his dungeon is no different. Convenient exits, far from providing escapes, more likely place the adventurers in even greater danger, and PCs expecting to hack and slash their way through every challenge will be sorely disappointed. Great treasures are hidden within the Vault, but only the most cunning and skilled can uncover them and return to tell the tale.

By the end of the adventure, PCs should bear a burning enmity for their tormentor, Cazül. This is expected and even encouraged. Furthermore, any PC who has spent any amount of time in one of Punjar's sprawling alleyways has seen the posters advertising a bounty of 20,000 gp for the Thief Lord's capture.

Would-be bounty hunters will find that the Lord of Thieves is anything but an easy target. A well-built half-orc hardened by a life of crime, Cazül is nothing if not a survivor. Trained as an assassin and thief, the Lord of Thieves has also dabbled in black magic, and is always eager to learn a new trick or two that might save his life down the line.

Gifted with a brilliant mind and a fiendish cunning, Cazül is always at least two steps ahead of his competition. He trusts no one save a handful of old adventuring associates, one of whom is a wicked cleric of Jezuel named Lodril, who has *raised* the half-orc on no less than three occasions. The Thief Lord is known for wearing any number of magical devices, some unique, designed to prevent certain forms of damage, and this paranoia has saved his life numerous times.

Typically he can be found wearing enchanted elven chainmail, oiled to a dark, matte finish, and carrying at least a dozen different weapons, most poisoned or enchanted against humans, elves, and dwarves. The Thief Lord is recognizable by the jagged scar that traces the line of his shaved scalp, a token from a battle with a giant, and by his unusual helmet: a black helm adorned with a single curved horn.

The Thief Lord has not been seen within the city proper for the last two years. Strangely, his extensive network of thieves, thugs, and racketeers has not suffered in his absence, leading some to believe that the Thief Lord is simply directing his guild from in hiding. Others allege that the guild is being run by the Thief Lord's lieutenants, while Cazül weaves wicked plots in some distant region of the North.

Those seeking the Thief Lord would do well to begin their search in Punjar, gleaning information from the Thief Lord's many enemies and by interrogating his old associates: the half-orc cleric Lodril, the elven mage Feron "Blackwand" Tanerale, and the fearsome half-ogre blackguard Celthor the Slayer.

Player Beginning

Start the adventure by reading the following:

The tight confines of the stairs are oppressive, forcing you to walk sideways and in single file. It seems that at any moment a thousand tons of stone might come crashing down on your heads, burying you and your companions in this miserable dungeon until the end of time.

A curtain of dusty cobwebs block your way. A bleached skull leers at you from the darkness just past the webs. A silent motion to your companions and instantly all are alert, with weapons at hand and spells balanced on the tongue.

Slowly you brush the webs away, revealing the skeleton of some dungeon explorer crushed against the wall by eight rusty iron spears. Just past the skeleton is an unadorned stone door. The door's sole feature is a small keyhole; a pair of rusty picks still hangs in the lock where the dead thief left them.

The stones surrounding the door are decorated with carvings inlaid with gold and silver. The keystone of the arch bears the following inscription:

No mercy to fools who would disturb my Vault

Turn back now, or Repent in Death

Certainly, this must be your goal: the Thief Lord's Vault.

The trap that killed the thief is rusted to the point of breaking. Once sprung, it was unable to reset. The iron spears can simply be pressed back into the wall, dropping the thief's skeleton to the floor and allowing the PCs to pass. While the trap poses no danger to PCs, GMs need not reveal this; instead, describe how the spears slide back into the wall with a solid clank. A cursory Disable Device check (DC 10) reveals that the trap has been broken for years and will never work again.

Most of the dead thief's items have long since been ruined. The leather armor has been gnawed by rats, along with the rogue's clothing and boots. His masterwork short sword is pitted with rust, and breaks on any natural 1 rolled in combat. Hidden in the rogue's right boot (Search DC 20) is a folded sheet of velum; drawn on the sheet is a crude picture of a rogue wearing a strange helmet with only one horn. This image is a depiction of the Thief Lord, and though PCs have no reason to suspect it yet, the missing horn is a clue to the puzzle of the Thief Lord's Vault. (See area 2-8 for more information on the Thief Lord's Vault.)

The door is locked with a very simple mechanism (Open Lock DC 10).

Stone Door: 3 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 45; Open Lock DC 10; Break DC 25.

Level 1: The Maze of Cazül the Chaotic

The first dungeon level is comprised of challenges that Cazül uses to punish thieves who earn his displeasure. While the traps and puzzles are relatively new, they are built into tunnels and chambers that have existed since the early days of Punjar.

Except where noted, the rooms and halls are uniformly dusty and dry, and thick cobwebs abound. A thin layer of sand covers the floor intermittently, providing a +2 circumstance bonus to Survival (Track) checks. The walls, floors, and ceilings are all made of sandstone blocks held in place by aging mud mortar. Every so often, the PCs come across a pool of dried blood, the sole remains of a thief that failed Cazül's tests.

The dungeon's wooden doors likewise show their age. Most are made of old planks and can easily be broken down. Exceptions exist, when noted in the room description.

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

Weakened Masonry Wall: 8 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 25.

Wandering Monsters

The first level of the dungeon is riddled with small holes dug into the loose mortar. Some of these tunnels are inhabited. Most of these creatures hide in their lairs, shunning adventurers, but there is 1 in 12 chance every half-hour that a wandering monster decides to make a meal of the PCs.

If a wandering monster is encountered, roll 1d8 and consult the following table:

Roll	Encounter
1	3 vargouille (EL 3)
2-4	Choker (EL 2)
5-7	Monstrous scorpion, Medium (EL 1)
8	2 ogres (EL 4) (workers in cahoots with those from area 1-5)

Vargouille (3): CR 2; Small outsider (evil, extraplanar); HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; Init +1; Spd Fly 30 ft. (good) (6 squares); AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk Bite +3 melee (1d4 plus poison); SA Shriek, kiss, poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Intimidate +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +5; Weapon Finesse.

Shriek (Su): Instead of biting, a vargouille can open its distended mouth and let out a terrible shriek. Those within 60 feet (except other vargouilles) who hear the shriek and can clearly see the creature must succeed on

a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed with fear for 2d4 rounds or until the monster attacks them, goes out of range, or leaves their sight. A paralyzed creature is susceptible to the vargouille's kiss (see below). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same vargouille's shriek for 24 hours. A shriek is a mind-affecting fear attack.

Kiss (Su): A vargouille can kiss a paralyzed target with a successful melee touch attack. An affected opponent must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or begin a terrible transformation that turns the creature into a vargouille within 24 hours (and often much sooner; roll 1d6 separately for each phase of the transformation). First, over a period of 1d6 hours, all the victim's hair falls out. Within another 1d6 hours thereafter, the ears grow into leathery wings, tentacles sprout on the chin and scalp, and the teeth become long, pointed fangs. During the next 1d6 hours, the victim takes Intelligence drain and Charisma drain equal to 1 point per hour (to a minimum of 3). The transformation is complete 1d6 hours later, when the head breaks free of the body (which promptly dies) and becomes a vargouille.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 12 or be unable to heal the vargouille's bite damage naturally or magically. A *neutralize poison* or *heal* spell removes the effect, while *delay poison* allows magical healing.

Choker: CR 2; Small aberration; HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk Tentacle +6 melee (1d3+3); Full Atk 2 tentacles +6 melee (1d3+3); SA Improved grab, constrict (1d3+3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., quickness; Space/Reach 5 ft./10 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Hide +10, Move Silently +6; Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy.

Quickness (Su): Although not particularly dexterous, a choker is supernaturally quick. It can take an extra standard action or move action during its turn each round.

Monstrous Scorpion, Medium: CR 1; Medium vermin; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk Claw +2 melee (1d4+1); Full Atk 2 claws +2 melee (1d4+1) and sting -3 melee (1d4 plus poison); SA Constrict (1d4+1), improved grab, poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Hide +4, Spot +4.

Poison (Ex): A monstrous scorpion has a poisonous sting (injury, Fort DC 13, initial and secondary damage 1d3 Con).

Ogre (2): CR 3; Large giant; HD 4d8+11; hp 33; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 8, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +3;

Grp +12; Atk/Full Atk Greatsword +8 melee (3d6+7) or javelin +1 ranged (1d8+5); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Listen +2, Spot +2; Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Possessions: Splint mail, large greatsword, 6 large javelins, necklace of humanoid skulls, hide sack with a collection of elf ears and 1d4 platinum bars (each worth 50 gp).

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Hall of the Thief Lords (EL 6): Read or paraphrase the following:

The stone door recedes into the ceiling, revealing a dusty chamber. The air is stale and dry, and smells of sickly-sweet spices and blade oil.

There are three exits to the room, each a set of copper-plated doors. Four bronze statues stand in the corners of the room atop short marble pedestals. Each statue is cast in the likeness of a king, and each bears a mighty great sword. Despite their massive weapons, the regents are all depicted wearing simple leather armor.

The hall is the first of Cazül's challenges, a simple but potentially lethal series of death traps. Cazül used the traps to gauge his apprentices; PCs that fail to act swiftly and decisively will quickly be reduced to fodder for the dungeon's beasts.

Upon crossing the center of the room, the eastern door closes and the PCs inside the room hear an audible click. The eastern door can be stopped from closing with a DC 23 Strength check, but this does not prevent the traps from activating. If the door succeeds in closing, it cannot be opened for 10 rounds. (The closed door can be lifted with a DC 25 Strength check.) The inside of the eastern door is covered with a hammered copper sheet.

On the first round after the PCs activate the room's traps, the statue in the northeast corner of the room grinds into motion with the whirling of gears and cogs, attacking the 5 squares adjacent to its base.

Each following round until all the PCs exit the room, roll 1d4. On a 1, the northeast statue attacks; on a 2, the southeast statue attacks; on a 3, the southwest statue attacks; on a 4, the northwest statue attacks. Each time, the attacking statue strikes any one PC in the 5 squares adjacent to its base.

The statues' weapons are actual swords, not part of the statues themselves. If a particular statue is disarmed, it doesn't attack when indicated. However, on the following round, any other statues continue to attack.

Eventually the PCs will need to exit the room. The copper-plated doors are all locked, and can be broken (DC 23 Strength check), opened by magic, or picked (DC 20 Open Lock check).

If the PCs take time to examine the doors (a perilous proposition indeed), the following details are revealed with a DC 10 Search check:

Northern Doors: The beaten copper sheets depict the flaming pits of hell, ruled by a horned, skeletal demon bearing a scythe and hourglass. The doors are hot to the touch.

Eastern Door: The sheet depicts humanoids, presumably thieves, set on spikes, speared through the belly and left to die. They seem to beg the viewer to end their misery.

Southern Doors: The beaten copper sheets depict a skeletal court, with a king and queen sitting atop a throne of bones. Beneath the royal couple, in descending order of importance, are dozens of dukes, counts, and lesser courtiers. All the figures are skeletons arrayed in royal garb. The doors are cold to the touch.

Western Doors: The sheets of copper are folded to produce thousands of tiny ridges, each filed to a razor sharp edge. Anyone touching the western doors with their bare flesh suffers 1d3 points of damage; until the damage is healed, the PC suffers a –2 penalty to any fine motions performed with their hands (such as Open Lock or Disable Device checks).

Thief Lord Traps (4): CR 3; mechanical; timed trigger; automatic reset; Atk +13 melee (1d10+5/19-20, sword); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 22.

Copper-plated Door: 3 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; Open Lock DC 20; Break DC 23.

Area 1-2 – The Razor's Edge (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The staircase descends ten feet before splitting to the left and right. A distant moan echoes up from the right. A cool breeze rises from the left, bearing the scent of algae and mold.

When weight is placed 5 feet down the flight, the stairs collapse to form a steep slope of polished stone. PCs on the stairs are pitched down the slope toward the trap: a razor sharp blade, stretching from floor to ceiling, concealed at the juncture of the two stairways.

Those failing a DC 20 Reflex save are caught on the razor corner, suffering 3d6 points of damage. Those that succeed manage to throw themselves to either the north or the south stairway, avoiding the blade but continuing to slide to the bottom of the stairs.

Collapsing Stairs/Razor Trap: CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; razor (3d6, razor wall); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

Area 1-3 – Blood Pit (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The small cistern is filled with a four-foot deep pool of brackish water. The water is covered with an oily sheen. Dozens of small, slimy creatures brush against your legs, concealed by the water's surface.

A single exit offers escape: a water-soaked door, half buried in standing water.

PCs entering the cistern by tumbling down the collapsing stairs of area 1-2 fall 20 feet, taking 1d4 points of falling damage as they tumble into the shallow pool. The water is not deep enough to dive into.

The surface of the pool is covered in a film of highly flammable oil. Torches or lanterns falling into the water have a 1 in 6 chance of setting the oil aflame. Once ignited, the oil burns for 10 rounds, causing 1d6 points of fire damage per round. Quick-thinking PCs may try to hide beneath the surface of the water, but this presents its own challenges.

The pool is infested by a swarm of blood leeches: a breed of voracious aquatic leech that can squeeze through the small cracks in armor, boring holes through leather and skin, and attach themselves to exposed flesh. The swarm viciously attacks anyone standing in the water, causing the water to roll and boil. The floor of the pit is covered in water-soaked bones from the leeches' previous victims.

The southern door opens away from the room and can easily be opened, causing the water to rush south. PCs failing a DC 15 Strength or Balance check are swept south with the water. See area 1-3A for the consequences of opening the southern door.

The walls of the cistern are smooth and slick can be climbed with a DC 20 Climb check.

Secret Door: The secret door in the western wall is a portal placed above the surface of the water, and can be found with a DC 17 Search check.

Treasure: Hidden in the mud at the base of the cistern is a rotten leather bag containing 59 gp and a simple jade star, a Xulmec relic worth 100 gp.

Blood Leech Swarm: CR 3; Tiny animal (swarm); HD 4d8; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp –; Atk/Full Atk Swarm (1d6 plus disease); SA Disease, distraction; SQ Half damage from slashing and piercing, low-light vision, scent, swarm traits; AL N;

Space/Reach 10 ft./0 ft.; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Hide +14, Listen +6, Spot +7, Swim +10; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever – swarm attack, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a swarm in its square must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round.

Note: The blood leech swarm stats are nearly identical to those of an aquatic rat swarm.

Area 1-3A – Visions of Flames (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The water-soaked door bursts open to reveal a short hallway. At the end of the hall is a short brazier, filled with flaming oil!

If the PCs open the door to area 1-3A without first blocking the water from area 1-3, the water rushes south, rolling up in a wave against the flaming brazier and setting the water's oily surface alight.

Once lit, the surface of the water burns for 5 rounds, causing 1d6 points of fire damage per round to anyone in areas 1-3 and 1-3A. Because the water is spread out over a greater area, reducing the depth of the water to a mere one foot, it is impossible to avoid fire damage by hiding beneath the water's surface. Any blood leeches surviving area 1-3 are also swept along, evenly distributing the swarm between the two areas.

Area 1-4 – Dance of the Globes (EL 5): Read or paraphrase the following:

The chamber is lit by four globes that float about the room. Each is perhaps two feet in diameter, glassy smooth and the color of milk. The globes hover about three feet off the floor, and all but one shimmer with a pale radiance that makes the shadows seem markedly deeper.

The floor of the chamber is covered in a carpet of fine dust. Every step you take throws up a cloud.

As you watch, the globes seem to sense your presence, and begin to edge in your direction.

PCs tumbling into the room from area 1-2 have a 1 in 6 chance of knocking into one of the floating globes. On a DC 17 Reflex check, the PC successfully avoids breaking the sphere. Otherwise, roll 1d4 to determine which of the globes breaks open, spilling its contents into the room.

The globes are made out of fragile glass; if they brush into the PCs, there is a 1 in 6 chance the globe breaks open. Worse, the globes move toward the

nearest living creature at the rate of 1 foot per round, crowding the PCs and making movement difficult. A PC attempting to edge past a globe must succeed on a DC 15 Balance check or brush the globe, risking an accidental opening. Striking a globe with a weapon instantly shatters a globe.

If detected for magic, the globes radiate a minor aura of transmutation.

Globe #1: The first globe contains a flawed emerald (worth 500 gp) enchanted with *continual flame*. The gem sits atop several thousand vrock spores preserved by the globe's vacuum.

If released, spores automatically deal 1d8 points of damage to all creatures adjacent to the broken globe. Then they penetrate the skin and grow, dealing an additional 1d4 points of damage each round for 10 rounds. At the end of this time, the victim is covered with a tangle of viny growths. (The vines are harmless and wither away in 1d4 days.) A *delay poison* spell stops the spores' growth for its duration. *Bless*, *neutralize poison*, or *remove disease* kills the spores, as does sprinkling the victim with a vial of holy water.

Globe #2: This globe holds a fragile glass key. When the globe is broken open, PCs see an *azure key* tumble toward the ground. PCs standing adjacent to the globe are permitted a DC 17 Reflex check to catch the key before it hits the ground. If the key strikes the ground, it shatters into hundreds of pieces, releasing an azure gas that dissipates with a quick hiss. The key's physical form can be repaired with the *mending* spell, but this does not recapture the azure gas.

The key is used to open the glass case in area 1-5.

Globe #3: The globe contains a compressed air elemental. If the globe is broken, the shards explode outward, inflicting 1d12 points of damage to all creatures adjacent to the globe (DC 15 Reflex save for half).

The elemental, driven mad from its imprisonment, transforms into a ferocious whirlwind, filling the room with a whirling cloud of dust. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have concealment, while those farther away have total concealment. Those caught in the cloud must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell.

The elemental can transform itself into a whirlwind once every 10 minutes and can remain in that form for one round. Tiny-sized creatures must succeed on DC 11 Reflex save when coming into contact with the whirlwind or take 1d4 points of damage. The victim must also succeed on a second Reflex save or be picked up bodily and held suspended in the powerful

winds, automatically taking 1d4 points of damage each round. Creatures trapped in the whirlwind cannot move except to go where the elemental carries them or to escape the whirlwind. Creatures caught in the whirlwind can otherwise act normally, but must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell. Creatures caught in the whirlwind take a -4 penalty to Dexterity and a -2 penalty on attack rolls. An elemental in whirlwind form cannot make slam attacks and does not threaten the area around it.

The globe also contains an iron key (to the door in the western wall of the room) and a *dusty rose ioun stone* (granting +1 insight bonus to AC).

Globe #4: Of the globes, the fourth is the only one that doesn't glow. Trapped inside the glass sphere is a shadow, imprisoned by a magical lead coating spread around the interior of the globe. If released, the shadow attempts to flee, returning 1d12 rounds later to stalk the PCs. It follows the party until such a time that it can launch a surprise attack on one or two PCs. The shadow continues in this manner, slowly turning the PCs into spawns.

Western Door: The door in the chamber's west wall is made of stone, and locked with a superior lock (DC 30 Open Lock check). The key to the door can be found in the second globe. The door is trapped with a needle trap poisoned with blue whinnis.

Stone Door: 3 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 45; Open Lock DC 30; Break DC 28.

Air Elemental, Small: CR 1; Small elemental (air, extraplanar); HD 2d8; hp 16; Init +7; Spd Fly 100 ft. (perfect); AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk Slam +5 melee (1d4); SA Air mastery, whirlwind; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Spot +3; Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

Air Mastery (Ex): Airborne creatures take a -1 penalty on attack and damage rolls against an air elemental.

Whirlwind (Su): The elemental can transform itself into a whirlwind once every 10 minutes and remain in that form for one round. In this form, the elemental can move through the air or along a surface at its fly speed. The whirlwind is 5 ft. wide at the base and up to 20 ft. tall.

Shadow: CR 3; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 3d12; hp 19; Init +2; Spd Fly 40 ft. (good) (8 squares); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp -; Atk/Full Atk Incorporeal touch +3 melee (1d6 Str); SA Create spawn, strength damage; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +2 turn resist-

ance, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str –, Dex 14, Con –, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8*, Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge. *A shadow gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a –4 penalty on Hide checks.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow becomes a shadow under the control of its killer within 1d4 rounds.

Poison Needle Trap: CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (blue whinnis, DC 14 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1 Con/unconsciousness); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17.

Area 1-5 – Soul'daem (EL 7): Read or paraphrase the following:

Immediately after opening the door you are struck by the stink of sweat and rotting meat. The chamber is home to two large piles of soiled furs and a wide fire pit dug into the west wall. Four barrels are placed against the south wall, creating a makeshift table. Atop the table is a whetstone and what could be the tips to three ballista bolts.

This chamber is home to two ogres that serve Reswythe (see area 1-12) in caring for the dungeon and its denizens. The brothers are crude, violent, and greedy, caring only for themselves. When the PCs enter the room, the ogres are busy resetting the traps in other areas of the dungeon. Roll 1d12 to determine how many rounds pass before the monsters return. When the time has elapsed, see The Ogres' Return, below.

The furs piles are the ogres' sleeping mats. A careful search of the piles (DC 15) determines that the furs are flea and tick ridden, and that the westernmost pile conceals a partially broken clay tablet (show players handout A). The tablet is one of three used to open the seal in area 1-13.

The coals in the fire pit are warm, and new logs were recently tossed atop the dying embers. A DC 15 Survival (Track) check determines that someone tossed the logs onto the embers within the last 10 minutes.

The barrels standing against the wall contain legs of pork and elf, packed in salt. One of the barrels is half empty. The "ballista tips" atop the barrels are actually the heads to the large javelins wielded by the ogres.

Concealed beneath the barrels (Search DC 15) in a crudely dug hole is a locked crystal coffer. The coffer contains a blue velvet pillow; atop the pillow rests a night-black bastard sword which glows an icy blue. A DC 20 History (nobility and royalty) or DC 15 bardic knowledge check recognizes the weapon as *Soul'daem*, the signature weapon of the infamous elf blackguard An-Kirith (see sidebar). An-Kirith died a century ago, but the blackguard's tomb – and his wealth of weapons and armor – were never found.

The crystal coffer also contains *compulsion gas*, which is nearly invisible to the naked eye. If the coffer is broken open or unlocked without the azure key from area 1-4, the gas is released, and all sentient creatures within 5 feet of the coffer must make DC 18 Will saves or be seized with the overwhelming desire to own *Soul'daem*. The duration of the gas is 9 rounds.

Soul'daem

This bastard sword is a weapon of legend, whose name is Infernal for "Death Dealer." Forged by fiends from volcanic hells-slag, the midnight-black blade radiates a chill blue light.

Soul'daem is an intelligent +2 *keen bastard sword*. The blade is lawful evil and is dedicated to causing strife amongst the forces of good. Able to communicate via both speech and telepathy, the sword will speak to multiple members of the party at once, alleging to be a weapon of good and doing its best to subtly turn the party members against one another. The blade has *deathwatch* continually active, has 10 ranks of Bluff, casts *major image* 1/day, and can detect chaotic good creatures at will.

Soul'daem: +2 *keen bastard sword*; AL LE; Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 17; Speech, telepathy, darkvision 120 ft., hearing; Ego 22.

Lesser Powers: *deathwatch* continually active, 10 ranks of Bluff (total +13), *major image* 1/day.

Greater Powers: Detect opposing alignment at will.

Personality: Cruel and wicked, *Soul'daem* prefers to work its schemes slowly over time, corrupting good warriors with the assurance that if they were to seize total power over those weaker than them, they would be free to work greater good. Despite its false promises, warriors that carry *Soul'daem* are inevitably drawn to the side of evil.

Moderate necromancy, CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *keen edge*; Price 44,435 gp.

If the unbroken *azure key* from area 1-4 is used to unlock the coffer, the key turns the coffer's lock, then breaks, releasing blue gas into the coffer, neutralizing the *compulsion gas*. (If the key has been repaired with the *mending* spell, it unlocks the lock, but does not neutralize the gas.)

The Ogres' Return: After enough time has elapsed, the ogres return to the room, ducking to pass through the south doors. If the PCs have set a sentry to guard the south doors, the sentry notices the ogres' approach with a DC 10 Spot check. If no sentries have been set, the PCs can notice the ogres' approach with DC 20 Listen or Spot checks.

Unless the PCs are making an extraordinary amount of noise (such as battling one another over *Soul'daem*), the ogres fail to notice their presence, granting the heroes a surprise round. Heroic PCs may be able to bottleneck the ogres in the south corridor, preventing more than one ogre from entering the room at any one time. The other ogre, trapped behind his companion, attempts to hurl javelins past his ally, taking a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Soul'daem will use both telepathy and speech to hail different PCs, volunteering to help defeat the ogres, even going so far as to claim special powers when wielded against evil humanoids. If the ogres see that one of the PCs is wielding *Soul'daem*, they launch into a foaming rage, doing everything in their power to strike down the PCs and regain the magic sword.

Ogres (2): CR 3; Large giant; HD 4d8+11; hp 33; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 8, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +3; Grp +12; Atk/Full Atk Large greatsword +8 melee (3d6+7) or large javelin +1 ranged (1d8+5); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Listen +2, Spot +2; Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Possessions: Splint mail, large greatsword, 6 large javelins, necklace of humanoid skulls, hide sack with a collection of elf ears and 1d4 platinum bars (each worth 50 gp).

Crystal Coffer: 2 in. thick; hardness 2, hp 10; Open Lock DC 20; Break DC 25.

Compulsion Gas: CR 5; magical; location trigger; manual reset; magical (victims are compelled to seize *Soul'daem*); DC 18 Will save resists; Search DC 29; Disable Device – (see text).

Area 1-6 – Hall of Skulls: Read or paraphrase the following:

The short hall is decorated with piles of bleached skulls stacked into small pyramids. There are four pyramids in all, two stacked against each of

the two walls. The skulls are predominantly human and half-orc, with a smattering of elves, dwarves and halflings.

All the skulls bear signs of violence: hairline fractures and deep furrows where blades bit deep into the hard bone.

The skulls all belong to thieves who died attempting to breach the Vault. The pyramids haven't been disturbed in ages, and have collected a thick coat of dust and cobwebs.

Hidden behind one of the pyramids (Search DC 20) is a loose stone that can be pried back from the walls with a DC 15 Strength check, revealing a small alcove dug into the loose sand: area 1-6A.

Area 1-6A – Alya's Last Stand (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

A desiccated corpse lies prostrate in the sand, dried skin stretched taut over the small frame that must have once been an elf or half-elf. The corpse wears a chain mail shirt, high leather boots, fine trousers, and a torn cloak. A sword and dagger lie beside the corpse, clutched to the bitter end.

The corpse was once Alya Dasher, a half-elven cleric/rogue who plied her trade across the Northlands. Alya met her end when she and a band of rogues ran afoul of Cazül's traps. Wounded and alone, Alya crawled inside this alcove, only to die of blood loss and shock.

Treasure: Alya's backpack, weakened with age and rot, contains a 50-foot length of silk rope, two weeks of trail rations (rotten), two broken candles, thieves' tools, and three ceramic flasks with the following labels marked in charcoal: *WOUNDS* (a *potion of cure serious wounds*), *BRAVERY* (a *potion of heroism*), and *SHIELD* (a *potion of shield of faith* +3).

The sword lying in the sand is non-magical, save for a simple iron ring secured to the pommel with a leather cord. The ring, one of five *Rings of Berain*, has no effect when worn by a creature, but when secured to a weapon, the ring grants the weapon's wielder spell resistance 13. (The effect only functions when the weapon is drawn.)

The corpse also wears a leather shoulder pouch. The pouch is secured with a leather strap tied to a hammered silver star. The pouch is protected by a *fire trap* that detonates if the strap is undone; the trap can be bypassed by cutting open the pouch from behind. Inside the pouch is 55 gp, 5 uncut bloodstones (worth 50 gp each), and a broken clay tablet wrapped in oilskin (show the players handout B). The tablet is one of three used to open the seal in area 1-13.

Fire Trap: CR 3; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, 3rd-level druid, 1d4+3 fire, DC 13 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

Area 1-7 – Serpent’s Wrath (EL 5): Read or paraphrase the following:

The corridor widens to reveal a sandy-floored chamber. Three enormous mosaics depict gaping bestial faces, stretching floor to ceiling. The faces are those of fierce snakes, jaws wide, fangs barred. In the place of each of the six eyes burns a small brazier. Shattered weapons and broken bones litter the sandy floor.

Investigation of the room reveals a small hole at the “throat” of each of the three snake maws. Two feet across, the holes lead to a warren of tunnels that connect the three maws through the walls and floors of chamber.

Lurking in the warrens is a spirit naga skeleton. The long, serpentine skeleton attacks anyone who enters the room, moving from hiding to strike PCs, then vanishing into one of the three heads, only to launch an attack from yet another head. Because the PCs are not sure from which head the skeleton will strike, it receives a +2 flanking bonus to these attacks.

The skeleton has no use or care for treasure, but some items have collected in the sand over the years. A search of the sandy floor (Search DC 15) reveals 192 sp, 81 gp, and a cat’s eye amethyst that, if appraised, appears to be worth 100 gp. The amethyst is actually a *gem of thieves’ lament* that bestows a –5 penalty to all Move Silently and Hide attempts made within 30 feet of the gem. (Note that the gem’s curse is actually an asset to rulers and others hoping to elude assassins.) The gem radiates

moderate evocation and is worth 10,000 gp.

Spirit Naga Skeleton: CR 4; Large undead; HD 9d12+36; hp 102; Init +6; Spd 40 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +5; Grp +9; Atk/Full Atk Bite +9 melee (2d6+6); SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 15, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.

Area 1-8 – Cazül’s Betrayal (EL 3, 7): Read or paraphrase the following:

The staircase before you descends into a thick cloud of steam. The walls and steps are slick with condensation and black algae. A loud, heavy burbling noise comes from deep within the mist.

The constant heat and moisture have weakened the sandstone steps to the point of collapse. If more than 25 pounds are placed on the stairs, they crumble, pitching PCs down into the burning mud pit below. Explorers making a DC 17 Reflex check are able to catch themselves before tumbling down the steps. The dangers of the mud pit are detailed below.

Once the PCs descend the stairs, read or paraphrase the following:

A steaming, bubbling mud pit stretches before you. Every few moments a geyser of steam and burning mud erupts, casting scalding mud about the chamber.

Six stone pedestals bridge the muddy chamber, each covered in globs of baked mud.

At the far end of the chamber, across the pool of boiling mud, is a platform. The details, obscured by the thick steam, are difficult to discern, but in

Relics of Legend: The Five Rings of Berain

When the dwarven dweomer-master Tiamyr Berain was trapped for one hundred days and nights while the ogres of the Bitterwater Clan laid siege to the dwarf’s holdfast, he methodically destroyed nearly all of his creations, relics the like of which the world had never seen.

The one item Tiamyr didn’t have the heart to destroy was the *Crown of Berain*, a relic of great power forged for the dwarf-lord’s wife. Tiamyr melted down the crown, and from the dweomer-rich metal forged five golden rings – each more powerful than the last. These rings he cast into the holdfast’s cistern, where they were washed downstream and deposited somewhere on the western slopes of the Trolltooth Mountains.

It is said that, alone, each of the five rings is a potent magic item, but that together, each amplifies the magic of the others, so that when all five rings are brought together, they serve as a minor artifact.

Unlike most rings, the *Rings of Berain* are not intended to be worn. Instead, each is designed to be affixed to a weapon or armor. This is because the old dweomer-master intended his rings to serve as tools of vengeance against the forces of darkness that cost him his life. Only warriors and fighting men in full battle-regalia and sworn to the defeat of evil can take advantage of all five rings working on concert. None know what the true effect of all five together would be save Berain, whose time on the mortal plane long ago expired.

between eruptions you can make out a throne and a leering skeleton that seems to point in your direction.

The pool of super-heated mud is 20 feet deep. PCs falling into the mud take 1d6 points of heat damage per round until they manage to pull free of the muck. PCs adjacent to a platform can climb out of the muck with a successful Climb check (DC 10), but climbing up a slick, muddy pedestal is much more difficult (DC 20). Rules for PCs attempting to swim through the mud are detailed below.

A PC can leap from one muddy, slick pedestal to the next in one round by making a Jump check (DC 15). A PC can attempt to negotiate two pedestals in a single round by succeeding on two successive Jump checks (DC 20). A PC can attempt to negotiate three pedestals in a single round by succeeding on three successive Jump checks (DC 25).

Every few moments, one of the geysers erupts, inflicting 1d8 points of heat damage to anyone within 5 feet. Any time a PC is caught in an eruption, the PC must make a Balance check (DC 15) or be knocked from the pillar into the mud. A PC in the mud atop an erupting geyser suffers 1d12 points of heat damage.

For the purposes of the encounter, only the geysers adjacent to the pedestals are marked on the map, but the GM should assume that large and small geysers are going off in the room nearly constantly.

Each round, roll 1d12 and consult the following table to determine which of the numbered geysers erupt:

Roll	Erupting Geysers
1	2, 4, 6
2	None
3	6
4	1, 3
5	4
6	None
7	2, 5
8	3
9	4, 6
10	2
11	None
12	1, 3, 5

Characters caught in the mud must make a DC 10 Swim check every round to simply stay above the mud's surface, 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.

Characters below the surface of the mud 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 pool, a rescuer needs a rope, pole, 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 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 all checks succeed, the victim is pulled 5 feet closer to safety.

The Throne: On the far north wall of the room is a platform adorned with a mud-splattered throne. Seated atop the throne is a skeleton, its bones cunningly secured with thin copper wire. The skeleton is pointing south, to the ceiling directly above the entrance to the chamber, revealing the location of a hidden vault. Seen from the north, the door of the vault stands out clearly.

In order to get to the vault, however, PCs will have to cross *back* across the mud once again. This is Cazül's idea of a joke: luring the PCs through mortal danger, when the object of their search was within reach all along.

The Thief Lord isn't entirely heartless. The skeleton wears a silver crown worth 50 gp and *bracers of armor +2*.

The Vault: PCs searching the ceiling directly above the staircase (Search DC 15) discover a wooden trapdoor covered in mud. The trapdoor is 12 feet off the ground, locked, and trapped. PCs can scale the wall with a DC 20 Climb check, and the lock can be picked with a DC 20 Open Lock check. The trapdoor's lock is trapped with a needle poisoned with monstrous centipede poison; any attempt to open the lock without the proper key springs the trap.

Opening the trapdoor reveals a small crawlspace built into the ceiling of the chamber, a cache of the Thief Lord's reserve weapons and gear. Resting in the crawlspace are two iron-bound coffers, tinged brown with rust and slick to the touch.

The first coffer holds a suit of masterwork studded leather armor, a masterwork rapier, and a bandoleer

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.

holding 7 *swarm shurikens* (see Appendix 1).

The second coffer contains two leather saddle bags (each containing 500 gp, 100 sp, and 10 pp), and a *mask of the shadowcat* wrapped in red velvet (see Appendix 1).

Rotting Staircase Trap: CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; DC 17 Reflex save avoids; boiling mud pit (1d6, heat); Search DC 20; Disable Device –.

Poison Needle Trap: CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (Small monstrous centipede poison, DC 10 Fortitude save resists, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17.

Area 1-9 – Test of the Lords (EL Variable): Read or paraphrase the following:

An archway stands above you. Chiseled into the stone is a cryptic warning:

Played by Kings,

Mocked by Jesters,

Envied by Fools,

Won by Worms:

The Test of the Lords.

Beyond the archway looms a darkened hall. The ceiling is vaulted, supported by arching buttresses, and painted with murals depicting a war between winged celestials and horned devils.

The floor of the chamber is divided into alternating squares of polished white marble and black obsidian. The smell of blood hangs in the air.

Show the players handout C. This chamber is a favorite with the thieves of Punjar. Rogues caught trying to steal money from the Guild are brought to the Game and forced to run a gauntlet of traps and monsters. Rogues that survive the gauntlet are permitted to go free, but to date none have survived. Any PC succeeding on a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check or bardic knowledge check (DC 15) will know of the Game's reputation.

PCs stepping into the room are immediately faced with the choice of stepping onto a white square or a black square. PCs inspecting the floor (Search DC 15) are able to discern faint runes carved into the stones, providing vague clues to the nature of the encounter. Moving over a black stone triggers a trap; moving over a white stone triggers a monster encounter.

Traps are sprung from the walls and floors, while monsters appear adjacent to the PC in a flash of light and smoke. Note that the triggers are magical, not



mechanical; PCs flying through the room trigger encounters just as if they had stepped on one of the squares, and the undead monsters do not activate any triggers. There is a single icon that is never trapped and appears on both black and white squares: the skull (Sk).

Any square, black or white, can only be triggered once every 24 hours.

White Squares

Map Symbol	Rune	Monster
Ki	King	Vampire spawn
Q	Queen	Ghast
W	Warlord	Ettin skeleton
Kn	Knight	Minotaur zombie
Ft	Footman	Ghoul
Sk	Skull	No monster

The monsters will only fight the PC that triggered the trap (even if they are attacked by others in the room). If the PC is slain, the monster vanishes as it appeared, in a flash of smoke and flames. If the monster is slain, its corpse remains.

King: The vampire spawn is garbed in rotting ceremonial robes and wears an ancient gold helm deco-

rated with a platinum lion (worth 150 gp).

Queen: The ghastr was once a beautiful elf maiden with unblemished skin and midnight black hair. She wears a white silk gown, stained with blood and gore, and a silver torque (worth 75 gp).

Warlord: The enormous ettin skeleton is decorated with the hides of slain foes, strapped to its body with black chains. (The chains and human skins approximate hide armor.) The beast fights with a pair of massive morningstars forged in the shape of hydras, the fierce heads extended as spikes.

Knighr: The minotaur wears a suit of rusted banded mail and wields an enormous greatsword. The minotaur wears the sacred, silver-threaded tabard of a fallen Knight of the Lance. If recaptured and returned to the Theocracy of the Lance, the PCs will earn the lasting gratitude of the holy bishops.

Footman: The ghoul wears a scorched suit of breastplate armor. The armor, helm, and greaves conceal all of the ghoul, leaving only the fiend's ragged, gore-stained claws exposed.

Black Squares

Map Symbol	Rune	Trap
P	Scythe	Ceiling pendulum
St	Storm	<i>Inflict light wounds</i>
F	Broken Sword	Extended <i>bane</i>
L	Locust	Hail of needles
D	Dragon	<i>Fire trap</i>
Sk	Skull	No trap

Vampire Spawn: CR 4; Medium undead; HD 4d12+3; hp 29; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +1 *Spear of wounding* +6 melee (1d8+7/x3 plus 1 point Con damage); SA Blood drain, domination, energy drain; SQ Damage reduction 5/silver, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, gaseous form, resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10, spider climb, undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con –, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Climb +8, Profession (dancer) +4, Diplomacy +4, Hide +10, Jump +8, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness.

Possessions: Ring of protection +2, +1 spear of wounding.

Blood Drain (Ex): A vampire spawn can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each

round. On each such successful drain attack, the vampire spawn gains 5 temporary hit points.

Domination (Su): A vampire spawn can crush an opponent's will just by looking into his or her eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the vampire must take a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed on a DC 14 Will save or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by a *dominate person* spell from a 5th-level caster. The ability has a range of 30 feet.

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

Ghastr: CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12+3; hp 38; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk Bite +5 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis); Full Atk Bite +5 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis) and 2 claws +3 melee (1d4+1 plus paralysis); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, stench; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 17, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +9, Hide +8, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8; Multiattack, Toughness.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease – bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghastr's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Even elves can be affected by this paralysis.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding these creatures is overwhelming. Living creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same ghastr's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws.

Ettin Skeleton: CR 5; Large undead; HD 10d12; hp 65; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +15; Atk Large Morningstar +10 melee (2d6+6); Full Atk 2 Large morningstars +10 melee (2d6+6 each); SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, superior two-weapon fighting, undead traits; Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 23, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Matched large morningstars, human hide armor.

Minotaur Zombie: CR 4; Large undead; HD 12d8+3; hp 81; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 touch 8, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk/Full Atk Large greatsword +10 melee (3d6+7/19-20) or gore +10 melee; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 21, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Possessions: Large greatsword, banded mail.

Ghoul: CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 20; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis); Full Atk Bite +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis) and 2 claws +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con -, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +2, Hide +3, Jump +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +7; Multiattack.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease – bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex.

Possessions: Breastplate.

Ceiling Pendulum: CR 3; mechanical; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; Atk +15 melee (1d12+8/x3, greataxe); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 27.

Inflict Light Wounds Trap: CR 2; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*inflict light wounds*, 1st-level cleric, 1d8+1, DC 11 Will save half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

Extended Bane Trap: CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*extended bane*, 3rd-level cleric, DC 13 Will save negates); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

Hail of Needles: CR 3; mechanical; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; Atk +20 ranged (2d4); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 22.

Fire Trap: CR 3; spell; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, 3rd-level druid, 1d4+3 fire, DC 13 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

Area 1-9A – King's Watch: Read or paraphrase the following:

A single throne stands atop a balcony, overlooking a large hall. The throne is carved from white marble and draped with silk. It is covered in cobwebs and dust.

To the left of the throne is a weapons rack holding a strung light crossbow and several quivers of bolts.

It is perhaps a twenty-foot drop to the chamber below. The floor of the hall is arrayed like a chessboard, with alternating stones of black and white.

When the characters look out over area 1-9, you can show the players handout C, explaining that their vantage point is rotated 90 degrees. The throne and balcony are for Cazül and his toadies to watch the bloody action in area 1-9 below. Since the Thief Lord's absence, the throne room has fallen into disarray. The crossbow and bolts, used by Cazül to shoot at thieves running the gauntlet, are all masterwork items.

PCs can climb down from the balcony into area 1-9, effectively avoiding most of the room. However, PCs choosing to leap off the balcony to advance even further place themselves in considerable danger. A PC leaping off the balcony must succeed on a DC 20 Jump check or fall across 2 panels, activating both. A PC that fails the check by 10 or more sprawls across 3 panels, activating all three. See area 1-9 for descriptions of the panels and their consequences.

Area 1-10 – The Cistern (EL 6): The secret door on the eastern side of the room is obvious from inside area 1-10. From the outside, the secret door can only be detected with a DC 20 Search check. The stone door is 2 inches thick, has a hardness of 8, 30 hp, and can be broken with a DC 20 Strength check.

Read or paraphrase the following:

A dry, gaping cistern looms before you. The smooth, polished walls funnel down to a narrow hole, scarcely ten feet across. A narrow staircase runs along the circumference of the chamber, connecting two portals cut into the walls of the cistern.

A fearsome, filth-covered troll lurks in the base of the cistern, and climbs up to investigate any intruders (climbing at a rate of 10 feet per round). The stairway is only 2 feet wide, making the PCs' footing in combat extremely treacherous. PCs atop the stairs gain a +1 attack bonus on melee attacks for having the higher ground, and the troll is considered flat-footed while climbing.

PCs struck by the troll in combat must make a Balance check (DC 15) each round or risk tumbling into the cistern. A PC failing this Balance check must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex check or fall into the cistern, taking 2d6 points of falling damage and shooting down the cistern into a pool of water 20 feet below. The walls of the well can be scaled with a DC 20 Climb check.

Troll: CR 5; Large giant; HD 6d8+36; hp 42; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +14; Atk Claw +9 melee (1d6+6); Full Atk 2 claws +9 melee (1d6+6) and bite +4 melee (1d6+3); SA Rend 2d6+9; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration 5, scent; Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +6, Climb +6; Alertness, Iron Will, Track.

Area 1-11 – Larder of Doom (EL 6): Read or paraphrase the following:

The room is stacked high with crates, barrels, and casks. In the center of the room is a low table flanked by two benches. Atop the table are two small casks, bound in silver and stamped with some sort of marking. Beside the casks is a large loaf of half-eaten bread and a wheel of cheese.

A quick search (DC 10) of the stacks of crates and barrels reveals that all the containers are empty. The entire room is little more than a trap laid for unwary delvers. (See Treasure below for the results of a more careful search.)

The two small casks atop the table are already tapped and ready for consumption. Both are marked with a red stamp that reads *Dragon's Bliss*, ostensibly the colorful name of the contents. Inside each cask is an ochre jelly, ready to ooze through the tap and into a PC's gaping mouth. The lids of the casks are designed to fall off easily; if the casks are hoisted above a PC for drinking, the lid falls off and the entire jelly slides onto the waiting PC's head. The false cask can be detected with a DC 10 Search or Spot check, or by any PC with ranks in Craft (woodworking) or a similar skill.

The loaf of bread and wheel of cheese are also deadly. The bread, though appearing freshly baked, has been powdered with lich dust. A PC with any ranks in Profession (baker), or succeeding on a DC 15 Search or Spot check, notices the dust, but there is no effective means of removing the deadly dust from the loaf.

The wheel of cheese has been intentionally infected with id moss; the blue-green veins run throughout the cheese, making the wheel resemble a variety of blue cheese. Any PC with ranks in Profession (cooking), or succeeding on a DC 20 Search or Spot check rightly suspects the cheese as being poisoned.

Treasure: A careful search of the room (DC 20) discovers a loose stone in the western wall that conceals a small alcove. Hidden inside the alcove is a pouch of lich dust, a box containing three rotting mushrooms infected with id moss, and a small gold

bracelet wrought in the shape of a serpent devouring itself (worth 75 gp).

Id Moss Cheese: Ingested, DC 14 Fortitude save resists, 1d4 Int/2d6 Int.

Lich Dust Bread: Ingested, DC 17 Fortitude save resists, 2d6 Str/1d6 Str.

Ochre Jelly (2): CR 3; Medium ooze; HD 6d10+36; hp 34 each; Init -5; Spd 10 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 5, touch 5, flat-footed 5; Base Atk +4; Grp +10; Atk/Full Atk Slam +5 melee (2d4+3 plus 1d4 acid); SA Acid, constrict 2d4+3 plus 1d4 acid, improved grab; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., split, ooze traits; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref -3, Will -3; Str 15, Dex 1, Con 22, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10.

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

Area 1-12 – Lair of the Keepers (EL 7): The secret door on the north side of 1-11 is obvious to those coming from area 1-13. From the outside, the secret door can only be detected with a DC 20 Search check. The stone door is 2 inches thick, has a hardness of 8, 30 hp, and can be broken with a DC 20 Strength check.

The western doors to area 1-12 are locked with a deadbolt, and must be opened with magic or broken down. Once the doors are opened, read or paraphrase the following:

The chamber before you is lit by a trio of iron braziers that cast a red, demonic light over the room. Dozens of chain harnesses, leather straps, and manacles hang on racks on the walls.

The air of the chamber smells of blood and freshly slaughtered meat. The floor is sticky with blood, gore, and tufts of animal hair. In the center of the room is a low iron table, outfitted with leather ties. A humanoid form lies prostrate on the table, covered in a black cloth.

This workshop is where Reswythe and Samarkin prepare the carcasses for the monsters in area 1-13. Reswythe was once a fierce warrior nomad, but she has grown weak and corrupt from living in the decadent city of Punjar. Now her life on the open plains is but a distant memory, and the swordswoman toils in the service of the Thief Lord. Samarkin is a half-orc thief, and can be found in area 1-12A.

Any PC with more than 2 ranks in Handle Animal will recognize that the implements in the room are for

restraining very large beasts for slaughter. The table is where animals are rendered; the beasts in area 1-13 consume an enormous amount of fresh meat every day, and the savage Reswythe rarely troubles with the remnants.

The body on the table is Reswythe, half-drunk on bad wine. Unless the PCs take extraordinary pains to open the doors without making the slightest sound, or succeed in breaking down the door in a single round, Reswythe is ready for them, sitting up and hurling a bottle at the PCs: Atk bottle +8 ranged

(1d2+3). Then Reswythe draws her glowing greatsword from behind the table and roars out, "Samarkin!" PCs may mistake this for a battlecry, but in truth it is Reswythe warning her companion in the adjoining room (see area 1-12A). Then Reswythe retreats north, hoping to distract the PCs from Samarkin's sneak attacks.

Treasure: There is very little of worth here beyond the collection of chains, manacles, and restraints. However, the lip of the table hides a sliding panel that can be found on a DC 25 Search check. Hidden

The Interrogation of Reswythe and Samarkin

So what if your PCs *don't* kill every NPC they encounter? Or kill them slowly, and only after asking lots of cunning and insightful questions?

Both Reswythe and Black Samarkin bear little loyalty to their employer. They will deal with captors, hoping to buy their way to freedom. Their chaotic and evil natures, however, make the pair less than reliable. If either of the pair is captured and intimidated with violence, they reveal one of the following "secrets" of the Thief Lord's Vault. (Note that not all the secrets are true, but that both Reswythe and Samarkin *believe* the secrets to be true; thus, attempts to detect lies by either magic or mundane methods may prove useless.) GMs should feel free to play off these secrets, expounding and exaggerating as they see fit.

Remember that torturing creatures for information is a thoroughly vile act, and PCs with alignment restrictions will suffer accordingly.

Each time a PC succeeds on a DC 20 Intimidate check, either roll 1d12 and consult the following table, or pick your favorite from the list.

Roll Result

- | Roll | Result |
|------|--|
| 1 | The Vault was built by none other than the legendary dwarf Prester "Trapmaster" Ungart. At the base of the dungeon is a secret vault that contains some of the old dwarf's treasures. (True) |
| 2 | Cazül the Chaotic, once Lord of Thieves, is now a lich residing with a court of undead thieves on the thirteenth level of the dungeon. (False) |
| 3 | Beware the False Vault, for it spells doom for all who enter. You will know it by the color blue. (True) |
| 4 | There's a shadow dragon lurking on the lower level. It guards a magical blue diamond that grants wishes to its possessor. The only way to avoid the dragon's wrath is to toss a magic item into the pit. (False) |
| 5 | Old Cazül is renowned for his helmet that has only a single horn. (True) |
| 6 | In the dungeons below, there is a sword trapped in a weeping stone. The sword is a powerful relic, but only the pure of heart can draw it from the stone and wield it in battle. (False) |
| 7 | There are three stone tablets, one of which is hidden beneath the table in the slaughterhouse. Placed together, the tablets map out the lower level. (True) |
| 8 | On the lower level of the dungeon, death traps abound. Trust nothing; the Thief Lord deals in lies and deceptions. (True) |
| 9 | Beware the door with the sapphire. It's surely not safe. (True) |
| 10 | Mergusi Kefon, a demon-blooded wizard from the Lostlands, vanished into the lower levels long ago. If he's dead, a wealth of magic items must still be with him! (True) |
| 11 | Don't eat the bread or cheese! It's a trap! (True) |
| 12 | Even the treasure hoard at the bottom of the dungeon is a trap. I heard there's an escape though – some sort of mirror. (True) |

behind the panel is a partially broken clay tablet (show the players handout D) and a *wand of cure serious wounds* with but 9 charges remaining.

Reswythe, female human Ftr6: CR 6; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d10+15; hp 59; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +1 *greatsword* +11 melee (2d6+6/19-20); Full Atk +1 *greatsword* +11/+6 melee (2d6+6/19-20); AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +9, Jump +10; Cleave, Great Cleave, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (*greatsword*), Weapon Specialization (*greatsword*).

Possessions: +1 *breatplate*, +1 *greatsword*, iron key (to area 1-13B), pouch with 15 gp.

Aged Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 3; hp 8; Break DC 20.

Area 1-12A – Black Samarkin (EL 5): Read or paraphrase the following:

The small room contains a pair of cots and a small brazier for cooking and warmth. Three or four cloaks hang to the side of the door. Against the far wall stands a low, wooden table. Atop the table are two dirty plates, one half-empty bottle of wine, and a strange twelve-sided copper box covered in rivets, dials, and levers.

A pair of smoky torches light the room, leaving the corners of the chamber cloaked in deep shadows.

Black Samarkin, a half-orc rogue infamous for her cruelty and hideously scarred face, lurks behind the cloaks, ready to sneak attack anyone who enters the room. Black Samarkin is Reswythe's partner in crime, and if she overhears sounds of battle coming from area 1-12, she comes her companion's aid.

Black Samarkin's strength makes her a fearsome opponent in battle, but the half-orc prefers to make devastating sneak attacks from a distance. When forced into melee combat, she wields two blades at once, attacking with her longsword and her magical shortsword in deadly concert. Samarkin attempts to disengage as quickly as she can, quickly quaffing her potions and then returning to make sneak attacks from a distance.

The small chamber is home to Samarkin and Reswythe when they are working for Cazül. There is little of worth here, but Samarkin has hidden a small pouch containing 20 gp in the hem of her cot.

The strange copper box on the table is a *lesser thieves' puzzle box*, and is instantly recognizable by

any rogue or bard, although it is likely that they have never seen one in person before. For information on the *box* and how to open it, see Appendix 1. Hidden in one compartment is a glass *ring of spell storing, minor*.

Secret Door: The secret door leading to the east is obvious from inside area 1-12A. From the hallway, the secret door can only be detected with a DC 25 Search check. The door is one way, and cannot be opened from the hall, though it can be broken in or beaten down. The stone door is 2 inches thick, has a hardness of 8, 30 hp, and can be broken with a DC 20 Strength check.

Black Samarkin, female half-orc Rog5: CR 5; Medium humanoid (half-orc); HD 5d6+5; hp 30; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grpl +7; Atk Longsword +8 melee (1d8+4/19-20) or heavy crossbow +6 ranged (1d10/19-20); Full Atk Longsword +4 melee (1d8+4/19-20) and +1 *shortsword* +4 melee (1d6+5/19-20); SQ Trapfinding, evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, sneak attack +3d6; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +10, Decipher Script +6, Disguise +5, Hide +11, Intimidate +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +8, Search +7, Spot +7, Tumble +8; Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (*longsword*).

Possessions: Heavy crossbow, +1 *leather armor*, longsword, +1 *short sword*, bolt case and 20 bolts, 2 *potions of cure serious wounds*.

Area 1-13 – Cazül's Menagerie (EL 3): If the area is approached from the southern door, read or paraphrase the following:

A heavy stone door blocks your way. Set into the center of the block is a rectangular depression, as if a portion of the door – a key perhaps – is missing.

Show players handout E. The southern entrance to the chamber is locked with a deadbolt that extends through the center of the door, making the doors nearly impossible (short of magic) to pick or destroy.

A Search of the door (DC 15) detects a fine coating of clay dust along the rim of the depression. If the stone tablets found in areas 1-5, 1-6A, and 1-12 are placed in the depression, the deadbolt retracts and the door slides away. Note, too, that if the tablets are placed in the proper formation, they form to make a map of level 2, revealing the location of Prester's secret treasure trove (area 2-7A). The door opens regardless of how the tablets are placed.

Once the door is opened, bypassed, or destroyed, read or paraphrase the following:

The door grinds open to reveal a large circular room. Five iron doors stand roughly spaced along the blank stone walls. The floor of the chamber is slightly concave, feeding toward a short pyramid in the center of the room. The line of sight makes it impossible to see what is atop the pyramid, but you can almost make out the tops of what might be levers or handles.

The top of the pyramid is flat, and 4 small iron levers jut forth from it. A careful Search of the pyramid (DC 20) or a Knowledge (engineering) check (DC 15) reveals that the top of the pyramid is a platform engineered to descend into the structure's heart. Each lever has 3 possible positions.

Explorers might presume that by maneuvering the levers in the proper sequence will lower the platform. Unfortunately, this is only another ruse of the Thief Lord. PCs will be right to be suspect Cazül of duplicity – the Thief Lord has absolutely no intention of providing such easy access to his vault.

No matter how the levers are moved, the PCs hear the whining of gears and the shifting of counterweights, and the platform descends, coming to a halt 30 feet below the lip of the pyramid. Note that the platform is 10 feet by 10 feet; if more than 4 Medium-sized creatures attempt to squeeze onto the platform, all take a –4 penalty on attack rolls and a –4 penalty to AC (they are considered to be squeezing, per the PHB). No more than 8 Medium-sized creatures may squeeze onto the platform.

At the same time that the platform descends, the door to area 1-13B is raised, releasing the ravenous manticore. The manticore, scenting prey, comes to the edge of the pit and begins to hurl spikes down toward the PCs.

The second time the levers are moved, the platform rises back up to the level of the pyramid.

The third time the levers are moved, the platform descends 60 feet into the floor, and door to area 1-13C is raised, releasing the 4 vargouilles.

The fourth time the levers are moved, the platform rises back to the level of the pyramid (taking 2 rounds to rise), simultaneously opening the door to area 1-13D, releasing the owlbear.

The fifth time the levers are moved, the platform finally descends to the second level of the dungeon, arriving at area 2-1.

The sixth time the levers are moved, the platform ascends to the first level, beginning the cycle over.

Stone Door: 6 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; Open Lock DC 30; Break DC 35.

Area 1-13A – Exit: The stone door is locked and can be opened with a DC 20 Open Lock check. The southwest face of the door (visible when approached from area 1-12) bears a visage of a ferocious demon, its fanged jaw thrown wide as if to devour all who would dare to pass.

Stone Door: 3 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 45; Disable Device 10; Open Lock DC 20; Break DC 25.

Area 1-13B – The Manticore (EL 5): The stone door can be lifted with a DC 20 Strength check, or by the raising and lowering of the platform in area 1-13. Once the door is raised, read or paraphrase the following:

Moldy hay and bleached bones litter the small cell. The air smells of rot and damp stone. At the back of the cell is a small pool of water, covered in a slick of algae.

This cell is home to a ferocious manticore. The beast has been mistreated by the servants of the Thief Lord; its wings have been clipped and the manticore shows signs of starvation, its ribs standing out in sharp relief. The monster is no less fearsome for its abuse, savagely attacking any intruders.

Submerged in mud at the base of the pool is the skeleton of an elven paladin. The water-logged corpse is covered head to toe in brackish mud (Search DC 23 to discover), but wears a suit of elven chain.

Manticore: CR 5; Large magical beast; HD 6d10+24; hp 57; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk Claw +10 melee (2d4+5) or 6 spikes +8 ranged (1d8+2/19-20); Full Atk 2 claws +10 melee (2d4+5) and bite +8 melee (1d8+2), or 6 spikes +8 ranged (1d8+2/19-20); SA Spikes; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +9, Survival +1; Flyby Attack, Multiattack, Track, Weapon Focus (spikes).

Spikes (Ex): With a snap of its tail, a manticore can loose a volley of six spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The creature can launch only twenty-four spikes in any 24-hour period.

Stone Door: 3 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 45; Disable Device 10; Break DC 25.

Area 1-13C – Blood and Fangs (EL 5): The stone door can be lifted with a DC 20 Strength check, or by the raising and lowering of the platform in area 1-13. Once the door is raised, read or paraphrase the following:

The small cell is splattered with gore. Blood, strands of sinew, and bits of flesh hang from the ceiling and walls, while the floor is covered in a sticky coating the color of rust. The stench of decay is nearly overwhelming; it fills your nostrils and mouth with the acrid taste of copper.

This chamber is home to 4 vargouille. The foul extraplanars begin combat by alternating their shrieking attack and *kissing* any paralyzed foes, attempting to inflict their fell curse on as many victims as possible.

The vargouilles have no use for treasure, but some tokens of their victims remain. A DC 15 Search turns up 51 gp scattered about the room. A successful DC 20 Search discovers a gold ring decorated with delicately wrought platinum leaves. On the inside of the band is an inscription in elvish that translates to *Beneath the Boughs of the Sylvan Queen, Within the Mines of the Dwarven Lords, Alliance in Arms.*

The ring is worth 150 gp for its materials and craftsmanship, but PCs succeeding on a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check, or DC 15 bardic knowledge check, will recognize the ring as one of 14 forged to commemorate peace between the elves of the Corsan Forest and the dwarves of the Holdfast of the Steel Overlord. Anyone bearing the ring is granted admittance and sanctuary in either realm.

Vargouille (4): CR 2; Small outsider (Evil, Extraplanar); HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; Init +1; Spd Fly 30 ft. (good) (6 squares); AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk Bite +3 melee (1d4 plus poison); SA Shriek, kiss, poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Intimidate +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +5; Weapon Finesse.

Shriek (Su): Instead of biting, a vargouille can open its distended mouth and let out a terrible shriek. Those within 60 feet (except other vargouilles) who hear the shriek and can clearly see the creature must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed with fear for 2d4 rounds or until the monster attacks them, goes out of range, or leaves their sight. A paralyzed creature is susceptible to the vargouille's kiss (see below). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same vargouille's shriek for 24 hours. A shriek is a mind-affecting fear attack.

Kiss (Su): A vargouille can kiss a paralyzed target with a successful melee touch attack. An affected opponent must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or begin a terrible transformation that turns the creature into a vargouille within 24 hours (and often much sooner; roll 1d6 separately for each phase of the transformation). First, over a period of 1d6 hours, all the victim's hair falls out. Within another 1d6 hours thereafter, the ears grow into leathery wings, tentacles sprout on the chin and scalp, and the teeth

become long, pointed fangs. During the next 1d6 hours, the victim takes Intelligence drain and Charisma drain equal to 1 point per hour (to a minimum of 3). The transformation is complete 1d6 hours later, when the head breaks free of the body (which promptly dies) and becomes a vargouille.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 12 or be unable to heal the vargouille's bite damage naturally or magically. A *neutralize poison* or *heal* spell removes the effect, while delay poison allows magical healing.

Stone Door: 3 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 45; Disable Device 10; Break DC 25.

Area 1-13D – The Owlbear (EL 4): The stone door can be lifted with a DC 20 Strength check, or by the raising and lowering of the platform in area 1-13. Once the door is raised, read or paraphrase the following:

Just inside the door of the cell is the corpse of an ogre. The beast bears dozens of bites and lacerations, and is nearly torn in two, its broken limbs hanging at awkward and unnatural angles.

The floor of the chamber is covered in matted, moldy straw and dozens of splintered bones. A skull, its cranium punctured by massive fangs, leers at you from the darkness.

This chamber houses an enormous owlbear, with considerably more hit points than most its kind. The beast has been tormented by its captors, and the abuse has transformed an already deadly monster into a ferocious force of nature.

The owlbear has no treasure, but if PCs intentionally and specifically search its gullet (DC 15), they discover 2 small gold nuggets (worth 15 gp each) and a *rod of metamagic (Enlarge, lesser)*.

Owlbear: CR 4; Large magical beast; HD 5d10+25; hp 51; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +14; Atk Claw +9 melee (1d6+5); Full Atk 2 claws +9 melee (1d6+5) and bite +4 melee (1d8+2); SA Improved grab; SQ Scent; Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +8, Spot +8; Alertness, Track.

Stone Door: 3 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 45; Disable Device 10; Break DC 25.



Level 2: Tests of the Thief Lord

Whereas the first level of the dungeon was created for the Thief Lord's amusement, the second level of the dungeon was designed specifically to lure intruders to their death. Unless the PCs are wary at every turn, they risk becoming the latest of the Thief Lord's victims.

This level is rarely visited, and is covered in a thick layer of dust and cobwebs. The doors and walls are made of stone, and uniformly decorated with elaborate carvings of demons, leering skulls, and souls caught in eternal torment. Unless otherwise noted, the grim murals blend seamlessly into one another, so that even regular doors can only be found on a DC 15 Search check.

Stone Door: 3 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 45; Disable Device 10; Break DC 25.

Masonry Wall: 8 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35.

Wandering Monsters

There are no wandering monsters on level 2.

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – Hall of Despair: Read or paraphrase the following:

The platform descends to a square chamber. The walls of the room are decorated with garish carvings of demons and devils, bowing and making obeisance before a human lord arrayed in rich robes and wearing a helm with a single horn.

At the far end of the chamber is a depiction of an enormous one-horned skull, its maw thrown wide in exultation. Past the skull's glistening teeth is a narrow tunnel descending into darkness.

The skull's teeth are wet with condensation, and pose no threat to explorers. The "one horn" motif is a tribute to the strange magical helm worn by Cazül, and is a clue to the riddle of the Thief Lord's Vault.

Area 2-2 – The Test of Might (EL 4): The door to area 2-2 is weighted and can only be raised with a DC 25 Strength check (up to three adventurers may combine their strength with the aid another action to try to lift the door). Once opened, the door will not suspend itself, so PCs must either conceive of a way of propping the door (iron spikes will suffice), allow the door to close, or succeed in making a DC 20 Strength check every round the door is held open. If the door is allowed to close, the party may be trapped in the room when the Test of Might is sprung. Remember that the mundane door leading out from the south requires a DC 15 Search check to notice due to the complex murals, like all doors on this level.

Once the door is opened, read or paraphrase the following:

A short series of stone stairs descend to a circular chamber. The roof of the chamber is supported by pillars carved in the likeness of noble warriors in full battle regalia. Each warrior is armored in plate mail and armed with a shield and sword. Both armor and weapons seem to be of ancient make.

Murals along the walls depict armies of soldiers conquering armies of wicked humanoids and vicious beasts. At the head of each army is a triumphant warrior – sometimes male, sometimes female – wielding a mighty bastard sword that shines with light.

At the center of the elaborate chamber is a disarmingly simple dais. Atop the dais is a black boulder, polished to a smooth finish. Plunged into the center of the stone is a majestic bastard sword.

The chamber is a host of secrets, and suspicious PCs will be rewarded for their caution. The room embodies the worst aspects of the Thief Lord's sense of humor: a deadly challenge with little or no reward. Parties surviving the Test of Might should rightly bear Cazül a burning enmity.

A close search of the room (DC 15) reveals writing encircling the base of the dais, offering hints to the nature of the room and its trap. The phrase reads:

Mighty & Courageous

Conquerors be warned:

I birthed Civilization

And have thrown it down

In crackling Rage

A cursory inspection of statues (Search DC 15) reveals that each "bleeds" oil from its eyes and hands. Over the years, this oil has had more than ample time to saturate the floor of the chamber.

Finally, any PC with ranks in Profession (miner) who inspects the stone recognizes the boulder as an enormous piece of flint.

The bastard sword is firmly set into the boulder, and can only be pulled free with a successful DC 20 Strength check. As the sword is pulled free, it showers the chamber with sparks, igniting the sheen of oil coating the floor. The flames burn for 12 rounds, dealing 2d6 points of fire damage per round to each creature in the room.



The sword is nonmagical, and the blade, roughed and pitted below the pommel, is worthless except as a curiosity.

Test of Might Trap: CR 4; mechanical, action trigger (drawing the blade); manual reset; flames (2d6, fire for 12 rounds); multiple targets (anyone standing within the room); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

GM Note: A colossal trap in area 2-3A affects both locations 2-3 and 2-3A. GMs should be familiar with both areas before running the complex encounters.

Area 2-3 – Honor Among Thieves, part I (EL 5): Read or paraphrase the following:

The corridor comes to an abrupt halt before a sharp precipice. The cliff drops off fifty feet or so to the sandy floor below. The natural cavern continues out of sight. Stalactites hang from the ceiling, glistening in the light. The air is cool with moisture.

The second of the Thief Lord's Tests forces thieves to choose between immense wealth and the lives of their companions.

The cliff sets up both the initial and final stages of the challenge. The cliff is sheer and can only be climbed with a DC 25 Climb check. Astute PCs will lower ropes, reducing the Climb DC to 15.

An inspection of the floor (Search or Spot DC 15) reveals that the sand is only a few inches thick in spots, and covers a platform made of wooden beams, spanning a much deeper gorge. The base of the gorge is 80 feet below the level of the fake floor, or 130 feet below the top of the cliff.

When the trap is triggered in area 2-3A, two effects take place in area 2-3. First, a tremor passes through the ceiling, causing stalactites to fall from the ceiling. The danger lasts for 4 rounds, during which time any PC in the sandy-floored area is attacked by falling stalactites (Atk +10 melee, 1d2 stalactites for 1d8+5 each).

Secondly, the wooden beams supporting the floor begin to collapse. This begins in area 2-3A and moves 15 feet toward area 2-3 each round. It takes 3 rounds for the collapsing floor to reach the cliff. On the fourth round, the cliff collapses, pitching anyone within 10 feet of the lip 130 feet to the base of the gorge, taking 13d6 points of falling damage. Those succeeding on a DC 15 Reflex save succeed in leaping to safety or grabbing hold of the edge after the collapse.

Area 2-3A – Honor Among Thieves, part II (EL 7): Read or paraphrase the following:

The natural cavern terminates before an immense natural well. The base of the well is somewhere far below in darkness, but how far is anyone's guess. In the center of the well rises a single enormous stalagmite.

Atop the stalagmite is a pedestal, upon which rests an enormous blue diamond, easily the size of a melon. A narrow, wooden bridge runs from the lip of the well to the edge of the stalagmite.

PCs succeeding on a DC 15 bardic knowledge check or a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check recognize the blue diamond as the legendary Star of Daenthar, a flawless gem worth 11,500 gp to any buyer. However, to the reckless, its cost in lives may be considerably higher.

The northern end of the bridge to the stalagmite rests – apparently solidly – on the lip of the well. The southern end terminates just a couple of inches from the pedestal, but this gap is too small to be seen by any PC from the northern end. A PC who reaches the center of the bridge may see the tiny gap if he looks closely (DC 20 Spot check).

The bridge itself rotates on a center fulcrum, much like a teeter-totter. The southern half of the bridge pitches over unless the northern half is counterweighted by something weighing as much as the adventurer(s) crossing the bridge.

The bridge begins to tip the instant a PC crosses the center point; PCs succeeding on a DC 10 Reflex check manage to leap back to safety before the bridge flips over. PCs failing this check are permitted a DC 20 Strength check to grab hold of the bridge. PCs failing both checks tumble to the base of the gorge 80 feet below.

If the northern half of the bridge is pinned or counterweighted, PCs may pass safely to the stalagmite and the pedestal that displays the gem. The pedestal is hollow and floats atop a chamber of water. If the diamond is removed, the pedestal rises 3 inches, triggering an *alarm* that sets into motion a rumbling tremble that shakes the entire cavern. If the diamond

is immediately replaced, the trembling ceases; otherwise the trap is sprung.

The supports to the floor beneath areas 2-3 and 2-3A begin to give way, beginning with the bridge in area 2-3A. Starting at the stalagmite and moving north, the wooden structures fall away at the rate of 15 feet per round. A PC at the pedestal or on the bridge is allowed a DC 20 Reflex check to run ahead of the collapsing platforms. PCs who cannot outrun the platforms, or fail the Reflex save, are overtaken by the falling platforms. These PCs must be rescued by their companions or fall to their doom (8d6, fall).

At the same time, a tremor passes along the ceiling, knocking stalactites loose. Each round every PC is attacked by 1d2 falling stalactites (Atk +10 melee, 1d2 stalactites for 1d8+5 each). Any PC struck by a stalactite must make a second Reflex save or be knocked to the ground and overtaken by the crumbling floor.

Bypassing the Trap: The trap can be circumvented by a careful rogue, but the process is challenging and any misstep spells almost certain doom.

First, the weight of the diamond must be carefully calculated. This can be done with a DC 20 Appraise check or a DC 15 Profession (gemcutter) check. The weight is equal to a pouch of 50 gp. If the diamond is removed at the same time a pouch is placed atop the pedestal (requiring a DC 23 Sleight of Hand check), the trap is not triggered.

Rotating Bridge Trap: CR 6; mechanical; location trigger, no reset; DC 10 Reflex save avoids; 80 ft. deep (8d6, fall); Search DC 15; Disable Device see above.

Honor Among Thieves Trap: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger, no reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 80 ft. deep (8d6, fall) or 130 ft. deep from top of cliff (13d6, fall); falling stalactites (Atk +10 melee, 1d2 stalactites for 1d8+5 each); Search DC 20; Disable Device see above.

Area 2-4 – The Test of Faith (EL 6): Read or paraphrase the following:

The narrow crack in the wall opens into a larger, rough-hewn vault. In the center of the chamber is a granite sarcophagus resting atop a low bier. The lid of the sarcophagus is carved in the shape of a knight lying in repose, his arms folded over a large mace.

A suit of gilded full plate armor stands at the back of the chamber, held erect by a wooden frame. A rolled sheet of parchment hangs from the suit, tied with a faded silk cord.

This encounter is designed to test men and women

of faith, by forcing them to choose between their principles and a powerful magic item.

The lid of the sarcophagus can be lifted with a DC 15 Strength check. Inside is the skeleton of a human garbed in once-regal robes. The skeleton wears a holy symbol of the god Justicia. The symbol is made of platinum and is worth 50 gp.

The suit of armor is gilded in silver and platinum, and radiates strong abjuration. The parchment has a phrase written in rust red ink:

*I answered the call to serve with
Arms sacred to my fathers,
Armor crafted by my own hands,
and a Soul, guided by Her hand.*

*We fought, never for glory, or gold,
but only for the right cause.*

*Grant us this small reward:
our hard-earned rest.*

Looting the tombs of good heroes is a wicked act, but even the holiest of warriors may be hard pressed to pass on a suit of clearly magical armor. Those that fail the test, electing to steal the suit of armor from the fallen cleric, will quickly come to regret their moral lapse.

The suit of armor is a cursed *suit of the iron maiden*. When donned, spikes grow from the inside of the suit, piercing the body of the wearer, causing 1d6 terrible wounds inflicting 1d8 points of damage each. So long as the suit is worn, the wounds continues to bleed, inflicting 1 point of damage per round per wound until the suit is torn free of the impaled body.

Area 2-5 – Test of the Magi (EL 5): Read or paraphrase the following:

As the doors are drawn open, the sound of wind chimes fills the air, as if a celestial host were heralding your arrival. The chamber beyond is small, scarcely fifteen feet across. Dozens of shimmering runes and glyphs cover the floor and walls. The curved walls rise to meet above the center of the room, where a pulsing master rune is placed at the apex of the chamber.

In the center of the room, bathed in the blue light of the master rune, floats an open tome and a staff.

The tome is worn and weathered, as if having recorded the march of the ages. The book is bound in time-blackened scales accented in silver. The wooden staff is polished with use; its tip is curled around a large ruby carved into the shape of a dragon.

Floating before the door is a long, black quill.

The feather pen scribes sparkling silver words in the air that fall away and vanish nearly as quickly as the pen can write.

Like the other tests found on this level, the Test of the Magi is designed to lure greedy and foolish heroes to their doom.

The writing feather is a *quill of dictation*, a minor magic item that writes whatever it is ordered (see Appendix 1). A DC 15 Spot check allows PCs to follow the motion of the pen, reading the falling silver ink. The pen repeats a series of short phrases:

*The staff I believe to be none other
than the fabled Gem-Staff of Ozimobi
the Nefandous. Therefore, if my research is correct,
the tome must be one of the sacred texts
of the Ordo Arcana, stolen from their
hidden vaults ten and twenty years ago.
If I can claim these artifacts –
No. I shall claim these artifacts.
I now approach the staff and tome.*

The floor, tome, and staff are the products of a *permanent image*. A DC 20 Will save permits a PC to disbelieve in the illusion, revealing a 60-foot-deep pit hidden below. Those walking into the room must make a DC 20 Reflex save or plunge headlong into the pit, landing atop a bed of long, rusty spikes.

The PCs are not the first to fall victim to this trap. Impaled on the spikes is the skeleton of Mergusi Kefon, a demon-blooded wizard whose rage was once feared throughout the Lostlands. The broken skeleton still bears the treasure Kefon wore when he died: a now-rotting mass of robes, *bracers of armor +1*, *ring of protection +1*, a gem-studded torque of gold and silver (worth 2,500 gp), and a masterwork quarterstaff, now worthless with age.

Buried beneath the moldering corpse (Search DC 15) is Kefon's spellbook. The spellbook is largely ruined, with many of the pages destroyed by book-moths or stained in the mage's blood. Only the following spells are still legible: 1st-level – *floating disk*, *silent image*, *reduce person*; 2nd-level – *arcane lock*, *detect thoughts*, *levitate*, *protection from arrows*; 3rd-level – *deep slumber*, *slow*, *tiny hut*; 4th-level – *enervation*, *polymorph*, *mnemonic enhancer*; 5th-level – *cone of cold*, *permanency*, *symbol of sleep*.

The *quill* dancing in the room above the pit belonged to Kefon. He used the wondrous item to record his exploration of the dungeon. Even ten years after his death, the pen is still writing (and repeating) the mage's final words.

Spiked Pit Trap: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 60 ft. deep (6d6, fall); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+5 each); Search DC – (illusion; DC 20 Will save to disbelieve); Disable Device DC 20.

Area 2-6 – The Riddling Cross (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The stairs descend to a small unassuming chamber with a vaulted ceiling held aloft by stone buttresses. A featureless stone door stands across the room.

A spiral has been carved into the chamber's stone floor, curling in from the walls to end in the very center of the room. Etched into the spiral is the following:

Once, I was a weapon of a bestial lord.

Now the proud cover me with wire of silver and gold.

Sometimes men kiss me –

*I swallow a soldier's breath, blasting battle-song,
scattering foes and summoning the hounds of war.*

Otherwise on hard boards, headless I lie,

Filled with ruby blood, the ruin of men.

What am I?

Speak proud, speak true.

The answer to the riddle is "horn." The answer needs to be spoken aloud in the room, directed toward the door. If the proper word is spoken, the currently unseen wall in area 2-6A rotates to the PCs' left, permitting access to the stairs down to area 2-8. If an improper answer is given, the wall rotates to the right, exposing the stairs up to area 2-7.

Regardless if the answer is wrong or right, the door on the opposite side of the room recedes into the ceiling 1 round after the answer is given. After 24 hours, the door descends and the riddle resets.

Area 2-6A – The Crossroads: At first glance this hallway is no different from any of the other hallways found on this level. But a DC 20 Search or Spot check reveals faint, curving scrapes on the floor where the wall has rotated. A second DC 20 Search check discovers the seam where the wall ends.

There is no secret door through the moving wall, but the wall can be destroyed or broken through, or moved with a DC 25 Strength check.

Moving Wall: 8 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35.

Area 2-7 – False Vault (EL 8): Read or paraphrase the following:

The stairs rise to a short corridor with a vaulted ceiling, perhaps twenty strides long and half as high. At the end of the corridor is an imposing door. Even from this distance, you can see that the door is made of polished black stone, bound in bright gold. A pair of identical dark keyholes adorns the door, and a large blue sapphire is placed in the very center of the door.

This unassuming location is perhaps the deadliest encounter in the adventure. Despite all the evidence to the contrary, the door is false, and only ill can come to those who disturb it.

A DC 20 Search or DC 20 Spot check permits PCs to notice faint scrapes on the hall floor, running perpendicular to the wall, clues to the dire nature of the hall's trap.

The face of the sapphire is inscribed with a *symbol of sleep*. PCs examining the gem trigger the *symbol*. All creatures of 10 HD or less within 60 feet that fail a DC 15 Will save fall into a catatonic slumber for 3d6x10 minutes. Unlike with the *sleep* spell, sleeping creatures cannot be awakened by nonmagical means before this time expires.

Four rounds after the *symbol* is triggered or disarmed, the walls of the hall begin to move together, crushing any sleeping victims for 12d6 points of damage. On the 6th round after the trap is triggered or disarmed, Large-sized creatures take the crushing damage. On the 7th round, Medium-sized creatures take the crushing damage. And on the 8th round, the walls come to a halt within 3 inches of each other, and Small-sized creatures take the crushing damage. After 10 rounds, the walls return to their starting positions, and the *symbol of sleep* resets.

For meticulous PCs who studied the map tablets in area 1-13, or for those PCs who are simply too tough to die and too stubborn to retreat, there is an escape. The ceiling of the hallway is the result of a *permanent image*. A DC 20 Will save permits a PC to disbelieve the illusion, revealing a concealed passageway to area 2-7A.

Reaching the passageway requires a DC 20 Climb check; until climbing PCs succeed in reaching the ceiling, they are still subject to the effects of the crushing walls.

The sapphire embedded in the door is worth 1,000 gp. The gem is held in place by mortar, and can be pried loose from the door with a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity check.

Symbol of Sleep Trap: CR 6; magic device; spell trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*symbol of sleep*,



9th-level wizard, DC 15 Will save negates); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

Compacting Hallway: CR 6; mechanical; timed trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 25); walls move together (12d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in area 2-6); never miss; onset delay (4 rounds); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 22.

Area 2-7A – Prester's Cache: The tunnel leading to this area is a mere 3 feet in diameter, forcing most explorers to crawl in on their bellies. Read or paraphrase the following:

Dust and cobwebs obscure your progress. Clearly, no one has disturbed this chamber in decades. The low, narrow passage opens to a small alcove, perhaps eight feet in diameter. Placed in the center of the alcove is a large wooden chest bound in rusted iron.

When Prester "Trapmaster" Ungart designed the traps of the dungeon, he took pains to hide a small cache of his own, in a location that he was certain would never be discovered. The treasure chest holds a mere fraction of Prester's accumulated wealth, but remains in case the legendary rogue should ever find himself in Punjar and desperate for resources.

The chest is neither trapped nor locked. However, given that Prester will return only under the direst of circumstances, the theft of his treasure will leave him in an *extremely* foul mood. The Trapmaster will certainly make every effort to track down the rogues who ransacked his hoard.

Treasure: The contents of the chest are neatly organized. There are seven ceramic flasks contain-

ing *potions of cure serious wounds*, two small leather pouches holding 50 pp each, a single silver necklace inlaid with emeralds (worth 1,000 gp), a suit of +2 *studded leather armor*, and a steel flask labeled *Potion of Ill Wishes*, which contains 5 doses of black lotus extract.

The chest conceals a false bottom that can be discovered with a careful (DC 20) Search. Hidden beneath the panel is a +1 *cold-iron dagger*.

Area 2-8 – Thief Lord’s Vault (EL 11): A simple door guards the Thief Lord’s Vault. It is neither locked nor trapped. Read or paraphrase the following:

The door opens to a vault bright with coins and glittering jewels. Coins spill from overflowing chests, coffers, and sacks. Weapons, glowing with mystic power, stand half buried in the piles of treasure. Gems of every size and shape are scattered about the vault, amid gem-studded necklaces, rings, chalices, and crowns. Massive tomes, ragged with age, whisper of long-lost secrets. Great staves, bound in platinum and gold wire, crackle with eldritch might. And at the far end of the vault, nearly lost behind the piles of treasure, is a man-sized mirror, wreathed in glowing, green mist.

Against all odds, you have reached your quest’s end: The Thief Lord’s Vault.

This is a treasure vault worthy of legend. Rarely has so much wealth ever been amassed in a single location. However, the Thief Lord is a bitter nemesis, one who would rather sacrifice his entire treasure hoard than watch it fall into the hands of adventurers.

Cazül the Chaotic has one last trap to spring.

Five rounds after anyone but Cazül enters the room, the ceiling in the hall outside the vault descends, shutting off access to the hall. The following round, the room begins to tip. PCs looking back to the entrance of the room will see an impending avalanche of over 500,000 coins, dozens of massive chests, and giant, gold-plated statues.

The sixth round, loose coins slide along the floor toward the northern wall, forcing PCs to make a DC 10 Balance check to stay on their feet. PCs attempting to cast spells must succeed on a Concentration check with a DC of 10 + the spell level.

On the seventh round, the chests and coffers begin to tip from their shelves, tumbling toward the north wall. PCs must make DC 15 Balance checks to stay on their feet, and a DC 15 Reflex check to avoid being struck by falling coffers for 1d12 points of crushing damage. PCs attempting to cast spells must succeed on a Concentration check with a DC of 15 + the spell level. (Spellcasting PCs struck by falling treasure must also make Concentration checks of 10 + damage taken.)

On the eighth round, the entire contents of the vault slide toward the north wall in a wave of coins, gems, and items. PCs must make DC 20 Balance checks to stay on their feet, and DC 20 Reflex checks to avoid being struck by falling, locked chests for 2d10 points of crushing damage. PCs attempting to cast spells must succeed on a Concentration check with a DC of 20 + the spell level. (Spellcasting PCs struck by falling treasure must also make Concentration checks of 10 + damage taken.)

On the ninth and final round, the vault is standing entirely on end. The southern walls of the vault tear loose, raining even more coins, massive stone slabs and tons of earth down on the room. PCs remaining in the room suffer 17d6 points of crushing damage from the avalanche. PCs attempting to cast spells must succeed on a Concentration check with a DC of 30 + the spell level.

The Mirror of Worlds: Short of magical or divine intervention, the *mirror* is the sole means of escape from the treasure vault. Heroes must simply move (or dive) into the mirror, transporting themselves across untold leagues. On the other side, thousands of gold coins have spilled out on the ground. If collected, the various coins amount to 11,000 gp – a mere fraction of the wealth in the Vault, but no small hoard in itself.

PCs will rightly be loath to leave without some treasure. For each round a PC remains in the chamber, she can either gather 5d20 gp into an open container or try to snatch up an item sliding past. For each round a PC elects to test her luck and remain in the chamber, check the following table, rolling 1d20 plus the PC’s Dexterity modifier:

Roll	Treasure
1-5	An open coffer containing 50 pp
6	A quiver containing 10 +2 <i>arrows</i>
7-8	Mithral shirt
9	<i>Rod of metamagic, Enlarge (lesser)</i>
10	+1 <i>short sword, orc-bane</i>
11-12	1 large ruby (worth 2,000 gp)
13	<i>Boots of elvenkind</i>
14	Suit of +1 <i>dragonhide plate</i>
15-16	Platinum necklace encrusted with diamonds (worth 3,500 gp)
17	<i>Bead of force</i>
18	<i>Wand of magic missiles (5th)</i> , 10 charges remaining
19	<i>Ring of counterspells</i>
20	+1 <i>shield of spell resistance (13)</i>
21	Roll twice*, choosing one of the rolls
22	Roll thrice*, choosing one of the rolls
23+	Roll twice*, keeping both items

* Ignore any roll higher than 20. Any magical item can only be discovered once.

King's Ransom Trap: CR 9; mechanical; location trigger (*alarm*); no reset; avalanche of coins (17d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in area 2-8); never miss; onset delay (5 rounds); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 35.

Dropping Ceiling: CR 8; mechanical; location trigger;

no reset; ceiling collapses (15d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in area 2-8); never miss; onset delay (9 rounds); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 35.

THUS ENDS THE LEGEND OF THE THIEF LORD'S VAULT

Where Does the Mirror Lead?

Tumbling through the *mirror of worlds* can take the PCs to anywhere in the wide world of Áereth. GMs are encouraged to fling their PCs across the world to exciting new locales, but a GM should always keep his players in mind. Nothing ruins a game quicker than dumping a group of urban rogues into the wilds of the Lostlands, or placing a band of warriors and barbarians into the center of a Criestine metropolis. A GM must always gauge the desires of the entire gaming group, perhaps even consulting the players in confidence before subjecting the game to a radical change.

With this in mind, consider one of the following possible destinations, or create one of your own:

- The PCs reappear in the back alleys of Punjar, in the midst of a city watch! The guardsmen are stunned for one round by the treasure-laden PCs appearing from thin air, then call for the PCs' capture!
- The PCs arrive in the midst of a smoking battlefield, in the conquered Grand Duchy of Leherti. A band of rebels are surrounded by a unit of mounted hobgoblins. Unless the PCs act immediately, the rebels will certainly be slaughtered! If rescued, the rebels explain that they were sent by their commander to explore the ruins of a dwarven burial ground, in search of a legendary weapon, the *Hammer of Daentharr*.
- The PCs tumble onto the deck of a rolling galleon making sight of the Southlands. Just as the PCs are able to gain their bearings, a cry goes up: Pirates! The captain, a stalwart merchant-trader with a Northland princess hidden among his cargo, begs the heroes to lead the defense of his ship. Just then, a *fireball* explodes over the bow, and the crew of lizardmen shout for the PCs' vessel to surrender or be boarded.
- The PCs reappear on the plains outside the city of Djeser al-Maqqara – the largest and most infamous slave city in the world. They hear a cry to put down their weapons as a dozen mounted slavers ride toward them!

But we want to Haul Monty home!

No PCs worth their salt are going to turn their back on a treasure hoard. That said, the collapse of the Vault buries that treasure beneath tons of earth and rock, and anyone staying behind is nearly certain to be crushed in the wreckage.

But if anyone can find a way to circumvent a foolproof death trap, it is a PC motivated by the sight of 500,000 coins. With the right combination of spells, magic items, and creativity, a quick-thinking group can achieve the impossible: surviving the collapse of the room and risking the ruin of your carefully wrought campaign.

There are a number of ways to handle this, depending on how demented and cruel you are willing to be. None of these solutions, however, require you to be unfair. Instead, simply extrapolate the world of Áereth in a natural, logical way, and you will find that answers present themselves:

- The Vault, now on end and entirely filled with rubble, is over 200 feet below the streets of Punjar. The collapse has sealed off the Vault from supplies of fresh oxygen. After four hours (two if the PCs are exerting themselves), the PCs begin to suffer from suffocation (refer to the DMG for full details).
- Even if the PCs succeed in removing all 500,000 coins from the Vault, they are still low-level characters in Punjar, a city of thieves. The instant the PCs begin to spend their hoard, rogues appear, like jackals scenting blood on the savannah. Hauling 500,000 coins around is one thing. Keeping it from bands of 10th level (and higher) villains is another. The PCs decide to recruit a bodyguard? Any hired muscle strong enough to fight off the thieves of Punjar is strong enough to kill the PCs and take all the treasure for himself.
- Triggering the Vault alerts Cazül, the Thief Lord, who immediately summons his crew of allies and begins stalking the adventurers. Cazül, a thief/assassin/wizard with over 17 combined levels, proves a remorseless, deadly foe, whose sole purpose becomes to punish the thieves who raided his Vault.

Appendix 1: New Magic

Mask of the Shadowcat: This mask is made of black silk, with five faceted blood rubies sewn into the fabric. When donned, the wearer's face takes on certain feline traits: Her pupils change to those of the cat, her ears seem to sharpen to those of a tabby, and long whiskers poke out from beneath the mask.

When worn, the mask grants darkvision up to 60 feet and a +2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity, adding the usual benefits to AC, Reflex saves, and other uses of the Dexterity modifier.

Moderate transmutation; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, *cat's grace*; Price 7,000 gp.

Quill of Dictation: A minor magic item used to assist wizards in their research, a *quill of dictation* writes whatever it is ordered, in any color of ink. While the *quill* can mimic colors, it cannot actually produce exotic inks or liquids. The *quill* cannot move farther than the page of a large book (roughly 1 foot).

Minor enchantment; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, *arcane mark*; Price 1,000 gp.

Swarm Shuriken: This throwing star resembles a masterwork shuriken with four jade chips embedded in its face. The jade chips give off a faint green glow that can only be observed in absolute darkness.

The shuriken functions as a +1 *shuriken*, but when thrown, it multiplies into 5 identical +1 *throwing stars*. All five throwing stars must be thrown at the same target, and each shuriken uses the wielder's full base attack bonus, plus any modifiers appropriate to the situation.

A *swarm shuriken* can only be used once. If a single *swarm shuriken* is treated with poison, all five resulting shurikens also carry that poison.

Moderate conjuration; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *major creation*; Price 400 gp.

Thieves' Puzzle Box, Lesser: Resembling a strange copper box covered with rivets, hinges, and panels, a *thieves' puzzle box* is instantly recognizable by any rogue or bard. *Lesser puzzle boxes* have twelve sides, while *greater puzzle boxes* have twenty. Both varieties conceal small nondimensional spaces, much like a *bag of holding*. A *puzzle box* opens to half as many different spaces as the box has sides. Each space can accommodate any item with a mass of 100 coins or less.

The puzzle box is designed to open from any of its twelve sides, but as each panel is opened or slid away, another panel is revealed. Each of the box's twelve sides has a small keyhole and is trapped. A total of five panels must be opened, slid aside, or otherwise dealt with before one of the box's tiny inner vaults is revealed.

The first panel can be removed with a mere DC 20 Open Lock check. But opening the successive panels grows progressively more difficult, increasing the DC by +1 each time, so that the fifth and final panel requires a DC 24 Open Lock check to remove.

Similarly, each panel is trapped. Whenever a rogue fails to pick one of the locks, one of the traps listed below is triggered and the *puzzle box* whirls closed. Roll 1d4 + the number of panels opened to determine which trap is triggered:

Result	Trap
1-2	Poison needle trap
3-4	Poisoned blade trap
5-6	Fire trap
7	Lightning bolt trap
8	Fireball trap

Poison Needle Trap: CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (blue whinnis, DC 14 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1 Con/unconsciousness); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17.

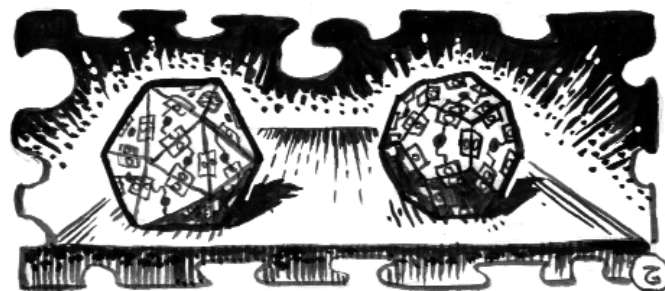
Poisoned Blade Trap: CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +12 ranged (1d8 plus poison, blade); poison (Large monstrous scorpion venom, DC 14 Fortitude save resists, 1d4 Con/1d4 Con); Search DC 19; Disable Device DC 15.

Fire Trap: CR 3; spell; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, 3rd-level druid, 1d4+3 fire, DC 13 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

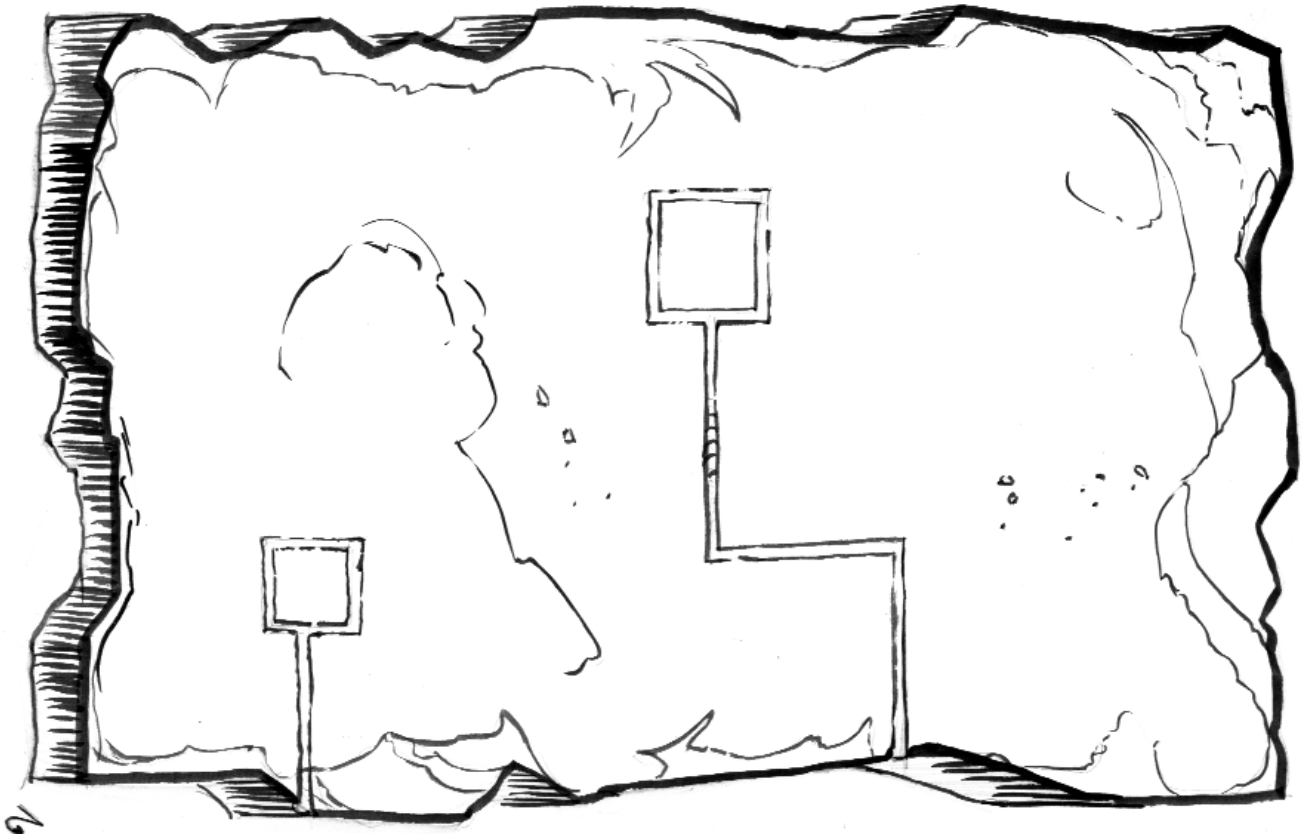
Lightning Bolt Trap: CR 4; magical device; automatic reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 5th-level wizard, 5d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Fireball Trap: CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*fireball*, 8th-level wizard, 8d6 fire, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Moderate conjuration; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *secret chest*; Cost 10,000 gp.



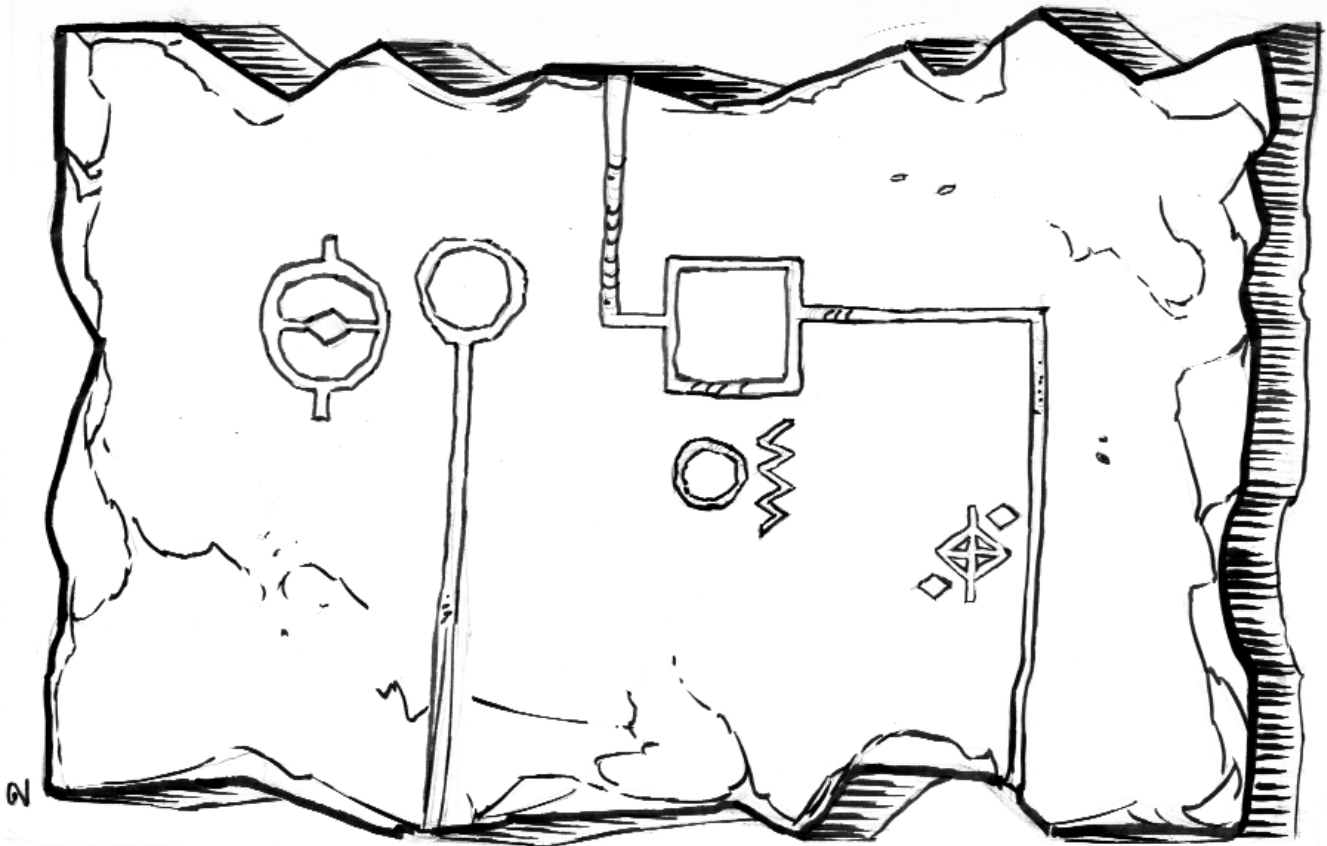
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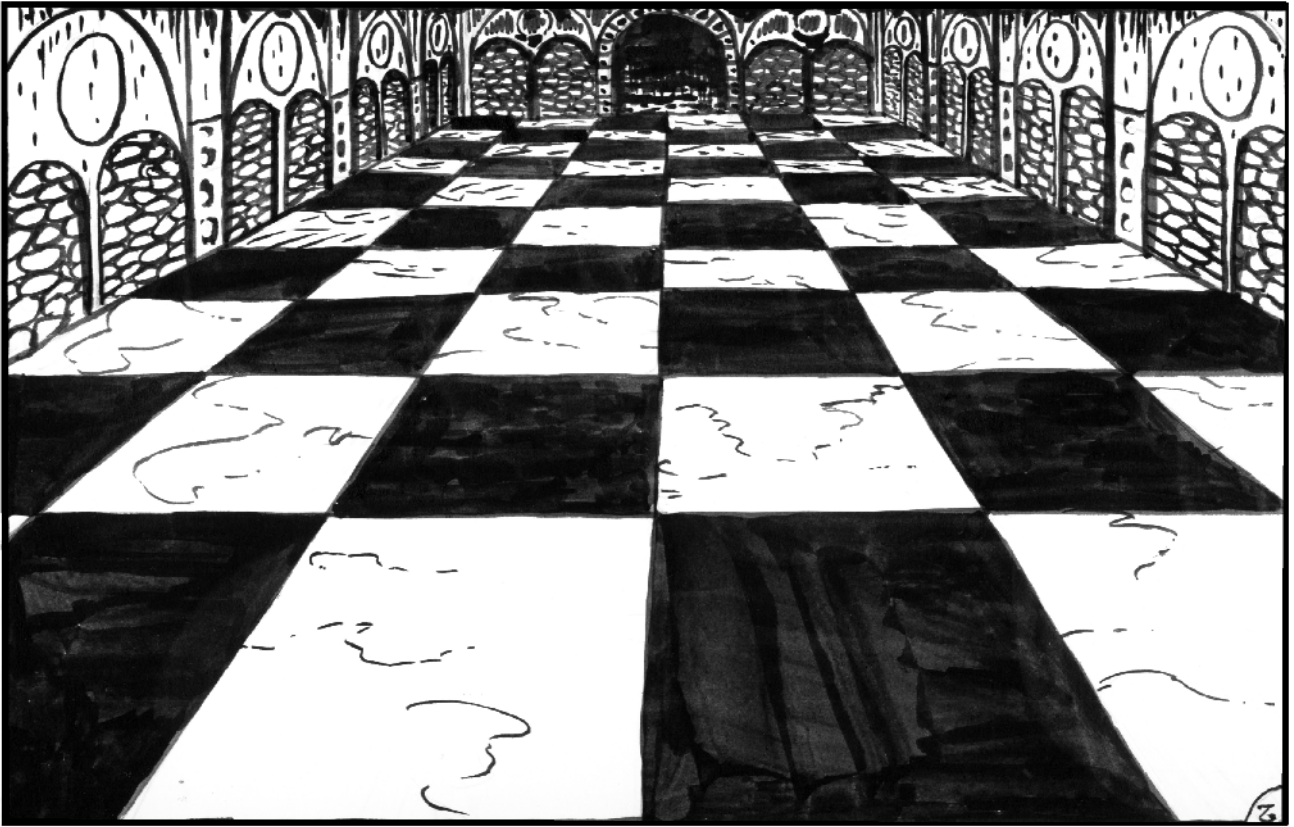
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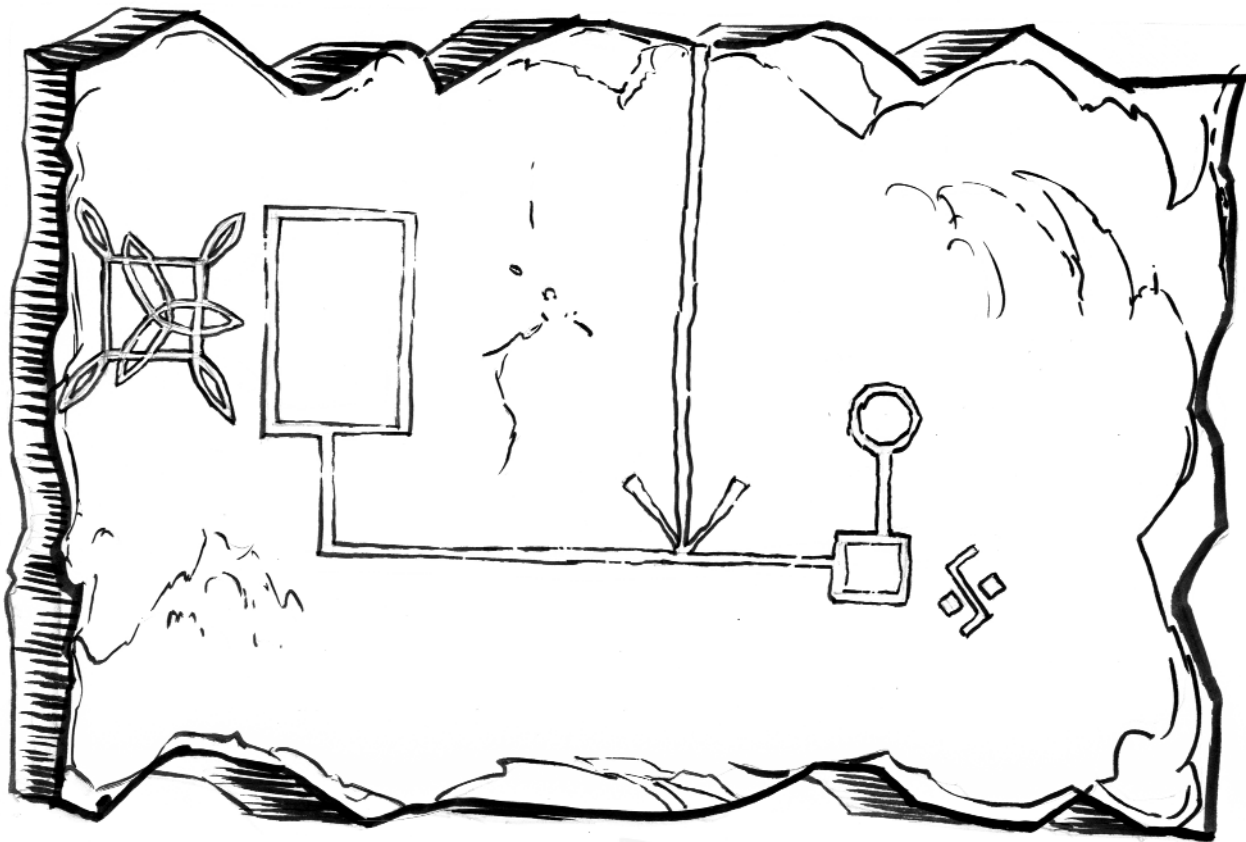
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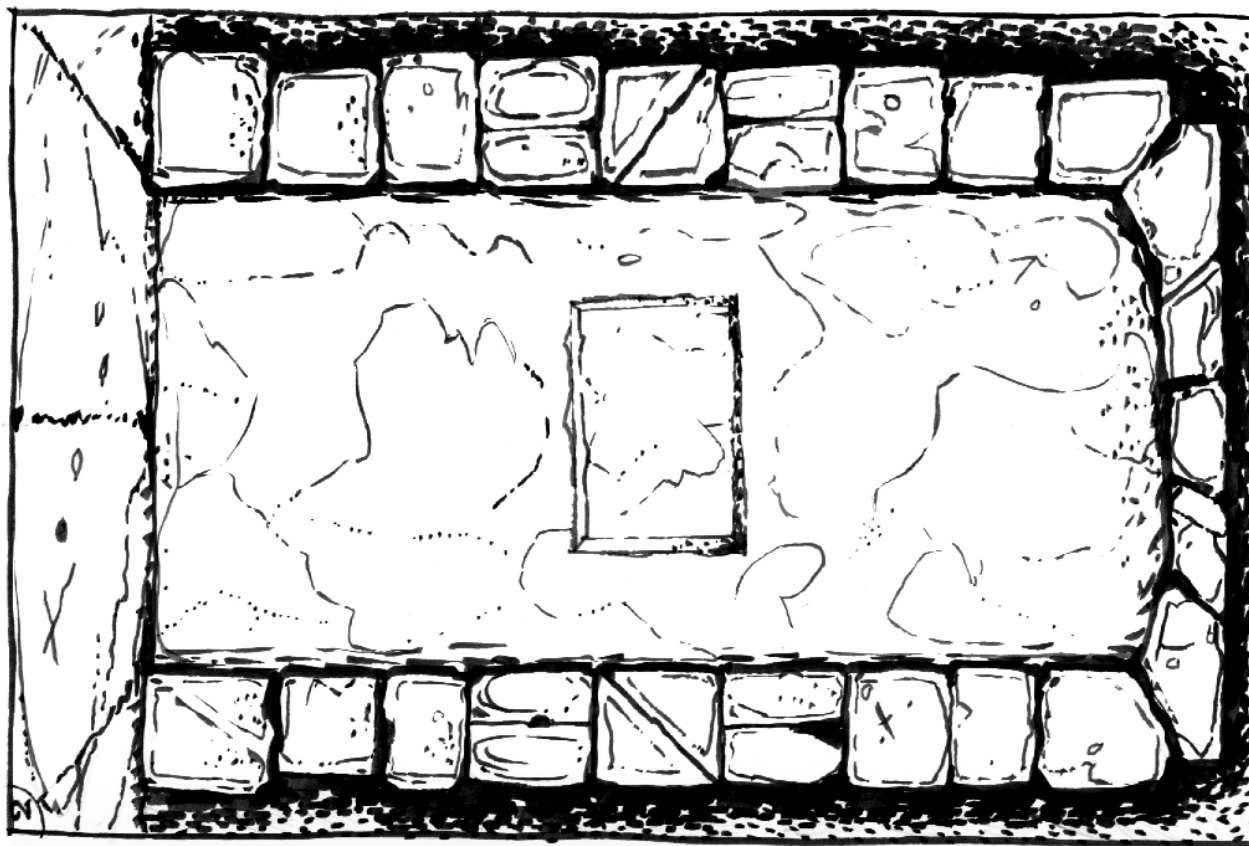


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Players' Handout D





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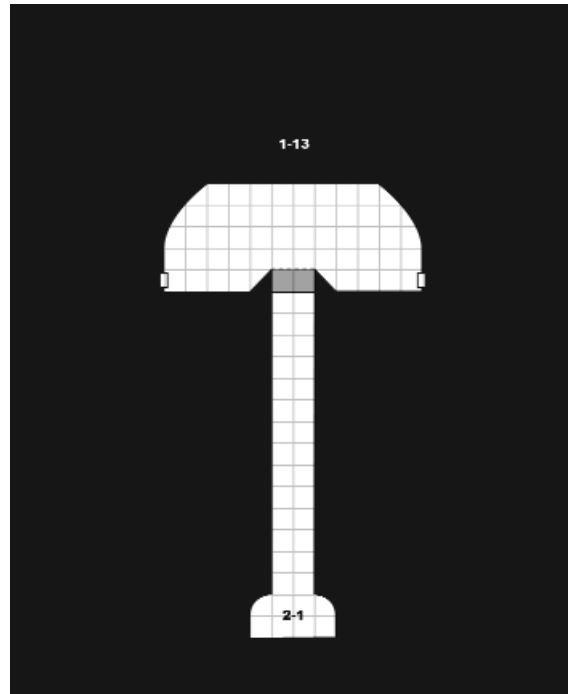
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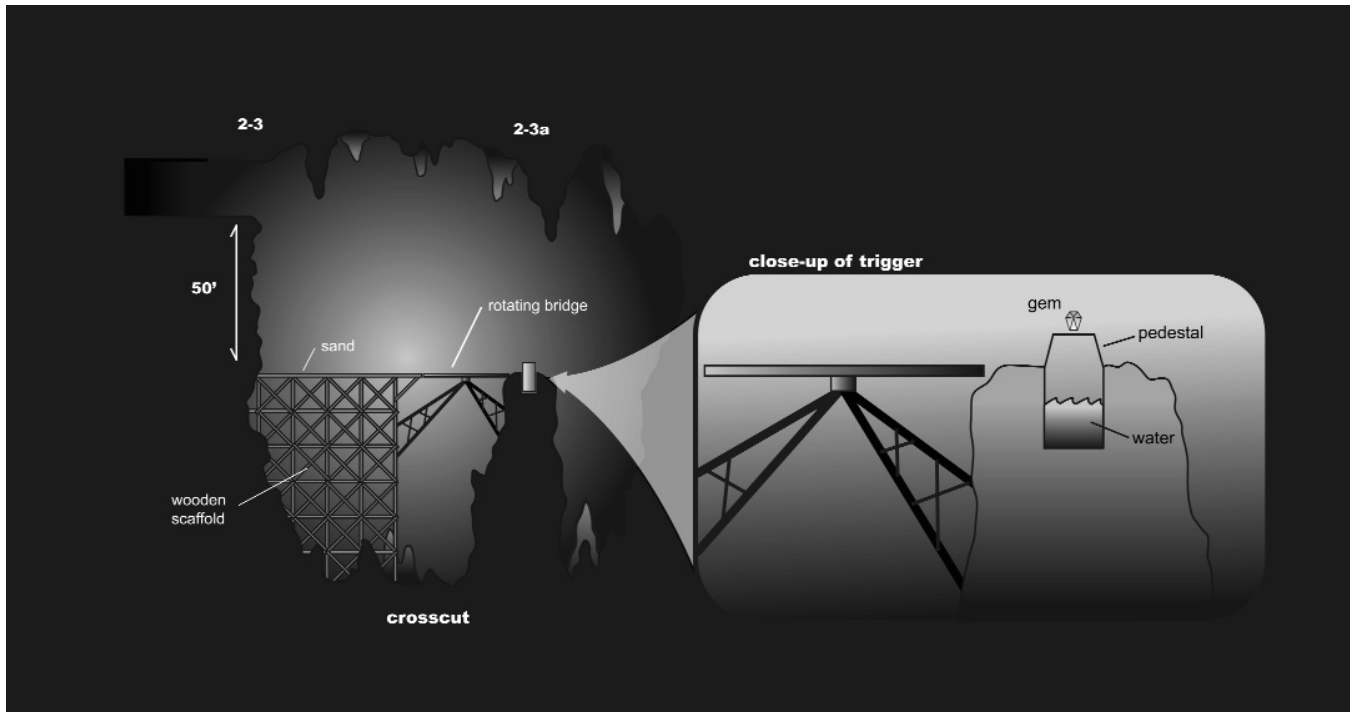
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Cross-Section of Areas 1-13 and 2-1



Cross-Section of Area 2-3



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