

Quests of Doom 2

ADVENTURES WORTH WINNING



FIFTH EDITION
COMPATIBLE

5th Edition Rules,
1st Edition Feel



NECROMANCER
GAMES

Quests of Doom 2

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Our Products

Here’s a convenient list of books published by **Necromancer Games** and our sister company **Frog God Games**.

You can find these and more at our website, froggodgames.com, and on the shelves of many retail game stores. Superscripts indicate the available game systems: “PF” means the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, “5e” means fifth edition, and “S&W” means *Swords & Wizardry*.

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Swords & Wizardry Complete ^{S&W}
The Tome of Horrors Complete ^{PF, S&W}
Tome of Horrors 4 ^{PF, S&W}
Tome of Adventure Design ^{ALL}
Monstrosities ^{S&W}
Bill Webb’s Book of Dirty Tricks ^{ALL}
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Quests of Doom 2 ^{5e}
Quests of Doom 3 ^{5e, S&W}
Quests of Doom 4 ^{5e, PF, S&W}

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Dunes of Desolation ^{PF}
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Introduction

Welcome to the second *Quests of Doom* book from **Necromancer Games**, following up on our two-volume *Quests of Doom I!* This addition to the series is specifically for first tier (low-level) and second tier (mid-level) adventures, compiled from our library of sinister scenarios and lethal locales. Each chapter is a stand-alone module that can be placed anywhere in your own campaign world, wherever you need it. If you're using the *Lost Lands* world setting by **Frog God Games**, each chapter has a quick note at the beginning with information about where it is located in the world.

These chapters are not a series, and are not linked to each other. They were originally published by our sister company, **Frog God Games**, for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and with our “clone” of the original 1974 edition, *Swords & Wizardry*.

What you'll find in this book is a carefully crafted adaptation of the original modules into the fifth edition rules, designed to take best advantage of fifth edition's particular strengths. We didn't just apply numerical formulas to the existing material, we — and by “we” I mean Merric and James — took into account the different tactics, skills, and options available in fifth edition and re-crafted the adventures as if they had been written with the fifth edition rules from the beginning. We convert adventures for the *system*, not just by the *numbers*, and we're very proud of the results here.

Enjoy!

Matt Finch

President, Necromancer Games

The Spire of Iron and Crystal

An adventure by Matt Finch for 6th level PCs

Background

For centuries, out in the wilderness beyond civilization's reach, there has stood an enigmatic tower known as the Spire of Iron and Crystal. It is a bizarre and ancient structure; four massive, egg-shaped crystals are mounted into a twisting, ornate structure of rounded metal girders, one crystal at the top and the other three mounted lower down. Moving lights seen inside the huge crystals suggest that they are hollow and even inhabited, but no one has ever discovered the secret of how to enter them. This is not surprising, for the tower is located on a broad stone ledge halfway up a sheer cliff face, the glassy walls of which have killed several adventurers who attempted to climb down to the tower almost a hundred feet below.

Over the course of the last few months, with considerable effort and some highly questionable methods, the adventurers have assembled quite a bit of information about the Spire – things not widely known, even among the wisest sages of the lands. Most importantly, they believe they know how to enter the structure safely. Once per year, the sun shines through an ancient runestone at the edge of the great cliff upon which the Spire stands; for a period of three days when the stars are aligned with the runestone, an invisible causeway manifests, connecting the highest crystal of the tower with the edge of the cliff, far above. According to the party's information, it is only during the first hour of evening, while the sun is visible through the runestone, that the ramp remains in being.

This information promises to allow the party access to the riches of the tower, which are lavishly described in rumor and lore. They have equipped a small expedition and made their way through the trails of the wild borderlands to their goal: the tower and its still-unplundered riches.

If you are using this adventure in the **Lost Lands** campaign setting by **Frog God Games**, then the Spire of Iron and Crystal can be found in the southernmost extent of the ancient Kal'Iugus Mountains. The mysterious tower stands where the southern slopes of the mountains reach into the vast Harwood Forest above the waters of the Hyon River. Legends of the Spire may be heard in the County of Toullen to the east, and in the rough-and-tumble Coredor Belt on Tywyl Bay, to the south. These legends are vague, more in the nature of folklore than any sort of specific information. Actual historical records of the spire have fallen into obscurity except among the most dedicated treasure hunters and scholars of antiquity.

GM Notes

The Spire is an extrusion from the vast, underground dungeons of a powerful wizard of pre-human origin named Iomnogoron (yom-no-GOR-on), originally designed to draw materials from the surface world for his strange projects far below. The invisible causeway between the spire and the cliff is not actually designed to provide a means into the spire – this is purely an incidental effect – the purpose of the causeway was actually to channel energy ("surface-essence") into the Spire for conversion into

the unearthly mineral compounds once used for the wizard's magic. Iomnogoron still lives within the bottommost crystal of the Spire, albeit in a horribly transformed shape. His researches into immortality drove him mad centuries ago, and while transforming into his new "immortal" form he went on a rampage, killing all of his minions and destroying much of the arcane machinery in the Spire.

At the bottom of each of the huge egg-shaped crystals in the Spire is an open-ceiling system of corridors and rooms, which is like a maze; the upper portion of the egg is open air, but this area is filled with lightning and crackles with dangerous electrical currents, flashing and often joining suddenly into deadly, arcing bolts of current that persist for minutes at a time. If the electricity is not deactivated (which is possible in some areas for limited amounts of time), anyone putting so much as a hand beyond the top of one of the walls will be struck instantly by one of the electrical arcs, and must make a DC 13 Dex save or suffer 1d6 lightning damage with tactical disadvantage on the save if the PC is wearing metal armor. Non-conductive, non-living substances can be reached over the top of the walls with impunity, including (for example) a mirror.

Egg-Tanks

In several places, the party will come across egg-shaped tanks slightly larger than a man; most of these are filled with liquid and contain dangerous creatures. However, the tanks can be used as protection against electricity once the critters are removed. Each one weighs only 100 pounds, but they are bulky and will require a couple of people to drag even one of them from place to place. They can also be moved from inside by walking, like a hamster wheel.

Light Conditions

Because of the constant lightning field overhead, the party will not need a light source unless they enter one of the crawlways. It is also possible for the entire lightning field to be turned off for short periods of time, in which case a source of light would be required in order to see.

Glow-Geodes

Several rooms in the Spire contain *glow-geodes*, which are about the size of golf balls, and look like rocks except for the fact that there is a flickering blue light shining and flickering inside – visible through the rock exterior. These can't be broken open. They are used as raw material for various machines in the Spire, and will prove very useful to the party if the players think to collect them. The key phrase, which will allow the players to connect the geodes with the machines, is "about the size of a golf ball." Use this phrase to describe the geodes, as well as the holes and funnels in the various machines (don't overdo it, of course).

Treasure in the Spire reflects the fact that the Spire has never been plundered ... and that it is quite a dangerous place.

Visibility in the Lightning Field

Visibility in the lightning field is limited to ten feet due to the sudden flashes of light and arcing current unless some sort of dark lens is worn over the eyes. Glass from the egg-tanks will also serve this purpose, although it is not actually dark. For some reason, the lightning field becomes almost invisible when viewed from above, at the very top of the egg's ceiling, and visibility is excellent.

Start

Outside the Spire

The party has already located a safe, easily defended cave in which to establish a base camp, large enough to hold the wagon, horses, and retainers comfortably. The wagon and NPCs will not be attacked at this campsite.

The spire is located mid-way up a huge cliff of relatively sharp and glassy volcanic rock. For every 10ft a PC climbs with a rope, there is a 1 in 6 chance the rope will be severed by a sharp rock. The invisible causeway is by far the safest way to approach the tower. Although it is certainly possible to climb all over the spire using ropes or flying magic, there are no entrances other than via the causeway or through the secret entrance into the second level. The crystal of the eggs is impervious to any sort of power the party could possibly bring to bear.

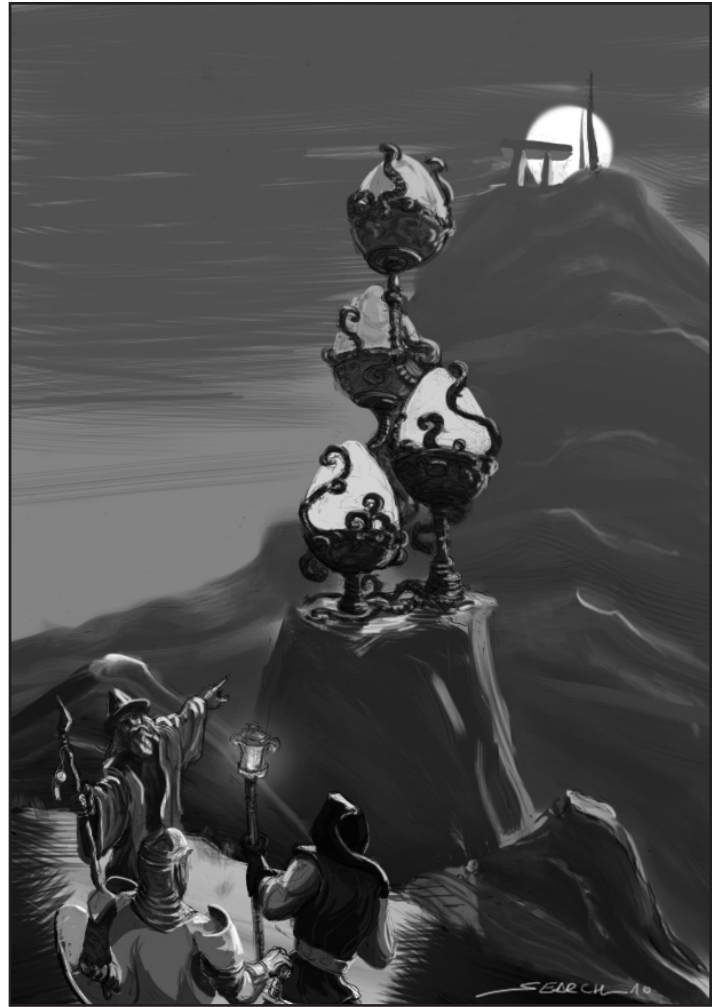
The Invisible Causeway

The causeway only exists in the material world for one hour each evening, and it will appear three times before disappearing again for a full year. It is invisible, and made of a strange, slightly elastic substance. Spikes can be driven through it, and will hold the weight of a person; however, when the causeway vanishes, the spikes will fall to earth. Traveling the causeway can only be done slowly, for it curves unpredictably and has an uneven surface. It takes 20 minutes to cross (only 5 if the traveler can see invisible objects). Running across it will almost certainly cause a PC to fall to a messy death (a running PC must make a DC 20 Dex (Acrobatics) check each minute or fall, with a 5-minute crossing time required). As the causeway approaches the topmost crystal, its edges begin to curve inward like a spout, eventually folding into a tube about 4ft in diameter as it enters the crystal.

Top Level (Level 1)

Access

The top (first) level is reached by means of the causeway, which gradually closes into a tube just as it enters the top of the uppermost crystal egg. It is possible to squeeze out from the causeway and onto the quartz surface of the egg itself. Anyone doing so will find that a small tendril of iron reaches up from the side of the egg to within 10ft of the causeway, and terminates in a hook-like flourish (which can be used to tie off a rope). The tube leads downward for 75ft through the crackling electricity of the egg's upper atmosphere and down to the safer environs of the open-topped maze at the bottom. There are no handholds, and the tube is extremely slippery. If the adventurers try to drive spikes through the tube once inside the egg, the spikes will become charged with the electricity of the egg's upper lightning fields, and will deal 1d6 lightning damage if touched directly or with any material that conducts electricity. They will still work to hold a rope, but it is much better to tie a rope to the iron hook atop the egg itself if the adventurers explored to find it.



Atop the Crystal

The outside of the topmost egg is smooth quartz. Lower down, it is supported by a tangle of round iron girders, with numerous baroque spirals and flanges. A rope can easily be attached to the flanges lower down, although getting down to them solely by climbing (sliding) down the edge could be dangerous. Tying a rope to the iron hook atop the egg is certainly the easiest way to descend safely, although a rope could also be tied around the causeway. When the causeway disappears, the entrance into the topmost egg also closes up (although it will not sever a rope), and the only way to enter and exit the Spire will be from the secret door (Area 22 on level 2) or the stairs into the dungeons (beyond the edge of the adventure).

Wandering Monsters

Movement in the labyrinth of open tunnels has a chance to attract wandering monsters. In general, the monsters travel along the walls over the top of the labyrinth, and will come over the top of the wall to attack. Use the table below to check for wandering monsters.

Type of Movement	Frequency of Checks	Chance of Encounter
Walking or bashing things	Once per minute/move	1 in 12
Remaining fairly still (talking, searching, etc.)	Once per 10 minutes	1 in 12
Completely at rest	Once per 20 minutes	1 in 12

d4	Encounter
1	1 slitherrat
2	1d4 lightning lampreys
3	1d4 giant fire beetles (light glands are blue rather than red)
4	2d6 giant ants (mottled blue and white)

Ant, Giant: AC 15; HP 9 (2d6+2); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Str** +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** -3, **Cha** -4; **AL** U; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Beetle, Giant Fire: AC 13; HP 4 (1d6+1); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+1, 1d6-1 slashing); **Str** 1, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** -5, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -4; **Senses** blindsight 30ft; **Traits:** illumination; **AL** U; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

Lightning Lamprey: AC 12; HP 7 (2d6); Spd fly 20ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d6+2 slashing plus 1d6 lightning, and attaches); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** -4, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -3; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (**Monster Appendix**)

Slitherrat: AC 13; HP 44 (8d6+16); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft, crystal glide 60ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 2d8+3 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -3; **Traits:** crystal bite; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1; **XP** 200. (**Monster Appendix**)

Location Key

Area 1: Entry Chamber

You descend through the invisible tube, down into the crackling and blasting sheets of lightning inside the crystal. The flashes obscure your vision on the way down. After about sixty feet of descent, you're suddenly able to see the bottom, a flat plane of what looks like quartz, with deep, geometric trenches carved into it. After another ten feet the tube ends, depositing you into a room cut ten feet deep into the quartz. It contains three doors of dark quartz, and at your feet there is a small hole, about one foot in diameter. There is no ceiling, and the lighting crackles and flashes viciously overhead, even striking the top of the walls from time to time, but it doesn't appear to be striking any further down than the top of the walls. The air is sharp with the smell of lightning, and you don't need lanterns or torches – the bluish inferno of lightning above you provides light so bright it's almost uncomfortable.

The invisible tube from the top of the crystalline egg (marked as "C" on the map) brings the adventurers through the crackling blue electrical discharges of the lightning field in the egg's top half, and down into an open-ceiling room. The walls are 10 ft. high and made from some sort of irregular, smoky quartz crystal. Overhead, arcs of blue electricity leap and dance viciously, often connecting with the top of the walls for moments at a time. The three doors leading out of the room are also made of quartz, much darker than the crystalline walls, so as to be almost black. Just underneath the point where the tube enters the room, there is a hole about 1 ft. in diameter, and a fan is whirring about 2 ft. deep inside the hole. There is condensation of some strange kind on the fan – it somehow doesn't look like water. Beneath the fan, only visible if light is directed inward, the characters can vaguely see a tangle of what looks like tiny crystalline tubes collecting the condensation and disappearing into minute openings in the quartz wall. It is impossible to jam this fan; it has an unearthly strength and sharpness, and will even cut through magical metal that is pushed into its circular path.

Area 2: Teleport Chamber

There is a ghostly, glowing figure in the southern end of this room, its arms upraised, and six strange-looking – possibly mineralized – skeletons are moving toward you with obviously hostile intent. The lightning overhead illuminates two of the dark quartz doors in the northeast and southeast walls.

The glowing figure is 7ft. tall and has a vaguely bipedal shape. It does not move in any way, nor does it have any discernable details. Also within the room are **6 fossil skeletons**, whose bones glitter and sparkle in the irregular light. (The mineral-charged internal atmosphere of the egg has caused deposits of quartz to form in and upon the bones; they are more durable than normal skeletons). They appear once to have been an adventuring party from their armor and ragged clothing, but the style of the armor and weapons is extremely archaic.

Skeleton, Fossil (6): AC 16; HP 34 (4d8+16); Spd 30ft; **Melee** claws (+4, 1d8+2 slashing); **Immune** exhaustion, poison; **Vulnerable** bludgeoning; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 50. (**Monster Appendix**)

Treasure: 2 *potions of lighting resistance*; rusty sword with 500gp gem in the pommel; *scroll* — *detect magic, knock*; two rotted belt pouches containing a total of 50gp, 100sp, and 200cp; rotted backpack in corner containing 1500sp.

The glowing figure is a teleportal to the second level of the egg. In order to make the teleportal function, a PC must stand inside the ghostly shape and raise his arms to match the figure's posture. The teleportal leads to **Area 32** on the second level.

Area 3: Empty Room (Trick doors)

This room is apparently empty, although there are strange mineral deposits crusted on the floor. There are two darkly-colored quartz doors in the room, one in the northeast wall and one in the southeast wall.

Only one of the two doors in this room can be open at any time. If one door is open, the other will not open unless broken down. The noise from breaking down a door requires an immediate check (1 in 6) to see if a wandering monster comes to investigate (see above, "Wandering Monsters").

Area 4: Trapped Room

This room looks empty other than a deep encrustation of minerals on the quartz floor. There are two doors of dark quartz, one in the northwest wall and one to the southeast.

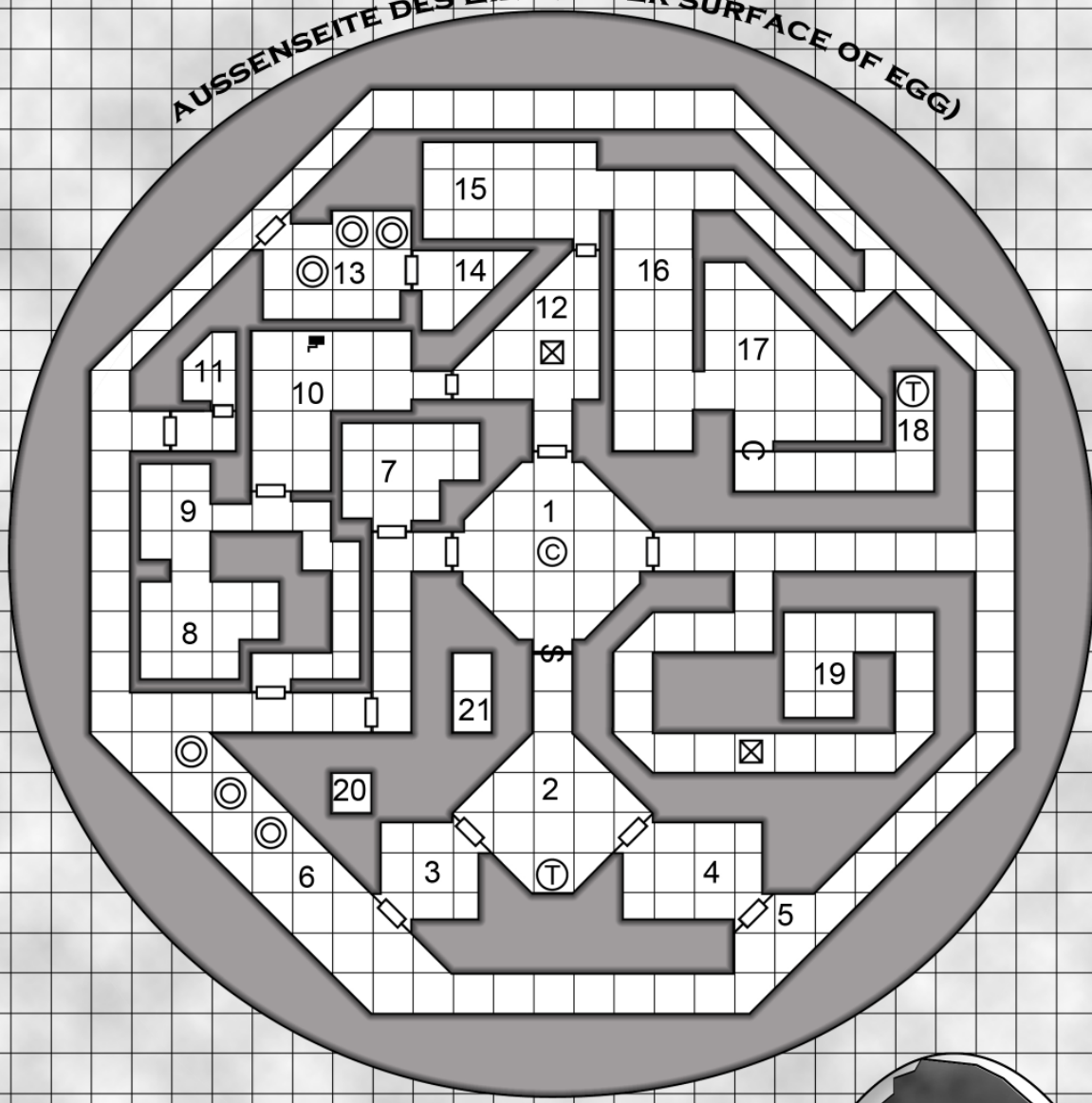
This room is designed as a trap; each time a person walks through the doorway, there is a 1 in 6 chance that both doors of the room will slam shut and seal closed for a period of 3 hours before the trap re-sets itself. Escaping over the tops of the walls incurs the normal risk of entering the electrical currents in the egg's "sky." These doors cannot be broken down by normal means (other than by use of a *knock* spell).

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TOPMOST EGG

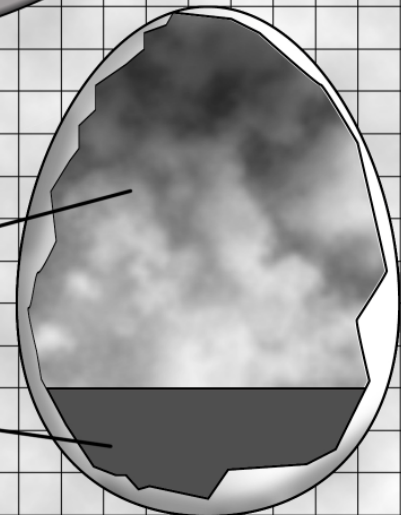
ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET

AUSSENSEITE DES EIES (OUTER SURFACE OF EGG)



ELEKTRISCHER STURM
(ELECTRICAL STORM)

QUARZ LABYRINTH
(QUARTZ LABYRINTH)



Area 5: Doorway Chamber

This is a wide spot in the corridor, with a black quartz door like the others you've seen. Runes that look like the capital letters "ZHA" are graven deeply into the center of the door.

This area has nothing of interest other than the runes in the door. "ZHA" means "danger," although the players won't know this yet unless they are returning from lower levels of the Spire. This marker is a warning about the trap in Area 4.

Area 6: Observation Gallery

This long chamber contains three very ornate structures, egg-shaped crystals mounted in bizarre, twisting strands of black metal that climb to an ornate loop at the top. Two of them are filled with greenish liquid and have something in them. The third looks empty.

This was once an observation chamber, and with the proper command word the crystal between this room and the outside will become transparent for 1 hour. The gallery also includes three creatures in liquid filled tanks: one is a metal sea urchin encased in a close-fitting coating of gelatinous material. It floats lifeless in the tank. The content of the second vat is a humanoid, possibly a caveman, but with strange alterations made to its body. The fingers are easily a foot long, with long bones and extra joints, ending in sharp claws. This creature is also dead. The third vat is empty and the crystal is broken. The tanks themselves are of a design similar to that of the tower; twining bars of iron support and climb up the sides of the crystal walls of the egg-shaped tanks, joining in a graceful swirl of iron at the top. Each tank has an entirely different construction; they are obviously not mass-produced in any way. Each of the vats has some ornate little dials at the base, which can be found with minimal inspection. There are three dials, each with the numbers 1 to 3. The egg will open when the combination is set to 1,2,3. It takes one minute to test a combination (you have to wait while the egg makes little whirring noises before it does anything).

Area 7: Supervisor's Chambers

This room contains a bed and an oddly proportioned chair with a writing desk. There is a strange-looking skeleton upon the floor, covered with what looks like dried glue.

There are papers on the desk, but they are ancient and crusted in mineral deposits, which make all but the bottom page illegible even with the use of magic. The bottom page in the stack can be deciphered (they are in an archaic language requiring the use of a *comprehend languages* spell to understand) as follows: "The master goes mad in his obsession with immortality. He is increasingly preoccupied with melding of bone and other substances he has created in his laboratories. More and more of the resources we collect from the surface are dedicated to these tasks, instead of being assigned to our constructions in the tunnels beneath."

The dried, glue-like substance on the skeleton is harmless and has no unusual properties. The skeleton itself is 7 ft. tall and has a skull slightly similar to that of a horse. It cannot be identified as any known creature, and any attempts to communicate with its dead spirit are fruitless.

Area 8: Gelatinous Cube Lair

The quartz walls and floor of this room are shiny and clean, completely free of mineral deposits.

A **gelatinous cube** lairs in this room, but will not be seen immediately since it is in the eastern alcove, where it appears to be a cluster of items floating suspended in the air.

Ooze, Gelatinous Cube: AC 6; HP 84 (8d10+40); Spd 15ft; **Melee** pseudopod (+4, 3d6 acid); **SA** engulf (3d6 acid, DC 12 Dex avoid, DC 12 Str escape); **Immune** blind, charm, deaf, exhaustion, fright, prone; **Str** +2, **Dex** -4, **Con** +5, **Int** -1, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -5; **Senses** blindsight 60ft (blind beyond); **Traits** cube takes its entire space so creatures that enter unaware subjected to engulf and have tactical disadvantage on save, DC 15 Wis (Perception) to spot transparent; **AL** U; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Treasure: 2 longswords, 4 head-sized chunks of quartz, one of which bears written carvings, a *potion of flying*, a *+1 longsword*, and a helmet. The inscription on the quartz piece can only be deciphered with a *comprehend languages* spell, for it is in a very old language. It reads: "The causeway has closed, and I am trapped here for at least a year if I could even find water and food. Here ends the illustrious adventuring career of Natono of Parg, betrayed by lesser men. As a gesture of my extreme annoyance at the situation, I shall go and feed myself to the gelatinous cube."

Area 9: Clean Room

The crystal walls and floor of this room almost sparkle with cleanliness. There are no mineral deposits on the floor, nor is there any dust.

This room is empty.

Area 10: Lightning Control Room

There is a large, crank-driven mechanism on the north wall of this room.

This machine can be used to temporarily turn off the lightning in the top atmosphere for 1d6+1 rounds, but it may not be used again in this way until 30-180 minutes (3d6) have passed. The crank must be turned continuously, or the lightning will resume immediately. Keep in mind that when there is no lightning, there is no light.

Area 11: Slitherrat Lair

There are five bizarre and unsettling creatures in this room. They have rat heads and sleek, furry bodies, but they are about four feet long, and move like snakes. They have tiny, vestigial, rat-like legs poking out from the sides of their bodies, but as they slither toward you over the floor, the vestigial legs are held high, out of the way. There is also

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an ancient wooden chest in this room, turned on its side and leaning against the wall.

This chamber is the lair of **5 slitherrats**. These monsters can move in and out of the crystal walls without leaving a trace – when they attack, they will take advantage of this ability, moving around behind the party or attempting to surround them, as circumstances dictate.

It contains the following: 100 pounds of worthless mineral chunks; 3 perfectly round crystalline rocks with what appears to be a flickering blue light shining through the stone (these are *glow-geodes*, described in the Referee Information section above), a chunk of silver worth 20gp (weighs 200 pounds), a dagger inscribed with archaic language (needs spell to decipher): “To Natono, from the Thieves Guild of Pirc – Good Luck!” The dagger is a *curse dagger*, which causes all its bearer’s attack rolls to suffer a –1 penalty, although its effects do not manifest until it has been carried for at least an hour. It will always reappear in the possession of the PC until a *remove curse* spell is used. The chest also contains 20 gems worth 50gp each, and a *potion of flying* (which looks diluted and only functions for 3d6 minutes).

Slitherrat (5): AC 13; HP 44 (8d6+16); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft, crystal glide 60ft; Melee bite (+5, 2d8+3 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** –4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –3; **Traits** crystal bite; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1; **XP** 200. (**Monster Appendix**)

Area 12: Astrological Formulae Room

This room appears to be completely empty, but the walls are carved all over with tiny letters and numbers.

There is nothing of interest in this room; the carvings are not a language, they are formulae involved in predicting the motion of stars and planets.

Area 13: Oozanderthal Tanks

There are three egg-shaped crystal tanks in this room, nestled in twisting spirals of iron that rise to a graceful loop at the top. The tanks are filled with a thick green liquid, and there are deformed, man-shaped creatures inside.

This room contains three cavemen with huge heads, in egg-shaped, liquid-filled tanks. They have extremely elongated hands and fingers that terminate in wicked claws, and appear to be coated in a layer of slime. These are **3 oozanderthals**, and the egg-shaped tanks are similar to the others found in the Spire, with complicated ironwork that terminates in a graceful loop at the top. They are in suspended animation until party enters, and they have controls in their tanks which allow them to close the room’s door once a few party members are inside. They can make other attacks from inside the tanks.

Controls inside the tanks allow each oozanderthal to do one of three things:

1. Pull lightning down into the chamber to strike one person wearing metal armor for 2d6 points of damage (DC 12 Dex save for half damage),
2. Cause a blast of electricity from the tank, causing all within 10ft to suffer 1d6 points of damage (DC 12 Dex save for half damage)
3. Cause the room’s door to open or close.

Once one of the tanks has called down electricity, it cannot do so again for 24 hours. The oozanderthals can drain their tanks and emerge if they



so choose, although the process takes a full round. Note that the tanks can be used by the PCs as a way of getting through the lightning, if a way of moving them is found (they weigh only 100 pounds each).

The tanks are AC 18 and can sustain 20hp of damage before breaking. Each has dials at the front of the base, allowing for the tank to be opened without damage (combination 1,2,3). Smashed tanks cannot be used to defend against lightning.

Oozanderthal (3): AC 12; HP 102 (12d8+48); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft; Melee claws (+6, 3d6+4 slashing plus prone and unable to move [DC 13 Con negates; repeats]); **Str** +4, **Dex** –1, **Con** +4, **Int** –2, **Wis** –1, **Cha** –1; **AL** NE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (**Monster Appendix**)

Area 14: Treasure Room

This room contains a variety of items scattered on the floor: a couple of weapons and bottles, as far as you can tell at first glance.

This room contains a variety of useful items. There are four vials, covered in dust, lying in one corner (each is a *potion of healing*); a normal mace, a normal shield, a pair of dark lenses, and a *bag of holding*.

15. Slitherrat Lair

Fast-moving, dark shapes slither toward you across the floor of this chamber!

QUESTS OF DOOM 2

This is one of the rooms where slitherrats congregate and sleep. There are **3 slitherrats** (see **Area 11** for stats) present.

Area 16: Empty

Hundreds of coin-sized circles appear to be carved into the quartz wall of this room.

The “carvings” are actually freely-rotating, coin-like disks made of metal. Whenever anyone moves inside the room, about fifty of the disks will suddenly begin whirring around. These have no significance to adventurers; whatever they once did, they don’t function any more other than spinning in response to movement.

Area 17: Technician’s Lair

There are three humanoid figures in this room. Two of them look like cavemen with huge hands and claw-like fingers, their bodies coated in greenish ooze. The third figure is seven feet tall, with a long head almost like that of a hairless horse but with a body like that of a strong but thin human being. It is holding a short silver wand. There are a couple of beds in the room.

This room is the sleeping chamber and base of operations for a **Korog technician**, who has come to the surface to collect surface mineral and sun essences while the causeway is open and collecting. He has **2 oozanderthals** (see **Area 13** for stats) with him as servants.

Korog Technician: AC 12; HP 52 (7d8+21); Spd 30ft; **Melee** longsword (+4, 1d8+2 slashing); **SA** wand of paralysis (x5, paralysis, 60ft, DC 13 Con repeat); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** +3, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Arcane +5; **AL** LE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (**Monster Appendix**)

Area 18: Teleporter

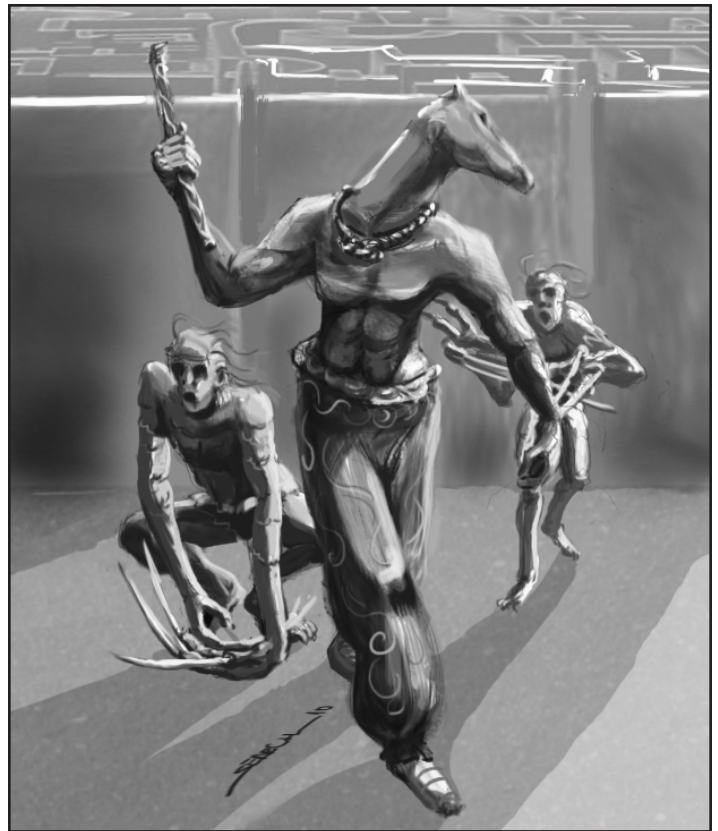
The corridor makes a dead end here.

The teleportal marked on the map transports characters to **Area 32** in the second level of the Spire. It activates when anyone steps into the 10 ft. diameter area marked on the map.

Area 19: Crystalline Tree

A crystalline tree grows here, its top rising into the lightning field itself. Blue light coruscates throughout the trunk and branches of this strange growth in response to the flashes of lightning overhead. Toward the base of the tree, the trunk is studded with mineral growths, almost like the growth of a parasitic moss or fungus; but these pustules glimmer with the warm luster of precious gems.

The crystalline tree is a predator, and when it sees the adventurers it will move one of its 8 roots to block the northern passageway so that retreat becomes difficult. Although (unless it is surrounded) the tree will not be



able to bring many attacks to bear, it will try to kill and eat the adventurers. If it is being beaten, it will try to escape through the crystal walls. Ask the players what part of the tree their PCs are attacking, but make it clear to them that attacks against the trunk or branches don’t appear to be harming the tree – it must be attacked at the base. There are 12 gems at the base of the tree, worth 100gp each. They are of various types.

Crystalline Tree: AC 10; HP 120 (9d10+72); Spd 20ft, crystal glide 30ft; **Melee** root x8 (+8, 15ft, 1d8+5 bludgeoning plus restrain and grapple); **SA** multiattack; **Immune** lightning, poison, psychic, charm, fright, poison, prone, unconscious; **Resist** piercing, slashing; **Vulnerable** bludgeoning; **Str** +5, **Dex** -2, **Con** +8, **Int** -3, **Wis** -2, **Cha** +2; **Senses** blindsight 60ft (blind beyond); **AL** U; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800. (**Monster Appendix**)

Area 20: Treasure Room

This room contains a small tree-like structure with several clear glass globes hanging from the branches, all of which appear to contain precious gems.

The tree is crystal, has 10 glass globes attached, and each globe contains a selection of four 50gp gems. (2000gp worth of gems in total). The tree and the glass globes are all harmless.

Area 21: Treasure Room

This room contains a large, stylized statue of a woolly mammoth, apparently made of gold.

The tusks are made of ivory, and tiny patterns are carved into them. The statue weighs 250 pounds and is worth 2,500 gp.

Second Level

Access

The second egg can be reached in one of two ways; teleporters in the top level provide one route, but climbing down the side of the tower will also give the players access to a secret door in the side of the crystal. The ledge in front of this door is not visible from the cliff (it is obscured by a twisting “growth” of iron), but examination of the egg’s side from higher up (dangling by a rope from the top of the uppermost egg) will reveal its presence. From the top, it is quite obviously a ledge of some kind – but this is not apparent without a conscious effort to scout out what the sides of the second egg look like from the top.

Like the top level, the atmosphere above the open-ceiling maze of the second level is charged with a fiercely active lightning field. Unlike the topmost egg, the second-level egg contains some crawlways through the quartz, which have ceilings and cannot be entered by running across the top of the maze. These are visible on the map as narrower corridors. THE CRAWLWAYS ARE NOT LIT.

Wandering Monsters

Movement in the labyrinth of open tunnels has a chance to attract wandering monsters. In general, the monsters travel along the walls over the top of the labyrinth, and will come over the top of the wall to attack. Use the table below to check for wandering monsters.

Type of Movement	Frequency of Checks	Chance of Encounter
Walking or bashing things	Once per minute/move	1 in 12
Remaining fairly still (talking, searching, etc.)	Once per 10 minutes	1 in 12
Completely at rest	Once per 20 minutes	1 in 12

d4	Encounter
1	1d2 slitherrats
2	1d6 lightning lampreys
3	1d6 giant fire beetles (light glands are blue rather than red)
4	2d8 giant worker ants (mottled blue and white)

Ant, Giant: AC 15; HP 9 (2d6+2); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Str** +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** -3, **Cha** -4; **AL** U; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Beele, Giant Fire: AC 13; HP 4 (1d6+1); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+1, 1d6-1 slashing); **Str** -1, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** -5, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -4; **Senses** blindsight 30ft; **Traits:** illumination; **AL** U; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

Lightning Lamprey: AC 12; HP 7 (2d6); Spd fly 20ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d6+2 slashing plus 1d6 lightning, and attaches); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** -4, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -3; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (**Monster Appendix**)

Slitherat: AC 13; HP 44 (8d6+16); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft, crystal glide 60ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 2d8+3 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -3; **Traits** crystal bite; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1; **XP** 200. (**Monster Appendix**)

Area 22: Outer Balcony

This is an outcropping of quartz, protruding from the side of the egg. It is almost completely surrounded by twisting growths of iron, which hide it from view except from above.

This area is outside the crystal wall of the egg; it is a quartz outcropping mostly surrounded by twisting growths of iron, and is not visible except from the uppermost parts of the tower. The iron here is made up of bars about three inches in diameter, dividing up into twisting branch-like decorations. A secret door leads into the side of the egg; it is spotted with DC 8 Wis (Perception) if anyone looks for it and resembles a circular crack in the crystal, but there is no visible means of opening it. Anyone who tries pulling and twisting on the iron growths of the branch-like “railings” around the outcropping will almost immediately find one that is a lever with a DC 12 Int (Investigation) check. When the lever is manipulated, the quartz door evaporates into nothingness, allowing entry. The door cannot be closed once it has been opened, but will reappear after 8 hours have passed.

Area 23: Entry Access

This wide spot in the corridor has four little spouts sticking out of the corridor’s western wall. The quartz below them has a heavy crust of mineral deposits.

There are four spouts in the wall here that seem as if they’re supposed to pour liquid from the wall. They are dry, and no longer work. There is a blank piece of parchment stuffed into one of them. If this area is searched for secret doors, the access to the outside will be found automatically. It cannot be opened from the inside; however, if it is opened from the outside it will remain open. This is a relatively important achievement, since it means the party will no longer have to rely upon the causeway to enter the Spire.

Area 24: Ululation Crystals Room

The bottom of this room is studded with relatively large growths of mineral deposits, making the floor look somewhat like a sea floor with scattered growths of coral.

As soon as anyone enters the room, the crystal growths will begin to make a low but audible humming noise, which has a 1 in 6 chance to immediately summon wandering monsters. More importantly, the humming alerts the ochre jellies in **Area 26** that some potential prey is nearby. It will wait for a short period of time, then squeeze under its door and start tracking the party.

Area 25: Covered Room with Condensation Grate

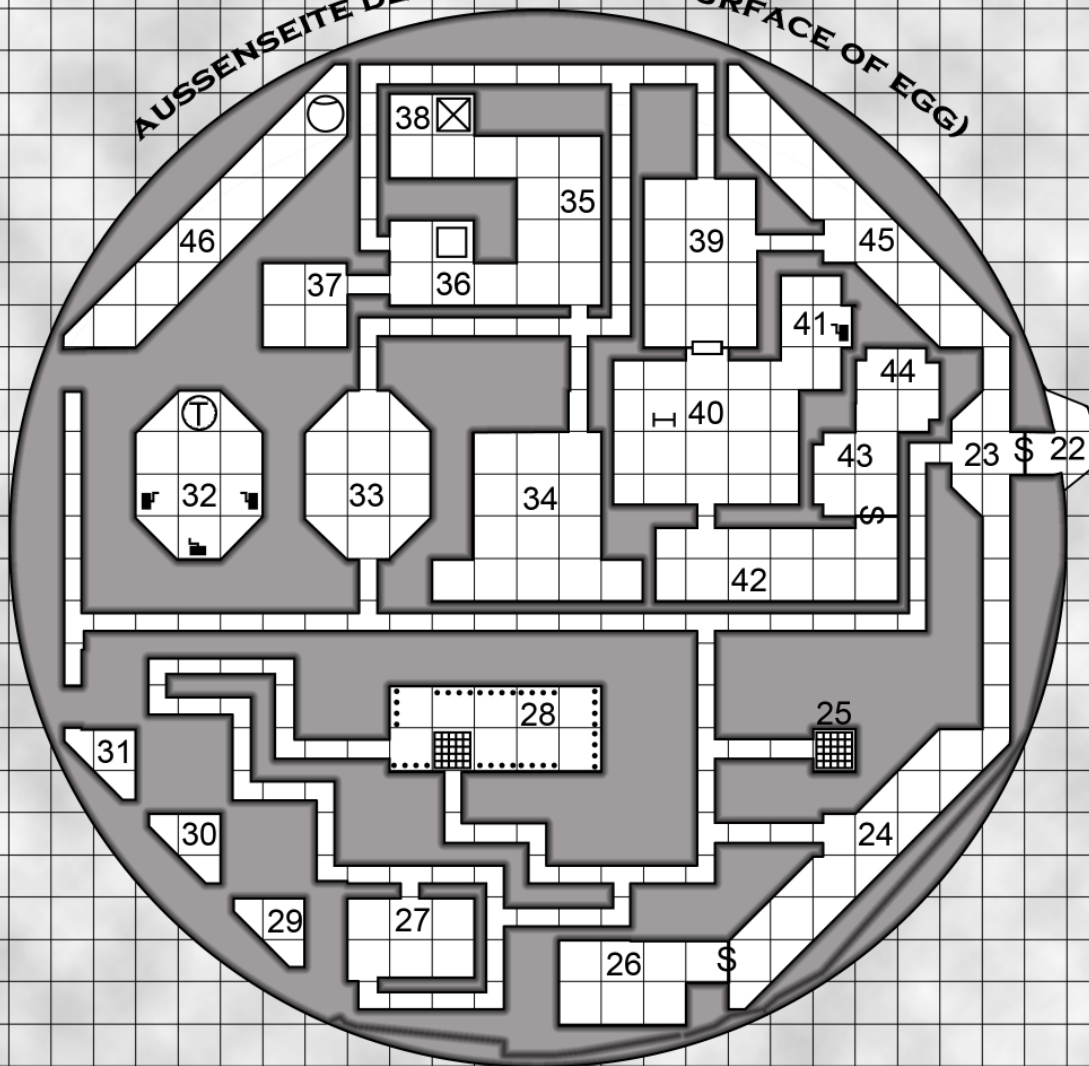
Important Note: This room has a ceiling, and cannot be seen or entered from above!

This is a closed in room, dug underneath the quartz, with an actual ceiling. Some sort of water-like fluid is condensed in droplets on the wall, which apparently roll down to drain through an iron grate in the floor.

SECOND HIGHEST EGG

ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET

AUSSENSEITE DES EIES (OUTER SURFACE OF EGG)



ELEKTRISCHER STURM
(ELECTRICAL STORM)

QUARZ LABYRINTH
(QUARTZ LABYRINTH)



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This room can only be accessed through the crawlways, for it has a ceiling of quartz about 8ft high. The grate can be removed, and permits access to one of the slide-tubes down to the third level, arriving in **Area 47**.

Area 26: Ochre Jelly Lair

This room has no unusual architectural features. **[Other than the ochre jellies, if they are still here].**

Four ochre jellies live in this room. They generally lie together on the floor, looking like an irregularly shaped orange carpet, but when they hear the ululation crystals in **Area 24** start to hum, they wait a bit and then come out to track down whatever prey alarmed the crystals.

Ooze, Ochre Jelly (4): AC 8; HP 45 (6d10+12); Spd 10ft, climb 10ft; Melee pseudopod (+4, 2d6+2 bludgeoning); **Immune** blind, charm, deaf, exhaustion, fright, lightning, prone, slashing; **Resist** acid; **Str +2, Dex -2, Con +2, Int -4, Wis -2, Cha -5; Senses** blindsight 60ft (blind beyond); **Traits** amorphous, spider climb, split; **AL U; CR 2; XP 450.**

Area 27: Trapped Room

The only visible thing of interest in this room is an empty egg-tank.

The floor of the room is trapped: each person stepping onto the floor of this room has a 1 in 6 chance to activate the trap. (Poking the floor from outside with a spear or pole has a 4 in 6 chance to activate the trap). The trap can otherwise be detected with a DC 18 Wis (Perception) check.

When the trap is activated, the room's floor suddenly shifts upward to leave only 5ft of clearance between the floor and the lightning field, blocking entrance to the crawlway. After this, it will move upward one foot per ten minutes until it is even with the top of the wall and anything standing on it is fully exposed to the lightning. It will remain in the fully upright and locked position for one round, and then sink back to its original position. The egg-tank can be used as protection from the lightning, but only for one lucky person...

This trap requires a DC 25 Dex check with thieves' tools to disarm.

Area 28: Invisible Ceiling Room

Important Note: This room has a force-field ceiling — it cannot be entered from the top, although this isn't likely to be discovered unless someone tries. The room CAN, however, be seen from above.

There is a dark quartz grate, like a drain, in the floor of this room.

The force field is denoted by the dots around the room on the map. The floor-grate leads down to **Area 49** on level 3 via a tube hollowed out through the interior of one of the round iron girders supporting the Spire.

Area 29: Treasure Storage Room One

There is a transparent crystal treasure chest in this room, and apparently nothing else.

The chest has no handles, no lock, and no latch — it is opened simply by lifting the lid. A scroll case is visible inside and contains a *scroll — knock, fireball*. The crystal of the chest itself is very heavy, and the chest weighs 50 pounds despite the fact that its only content is the scroll case. The words “Natono. Cleared. Mule,” are scratched into the crystal on the lid, if anyone examines the chest closely (and they almost certainly will). Note that anyone in this room will attract the lightning bladder in **Area 30**, which will show up in a short amount of time.

Area 30: Lightning Bladder's Lair

This room has no distinguishing features. **[other than the Lightning Bladder, if it is still here].**

A lightning bladder lives in this chamber, and has for hundreds of years, crawling over the top of the wall occasionally to feed on wandering monsters. If there is any activity in Treasure Rooms One or Two (**Areas 29 or 31**) it will climb over the walls to investigate, as it was trained to do over a hundred years ago.

Lightning Bladder: AC 7; HP 170 (9d10+72); Spd fly 30ft; Melee touch (+3, 4d8 lightning); **Immune** charm, fright, lightning, poison, prone, psychic, unconscious; **Str +0, Dex -3, Con +3, Int -5, Wis -2, Cha -1; Senses** blindsight 60ft (blind beyond); **Traits** electrical discharge (6d8 lightning, DC 13 Dex half); **CR 5; XP 1800. (Monster Appendix)**

Area 31: Treasure Storage Room Two

This room contains a square pile of gold, and a skeleton, apparently completely mineralized, which is lying on the floor with one hand about two feet in the air, over the top of what might be a gem.

This room contains a fossilized skeleton and two transparent crystal chests. The fossilized skeleton has a hand on one of the chests (the one containing the gem). It will not animate unless someone remains in the room for a turn or more. One chest contains a single gem (500gp) and the other contains 450gp. The chest with the gem weighs 50 pounds (due to the weight of the dense crystal forming the chest itself); the chest with the gold weighs 95 pounds. Each chest is trapped, and releases poison gas when opened. The gas fills the room and each PC in the room must make a DC 14 Con save or take 5d8 poison damage and become poisoned for 1 hour. Note that the lightning bladder from **Area 30** will also come to investigate any movement in this room.

Area 32: Teleport Arrival Chamber

There are three machines on the walls here, all of which are unlit and silent, with a single gargoyle-like button on the front face of each one. There are no doors leading out.

QUESTS OF DOOM 2

All teleportals from **Level 1** arrive here in this chamber. If a gargoyle button is pressed, the machine will begin to hum and clank. If all three machines are turned on, the lightning field overhead suddenly goes out, and all is dark and quiet. The lightning field remains turned off for 10–60 (d6) minutes. The machines will operate only twice before they must recharge, which takes a full 24 hours. The vertical conveyor in **Area 33** can be seen from here. The teleportal here can be used to get back to the first (top) level of the Spire, but whether it transports people to **Area 2** or **Area 18** is a 50-50 chance determined separately for each traveler.

Area 33: Vertical Conveyor

This room contains a tall structure supporting a segmented metal belt, which extends upward into the lightning field above. Large metal scoops are mounted on it at intervals of about six feet. The belt is mounted on an ornate metal stand that resembles a huge sawhorse.

The segmented belt, if further description is needed, resembles a tank-tread or bicycle chain. There is a lever on one side of the massive “sawhorse” mounting; it is stiff and requires two people to move it. The lever activates the machine, which will begin the chain moving, cranking the shovel blades upward into the lightning field, and then back down in an endless loop, the shovels swinging to remain upright through the whole journey. That’s all it does.

Area 34: Main Oozanderthal Lair

This chamber is strewn with bones and primitive fur cushions. Several humanoid creatures are in here, cavemen with unnaturally long hands and clawlike fingers, dripping all over their bodies with a strange greenish ooze.

Thirteen oozanderthals live in this room, their only furnishings the cushions made from slitherratt fur. Any battle will likely begin in the crawlway, but some of the oozanderthals will crawl up to the top of the walls and try to cut the party off, attacking them from behind in the crawlway. (The oozanderthals’ slimy coating makes them immune to electrical damage from the lightning field).

Oozanderthal (13): AC 12; HP 102 (12d8+48); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft; **Melee** claws (+6, 3d6+4 slashing plus prone and unable to move, DC 13 Con repeats); **Str** +4, **Dex** -1, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -1; **AL** NE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (Monster Appendix)

Area 35: Empty Room with Floor Circles

Four circles, five feet in diameter, are deeply incised in the quartz floor of this room.

The circles no longer do anything.



Area 36: Grate and Access to Level 3

As you look into this chamber, a huge blob of what looks like liquid lightning drops down from the lightning field, and runs down through a big funnel in the floor.

Blobs of liquid lightning fall from the lightning field and run down through a big funnel in the floor. They fall every ten minutes, and trickle down through a hollow support bar to a processing area in level three. This is one of the ways down to level three, and the downward-sloping, spiraling tube is 60ft long. It takes a full 8 minutes to get to the bottom of the tube due to the twists and slopes. Unfortunately, there’s a filtering grate halfway down the tube, which blocks the way and delays progress while a blob forms above. It can be broken very easily, but will likely cause the party to get hit by some of the liquid lightning if they are in the tube when a blob comes down. A blob causes 3d6 points of damage (half damage with a successful DEX saving throw). The staffs at **Area 38** might help the party avoid this fate.

Area 37: Cockatrice Machine Room

This room contains what appears to be a very large rooster with a snakelike tail. There is also some sort of machine in here.

This room contains a **cockatrice**, which (unlike most of the monsters in the crystal) is not immune to lightning and cannot leave

THE SPIRE OF IRON AND CRYSTAL

its chamber. There is a machine in the room, placed under a steady drip of lightning-charged condensation from the ceiling. The machine has three dials and a metal button on it; the dials are stuck in place by crusted mineral deposits. Pushing the button causes a door at the bottom of the machine to swing open and release whatever creature the machine is currently set to create from the condensed energy; it is currently set on “cockatrice.” The machine only has enough condensed energy to make one cockatrice. None of the readings on the dial are in a language that can be understood (the use of *comprehend languages* will reveal that they are: basilisk, blue dragon, giant snake, slitherat, and lightning lamprey).

Cockatrice: AC 11; HP 27 (6d6+6); Spd 20ft, fly 40ft; **Melee** bite (+3, 1d4+1 piercing plus petrifying touch); **SA** petrifying touch (restrained then petrified, DC 11 Con repeat); **Str** -2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Area 38: Empty Room with Maintenance Wands

This room is empty, except for four ornate staves leaning together against one wall.

These staves aren't useful for anything much, unless the party needs a metal bar 6 ft. long. One thing about these – if one gets within 10ft of the grate blocking the tube down from **Area 36**, the staff will zap over to the grate, as if by magnetism, and the grate will unlock and open without causing any delay. The staves are used for maintenance on things that mostly aren't operational any more.

Area 39: Oozanderthal Lair

There are five ooze-covered cavemen with massive claws in this room.

This room contains 5 **oozanderthals** (see **Area 34** for stats). If they begin to lose a fight, some may attempt to flee over the walls to **Area 34**.

Area 40: Crane Room

This room itself is featureless quartz, but there is one very strange thing here; a huge hook suspended from an extremely thick iron chain hangs down into this room from the obscured heights of the crackling lightning field overhead. It sways slightly, creaking back and forth as it is struck by lightning high above.

This is a crane, and the hook can be cranked upward and downward from the mechanism in **Area 45**. Any of the egg-tanks can be hooked onto the crane by the loop of iron that is built onto the top of each egg-tank, and these will insulate one occupant from the lightning. Other protections against lightning will also work. From the top of the crystal's interior (after getting through the lower-altitude level of low visibility), it is possible to see the open areas in the crystal maze below. A player map of level 2 is included, in case the party takes advantage of the crane. Note that the crawlways are not visible from the top (or on the player map), since they have ceilings.

Area 41: Crane-Swinging Machine

There is a lever mechanism on the eastern wall of this room.

Pulling this lever causes the chain and hook apparatus (**Area 40**) to swing back and forth, but does not raise or lower it. If this is used while someone is in the lightning field suspended from the chain, it will not cause problems – but the person up on the chain will have a very unpleasant time of it as the chain begins swinging to and fro.

Area 42: Processing Track

This room contains an oval-shaped track about ten feet across. There is an oddly shaped cart on the tracks, made of crystal and carved with runes. The entire setup is studded and almost covered with what appears to be melted rock, that has hardened on it in patterns like candle wax.

This mineral-processing apparatus is located under a slow drip of surface minerals that condense at the top of the ceiling far above, then drip down. Over the years, the dripping mineral has hardened upon the non-functioning mechanism that once collected and processed it. The track and cart no longer function in any way, although the cart can be broken loose, removed, and used as an ordinary cart if the party decides they need one.

Area 43: Pillar-Machine Room

Two pillar-like columns are attached to the walls of the northwest and southwest corner of this chamber. In addition to the irregular mineral deposits, there are also four round rocks on the floor, about the size of a golf ball.

Note that if the party lingers in this area to play with the machine, the phase spider from **Area 44** will come quietly to investigate the noises. Each pillar has a hole at eye level and a second hole at floor level. The top holes are slightly larger than the four “round rocks,” which are *glow-geodes*, and the bottom hole is about twice the size of the top one. These are actually machines, operated by putting a *glow-geode* inside. The one in the northwest corner does not function, but the one in the southwest corner is operational, and transforms *glow-geodes* into various possible products. If a *glow-geode* is placed into the top hole, it will roll downward and be transformed into something else that rolls out of the floor-level hole.

Roll 1d6 to determine what the *glow-geode* is transformed into:

1d6	Result
1	Glowing sludge that creeps across the floor and then dies.
2	+1 mace (followed by +1 longsword if rolled again, followed by a wand of fireballs)
3	Chunk of gold worth 300gp
4	A cloak that will absorb 10 points of electrical damage before disintegrating

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1d6	Result
5	A telescoping rod of an unknown metal, about the width of a finger that can be extended to 5ft in length. If this is extended and held vertically, it will suck in lightning in a radius of 10ft, allowing people to move safely within the "shielded" area. This effect lasts for 30 minutes, and then the rod is destroyed by the lightning.
6	A chunk of crystal with what appears to be a small, living octopus inside. It does nothing, and if the crystal is cracked open, the octopoid will die from exposure to the air.

Area 44: Phase Spider Lair

There is treasure scattered on the floor of this room. [And 3 phase spiders, if they haven't already come out to attack the party in Area 43].

Three phase spiders make their lair in this room, and will come to investigate any noises from Area 43. Part of the phase spiders' treasure is 4 glow-geodes that can be used in the Spire's machines (either the one in Area 43 or the ones found in level 3). Other treasure, which is scattered in the room, includes: 200gp, a gem worth 100gp, a richly embroidered cloak worth 50gp, and a scroll – cure wounds x3.

Spider, Phase (3): AC 13; HP 32 (5d10+5); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d10+2 piercing plus 4d8 poison, DC 11 Con half); Str +2, Dex +2, Con +1, Int -2, Wis +0, Cha -2; Skills Stealth +6; Senses darkvision 60ft; Traits ethereal jaunt, spider climb, web walker; CR 3; XP 700.

Area 45: Cranking Apparatus Room

There is an ornate bronze crank on the wall of this room, attached to a metal chain that disappears upward into the lightning field, angling toward where the center of the egg's ceiling must be.

This is the cranking apparatus for the egg-lifter in Area 40, and it can be used to raise and lower the chain which descends into that location. The crank amplifies the strength of anyone using it, so that a single person at the crank can raise almost 1000 pounds of weight.

Area 46: Chamber of the Luhuloi

Three strange beings are in this room, singing softly to a large pool of water. They look like small people with orange skin, blue hair running in a ridge down the back, and large, webbed hands and feet. They wear no clothing other than a loincloth. One of them is waving around a large golden bracelet.

Members of a peaceful race from another dimension, the luhuloi, come in and out of the Northwestern wall of this egg, utterly unaware that they are entering and leaving another world. They believe the quartz is a fine mist that blocks off their religious sanctuary underneath the lightning. Although the luhuloi do not understand any language spoken by the adventurers, they will pat them with friendly (webbed) hands

and nod wisely at everything they hear. If the party somehow opens communications without language, the luhuloi will try to communicate that the pool in this room has magical properties. To demonstrate, they will throw a gold bracelet (100gp value) into the pool. Inside the pool is a dangerous monster with tentacles laden with golden bracelets. If anyone tries sticking a hand or a 10ft pole into the water, it will attack. The total value of the gold bracelets is 3,300gp.

Pool Monster: AC 14; HP 168 (16d10+80); Spd 10ft, swim 30ft; Melee tentacle x4 (+8, 20ft, 2d8+5 bludgeoning plus grapple); SA multiattack; Str +5, Dex +1, Con +5, Int -4, Wis -2, Cha -2; Senses darkvision 60ft; AL U; CR 6; XP 2300. (Monster Appendix)

Third Level

Access

The third level can only be reached by sliding through metal tubes from Areas 25, 28, and 36 - these tubes are the hollow interior of twisting iron girders, part of the complicated structure supporting the four eggs.

Notes: The third level is a machine level, used for the processing of surface-essence.

Wandering Monsters

Every 10 minutes spent in the third level of the Spire has a 1 in 6 chance of attracting a wandering monster. Roll 1d4 to determine the type of monster:

1d4	Encounter
1	1d3 slitherrats
2	1d8 lightning lampreys
3	1d8 giant fire beetles (light glands are blue rather than red)
4	2d6 giant ants (mottled blue and white) and 1d3 giant warrior ants

Ant, Giant: AC 15; HP 9 (2d6+2); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing); Str +2, Dex +1, Con +1, Int -4, Wis -3, Cha -4; AL U; CR 1/8; XP 25.

Ant, Giant Warrior: AC 15; HP 13 (3d6+3); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing plus 1d6 poison); Str +2, Dex +1, Con +1, Int -4, Wis -3, Cha -4; AL U; CR 1/4; XP 50.

Beetle, Giant Fire: AC 13; HP 4 (1d6+1); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+1, 1d6-1 slashing); Str -1, Dex +0, Con +1, Int -5, Wis -2, Cha -4; Senses blindsight 30ft; Traits illumination; AL U; CR 0; XP 10.

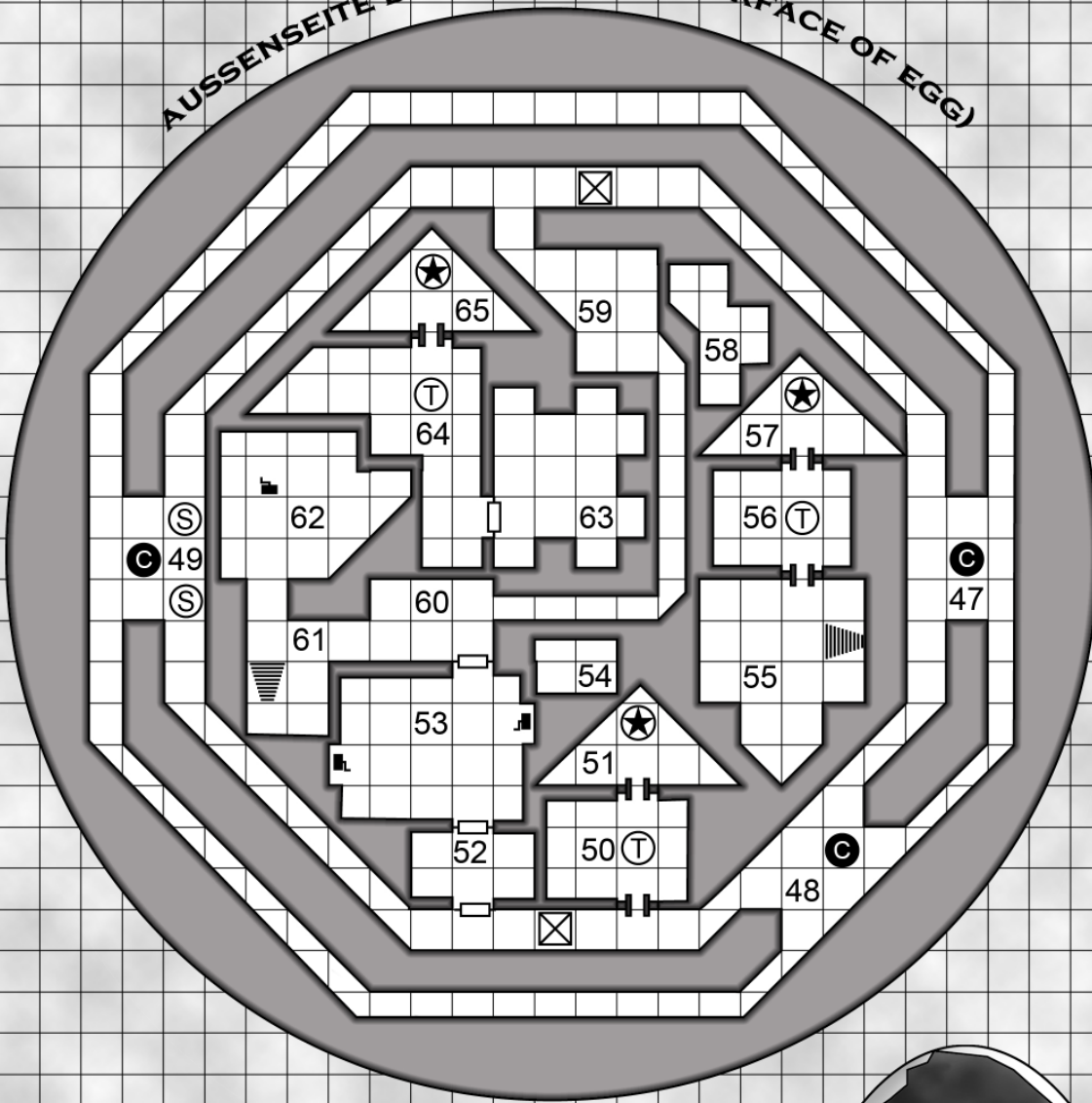
Lightning Lamprey: AC 12; HP 7 (2d6); Spd fly 20ft; Melee bite (+5, 1d6+2 slashing plus 1d6 lightning, and attaches); Str +2, Dex +2, Con +0, Int -4, Wis -2, Cha -3; CR 1/2; XP 100. (Monster Appendix)

Slitherrat: AC 13; HP 44 (8d6+16); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft, crystal glide 60ft; Melee bite (+5, 2d8+3 piercing); Str +3, Dex +3, Con +2, Int -4, Wis +0, Cha -3; Traits crystal bite; Senses darkvision 60ft; AL U; CR 1; XP 200. (Monster Appendix)

THIRD HIGHEST EGG

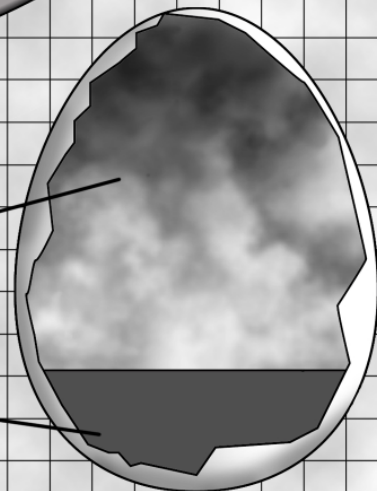
ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET

AUSSENSEITE DES EIES (OUTER SURFACE OF EGG)



**ELEKTRISCHER STURM
(ELECTRICAL STORM)**

**QUARZ LABYRINTH
(QUARTZ LABYRINTH)**



Area 47: Chute-Access to Area 25

An iron tube, large enough for people to enter, comes in from the side of the crystal, and opens into this room. A dragon with bright blue scales uncoils itself and prepares to attack.

This room is where the chute from **Area 25** arrives; the iron girder twists to enter the side of the crystal, and opens out directly to the floor of the room. A **blue dragon wyrmling** (which made its way into the Spire through the top) has taken a fancy to this chamber and lairs here. It does not speak or cast spells. If it is frightened, the dragon will fly up into the lightning field, but will keep an eye on the party and (if the adventurers take any of its treasure) attack at an opportune moment. If it was badly frightened and the adventurers do not take its treasure, it will simply avoid them in the future. The treasure is a disorganized scattering of items on the floor: 3 *glow-geodes*, 600gp, bones from several skeletons (mainly those of slither rats and lightning lampreys, but including one or two from oozanderthals), a golden lamp (100gp) a ruby (250gp), and a chunk of silver worth 50gp (weighs 100 pounds).

Blue Dragon Wyrmling: AC 17; HP 52 (8d8+16); Spd 30ft, burrow 15ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d10+3 piercing); **SA** lightning breath (recharge 5–6, 30ft line, 4d10 lightning, DC 12 Dex half); **Immunity** lightning; **Str** +3, **Dex** +0 (+2), **Con** +2 (+4), **Int** +1, **Wis** +0 (+2), **Cha** +2 (+4); **Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +2; **Senses** blindsight 10ft, darkvision 60ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Area 48: Chute-Access to Area 36

An iron tube with a 5 ft. diameter enters the side of the crystal, and opens into this room. Just underneath the tube opening, there is a large quartz bowl with an iron pipe leading from it into the northeast wall.

This room is where the chute from **Area 36** arrives, in the same manner as the chute in **Area 47**. In this area, the tube empties into a large quartz-crystal bowl with a drain at the side. The drain leads to a pipe that disappears into the northeast wall just behind the bowl. If the PCs wait until some of the liquid lightning comes down the pipe, they will see it drop into the bowl, spin around like liquid mercury, and then be sucked into the pipe.

Area 49: Chute-Access to Area 28

An iron tube enters the side of the crystal, and extends down to the floor, where it ends. The opening is 5 ft. in diameter. There are carvings in the quartz floor.

This room is the termination point for the chute down from **Area 28**. All around the chute, strange geometric shapes have been incised into the floor, leading to the northeast and southeast and then forming two circles of carven shapes almost 10ft in diameter, just at the entry to the corridors (these circles are marked on the map). If a person stands or steps into the north circle, the southern circle will instantly levitate anything on it upward into the lightning field (20ft into the air), at which point the levitation power will stop and allow the person (or thing) to fall back to earth. Between the electrical and the falling damage, this is a fairly dangerous trap. However, it could be used against monsters, even those immune to electricity, just for the falling damage.

Area 50: Teleporter Room

This chamber has no unusual features. There is an archway in the north wall, and another one in the south wall.

Anyone stepping into the area marked “T” on the map will instantly be teleported to **Area 56**. The transition is so smooth it cannot be felt, and the two rooms are identical.

Area 51: Identical Statue Room One

This room contains the statue of a creature that is almost but not quite human. Its head is long and almost like that of an evil-looking horse. It is dressing in the flowing robes of a wizard and it carries an ornate staff.

This is a statue of the wizard Iomnogoron before his self-transformations into an immortal ooze-being were completed. This room is identical to **Areas 57** and **65**.

Area 52: Room of Damaged Crystalline Golems

This room contains three crystal statues of large humans; each statue is bashed up and damaged.

This room contains three crystalline golems, each of them very badly damaged from the battle between Iomnogoron and his minions, after the wizard went mad.

One of the golems has only one fist (only 1 slam attack), another has only 25 hit points, and the third has a –4 to hit.

Golem, Crystalline (3): AC 16; HP 59 (7d8+28); Spd 25ft; **Melee** slam x2 (+5, 2d6+3 bludgeoning plus knock prone, DC Str 13); **Immune** charm, force, fright, lightning, paralysis, petrification, poison, radiant, thunder; **Resist** normal non-adamantine weapons; **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** –4, **Wis** –1, **Cha** –5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** magic resistance, magic weapons; **AL** U; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (**Monster Appendix**)

Treasure: The treasure in this room is in a large chest of smoky quartz – it is not transparent enough to see the interior. The chest itself is worth 1000gp and weighs 100 pounds. Inside is a bag containing 350gp, a second bag containing 3 gems worth 100gp each, and a third bag containing a golden orb studded with gems, worth 1500gp.

Area 53: Machine Room

This room contains two machines: the one on the southwest wall is lit with a glowing light, and the machine on the northeast wall is dark and inert.

The glowing machine is a potion-making machine with a hole on top about the size of a golf ball. There is a spout in the middle, just above a

Area 54: Hidden Treasure Room

This room contains hundreds and hundreds of crystallized pre-humanoid skulls, piled about a foot deep across the floor.

Anyone sifting through the skulls will find that there are several items of treasure in here as well. It will take 5 turns to gather all of it together, with the “find” for each turn being as follows: (1) one of the skulls is gold, weighing 10 pounds and worth 200gp, (2) a rotted leather bag containing 300gp, (3) a stick of wood shaped like a wand, with the command word “Jax” carved into the handle, (4) a scattering of 100gp, (5) a scattering of 10gp.

Area 55: Gelatinous Triangle Lair

This room contains four triangular-shaped structures, almost transparent and of strange material. Stairs lead down into the darkness of a huge iron tube.

This room contains 4 **gelatinous triangles**, the result of an experiment in which Iomnorigon bisected two gelatinous cubes into two triangular shapes each. Stairs lead down to **Area 66** on the fourth level through the iron tube. The triangles are treated as half-hit point gelatinous cubes.

Ooze, Gelatinous Triangle (4): AC 6; HP 42 (4d10+20); Spd 15ft; Melee pseudopod (+4, 3d6 acid); **SA** engulf (3d6 acid, DC 12 Dex avoid, DC 12 Str escape); **Immune** blind, charm, deaf, exhaustion, fright, prone; **Str** +2, **Dex** 4, **Con** +5, **Int** -5, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -5; **Senses** blindsight 60ft (blind beyond); **Traits** cube takes its entire space so creatures that enter unaware subjected to engulf and have tactical disadvantage on save, transparent—DC 15 Wis (Perception) to spot;; **AL** U; **CR** 1; **XP** 200. (50% hp Gelatinous Cubes, otherwise identical).

Area 56: Teleport Room

This chamber has no unusual features. There is an archway in the north wall, and another one in the south wall.

Anyone stepping into the area marked “T” on the map will be instantly transported to **Area 64**. If the teleporter has just been used (from **Area 50**), it will begin recharging to move people from here to **Area 64**, which takes 20 minutes. During this process, it can continue to accept teleportations from **Area 50**.

Area 57: Identical Statue Room Two

This room contains the statue of a creature that is almost but not quite human. Its head is long and almost like that of an evil-looking horse. It is dressed in the flowing robes of a wizard and it carries an ornate staff.

This is a statue of the wizard Iomnorigon before his self-transformations into an immortal ooze-being were completed. The room is completely identical to **Area 51** and **Area 64**.



metal plate, and there is a rack of glass bottles (four of them are intact, several others are smashed) beside the machine. There are three small transparent windows in the machine, a blue lever, a red lever. Two of the windows contain numbers (currently “1” and “2”), and the third shows runes which resemble the letters “ZHA.” Pulling the blue lever spins the numbers like a slot machine, the runes identify what the potion maker will make as a result, and the red lever tells the potion maker to make the potion out of a *glow-geode* (assuming one has been inserted at the top). Every time the blue lever is pulled, whether or not a *glow-geode* is inside the machine, roll a d4 for each of the number dials. Read the result below to find out what potion this would make (and the corresponding label in the “description” window). Note that the machine will not make a potion until there is a *glow-geode* in the machine and the red lever is pulled; at this time, the machine will make whatever potion the current dial setting indicates. The blue lever can be pulled as many times as desired, to get the right combination of numbers before pulling the red lever (the players may be aware that “ZHA” is a warning).

- 1,1: *potion of flying* (descriptive runes: “KTHI”)
- 1,2: *potion of poison* (descriptive runes: “ZHA”)
- 1,3: *potion of healing* (descriptive runes: “OAN”)
- 1,4: *potion of lightning resistance* (descriptive runes: “ATO”)
- 2,1: *potion of healing* (descriptive runes: “OAN”)
- 2,2: *potion of poison* (descriptive runes: “ZHA”)
- 2,3: *potion of healing* (descriptive runes: “OAN”)
- 2,4: *potion of heroism* (descriptive runes: “LIN”)
- 3,1: *potion of lightning resistance* (descriptive runes: “ATO”)
- 3,2: *potion of poison* (descriptive runes: “ZHA”)
- 3,3: *potion of healing* (descriptive runes: “OAN”)
- 3,4: *potion of speed* (descriptive runes: “MAR”)
- 4,1: inert liquid (descriptive runes: “IOCTP”)
- 4,2: *potion of poison* (descriptive runes: “ZHA”)
- 4,3: *potion of healing* (descriptive runes: “OAN”)
- 4,4: MACHINE BREAKS (descriptive runes: “ZHA”)

Area 58: Korog Technician's Hideout

There is a strange creature here, with an almost horse-like head and the body of a tall, thin human. It is hairless, and carries a short silver wand.

This room contains another Korog technician, part of the small expedition that is exploring and using the Spire while the causeway is open. This one has been slightly wounded by a trap, and is hiding out in this isolated chamber. He is alert, and will use his wand of paralysis in an attempt to paralyze attackers while they are still atop the walls in the lightning field.

Korog Technician: AC 12; HP 52 (7d8+21); Spd 30ft; **Melee** longsword (+4, 1d8+2 slashing); **SA** wand of paralysis (x5, paralysis, 60ft, DC 13 Con repeat); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** +3, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Arcane +5; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (**Monster Appendix**)

Treasure: the technician carries 50gp in a belt pouch.

Area 59: Kenckoo Camp

This chamber contains several bird-like creatures dressed in ragged, filthy robes, arguing vehemently in low voices. There are several wine bottles scattered around the room and a distinct smell of sour wine. Although you can't understand the voices, it is clear that a couple of the bird-men are slurring their words badly.

This is the temporary encampment of a nomadic, subterranean gang of **15 kenckoos** that have been wandering through the caverns beneath the Spire for years. On their way up into the Spire, they dashed past Iomnorogon in the fourth level in a panic, and ended up here. At this point, terrified by the entire situation, the lightning fields, the traps, and the monsters, they are arguing about whether to continue proceeding upward or to try dashing back past Iomnorogon. They are speaking in low voices, but the party will probably hear them ahead of time, although they speak common only through mimicry. The ragged assortment will be overjoyed to find some potential saviors. If attacked, however, they will flee until cornered and then fight. They have no idea where they are or how to retrace their steps, since they pelted here at top speed. However, they can describe Iomnorogon's chamber (circle of pillars, throne, and two stone basins), describe Iomnorogon himself, and warn the party that he hides behind a large curtain. Their story is somewhat exaggerated; Iomnorogon is supposedly the size of a house, and casts magical fear spells (ahem). If the party does not wipe them out, the kenckoos will try to follow them at a safe distance (trying to get out of the Spire), muttering quietly among themselves. If the party tries to use one of them for any useful purpose, several of them will begin shrieking in fear, immediately calling down **1d6 lightning lampreys** to investigate the noise.

All of the kenckoos are treated as poisoned due to their alcohol intake.

Kenckoos (15): AC 13; HP 13 (3d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** shortsword (+4, 1d6+2 slashing); **Ranged** shortbow (+5, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **SA** ambush (tactical advantage to surprise attacks); **Str** +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Deception +4, Perception +2, Stealth +5; **Traits** sound mimicry (fail on DC 14 Wis or Insight check); **AL** CN; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Treasure: 14 empty wine bottles, a 50-pound bag of seeds, 20 sleeping darts, 15gp, 2 full wine bottles labeled "Yarkok's Wine: don't touch," 1 *glow-geode*, a 10ft pole, and a scroll containing a spell that makes the parchment it is cast from turn into a mouse.

Area 60: Storage Area

This room contains a tall, clear crystal tube with 5 round stones at the bottom, all glowing faintly. The room also contains several empty boxes and chests.

The crystal tube is 4 ft. tall, with 5 glow-geodes at the bottom (it's quite a reach to get them out). Obviously it once contained many more. The room also contains several empty boxes and chests, none of which have any use to the adventurers.

Area 61: Crystal Cutter Storage Area

This room contains a vertical crystal cabinet in which there is a five-foot long silver implement with a disk at one end and a sort of handle at the other end. At the side of the cabinet there is a compartment with a hole at the top, about the size of a golf ball. A set of iron stairs leads downward into what looks like a dark iron tube.

At the side of the box is a compartment with a hole at the top, about the size of a golf ball. The cabinet can be opened easily. The implement inside is a heavy-duty crystal cutter. The business end is the spinning disk, which has the runes "ZHA" inscribed on it, and the other end has a ring attached by a short chain. When it is directed at a crystal wall, and the ring is yanked out to its full extension (it is attached to a chain about two feet long inside the cutter), the disk end of the cutter begins whirring, and any crystal in its path will begin dissolving. The cutter has ten charges, and cuts through 10ft of crystal with each charge. If the cutter is directed at a living being within 10ft, it will inflict 2d6 slashing damage with no saving throw and no to-hit roll (this expends one charge). If the cutter is in the cabinet and a *glow-geode* is placed in the adjacent box, the cabinet will glow for a moment and the cutter will recharge (5 charges). The maximum number of charges it can hold is ten. The stairs lead down to **Area 67** on the fourth level, through a broad iron tube.

Area 62: Second Machine Room

This room contains two large machines almost the size of a person. One glows and hums softly; the other is dark and appears to have been chewed upon by something big.

There is a *glow-geode* underneath the dead machine, which rolled underneath in the days when the machines were in use, without anyone noticing. The functional machine has a door on the top somewhat like a washing machine, and a tall funnel (with a hole inside about the size of a golf ball). If a weapon is placed into the machine, and a glow geode is rolled into the funnel, the machine will enchant the weapon to +1 (and no more than +1). *Glow-geodes* rolled into the funnel when there is not a weapon inside are not destroyed, but they can't be retrieved, either. They can be seen down there if someone peers into the funnel, but they are stuck until a weapon is placed in the machine. When the machine is used successfully, of course, the *glow-geode* is consumed in the process.

Area 63: Alcove Room

This room has no unusual features other than six alcoves in the walls.

THE SPIRE OF IRON AND CRYSTAL

The alcoves are empty, and there is nothing of interest in this room.

Area 64: Teleportal Room

This L-shaped room has no apparent features other than an archway in the north wall and the door in the east wall.

This teleportal accepts teleportations from **Area 57**. Any character stepping out of the teleportation field, and then stepping back in, is transported to **Area 50**.

Area 65: Identical Statue Room Three

This room contains the statue of a creature that is almost but not quite human. Its head is long and almost like that of an evil-looking horse. It is dressed in the flowing robes of a wizard and it carries an ornate staff.

This is a statue of the wizard Iomnogoron before his self-transformations into an immortal ooze-being were completed. The room is completely identical to **Area 51** and **Area 57**.

Fourth Level

Wandering Monsters

No wandering monsters are found in the fourth egg-crystal.

Area 66: Stair Room One

Stairs lead upward from this featureless room into a wide iron tube. The tube ascends into the lightning field above.

This area contains the stairs to **Area 55** on the third level. This chamber has no unusual features. As with the higher egg-levels, the top of the crystal labyrinth is open-air and is charged with a lightning field.

Area 67: Stair Room Two

Stairs lead upward from this featureless room into a wide iron tube that disappears into the lightning field above.

This room has stairs up to **Area 61** on the third level, but has no other unusual features. As with the higher egg-levels, the top of the crystal labyrinth is open-air and is charged with a lightning field.

Area 68: Dead Machine Room

There is a strange machine in this room: a box with a funnel at the top and a little door in the side.

Crystal tubing spirals up and down the sides of the machine like intertwining vines. This machine is dead and does nothing – any *glow-geodes* dropped into the funnel will just roll down into the body of the machine and can be retrieved unchanged through the little door.

Area 69: Trap Room

This room contains six narrow pillars approximately arranged into a circle. Each pillar reaches only as high as the top of the wall.

Anyone stepping into one of the 10ft x 10ft areas that does not contain a pillar will instantly become coated in a hard shell of quartz. The quartz can be hammered away, inflicting 2d6 bludgeoning damage on the creature within, or it can be effortlessly and painlessly removed with a blast from the crystal cutter found in **Area 61**.

The trap may be detected with a DC 18 Wis (Perception) check.

Area 70: Imprisoned Minion

There is a crystal egg-tank filled with green liquid in this otherwise featureless room. Inside the egg tank is a seven-foot tall humanoid with a head similar to that of an evil-looking horse, and a thin but strong-looking human body.

This room contains an egg-tank that houses one of Iomnogoron's pre-human korog minions, still alive. It will gesture frantically to the party, pointing to the dials at the bottom of the tank and doing everything it can to persuade them to release it. This is UlwaKorm, one of the few minions who remained loyal to the wizard. However, over the course of centuries of imprisonment, he has changed his attitude and will help the adventurers to kill his former master as best he can. He cannot walk, for his preservation in the egg-tank was imperfect, and his tremendous age has taken some effect on him. However, he will try to communicate to the best of his ability where Iomnogoron is located (drawing the large chamber on their map if they have one – or sketching it out and pointing if they do not). He will also draw a sketch picture of the wizard if he can – a stick figure inside a cone-like shape with two tentacles (the slime). He will also draw some jagged lines to try and depict the fact that Iomnogoroth can cast spells.

Area 71: Living Quarters of the Slain Minions

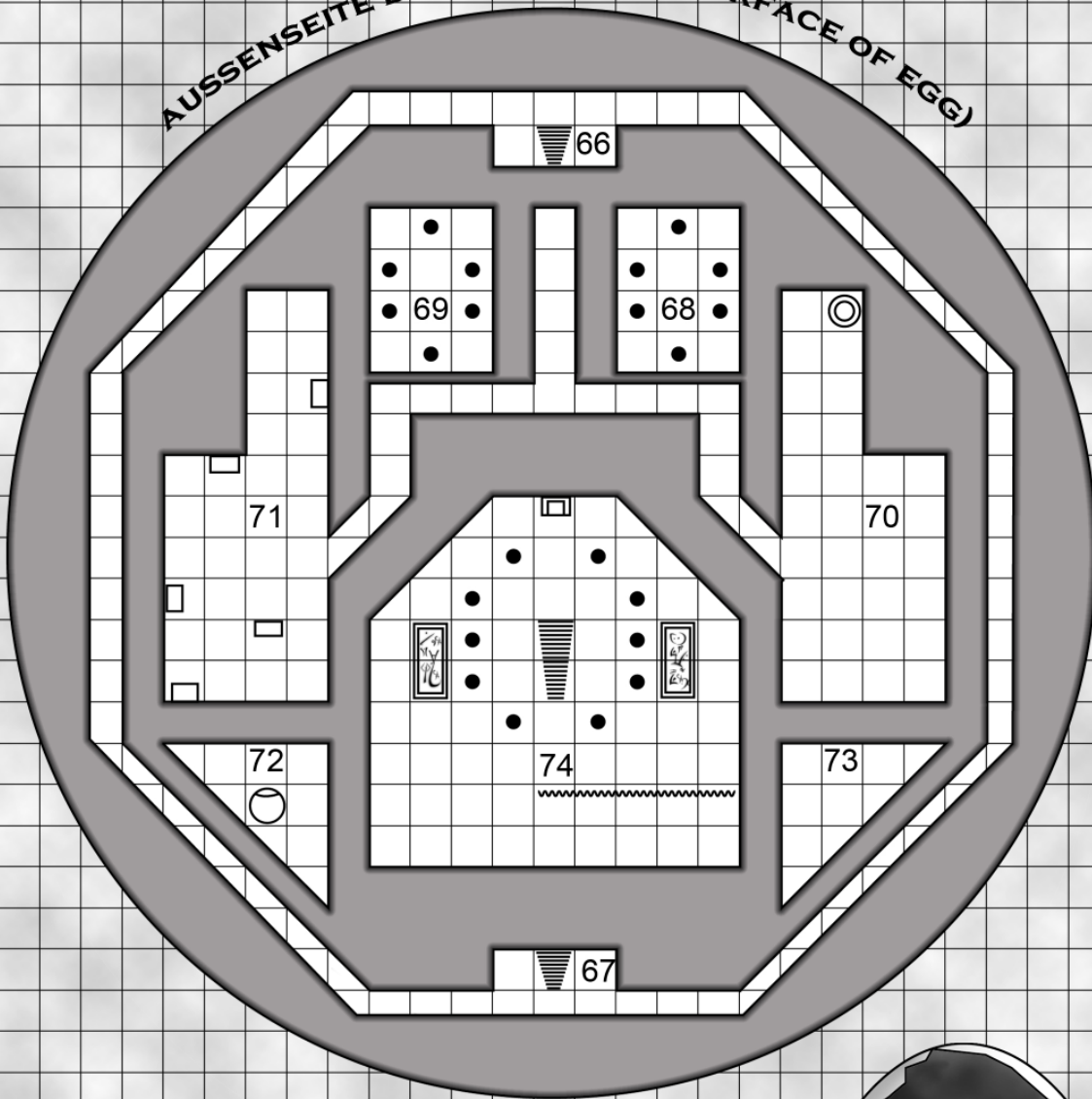
This room looks like it was once living quarters, but everything in it has been violently destroyed except the carpets. The walls are splattered with dried slime, and there are three large piles of bones on the floor along with bits of shattered wood.

This room once served as the luxurious living quarters for Iomnogoron's korog assistants, but it was destroyed when Iomnogoron went mad and killed them. A few beds, still partially intact, have been smashed against the walls, and tables are likewise bashed apart in the center of the room with other piles of broken wood that might once have been chairs. The carpets on the floor are still in good condition, except that they, and most of the broken piles of furniture, are splattered with slime. The walls, also, appear to have been splashed and speckled with the oozy, mucus-like

LOWEST EGG

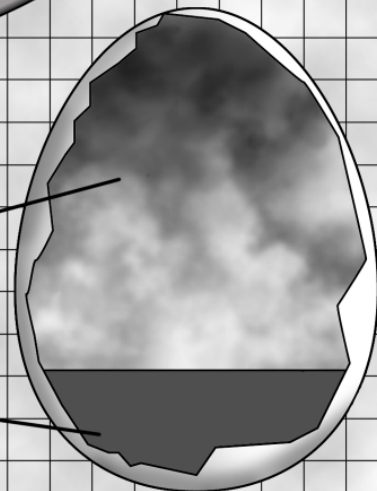
ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET

AUSSENSEITE DES EIES (OUTER SURFACE OF EGG)



**ELEKTRISCHER STURM
(ELECTRICAL STORM)**

**QUARZ LABYRINTH
(QUARTZ LABYRINTH)**



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substance. There are three piles of what look like bones here. The bones themselves are not covered in slime, but the heaviest coating of the stuff is centered on them.

Each pile of bones is non-human; these are the pre-human minions of Iomnogoron, slain when the wizard began to go mad. Inspection of any of the slime in the room reveals that it has hardened, and inspection of the bone-piles will turn up a fair amount of jewelry that the creatures were wearing when Iomnogoron killed them. (10 pieces of jewelry worth 100gp each).

Area 72: Treasure Basin

This room contains a round, circular basin of stone, covered by a coruscating field of magical force. Inside the basin, there are several objects, vaguely visible.

There are only two ways to get into the basin: using the crystal cutter from **Area 61** (which will strip away the force field) or smashing the stone basin, which needs a mace, hammer, or similar instrument. Smashing the basin takes 40 minutes, and the noise will certainly attract Iomnogoron (**Area 74**), who will approach over the top of the wall and attack with spells, retreating again if it seems prudent. If no one is watching the walls as the rest of the party hammers away at the basin, the encounter is likely to begin badly for the party.

Treasure: the basin contains a *staff of frost*, a *+1 longsword* that is +2 versus oozes and overcomes any creature's immunity to slashing damage; and a *scroll of protection from dragons*.

Area 73: Mesh Treasure-Basket Room

This room contains a complex structure of wires arranged into a sphere with effectively a very close mesh. One wire leads upward into the lightning field.

The mesh sphere is electrified; this isn't apparent from looking at the wires themselves, but the wire up into the lightning field should be an obvious warning for reasoning players. Anyone immune to lightning can

push aside the wires without being shocked; the wire into the lightning field cannot be cut unless the PCs are able to create some sort of scissor-like apparatus; hacking at it will just sway the basket around. Pushing the wires of the basket aside with poles or cloth-covered hands doesn't allow enough precision to get through the tangle of wires, which is quite thick; only bare hands (or something ingenious the author hasn't thought of) will do the trick. The basket contains a treasure chest with 500gp inside.

Area 74: Lair of Iomnogoron

In the center of this huge chamber, a stairwell leads downward, surrounded by bizarre crystalline carvings resembling gargoyles. The stairwell is surrounded by a circle of pillars about 30 ft. in diameter. Two long stone basins of green stone stand just outside the circle of pillars, one to the west and one to the east, about 10 ft. from the walls. These are carved with strange runes and glyphs. There is a throne at the north end of the room, dusty and apparently unused for a long time. In the southeast corner, a long curtain mounted on sturdy iron rods closes off that part of the chamber.

The hulk of **Iomnogoron** is behind the curtain, where it will prepare for combat or cast spells to begin the battle, depending on what the players do.

This huge room is the lair of the creature that Iomnogoron has become. He is a desiccated, almost skeletal creature encased in a huge pillar-like glob of transparent ooze, dependent upon it for his almost immortal lifespan. The creature is no longer sane, but is cunning and still evidences a dangerous intelligence. Iomnogoron can cast spells at the same time his outer ooze attacks with its two tentacles.

Iomnogoron: AC 12; HP 126 (11d10+66); Spd 20ft; **Melee** tentacle (+6, 20ft, 2d8+3 bludgeoning); **SA** multiattack (tentacle x2 and spell), spells (Int+7, DC 15); **Immune** charm, lightning; **Resist** bludgeoning; Str +3, **Dex** -3, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Arcane +9; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **CR** 6; **XP** 2300. (**Monster Appendix**)

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—light, mage hand;

1st (4)—charm person, shield, magic missile;

2nd (3)—hold person, misty step, see invisibility, web;

3rd (3)—counterspell, lightning bolt, nondetection;

4th (1)—greater invisibility.

The Mires of Mourning

An adventure by Greg A. Vaughan and Kevin Wright for 6th level PCs

Introduction

The adventure takes place both in a swamp and the sunken remains of an old asylum that still stands there. The Creeping Mire, as the swamp is known, sits on the outskirts of the provinces that form the borders of a major kingdom. It is officially within the province of Keston, though it is far enough away from the main centers of power to be all but forgotten. Even if remembered at all, it is more a source of rumor and dire reputation than any sort of first-hand knowledge. It is a place where undesirables go away to be forgotten, and everyone seems happy with that arrangement. The Creeping Mire and province of Keston can be easily placed in any campaign world where an established kingdom has a swampy wilderness area on one of its outer boundaries. In the **Lost Lands** Keston Province and the Creeping Mire lie in the Borderland Provinces to the east of the March of Mountains. This region is detailed in the forthcoming *The Lost Lands: Borderland Provinces* from **Frog God Games**.

The History of Mourninghaven Sanitorium

Morninghaven Sanitorium was constructed by the church of Mitra, the Sun Father, god of the sun and benevolence, as a hospital for the advancing arts of medicine and healing. It was built on a spot traditionally held to have been visited by Mitra in ancient times and stood surrounded by the Hearthglen, a picturesque green moor where patients could take strolls at their leisure through the calming scenery to restore their flagging constitutions while undergoing the gentle healing arts of the clerics and lay brothers. For many years Mourninghaven faithfully served its role at the edge of the province of Keston and catered to the rich and poor alike, turning away no one in need of its healing.

Then came the Fiend Rains, a decade of torrential rains and swelling rivers said to have been brought on by the forces of darkness. Whether supernatural in origin or not, these unusually wet years brought about the end of the Morninghaven Sanitorium's original purpose. The water table rose and the Hearthglen became a small marsh that continued to spread and grow wild with plant life, hidden bogs and pools, and the strange creatures that call such places home. As the tangled swamp expanded it became known as the Creeping Mire and began to undermine the foundations of the Morninghaven facilities. Entire buildings began to sink and walls buckled and cracked as foundations shifted and settled. The road to the sanitorium grew increasingly wild and hazardous, and people stopped going to the facility for the healing it offered.

Eventually the unhealthy environment caused disease to break out among the lay brothers, and there were insufficient clerics present to stop its spread before several of the healers had succumbed and died. This proved more than the sanitorium could withstand, and ultimately the clergy of Mitra relocated their facility to a distant, more hospitable clime. They sold the rapidly deteriorating property to an ambitious baronet from

the nearby provinces. However, they maintained their rights to visit the shrine of the Sun Father in pilgrimages, a condition of the sale to which the baronet readily agreed.

Baronet Wilbane Osterklieg continued to run the sanitorium but changed it from a convalescent home to an incarceration facility for those institutionalized due to mental illness or related crimes. Ostensibly the sanitorium served to treat and rehabilitate the offenders, but far from the prying eyes of the public in the dismal marshlands, Osterklieg handled them in a very different manner; using treatment philosophies and experimental techniques he had developed involving isolation, hypnotism, sensory overload, and old-fashioned brutality. No more did people come of their own volition seeking treatment and recovery; the authorities from the provinces brought inmates to the sanitorium where they could be held and dealt with far from any population centers, and Osterklieg charged them hard coin for his services. Those who were institutionalized within rarely emerged, and those who did were never whole again. The grim institution became known colloquially as Mourninghaven in light of the fates of the wretches who were interred within.

As the dire reputation of the sanitorium grew, so too did the hazards of the Creeping Mire. Rarely did the heavily guarded prisoner gangs or supply runs have trouble, but the lone pilgrims of Mitra that still made the trek to their shrine began to disappear. Searches were conducted by both the Keston authorities and the sanitorium staff, but no trace of these lost folk was ever found. Over time more and more began to disappear, on some occasions even entire parties of pilgrims traveling together for safety. Eventually, the church of Mitra reached the conclusion that it could not guarantee the safety of its pilgrims nor could it stomach the loss of any more to the increasingly dangerous trek. With this decision the church formally renounced the sanitorium as a holy site of its faith, and all use of the track through the Creeping Mire ceased other than the transportation of inmates and supplies for its maintenance.

Despite rumors of Osterklieg amassing a sizable fortune by selling the services of the facility, eventually his house fell from the Crown's favor and its fortunes turned. After two decades of Osterklieg administration, the lord-governor of the nearby province of Keston assumed control of the asylum and continued its use as a prison for the criminally insane, where they could be safely confined far from civilized folk, as well as a place for confining politically or socially valuable prisoners, where they could be isolated but kept out of harm's way in the rigidly enforced discipline and security of the sanitorium. Mourninghaven has continued in this capacity now for more than 30 years as it continues its slow slide into the depths of the swamp.

The Osterklieg Legacy

The baronet Wilbane Osterklieg was a vile and despicable man in more than just his dealings with the unfortunate folk incarcerated in his sanitorium. It was this reputation and other dire dealings that eventually spelled his political doom and ended with his neck on a headman's block and his family stripped of title and possessions. Despite the vast amount of gold paid to him over two decades by the Crown for the use of his facilities, his holdings upon confiscation were found to be quite modest, and it was assumed that his spending had been as wanton as his other unsavory activities. Once he was dispensed with and the properties had been sold off, little further thought was put into the matter.



However, the truth was another matter entirely. Wilbane Osterklieg did amass a sizable fortune from the payments by the Crown. Further, he held a terrible secret that he had taken with him to the grave; he was the cause of the disappearance of the Mitran pilgrims. Through alliances with certain foul denizens of the Creeping Mire, he arranged for scores of pilgrims to be taken captive as they traveled the Swamp Road. He then sent letters of ransom, purporting to be from brigands or foul creatures residing in the swamp, demanding payment for the safe return of loved ones and threatening that any attempts at rescue would only result in their horrible deaths. Some families turned to the church or the authorities for help in recovering their family members, but the “swamp denizens” always proved too elusive and were never located, though the mutilated remains of the kidnapped pilgrims were sometimes found—left as a warning for failure to pay the ransom. Other families elected to pay the exorbitant sums demanded but, after being strung along through months or years of blackmail, eventually realized repatriation was not forthcoming and despaired of hope. Once Baronet Osterklieg realized that a particular captive no longer held value, he murdered the unfortunate and moved on in his schemes. Not a one of the missing pilgrims was ever found alive.

Always careful of the Crown or the church catching wind of his schemes, Baronet Osterklieg made sure that his prisoners and the payments for them were stored in a little-known section of the asylum called the Black Ward where he kept the very worst and most violent offenders incarcerated. Over time, the access building to this underground ward sank into the swamp so that its very existence was hidden from any who did not already know of its location. Despite his constant paranoia, the baronet was caught off guard when soldiers sent by the Crown arrived at the sanatorium and took him into custody. He never had a chance to flee to his secret sanctum or even release those still trapped within it. Those locked within the confines of the Black Ward were abandoned and slowly succumbed to starvation or their own madness—a host of lost souls left to guard a hidden treasure.

Adventure Summary

The PCs are hired by the lord-governor of Keston to escort a politically sensitive prisoner out to Mourninghaven Sanatorium for confinement. As they travel the Swamp Road through the Creeping Mire they are beset by attacks from tribes of primitive swamp humanoids. Finally reaching the sanatorium late in the evening, the PCs hand over their prisoner and bunk down for the night in preparation for leaving on the morrow.

During the night the sanatorium comes under attack by more of the swamp brutes accompanied by a black dragon. The dragon’s breath weapon destroys part of the building releasing many of the madmen locked within. The PCs are forced to battle both escaped lunatics and invading swamp beasts as confusion reigns. Fighting through the chaos, they come upon the dying curator of the sanatorium. He is beyond help but confesses with his dying breath that the secret to old Wilbane Osterklieg’s stolen treasures lies within the mind of the madman they escorted to the asylum. He states that Wilbane’s grandson, a vile criminal, is also after the treasure and staged the attack to obtain the prisoner.

Following the information provided by the curator and a clear trail left through the swamp, the PCs are able to track the swamp brutes back to their primitive stockade. There they defeat the remainder of the tribe but learn that Vidas—Osterklieg’s grandson—and the prisoner did not return here but instead went straight to the Black Ward to recover the treasure.

Returning to the sanatorium the PCs are able to locate the entrance used by Vidas and his prisoner and enter the Black Ward. Within they find the slaughtered remnants of Vidas Osterklieg’s party, slain by the mad spirits locked away within the ward for the last 30 years. They encounter these spirits and Vidas himself, his sanity shattered by the horrors he has uncovered. Finally they find the escaped madman, now a powerful and twisted creature inhabited by the vengeful spirits of the insane and innocent whom he had a hand in condemning to torment and death so long ago. Defeating this powerful evil, the PCs are able to discover the resting place of the lost Mitran pilgrims as well as the treasure hoard of old Wilbane.

Getting Started

The adventure begins as the PCs are approached by the Lord-Governor of Keston about transporting a prisoner to Mourninghaven Sanitorium in the nearby Creeping Mire. Read or paraphrase the following.

Your summons has brought you to the offices of Miltrin Cormien, Lord-Governor of Keston Province. The old veteran sits before you at his desk of wood and slate, the sleeve of his gubernatorial tunic pinned up where he lost his arm in the wars of a decade ago. Despite his infirmity and the weight of years upon him, he is still a formidable man, hale and hearty with a head of close-cropped silver hair.

Once everyone is seated and his aid has left the office and closed the door, Governor Cormien produces a roll of parchment bearing the royal seal and clears his throat as he reveals it to you. "Thank you, good people, for responding to my entreaty on short notice. I have a matter of some urgency and political sensitivity. The Crown has ordered the transfer of one Haden Ward, male human, age indeterminate, to the secure facilities of Mourninghaven Sanitorium for convalescence until such time as the Crown has deemed his release to be prudent and acceptable.

"Basically the Crown wants this individual moved to a new and more secure location. Haden Ward—Ward is not his true name but rather a legal designation of the state for an individual of unknown lineage—was a soldier injured in the wars. His injuries basically rendered him catatonic and he has lived under constant care for the last 10 years. I don't know why the Crown has taken an interest or what threatens this Haden's well-being, but for whatever reason it has been ordered that he be moved to the Mourninghaven facility for his own protection.

"The catch is that Mourninghaven is an older institution that has been engulfed by the Creeping Mire in the last few decades. It's an old hospital that used to be run by the priests of Mitra for the treatment of the infirm, before being turned over to the State. It's still accessible by the Swamp Road, but the trip is dangerous—Mitran pilgrims used to disappear along that road until they gave making the trip, and with the rainy season upon us the road is at its worst.

"I need you to escort Mr. Haden Ward safely to the sanitorium. I'm relying on you because I believe your skills show you to be as capable as any military escort I could provide, and I have checked out your credentials and confirmed that you are not associated with any of the possible political players that might have an interest in the matter. The Crown wants him to get there and in one piece, and I want what the Crown wants. I will provide you with Writs of the Treasury so that upon turning Mr. Ward over to the curator of the sanitorium, he will sign the writs and allow you to collect your payment in full. Do you have any questions?"

The Lord-Governor Cormien is telling the truth. He doesn't know any more than what he is saying but fears that there may be other interested parties who will try to interfere, since normally the Crown would not send a request for the transfer of an individual like this if there was not an issue of State interests at stake. He sees the use of a party of unaffiliated adventurers of some reputation to be his best bet in complying with his orders.

If asked about Haden Ward, Governor Cormien will allow the PCs to see his file. It confirms that he is an unidentified soldier that served the Crown in the wars of the previous decade and suffered a severe head injury in a major engagement. He is ambulatory and cooperative, following simple instructions, but he is not able to care for himself and non-responsive to attempts at communication. The only word he has uttered in the last 10 years is "Haden" which they have assumed to be his name. Otherwise he

is generally healthy, having physically recovered from his wounds. There is nothing in the file to indicate what special value he might have, however.

If the PCs ask about Mourninghaven Sanitorium or the Creeping Mire, you can reveal to them the information provided under "The History of Mourninghaven Sanitorium" above. Governor Cormien does not know the information described under "The Osterkleg Legacy," and the PCs will not be able to uncover any of it on their own either.

If the PCs accept the job, Cormien provides them with a map to the sanitorium showing little other than the route from the province to the Swamp Road, a letter of introduction for the curator, including a copy of the Crown's orders, and a Writ of the Treasury in the amount of 500 gp for the curator to countersign. If the PCs wish to bargain for a greater payment, the Lord-Governor may add up to an additional 500 gp to the amount of the writ, but will haggle in 50–100 gp increments.

Once all the negotiations have been completed, Governor Cormien arranges for the PCs to pick up their charge at the city gates at dawn the next morning.

Haden Ward

When the PCs first meet their charge, he is wearing a simple wool shift and trousers with tattered shoes. City guards turn him over to the PCs in a pair of manacles and provide them with the key and a traveling cloak in return for their signature upon the lord-governor's transfer order. Haden is nondescript and, despite the presence of the manacles, seems completely harmless. He is a middle-aged man with stubble upon his face and long, ill-kept hair. Both hair and beard are dark but liberally peppered with gray. His face is seamed and leathery by years of exposure to the weather, as is befitting a former soldier, but is currently pale and wan from lack of exposure to the sun in recent years. His eyes are hollow with dark circles under them and with a vacant stare. A DC 20 Wis (Perception) check will reveal that he is actually a half-elf with strongly human features. He responds immediately to firm commands but takes no actions on his own. He appears fit enough to walk, though the PCs can have him ride if they so choose. He is otherwise completely non-responsive, so full stats are not provided for him here.

Haden Ward: AC 10; HP 41 (6d8+18); Str +1, Dex +0, Con +3, Int -2, Wis -2, Cha -2.

He is in a daze, which does not respond to even magical healing (his woes go deeper than merely physical hurts). He will pose no trouble for the PCs on the journey—his manacles notwithstanding.

The Swamp Road

The road from the city in which the PCs begin heads eastward towards the swamp for 36 miles. It passes numerous villages, crossroads, and homesteads for the first 20 miles, but for the remainder of its length it is abandoned and lonely. The weather is generally gloomy and overcast with frequent downpours and drizzles throughout the day. It is warm enough for now, though ominous dark clouds on the northern horizon make it look as though a change for the worse is coming. Despite these conditions, the road is well kept for most of its length, and the journey to the edge of the Creeping Mire takes 2 days on foot or 1 day on horseback. No encounters occur during this segment of the journey, though travelers are few and give the PCs and their prisoner a wide berth.

Upon reaching sight of the Creeping Mire, read the following.

The rain-drenched gloom stretches ahead into a green haze that slowly resolves itself into a tangled tree line festooned with thick undergrowth and overgrown with hanging mosses and vines—the Creeping Mire. A thin mist seems to hang around the eaves of this swamp, and brackish mires and pools grow more and more numerous

THE MIRES OF MOURNING

as the tree line nears. The road itself becomes an elevated causeway of rubble and mud rising several feet above the surrounding marshes and in many places has a corduroy of ancient logs sunk into its muddy surface to try and create some stability and traction in the morass.

Despite the proliferation of plant growth, the shaded mire itself seems remarkably quiet—the only sounds are the continuous plops of falling water drops and a low, incessant hum, almost below the level of audibility—that seems to be felt as much as heard; the source of it is not readily apparent.

As mentioned, the Swamp Road is a raised earthen causeway—part dike and part road. It once had fairly regular upkeep, however as the Creeping Mire has spread and the fortunes of the Mourninghaven Sanatorium have declined, it has fallen into ever-greater disrepair. In addition, during the rainy season it sees almost no travel and no maintenance whatsoever. It is a muddy track that constantly sucks at the feet of travelers, occasionally even managing to pull off a boot. In tactical combat situations, it does not inhibit movement, but for long-term travel it creates a tiring and unstable experience that seriously hampers the travelers' efforts. It is 20 miles from the edge of the Creeping Mire to Mourninghaven, and regardless of whether the PCs travel on foot or by horseback it will take them 2 full days to reach the sanatorium and require them to camp at least one night on the Swamp Road.

The causeway upon which the road sits varies in height and width but averages rising about 5ft above the surrounding marshes and about 20ft wide. Climbing the muddy slope of the causeway requires great care to traverse it without slipping. In many places trees and undergrowth hug the causeway, even arching across its path in some places 10ft above the track. At other places it is surrounded by swamp pools with only small hummocks of grass and mud bars to mar the placid surface below. All manner of swamp fauna can be spied from the road, but these are typically small birds of prey and aquatic or amphibious creatures. Snakes can often be seen dangling among nearby tree limbs, but they do not typically molest passersby that leave them be. Travelers and horses alike are often startled by the sudden plop and splash of a large frog jumping into the water at their approach. And during the few pauses in the omnipresent drizzle, the mires ubiquitous clouds of mosquitoes arise to harass anything that moves, filling the air with their teeth-grinding whine.

Three set encounters occur as the PCs travel along the Swamp Road. These can be timed as you see fit, but **Event 2** occurs while they camp during their first night in the swamp. If the PCs stray from the Swamp Road, use the table below to determine random encounters and events while within the marshes. These random encounters do not occur while the PCs remain on the road, except as otherwise noted. Roll once on the table for every 4 hours spent away from the sanatorium or the Swamp Road.

Random Encounters in the Creeping Mire

d%	Encounter
01–12	1d6+4 giant mosquitoes (see Event 1 below)
13–25	1d8 lacedons (aquatic ghouls)
26–37	1d3 swarm of insects (mosquitoes)
38–45	1 shambling mound
46–58	1d4+1 swamp brutes (see Event 2 below)
59–63	1d2 chuuls
64–66	1 gray render
67–00	No encounter

Chuul: AC 16; HP 93 (11d10+33); Spd 30ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** pincer x2 (+6, 2d6+4 bludgeoning plus grapple); **SA**

multiattack (pincers x2 or tentacles if grappled); tentacles (paralyzed 1 min, DC 13 Con repeat); **Immune** poison; **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** –3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –3; **Skills** Perception +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** amphibious, sense magic (120ft as *detect magic*); **AL** CE; **CR** 4; **XP** 1100.

Gray Render: AC 15; HP 95 (10d10+40); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+8, 4d8+5 piercing plus grapple), claws (+8, 10ft, 2d8+5 slashing), rend (+8, grappled target, 4d8+5 slashing); **Str** +5, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** –4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** –1; **AL** NE; **CR** 6; **XP** 2300. (**Monster Appendix**)

Lacedon (Aquatic Ghoul): AC 12; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 30ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** bite (+2, 2d6+2 piercing) or claws (+4, 2d4+2 slashing plus paralysis); **SA** paralysis (1 min, DC Con 10 repeat); **Immune** charm, exhaustion, poison; **Str** +1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** –2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Shambling Mound: AC 15; HP 136 (16d10+48); Spd 20ft, swim 20ft; **Melee** slam x2 (+7, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); **SA** engulf (if grappled, then blinded, restrained, and suffocating, 2d8+4 bludgeoning, DC 14 Con), multiattack (if both slams hit, target is grappled and engulfed); **Immune** blind, deaf, lightning, exhaustion; **Resist** cold, fire; **Str** +4, **Dex** –1, **Con** +1, **Int** –3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –3; **Skills** Stealth +2; **Senses** blindsight 60ft (blind beyond); **Traits** electric fortitude; **AL** U; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Swarm of Insects (Mosquitoes): AC 12; HP 22; Spd 20ft, fly 20ft; **Melee** bites (+3, 0ft, 4d4 piercing or 2d4 piercing when at 50% or fewer); **Immune** charm, fright, paralysis, petrify, prone, restraint, stun; **Resist** bludgeoning, slashing, piercing; **Str** –4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** –5, **Wis** –2, **Cha** –5; **Traits** swarm in target space; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Event 1: A Taste of Blood

This encounter occurs in the evening hours of the first day before the PCs have stopped to camp.

The gloom of evening draws onward, and a few breaks in the omnipresent cloud cover provide both a temporary respite from the near-constant drizzle as well as tantalizing glimpses of occasional rays of the descending sun. The air fills once again with the high-pitched whine of mosquitoes as clouds of them begin to gather. This time, however, a thrumming of lower register fills the air—the same low buzzing you have heard since sighting the mires. The source becomes apparent as a number of mosquitoes the size of small dogs take flight from their perches beneath the drooping moss of a nearby tree and swoop towards you. With a chilling thought you realize that almost every tree has these monstrosities lurking beneath their branches, giving the entire swamp its low hum.

Creatures: Other than as irritants, the normal mosquitoes pose no threat to the party (unless they form into a true swarm as described under “Random Encounters of the Creeping Mire” above). However, the giant mosquitoes are a different matter altogether. The mire teems with these blood-sucking brutes, although they are more prevalent deeper in the mire. Fortunately they mature at the same time that the rainy season strikes so most of them perch under tree branches to avoid the rain, except during dry spells, and consequently most of them starve to death. The mire's ecology could otherwise never support such a population. In general, if it is raining, travelers are safe from attack unless they attempt to climb the trees. However, when the weather clears, these predators fly out and attack

en masse. **9 giant mosquitoes** attack the PCs and will fight until slain or sated on blood. After the attack, the drizzle will resume and prevent other mosquitoes from arriving, as otherwise would surely happen.

Mosquito, Giant (9): AC 13; **HP** 26 (4d6+12); **Spd** 20ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** bite (+3, 1d6+2 piercing plus attach); **Str** +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** -5, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (**Monster Appendix**)

Event 2: Strangers in the Night

This encounter occurs after night has fallen on the PCs' first day of travel along the Swamp Road. The drizzle has continued intermittently into the evening hours and, though a wide enough space on the road can be found in which to make camp, the PCs are unlikely to be able to make a fire without resorting to magical means since all of the wood in the area is completely waterlogged. The point on the road where the PCs have found a suitable campsite is approximately 30ft wide. The lower ground around it is soggy with standing water, but is nowhere more than a 1ft deep and is considered difficult terrain. Cypress trees grow in profusion, but none closer than about 20ft from the road, and they are widely spaced with plenty of room between their trunks. However, as night falls those shadowed alleys become dark voids shielding what is within from prying eyes. At some appropriate time during the night, when most of the PCs have gone to sleep, proceed with the following.

The drizzle continues like a clammy blanket upon your camp site making the miserable night even worse. The solitude of the darkness is suddenly broken by a crashing sound, like something heavy smashing through branches, followed by a thump in your midst. A large stone, the size of a melon, has sunk into the earth in the center of a road, still trailing bits of moss where it flew through the nearby tree branches. Sudden splashing and the sound of more thrown missiles alert you that an attack is underway.

Creatures: The PCs have come under attack by a group of **5 swamp brutes**, a tribe of primitive bugbears that lead a crude, barbaric existence within the depths of the Creeping Mire, far from the eyes of civilization. These hulking bugbears resemble ordinary bugbears but with a more heavily muscled and stooped frame making them both broader and shorter than their more advanced cousins. Their faces are more prognathic with a pronounced underbite and enlarged lower teeth. Their coarse hair is the grayish-green of tree moss allowing them to blend in easily in their swampy surroundings. Anyone standing downwind of them can detect the acrid stench of their stinkroot (see sidebar) within 10ft, and a creature with the scent ability can detect them at double the normal distances.

Swamp Brute (5): AC 13; **HP** 39 (6d8+12); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** greatclub (+5, 2d6+3 bludgeoning); **Ranged** rock (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d4+3 bludgeoning); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Traits** brute; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200. (**Monster Appendix**)

Tactics: The swamp brutes begin their attack by hurling rocks from the cover of the tree line 30ft downwind from the road. After an initial volley focused on any obvious guards, they come charging into the camp hooting and yelling. None of them attacks Haden even if they come upon him as an easy target. They are under orders to bring him back alive, but they want to kill the PCs and loot them first. If three of the swamp brutes are killed, the rest retreat and scatter into the swamp. They do not return to the stockade for fear of punishment.

Development: If any of the swamp brutes are captured and questioned, it may reveal that they were ordered by the "Swamp King" to keep the "chained man" (Haden—though if his manacles have been removed, they find this quite befuddling) from reaching the stone house (the sanatorium). If asked to describe the Swamp King it will become



Stinkroot

Stinkroot is a plant that grows indigenously in the Creeping Mire. It resembles a small woody sapling no more than 2ft to 3ft high covered in clusters of needle-like thorns. The thorns are not its only defense, however, as its black, tuber-like roots give off an acrid stench that most animals find repulsive and instinctively avoid.

The shamans of the swamp brute tribe have discovered a way to render this root into a paste that can be smeared on their bodies to serve as insect repellent. In order for mosquitoes or other vermin to attack anyone who is wearing the stinkroot paste, they must first make a DC 15 Con saving throw. However, it causes obvious problems when attempting social interaction with any creature that is not also wearing the paste or understands its use. One application will protect a man-sized creature for 6 hours. The refined stinkroot paste can be created from the plant with a few hours of work and a successful DC 10 Int (Nature) check. A typical stinkroot plant can produce 1d3+1 applications. A single application can be purchased for 1sp and a single plant for 5cp.

confused as it considers "Swamp King" to be the best description, and its simple mind will be unable to conjure one that is any more illuminating. Further, they were actually ordered to capture the chained man before he could reach the sanatorium, but it considers its explanation to be an accurate rendition of this. It can provide no more information than this. Though this should be sufficient to tip off the party that someone knows Haden was being transported to the sanatorium and does not want him to make it for some reason.

Event 3: Collapsed Causeway

This encounter occurs some time during the second day of the PC's journey on the Swamp Road.

The road passes through a swampy lake over a mile wide here, with only occasional hummocks of swamp reeds and flooded stumps breaking the surface. The water has eroded away parts of the causeway significantly, reducing it to a narrow trail in places. Ahead is a place where the erosion is complete. A section of the causeway more than 40 wide has collapsed into the murky waters leaving a gap with no visible means of crossing.

The poorly maintained road has collapsed here due to the recent rains. The waters of the lake average 20ft deep, but the stretch between the broken ends of the causeway is only 5ft deep, though this is not readily apparent from the surface. Treat it as a deep bog. Smaller creatures such as dwarves and halflings must swim. The water provides cover.

Development: While the PCs are passing through this area, roll once on the Random Encounters table. Reroll if no encounter is indicated.

Mourninghaven Sanitorium

The PCs arrive at Mourninghaven Sanitorium on the evening of their second day of travel as night begins to fall and a steady rain pelts the road and everyone on it.

The asylum rises like a tombstone from the dismal green of the swamp through the gray curtain of rain. Its once-white walls now bear dark stains from the mold and that grows in streaks upon it from years of runoff down the slate roof. Its windows are alight with the flicker of lanterns and are covered in wire mesh to keep out the fiercer denizens of the swamp. Smoke rises from its chimneys indicating habitation, but a pall of silence seems to hang over it like a shroud, broken only by the occasional forlorn cry as of some marsh bird—or is it coming from within the building itself?

Mourninghaven was once a magnificent campus of structures of shining white marble standing upon a green heath. Now its walls are cracked and stained, its foundations buckled and ruptured. The entire facility was once encompassed within a retaining wall that extended outward from the main building, but now that wall has collapsed and sunken, leaving only a few pitiful remnants rising in forlorn stacks from the mire, festooned with swamp vegetation. In addition, other than the main building and the curator's house, the other structures of the sanitorium have collapsed or sunk into the muck leaving little more than overgrown hillocks of tangled vines and tumbled stones.

The interior walls of the main building are composed of dressed stone, many painted with cracked and faded murals of the benevolent Mitra, with the outer walls made of marble except where the many repairs have been made in lesser masonry. Floors are hardwood as are the 9ft ceilings, reinforced by heavy rafters. All doors are of strong wood and bear good locks unless otherwise noted. Individual entries indicate who possesses the appropriate keys. All rooms are lit by oil lamps that hang from the ceilings inside locked wire mesh

cages to prevent tampering by the inmates. Ground floor windows are mere arrow slits and upstairs windows are only a foot wide. All can be shuttered from within and have wire mesh that cannot be easily removed (DC 20 Str check). The interior of the main building is universally hot and humid with the omnipresent odor of excrement and many unwashed bodies in too small a space, with an underlying hint of fresh blood.

Mourninghaven Staff

Mourninghaven is administered by its curator, Xavien Drusus, and a small staff of orderlies and servants. The orderlies double as both guards and support personal while the servants tend to the cooking needs of the sanitorium and perform some filing and office tasks for the curator; the inmates actually perform most of the cleaning and laundering needs of the place.

Serving Staff: The 7 servants are all noncombatants (N male or female human **commoners**) who are a sullen and silent lot. They are undesirable that would have trouble finding work in more genteel surroundings. They don't necessarily approve of the cruelty and neglect that occurs on a daily basis but are inured to it and keep their mouths shut to avoid worse themselves. None will speak to the PCs during their visit.

Orderlies: If the servants are slovenly and tight-lipped, the **24 orderlies** are brutal bullies. In other circumstances they would likely be brigands or perhaps prisoners themselves, but at Mourninghaven they represent authority and order and even assist Curator Drusus in administering "treatments" to the inmates. They wear simple white uniforms (usually bearing at least a few bloodstains) and leather masks (when on duty) to protect their eyes and faces from the more violent inmates. Selected for their brawn rather than their brains or hygiene, they are universally unwashed and insolent. They obey the curator unquestioningly, though if reduced to below half hit points an orderly may become panicked and flee (GM discretion). The orderlies may become opponents of the PCs at times, so a stat block is included below.

Morninghaven Orderly: AC 11; HP 32 (5d8+10); Spd 30ft;

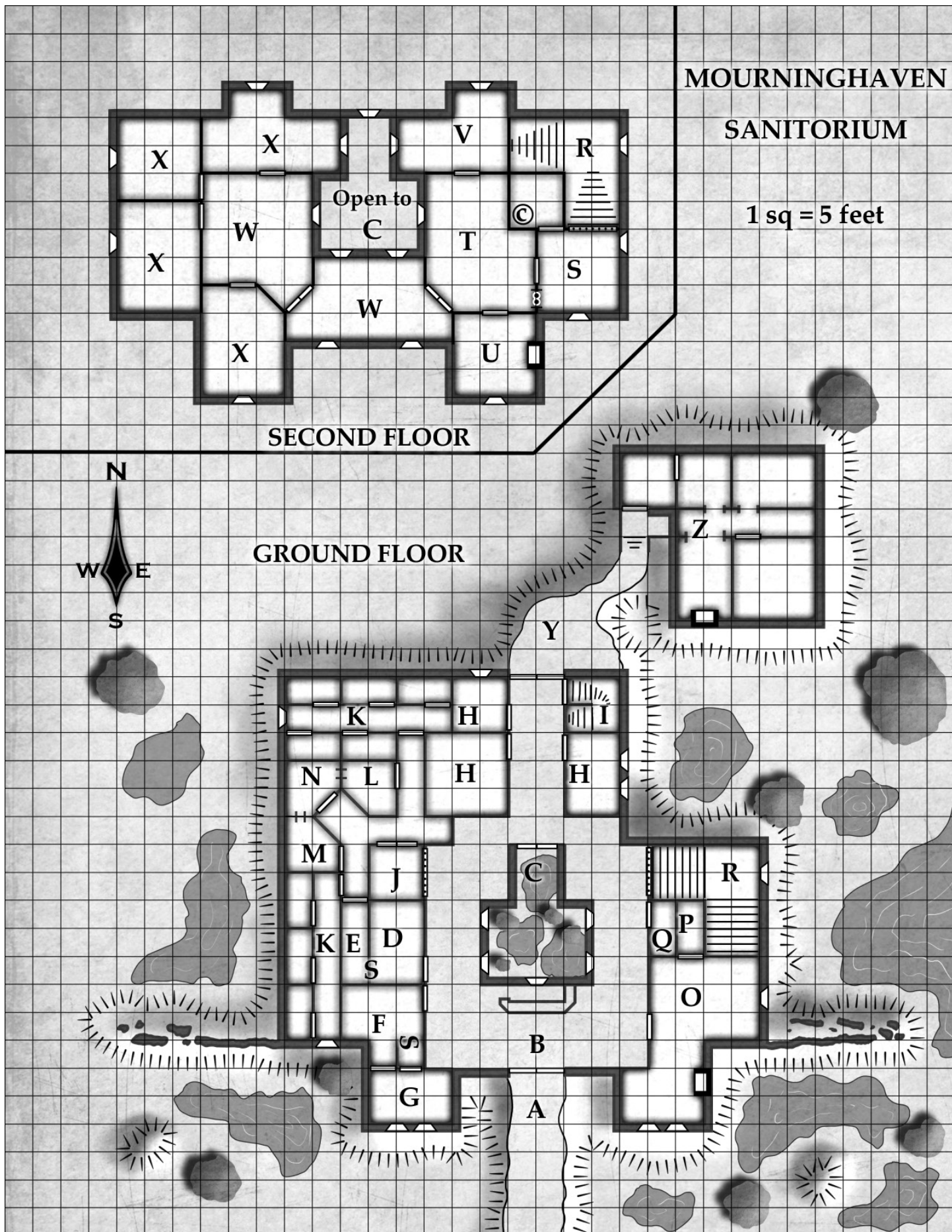
Melee club x2 (+4, 1d6+2 bludgeoning); **Ranged** light crossbow (+2, 80ft/320ft, 1d8 piercing); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidate +2; **AL** CN; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Curator Drusus:

Xavien Drusus (commoner) is a competent (if corrupt) administrator, but he is no doctor, though he refers to himself as a "physiker" when speaking of treating the inmates. He has flowing gray hair, thinning on top, with long sideburns that hang below his shoulders but is otherwise clean shaven. He wears a somewhat threadbare and out-of-fashion courtier's outfit and throws an oft-stained white smock over it when attending to his rounds. Though he typically carries a leather bag with an assortment of knives, pliers, needles, and other harmful devices, he avoids all combat and quickly flees or surrenders if confronted. He is the lawful administrator of the sanitorium, so threats and attempts at bullying him are met with a cold stare and quiet promises of retribution from the authorities.

Mourninghaven Inmates

The inmates of Mourninghaven are a mixed lot. There are a total of 67 of them, most of them are male, and the majority are human, though there are a number of females and most PC races are represented to some extent. They range in age from late teens to mid-sixties and are universally in ill health due to poor nutrition, care, and poorer treatment at the hands of their keepers. Some tend to rave at random, but most are cowed and silent, quietly shuffling about their daily routines. All are noncombatant unless otherwise noted. Those that truly pose a danger are kept locked in the isolation cells (**Area K**).



Mourninghaven Building and Grounds

This sidebar provides a brief description of the various rooms on the map to allow you to flesh out the asylum as you see fit. Secret doors are not locked. Valuables that can be looted are listed in parenthesis. Only a coin value is given, but it can include various portable valuable items as well, as randomly determined or specifically placed by the GM.

Area A:

Front Doors (keys: on-duty orderly, Drusus) — This overgrown gravel walk leads to the front doors, which are kept locked at all times. A worn plaque above the door reads, “Morninghaven Sanatorium, Doorway to a new life.” A tarnished bell hangs by the door.

Area B:

Reception Area (keys: on-duty orderly, Drusus) — A wooden counter always staffed by an **orderly** sits beyond the door where visitors and new inmates check in. A wide hallway wraps around the central courtyard and provides access to the rest of the building as well as the back doors. (5gp)

Area C:

Meditation Yard (keys: Drusus) — Once a tranquil garden dedicated to Mitra, this area is now a flooded yard of stinking muck and dead trees. A **shambling mound** sprouted here some time ago and attacks anyone who dares to open the door.

Shambling Mound: AC 15; HP 136 (16d10+48); Spd 20ft, swim 20ft; Melee slam x2 (+7, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); SA engulf (if grappled, then blinded, restrained, and suffocating, 2d8+4 bludgeoning, DC 14 Con), multiattack (if both slams hit, target is grappled and engulfed); Immune blind, deaf, lightning, exhaustion; Resist cold, fire; Str +4, Dex -1, Con +1, Int -3, Wis +0, Cha -3; Skills Stealth +2; Senses blindsight 60ft (blind beyond); Traits electric fortitude; AL U; CR 5; XP 1800.

Area D:

Patient Records (keys: on-duty orderly, Drusus) — This room bears rows of shelves stacked with countless sheaves of moldering, stinking paper, most no longer legible. It hasn't been kept up in years.

Area E:

Secure Records (keys: Drusus) — Drusus keeps records here on special inmates that he hopes will provide blackmail material someday. There is nothing of interest to the PCs though. (25gp)

Area F:

Secretary (keys: all staff) — Once an office, this chamber has been converted to living quarters for the serving staff. The accommodations are cramped and uncomfortable. (7sp, 132cp)

Area G:

Curator's Office (keys: Drusus) — This room is finely appointed but aged and worn. Many of Drusus's tools are in a locked cabinet on the wall. An empty closet hides a secret escape route. (380gp)

Area H:

Bunkrooms (keys: orderlies, Drusus) — These rooms stink of sweat and mildewed clothing. They hold bunk beds and the orderlies' personal effects. The northernmost one is currently unused. (25gp and 425sp in each of the occupied rooms)

Area I:

Basement Stair (keys: orderlies, Drusus) — The stairs to the basement are blocked by a brick wall, as it is completely flooded with swamp water. Insert any encounters you wish with mire denizens if the PCs decide to break through. No map is provided.

Area J:

Security Room (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — **Two orderlies** are always on duty here. The eastern door is composed of iron bars (treat as portcullis). The north doors have a sliding view port in them.

Area K:

Isolation Cells (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — These rooms are padded with tattered leather stuffed with wool, now infested with nits and fleas. Doors have a sliding view port. A total of **4 violent lunatics** are kept within these two areas.

Area L:

Therapy I (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — A padded bed with straps occupies the center of the room. Next to it are a number of devices for inhibiting sight, speech, and sound to someone on the bed.

Area M:

Therapy II (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — A metal table set with manacles is next to a cabinet holding an assortment of knives, tongs, saws, and needles. (50gp in tools)

Area N:

Observation (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Chairs and desks are set in front of windows looking into the therapy rooms.

Area O:

Staff Lounge (keys: all staff) — Part lounge, part kitchen, the staff takes their meals and breaks in here.

Area P:

Pantry (keys: serving staff, Drusus) — This closet holds a week's worth of food for the sanatorium staff. (85gp in spices and spirits)

Area Q:

Broom Closet (keys: all staff) — Cleaning supplies.

Area R:

Main Stair (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Doors of iron bars block both ends of this stair.

Area S:

Security Room (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — **Four orderlies** are always on duty here. The west door has a sliding view port. Next to it is a barred window. A side room holds stores for this level and a trapdoor to the attic where enough food stores for the entire sanatorium for two months are kept.

Area T:

Dining Hall (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Long trestle tables and benches occupy this room where the inmates eat. Windows look out over the courtyard below.

Area U:

Kitchen (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — This chamber is where the tasteless meals of gruel and hard bread are prepared for the inmates. Three times a day, at mealtimes, there are **4 members of the serving staff** and **2 orderlies** here.

Area V:

Infirmary (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Inmates who are ill or injured are chained to beds here and treated by the orderlies and the curator. The seriously ill rarely recover. (5 healer's kits, 4 *potions of healing*, 1 *potion of greater healing*)

Area W:

Common Areas (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Inmates are allowed to wander and congregate here during the day. There are a few chairs and tables. The doors are kept unlocked during these times.

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Area X:

Inmates' Quarters (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Hard cots are crammed closely together in these rooms. The inmates are locked within at night, but the doors remain open during the day unless there is a lockdown. The southernmost room is for female inmates.

Area Y:

Grounds — The mires have taken over most of the grounds leaving only stagnant pools and a few overgrown hillocks among the encroaching trees. One patch of high ground to the west holds several dozen wooden markers and serves as the burying ground for inmates who die. An overgrown gravel path runs from the backdoor to the curator's house.

Area Z:

Curator's House (keys: Drusus) — This house is stoutly built of mold-encrusted red brick. Torches blaze on the front porch to ward away insects and worse. All of its windows have been bricked over. The furnishings within are old and prone to mildew. There are always two orderlies on guard duty in the front room whether Drusus is present or not. (2500gp)

Event 4: Suspicious Welcome

This event occurs when the PCs ring the bell by the door or otherwise make their presence known.

A view port in the front door slides open and a human face appears, giving you a look over. Seconds later a lock slides and the door groans as it opens revealing a wide reception hall. A battered wooden counter stands across from the door, and the hallway extends deeper into the facility on either side. The once shining tiled floor is grimed with years of use, and the plastered walls are stained with mildew and worse. A hulking man in the white uniform of an orderly stands before you, ushering you in. He is soon joined by two more men, their uniforms bearing the spatters of old blood stains, and wearing hardened leather masks to protect them from the attacks of desperate inmates. Heavy clubs hang from wide leather belts.

Soon another man approaches, wearing the white coat of a physician. His face is wan and haggard, and his long gray hair blows errantly in the slightest breeze. In a voice like a creaking door he says, "I am Curator Drusus. Welcome to Morninghaven."

Curator Drusus and **3 orderlies** meet the PCs at the front doors. The doors are secured behind the PCs as soon as they come in, with the orderly on duty giving a final nervous look outside before closing the portal. Drusus reviews the PCs' transfer orders before allowing them to enter any further. Though he is aware of who Haden is and has no intention of allowing him to leave, he makes a big fuss over examining the orders before having the orderlies admit him and escort him to away for processing. The PCs are not allowed to accompany him, and he is taken immediately to the northern **Area K** and placed in one of the cells. Meanwhile, Curator Drusus will countersign the PCs' treasury writ, allowing them to cash it back in Keston for 500gp (or more if they were able to negotiate the lord-governor higher).

Drusus answers few, if any, questions for the PCs, citing the need for the patients' privacy and security concerns for a facility of the Crown. He seems to be acting suspiciously and wants to be rid of the PCs as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, night is fully fallen and the rain has worsened so that any travel along the Swamp Road would be virtual suicide before first light due to the hazardous, muddy conditions that could dump an unsuspecting traveler into a hidden mire in a heartbeat. As a result, he allows the PCs to remain the night but informs them that they must depart at dawn. He allows them to stay in an unused bunkroom (the northern **Area H**) but advises them that they are not free to roam around the facility

and makes sure that there are always at least **2 orderlies** hanging around outside their door. These lock the PCs in for the night. Any animals can be stabled in the relative shelter of the building's shadow right outside the back doors. Drusus then heads back to **Area K** to begin questioning Haden. Unless the PCs make trouble, the night passes uneventfully until **Event 5** occurs.

Event 5: Midnight Raid

This event occurs around midnight while the PCs stay at the asylum.

The endless drone of the night rains is suddenly interrupted by a massive roar, like a clap of thunder, and then a heavy blow shakes the entire foundation of the building. There are shouts from the orderlies as a mad scramble ensues in the halls outside. Soon the sounds of combat reach your ears. The sanitorium is under attack!

Creatures: The asylum has come under attack by a force of **swamp brutes** accompanied by a **young black dragon**. The dragon has used its breath weapon to destroy a part of the northwestern corner of the building (**Area K**) releasing several homicidal maniacs as well as Haden, while the swamp brutes spread out through the asylum to eliminate any witnesses. The guards outside the PCs' room rush away to respond to the attack leaving the PCs free to try and get out. If the PCs remain in their room, eventually three swamp brutes smash down the door and attack. If the PCs leave their room, they find the two orderlies slain not far away. Every 3 rounds that they wander through the asylum, roll on the table below for encounters. Orderlies, swamp brutes, and maniacs, attack on sight. Other inmates attempt to flee into the night.

Sanitorium Attack Encounters

d%	Encounter
01-12	1d6 panicked inmates (commoner)
13-25	1 escaped maniac (berserker)
26-37	1d3 Morninghaven orderlies
38-58	1d4+1 swamp brutes
59-74	1 young black dragon
75-00	No encounter

Berserker: AC 13; HP 67 (9d8+27); Spd 30ft; **Melee** greatclub (+5, 2d6+3 bludgeoning); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Traits** reckless; **AL** CN; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Morninghaven Orderly: AC 11; HP 32 (5d8+10); Spd 30ft; **Melee** club x2 (+4, 1d6+2 bludgeoning); **Ranged** light crossbow (+2, 80ft/320ft, 1d8 piercing); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidate +2; **AL** CN; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (**New Monsters**)

Swamp Brute: AC 13; HP 39 (6d8+12); Spd 30ft; **Melee** greatclub (+5, 2d6+3 bludgeoning); **Ranged** rock (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d4+3 bludgeoning); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** 1; **Traits** brute; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200. (**Monster Appendix**)

Young Black Dragon: AC 18; HP 127 (15d10+45); Spd 40ft, fly 80ft, swim 40ft; **Melee** bite (+7, 10ft, 2d10+4 piercing plus 1d8 acid), claw x2 (+7, 2d6+4 slashing); **SA** acid breath (recharge 5-6, 30ft line, 11d8 acid, DC 14 Dex half), multiattack; **Immune** acid; **Str** +4, **Dex** +2 (+5), **Con**

THE MIRES OF MOURNING

+3 (+6), **Int** +1, **Wis** +0 (3), **Cha** +2 (5); **Skills** Perception +6, Stealth +5; **Senses** blindsight 30ft, darkvision 120ft; **Traits** amphibious; **AL** CE; **CR** 7; **XP** 2900.

Development: If the PCs search **Area K**, they find Haden gone but eventually, regardless of where they go within the asylum, they spy Curator Drusus stumbling, wounded into his house. If they follow him, they find him collapsed in the entry room, badly seared by acid and a swamp brute spear point lodged in his shoulder—the poison on it coursing through his system. He cannot be saved. With his dying breath he confesses the secret history of the asylum (read or paraphrase “The Osterkleg Legacy” but exclude the last two sentences). He admits that he has spent 30 years searching for the gold and learned that Osterkleg’s lieutenant, a half-elf knight named Haden Crestingdrake, also knew the secret location of the treasure.

Crestingdrake—who was often able to pass for a human—became a mercenary and disappeared until Drusus was able to determine that he had received a head wound and been placed in a convalescent home a decade ago with no one aware of his true identity. He admits that he forged the royal orders to have Haden transferred to Mourninghaven in order to extract the secret from him but includes that he was not alone in seeking Crestingdrake. Old Osterkleg’s own grandson, Vidas, has also been seeking Haden and has allied with the swamp tribes that used to work for his grandfather. He states it is Vidas who has to be behind the attack and who surely has Haden even now to be taken back into the swamp for questioning.

Into the Swamp

After the PCs have talked to Drusus, the attack on the asylum dies down as the surviving swamp brutes retreat back into the mire. With the information provided by the dying curator, the PCs should have pretty good idea of what is going on and who has absconded with Haden—his corpse is not among those found within the sanitorium. The PCs can easily find a clear trail through the swamp that the swamp brutes arrived from and that the survivors have departed along. The rain has let up enough to follow it safely. The PCs can easily follow this trail as the best bet for locating Haden. Unfortunately for the PCs, Haden has not been taken by the retreating brutes as explained later.

After following the trail through treacherous mires for an hour, the PCs find that the trail grows less plain and the way more hazardous. In addition, the rain begins to fall harder. Continuing onward leaves a strong possibility of losing the trail and possibly even becoming lost among the uncertain footing of the mires. It would be safest for them to camp and recover from their ordeals (no wandering monsters attack their camp). If they choose to press on, allow them to do so, but they will likely be in poor shape to face the finale. It takes four hours to reach the stockade; roll for random encounters normally.

The Old Stockade

Deep in the swamp is an old stockade fort. It was built in the time of Wilbane Osterkleg and used as a meeting place and stronghold for the swamp brute tribes he employed to capture pilgrims on the Swamp Road. Abandoned for many years, it became the lair for a young black dragon named Asterise—the same dragon as was involved in the raid on the sanitorium. Recently it was rediscovered by Vidas Osterkleg and his mercenary crew, who allied with the dragon and used the fort to rally the swamp tribes once again. As the PCs approach, read the following.

Through the tangle of vines ahead can be seen some sort of structure. It is an old stockade fort, part of its walls collapsed and all of it heavily overgrown by the swamp. The trail you have been following leads to a gap in the wall where a gate once stood. Thin trails of smoke rising from within reveal that it is inhabited.

Area A: Gate Guards

Lurking in the water here are **3 lizardfolk** and a trained **giant frog**. The black dragon Asterise has enslaved this lizardfolk tribe and uses them to guard its lair. The swamp brutes ignore sounds of fighting coming from here.

Lizardfolk (3): AC 15; **HP** 22 (4d8+4); **Spd** 30ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing), heavy club (+4, 1d6+2 bludgeoning), spiked shield (+4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Ranged** javelin (+4, 30ft/120ft; 1d6+2 piercing); **SA** multiattack (x2 different melee); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** 2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** 2; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5; **Traits** hold breath; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Frog, Giant: AC 11; **HP** 18 (4d8); **Spd** 30ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** bite (+3, 1d6+1 piercing plus grapple and restrain); **SA** swallow; **Str** +1, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** 4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** 4; **Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +3; **Senses** darkvision 30ft; **Traits** amphibious, standing leap; **AL** unaligned; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Area B. Back Entrance

A breach in the wall accesses the lair of Asterise. **Three lizardfolk** (see **Area A** for stats) are in the water here guarding the lair. If Asterise is present in **Area C**, he joins in the fight after 2 rounds.

Area C: Dragon’s Lair

This half-ruined structure serves as the lair of Asterise the **young black dragon**. If he survived the attack on the sanitorium, he is present recovering from the attack. If attacked, his roars bring the lizardfolk and swamp brutes in the fort to his aid in 1d6 rounds respectively.

Young Black Dragon: AC 18; **HP** 127 (15d10+45); **Spd** 40ft, fly 80ft, swim 40ft; **Melee** bite (+7, 10ft, 2d10+4 piercing plus 1d8 acid), claw (+7, 2d6+4 slashing); **SA** acid breath (recharge 5-6, 30ft line, 1d8 acid, DC 14 Dex half), multiattack (bite, claw x2); **Immune** acid; **Str** +4, **Dex** +2 (5), **Con** +3 (6), **Int** +1, **Wis** +0 (3), **Cha** +2 (5); **Skills** Perception +6, Stealth +5; **Senses** blindsight 30ft, darkvision 120ft; **Traits** amphibious; **AL** CE; **CR** 7; **XP** 2900.

Treasure: Hoarded here is tribute from the lizardfolk and bribes from Vidas Osterkleg totaling 895gp, 1270sp, 3508cp, and five uncut gems worth 25gp each.

Area D: Swamp Brute Camps

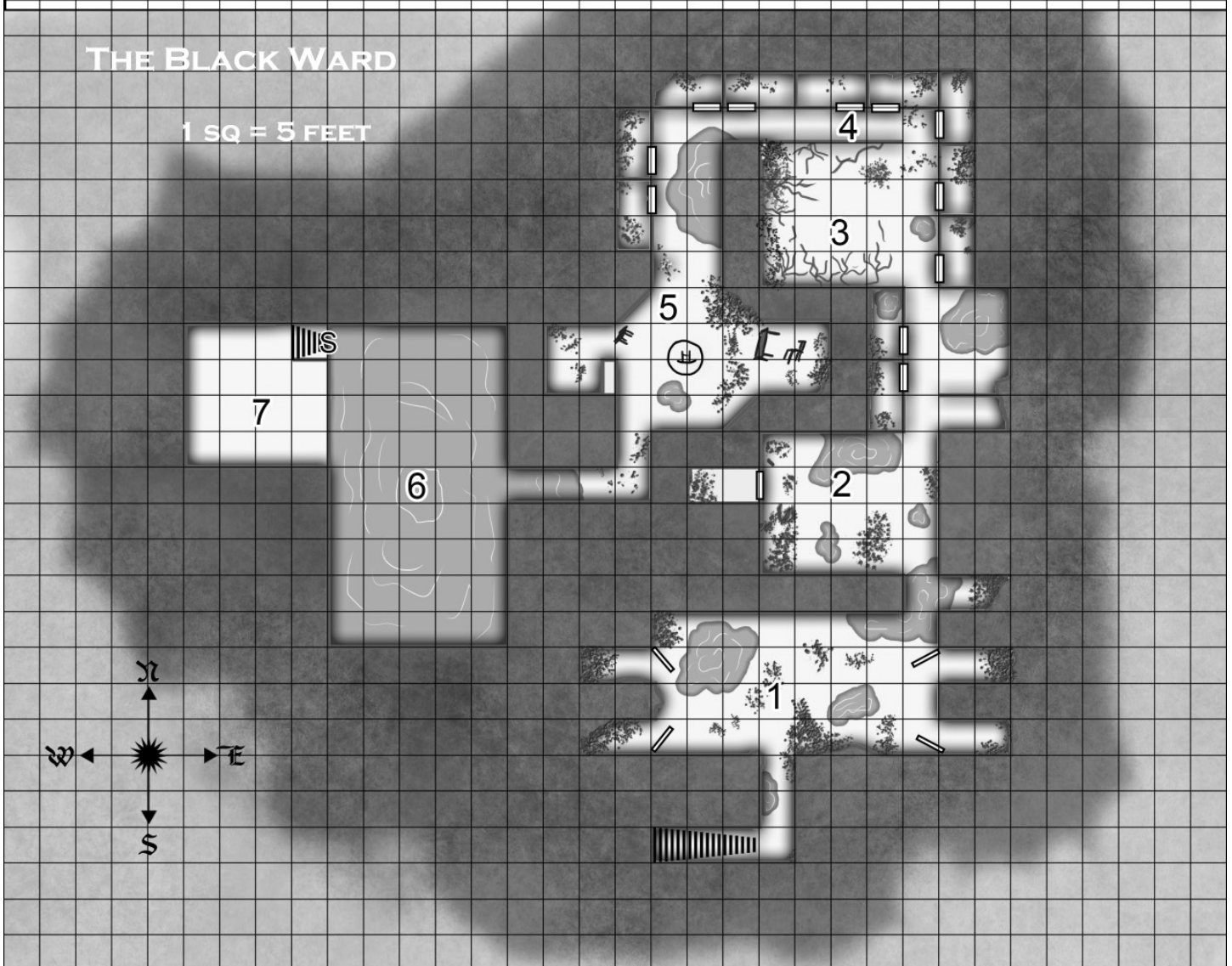
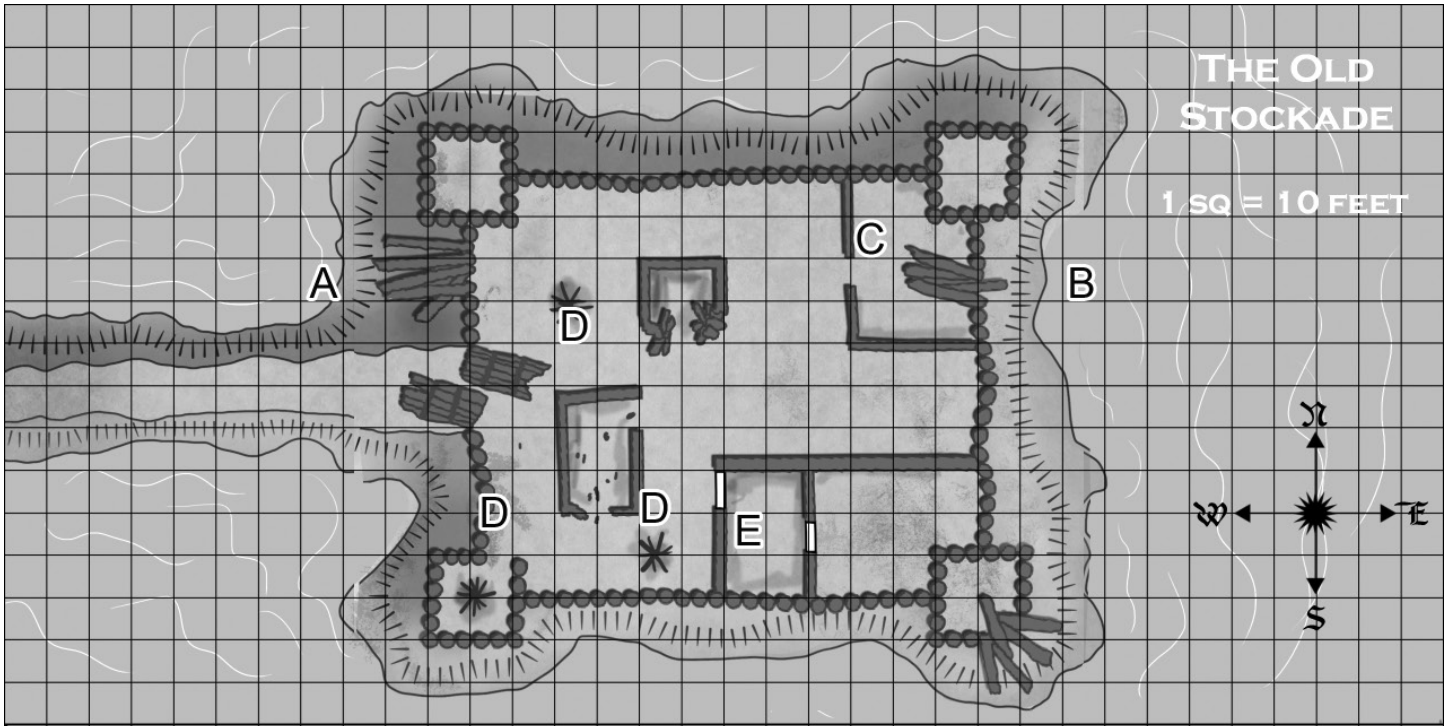
At each of these fires camp are **1d4 swamp brutes**—survivors of the raid. If they hear the sounds of combat at another fire, they respond in 1d3+1 rounds. They know nothing if questioned. Each camp has 2d20gp worth of scattered coinage and small gems.

Swamp Brute: AC 13; **HP** 39 (6d8+12); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** greatclub (+5, 2d6+3 bludgeoning); **Ranged** javelin (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Traits** brute; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Area E: Commander’s Camp

This intact building shows signs of recently served as the quarters for as many as a dozen men. The back room holds the leader’s camp, complete with a brazier holding still-warm coals and some partially burned papers.

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None are legible except one page that can still be partially read. It says, “Grandfather hid the gold in the Black Ward on the grounds of the asylum, but only Crestingdrake knows its location. The old witch’s potion should recover his memory and make him lead me straight to it.”

With the information gained in the stockade, it should be evident to the PCs that Osterklieg never came back here but used a potion to get Haden to lead him straight to the Black Ward. They are likely already there, so the PCs have no time to lose in getting back to Mourninghaven. If the PCs are battered much, forgo any random encounters on the trip back.

The Black Ward

Mourninghaven Sanitorium has housed the insane of the Province of Keston for decades. The troubled, the demented, the lunatic—all forms of mental disturbance have been confined, and to some extent treated, in the infamous facility. Yet, some breeds of madness are worse than others. When a twisted mind mates with a corroded heart, the offspring is a uniquely perverse and vicious brand of evil. These poisoned souls are untouched by any human warmth or compassion, untreatable by any method known to man. Murderers, cannibals, serial killers—society could not bear to have them run loose and wreak havoc, yet political interests or scientific curiosity kept them from the hangman’s noose. Too dangerous to be confined among the regular population of Mourninghaven, these monsters were placed in Baronet Osterklieg’s dreaded Black Ward.

When Osterklieg fell from grace and his staff scattered, the Black Ward and all of its inhabitants were abandoned and forgotten. The new regime overseeing the facility had no knowledge of the ward, and its door was not only locked, but sealed. As the patients slowly starved to death in the near-airless dark, something dreadful happened; all of their misery and insanity and raving fear coalesced to create in them a horror beyond imagining. One by one, the inhabitants of the Black Ward perished and—in the throes of death—became something more.

Not only did the secret Black Ward house the worst of the worst, it also served as the perfect place for Wilbane Osterklieg to hide his ill-gotten treasure reaped from the demise of innocent pilgrims and travelers. Deep within the ward’s bowel lies a secret room where among the bones of the innocent victims, gold coins lie thick as dust.

The Current Situation

Vidas Osterklieg, grandson of the sanitorium’s former administrator, has finally located the Black Ward to claim what he thinks of as his inheritance: the ill-gotten gold of Baronet Wilbane Osterklieg. To this end, Vidas orchestrated the attack upon the sanitorium in order to kidnap the near-catatonic Haden. He then fed him a magical brew to drag the memories of the invalid half-elf to the surface where he could remember the Black Ward’s location. Vidas then dragged Haden to the secret ward and broke open the decades-old seals.

When they reopened the ward, two unthinkable things happened: first, Vidas and his minions were beset and overcome by the undead remains of some of the ward’s former prisoners. Second, upon entering the Black Ward Haden finally broke through the decade-long mental haze he had endured...and remembered. He remembered the years of murder and rapine serving Wilbane Osterklieg: the robbery, the looting, and the butchery. He remembered his years afterward on the run as a soldier of fortune: the sack of cities and the slaughter of innocents. He remembered who he really was.

In that moment of remembrance, the invalid Haden became the foul-hearted villain Lord Crestingdrake as he had been so many years before and, in that instant, the deranged spirits of the Black Ward recognized a kindred rage and blood-lust. They seized upon Haden, entered him, warped and twisted him, killing his black soul and replacing it with something blacker still. The spirits spoke to him of years of pent-up fury and unhinged glee, and they spoke to him of blood money—the treasure of Wilbane Osterklieg. Leaving Vidas and his embattled men behind to die, Haden passed, unmolested, deeper into the ward to embrace his own dark legacy.

The Voice in the Dark

During the course of this adventure Haden speaks to the PCs, his voice echoing hollowly through the ward’s defunct ventilation system. The spirits of the ward keep him informed of all that befalls the adventurers, and Haden mocks every failure and insults every flaw. Though he seemed catatonic at the time, Haden remembers when the PCs escorted him to Mourninghaven and is especially vicious toward those he felt demeaned him or that showed some weakness of their own for him to latch onto with merciless glee.

Examples of things he might say include: “Such tender mutton, perhaps you should try a taste as well,” if a PC is bitten badly by a ghost; “From a fool springs a fool; from what did you spawn?” when the PCs defeat Vidas; “The sounds of freedom from concerns are inviting, are they not? Perhaps you should embrace purity and join us,” when the PCs encounter the babbling of the allip; “Their blood still flows, though bones they be,” at any random moment; and a long sigh followed by the whispered word, “Delicious,” if one of the PCs should be killed.

Entering the Black Ward

When the PCs arrive back at Mourninghaven, they find that little has changed since they departed other than that it is now deserted—all surviving servants, inmates, and orderlies having fled down the Swamp Road for Keston and the swamp brutes having retreated back into the mire. The halls within are awash with blood and scavenging vermin from the deadly battle that recently took place. There are no random encounters.

Now that the PCs know that the Black Ward is somewhere on the asylum grounds and that Vidas has likely found the entrance with Haden’s help, they can begin searching for it. They find upon one hillock of broken rubble and tangled undergrowth approximately 100 yards northwest of the main building that a minor excavation has occurred in its side revealing a once-buried portal. This door has been flung open revealing a stair descending into darkness within. Following this stair leads to **Area 1** below.

Features of the Black Ward

The Black Ward began to sink into the mire before even Osterklieg assumed control of the asylum, and it is a crumbling ruin filled with swamp seepage and the lunatic screams of the undead. Its walls are of decayed and crumbling masonry and are covered with intrusive roots and slime, and in most places its cracked and uneven flagstone floor is covered in several inches of foul, stagnant water. Due to the slickness of the floor and its instability, it is considered difficult terrain. The long-rotten, broken remnants of devoured corpses can be found tucked in corners and behind piles of shattered furnishings. The air is stale and unwholesome with a faint, unidentifiable stench, and there is no light whatsoever, making for a claustrophobic, tomblike atmosphere almost tangible with the horrible deaths of so many tainted souls.

Area 1: Chained Hunger

The ravages of time and the mire above have taken their toll on this room. The floor is swamped in dark, fetid water, and the walls are smeared with slime and filth. Naked ends of roots hang listlessly from the cracked ceiling. A tenebrous sphere of darkness sits in the center of the room, twenty feet across and reaching from the floor to the ceiling. From the murky guts of the sphere come the sounds of smacking, slobbering lips and the cracking of bones. The charnel reek of this place is overbearing.

QUESTS OF DOOM 2

Once a reception area, this chamber now holds only broken furniture and few holding cells, their doors hanging open on corroded hinges.

Creatures: **Three ghosts**, formerly known as the Shank Brothers, lurk within this black sphere. The Brothers Shank were scum in life—thugs who preyed on any travelers they could ambush in the wilds of Keston and beyond. One winter five decades ago during a fierce blizzard, they became snowed-in and trapped in a trading station high in the Eirtun Pass. As the weeks wore on and supplies ran out, they stalked and slew the families that ran the trading post, feasting on their bodies. With each new victim and each new meal, the brothers found themselves changing, gaining ferocious strength and unnatural health. When the spring thaw came, they came down from the pass with a newfound hunger for human flesh. The Shank Brothers then went on a rampage, killing and eating—seemingly unkillable. They were in the village of Ruh-Kabel, drunk on liquor and blood, when the Royal-Marshall and his troops arrived to arrest them. The brothers were to be summarily executed, but when evidence of the disease they carried and its ability to be transmitted was discovered, they were sent to Mourninghaven for further study.

In the Black Ward, they were bound with chains and placed in a secure observation room. By the time Wilbane Osterkleg realized that they were actually undead rather than just homicidal lunatics, he decided they could prove useful in his schemes. When the ward and its residents were abandoned, the brothers were ultimately able to break free of their bonds and prey upon their fellow trapped inmates, but they never completely shed their chains—they are still anchored to each other and none can go more than 2 squares from the others. Strangely over time the soul-infested darkness of the ward gathered round them, forming a globe of impenetrable darkness that follows them wherever they go.

They ambushed Vidas Osterkleg and his party as they entered the Black Ward. Vidas fled while the ghosts feasted on his former compatriots. As soon as the ghosts become aware of the PCs, they attack. They attempt to encompass prey in their darkness and then gang up on them. They gain a trip attack with their dangling chains whenever they hit with a claw attack, pouncing on anyone who falls. They don't resemble normal ghosts in that their skin tone and features are still those of living—if completely deranged—men. One of them still has the gnawed remains of Vidas's snake animal companion caught in his unnaturally sharp teeth.

Ghast (3): AC 13; HP 36 (8d8); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+3, 2d8+3 piercing) or claws (+5, 2d6+3 slashing plus paralysis plus trip; **SA** paralysis (1 min, DC 10 Con repeats), trip (prone, DC 11 Str); **Immune** poison, charm, exhaustion, poison; **Resist** necrotic; **Str** +1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** 2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** 2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** darkness 10ft radius, stench (5ft, poisoned, DC 10 Con repeat), turning defiance; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450

While at least one ghost is alive, a 10ft-radius sphere of total darkness is always present at the midpoint between the three ghosts.

Treasure: The partially devoured corpses of twelve warriors—Osterkleg's men-at-arms—lie piled on the floor. Their chainmail, light wooden shields, and short swords are mundane, but among them they have a total 225gp.

Area 2: The Last Osterkleg

This chamber is empty of all save a single door opening off to one side. Its door hangs open just a crack and a skeletal hand protrudes partially from the threshold.

Creature: Hiding within the broom closet is none other than **Vidas Osterkleg**, lost heir of old Wilbane and last of an ignominious line. Nothing more than a petty bandit for much of his life, strangely, Vidas actually died several years ago. However, the spores of the odd swamp fungus that killed him caused his body to reanimate as a fungal creature. Working on base instinct alone for many months, the new fungal Vidas was able to piece together much of his former life and discovered once

again the secret of Wilbane's treasure. Simultaneously energized and repulsed by his new existence, Vidas has spent the last several years marshaling his resources in order to locate and plunder the Black Ward in hopes that the money will help him find a cure for his condition.

Vidas resembles his old self a great deal—black beard and hair, pinched facial features, and a lazy eye—but now his face is further adorned by shelf fungi, mushrooms sprout from his shedding scalp and beard, and an odor of wet, putrid flesh hangs perpetually over him. He waits behind the door of the closet with his bow readied to fire as soon as someone opens it, having placed the skeletal hand there as a lure. He then releases his spore cloud and remains in the closet while fending off attackers with his axe. If reduced to 10 hp, he pleads for mercy but attempts to backstab anyone showing mercy at the first opportunity.

Vidas Osterkleg: AC 17; HP 119 (14d8+56); Spd 30ft; Melee +1 battleaxe x2 (+8, 1d8+5 slashing); **Ranged** shortbow (+5, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+2 piercing) or dagger (+7, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+4 piercing); **SA** multiattack, spore cloud (1/day, 1 min, 6d6 poison, DC 15 Con repeat); **Immune** magic missile, poison; **Resist** force; **Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** create spawn, poisonous blood, **AL** NE; **CR** 6; **XP** 2300. (**Monster Appendix**)
Equipment: chain shirt, shield, brooch of shielding, +1 battleaxe, 2 daggers, shortbow, quiver of 11 arrows, feather token (anchor), signet ring, pouch with 35gp.

Area 3: Swamp Preserves

This moldering space appears to be a boggy garden. Trailing vines climb the walls and a variety of plants shoot up from the murky water; water lilies, asp-orchids, drowning creepers and more all bloom in the dank gloom. The sporadic sound of droplets falling from the ceiling punctuates the silence.

At one time, this room served as a place to store food and other sundry items for the Ward, but various aquatic and bog plants have now made it their home.

Creature: A **basidiron** has taken root here, suckling on minerals that descend from the swamp above but would certainly prefer fresh blood to its present diet. The odd plant uses its hallucination cloud to disorient its foes. Then it uproots to move forward and attack. It resembles an inverted umbrella with several stems of dark brown hanging beneath it. The inside of its cone-shaped top is inky black.

Basidiron: AC 16; HP 76 (9d8+36); Spd 30ft; Melee slam (+5, 2d8+2 bludgeoning plus suffocation, DC 15 Con); **SA** hallucinatory spores (recharge 5,6); **Immune** cold, poison, paralysis, stun; **Str** +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Senses** tremorsense 60ft; **AL** U; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800. (**Monster Appendix**)

Area 4: A Grief for the Ages

This cell looks like every other, drenched in seepage from the bog above and affixed with various restraining chains and straps on the wall and ceiling. However, a heart-rending sense of sorrow and anguish pours forth from the enclosed space.

A century past, an impetuous bralani (dwarvish extraplanar fey) called Xander the Illuminated fell deeply in love with a lillend (A spirit of inspiration and art that looks like a beautiful elven woman with rainbow-

Basidiron Hallucination Cloud

Rather than confusing an opponent, you can randomly determine hallucinations for each creature affected. The duration remains the same as detailed under the creature's special attack.

Basidiron Hallucination Cloud

1d8	Hallucination
1	Individual believes he is in a swamp and strips off gear and armor to avoid sinking.
2	Individual believes he is being attacked by a swarm of spiders. He attacks the floor and surrounding area.
3	Individual believes item held has turned into a viper; drops item and retreats back from it.
4	Suffocation—Individual believes he is suffocating and gasps for air and clutches throat.
5	Individual believes he has shrunk to 1/10 normal size. He begins yelling for help.
6	Individual believes his associates have contracted a disease. He will not come closer than 10ft.
7	Individual believes he is melting; grasps self in attempt to hold together.
8	Individual believes his back is covered with leeches. He tears armor, clothing, etc. from his back to get at them.

hued feathered wings and the lower body of a serpent) named Anac'Orli. To test his devotion, the lillend sent him on several difficult and dangerous missions. The lovesick celestial returned each time victorious, and each time the beautiful maiden fell more deeply in love with him. When Xander completed the seventh and final task, he joyfully returned to Anac'Orli's abode only to find her home destroyed and her servants slain. The lady herself was missing. For decades, the grieving bralani searched for his lost love but never found her. Eventually, he gave up all hope and, seeking forgetfulness and oblivion, had himself committed to the Mourninghaven Sanitorium. Not really knowing what to do with this strange but obviously powerful creature, Osterklieg placed him in the Black Ward for study and incarceration. When the ward was abandoned, the celestial succumbed to his own enveloping despair and perished.

The bralani's sorrow has left behind a powerful residue in the form of a haunt. When any living creature looks into the cell, the haunt manifests. When this haunt is triggered, the image of the grieving celestial—still held in the shreds of a straightjacket—appears and implores any witnesses, "Where is she? Tell me now; tell me where she is!" All creatures who see this must make a DC 15 Wis save or suffer a -1 to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws from crushing despair until their next long rest. If a cleric casts *bleed* within the cell, the haunt is laid to rest.

Treasure: Though Osterklieg did not know it, Xander actually kept his favorite weapon on hand, hidden behind the leather padding on the walls. A DC 10 Int (Investigation) check in the cell locates the unstrung +1 *longbow* behind the shredded remains of the padding. A simple bowstring will bring it back to working order.

Area 5: Siege Perilous

A metal chair stands on a dais in the center of the floor, its legs bolted to the stone beneath. Metal straps and hooks hang from its arms and its back, instruments used to brutally restrain the seat's occupant. Broken desks and tables poke out of the muck. A curious burbling mutter fills the air, echoing and re-echoing through the dismal chamber.

One of the more distinguished inmates of the Black Ward was a man called Sipe. He was brought in by the Royal Guard, having been convicted of the despicable crime of impersonating nobility yet judged not guilty by reason of insanity. In his lunacy, he claimed to be the Lord-Governor of Keston himself (a lord-governor prior to the current Lord Cormien). Sipe insisted upon that claim over the many years he was held in the Black Ward, but obviously no one gave him any credence.

Sadly, he actually was the Lord-Governor of Keston. Through various underhanded deeds and political obfuscations, he'd been replaced by a doppelganger. Sipe, in his claims to be the governor, was completely sane and in his right mind...for awhile. The years of imprisonment, the screams and babblings of the insane, the bizarre experiments and mind games performed upon him by the suspicious Osterklieg, and the special torturous "throne" that Osterklieg had fashioned for him finally drove him over the edge and into the waiting arms of madness. When the ward was abandoned, the lord-governor—still confined to his chair—found a way to slit his own wrists, spilling his blue blood onto the common floor.

Creatures: In his death the lord-governor became an **allip**, a creature of boiling darkness and mad screams. Now, he waits to spread his madness to any who come upon this chamber.

Allip: AC 12; HP 60 (8d8+24); Spd fly 30ft; **Melee** touch (+5, lose 1d4 Wis, regains 1d8+4 hp); **Immune** poison, exhaustion, fright, unconscious; **Sfr** +0; **Dex** +2; **Con** +4; **Int** +0; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** babble, incorporeal, madness; **AL** CE; **CR** 4; **XP** 1100. (**Monster Appendix**)

Area 6: The Prodigal's Return

The pooled water covering the floor in this room is perfectly still and smooth. Suddenly, the murky water explodes upward as a hail of disconnected bones shoot forth and fly wildly through the air. Haden's disturbing voice slithers through the gloom.

"Hail the conquering heroes! I'm glad to see you've made it, my brave escorts, my slave escorts, my dears. There is much death here, and I'm alone and afraid. All the beds unmade. All my veins are frayed. All my births decayed..."

The whirling bones fall to the water with a slap, and a figure rises from the pool in the center of the room. It is Haden, but warped and mangled beyond imagining. Dark blood courses from his eyes, his nose, and mouth. His body is twisted and shattered, bones poking through his skin and clothing. He lifts a claw-tipped hand and inspects it closely, exulting as blood seeps from under his wicked nails.

"Come closerclosercloser and still closer," Haden pleads as blood seeps from the walls and reaches yearningly toward him.

Once a room for experimentation on inmates, this chamber is now 2ft deep in water.

QUESTS OF DOOM 2

Creature: The insane spirits of the Black Ward have infested this evil man, bending his wicked will to their own and creating a **bleeding horror**. The bones are those of former inmates of the ward, gathered here to focus their deranged power. After the PCs have been subjected to his horrific appearance, Haden uses his *bloodstorm* ability and then focuses his attacks on whichever PC showed the most weakness or compassion during their trek to the asylum. He is unaffected by the *bloodstorm*. He fights maniacally until destroyed at which point the spirits leave his corpse in an explosion of blood from his every pore.

Bleeding Horror: AC 18; HP 60 (8d8+24); Spd 30ft; Melee claw x2 (+7, 2d8+4 necrotic and heal same amount); SA bloodstorm (5d6 acid plus blind, DC 15 Con), multiattack (if both claws hit, reduce max HP, DC 15 Con); Immune necrotic, poison, exhaustion, fright; Resist nonmagical weapons; Str +4, Dex +0, Con +3, Int +4, Wis +2, Cha +1; Senses darkvision 60ft; Traits horrific visage, magic resistance; AL CE; CR 6; XP 1100. (Monster Appendix)

Area 7: Wilbane's Bequest

The floor is dry in this room. Stacked like cord wood are the desiccated corpses of dozens of men and women—many obviously tortured—wearing the simple traveling robes of pilgrims. A calm seems to surround them amidst the madness of this place. Around this macabre collection sit five iron-bound chests, their wooden seams splitting from years of exposure to the damp. One chest's side has given way spilling a cascade of gold onto the dusty floor.

Here is where Baronet Osterklieg hid his treasure and the evidence of his dark deeds. A quick search among the corpses reveals many bearing the symbols of Mitra on their garb. These are the murdered pilgrims kidnapped by Wilbane.

Treasure: The chests are unlocked and hold the source of so much death and tragedy. Stored with them are coins, gems, and small valuable items worth a total of 65,300gp, though the combined treasures weigh over 500 lb.

Conclusion

With Vidas defeated, the spirits of the mad laid to rest, and the treasures of old Baronet Osterklieg recovered, the PCs have some decisions to make in regards to their next move. They can certainly take the treasure and return to Keston and claim their payment—no one would miss the extorted gold. However, if they choose, they may try to repatriate the pilgrims' blood money to the church of Mitra, for which they would surely be rewarded and possibly hired for future endeavors. Finally, they may simply continue to adventure in the area, using Mourninghaven as a base of operations. Surely many secrets remain to be discovered in the Creeping Mire.



Death in the Painted Canyons

An adventure by Kenneth Spencer for 5th level PCs

Introduction

The party of at least four PCs of level 5 should include a mix of abilities, especially PCs with investigative and survival skills. It would be helpful, but not necessary, if at least one PC has some knowledge of the Painted Canyons, or at least some experience with desert survival. If your party lacks investigative skills, there are clues as to the criminal conspiracy in the gnoll encampment, or you can just drop that aspect of the adventure and run it as a stand-up fight. Parties lacking survival skills or desert experience can hire a guide at Salt Springs for 3 silver shekels (gp) a day. There is a hidden secret behind all the events of this adventure; a great deal of combat can be expected, and those attempting this adventure should be prepared for a vicious battle before resolving the plot. Individually, the combats in this adventure are not that challenging, but the cumulative effect of so many battles – or if the PCs allow the gnolls

to organize themselves – may prove more challenging to the players than it might initially appear.

The adventure takes place in a hilly, arid region called the Caliphate, but can be set in any campaign world. A well-defined caravan route dotted with caravanserai, small walled oasis communities that provide safe locales for the caravans to rest and resupply, crosses this region. Each caravanserai is almost an independent fiefdom, their isolation resulting in the local rulers possessing great leeway in the exercise of their authority.

If using this adventure in the **Lost Lands** campaign setting by **Frog God Games**, the Satrapy of Salt Springs and the great ergs flanking the Painted Canyons lie in the western extent of the great Ashurian Desert. The pasha of Salt Springs answers to the Caliph of the Ammyud Caliphate in the northwestern extent of the continent of Libynos.

GM's Note

You can give the adventure a more exotic feel by referring to the monetary currency by the local names. In the Caliphate, a silver shekel (a



heavy silver coin) is the equivalent to a standard gold piece (1gp), while a gold daric (1pp), a silver drachma (1sp), and a copper obol (1cp) round out the currency equivalencies. PCs can exchange their normal currency prior to the adventure at this rate, or if it is easier you can simply ignore the Caliphate designations and use the standard currencies (given in parentheses throughout the adventure).

The Satrapy of Salt Springs

Adventure Background

Caravans passing from the caravanserai at Salt Springs through the Painted Canyons and on towards the oasis town of Beni-Hadith are being attacked by a band of gnolls. These gnolls have been particularly lucky, always seeming to strike the caravans that are the least guarded and where the most valuable items are being carried. The Satrap of Salt Springs has offered a bounty for the destruction of these gnolls but is unaware that treachery from within actually lurks behind the attacks.

Adventure Summary

All is not as it seems, as the gnolls are in the employ of Hiram Parth, a corrupt merchant in Salt Springs. Parth has been supplying them with information concerning the caravans and then fencing the goods through his criminal contacts in the distant city of Bhutan. As the adventurers poke around they alert Parth, and he will warn the gnolls. To solve the mystery, the heroes must not only face the gnolls, but also uncover the traitor in Salt Springs. But all know that only death awaits in the Painted Canyons.

The Satrap's Request

The PCs are traveling through an area not far from Salt Springs when they notice that placed in the markets are several official announcements calling for adventurers and mercenaries to come to the aid of the Satrap of Salt Springs. Alternately, the PCs can hear about the job through idle gossip in taverns or from a crier hired by the pasha's agents to spread the word.

Adventurers and Mercenaries Wanted!

By His Wisdom, Pasha Hari Abubakkar,
The Satrap of the Salt Springs Caravanserai

To Rid His Wisdom of a Plague of Gnolls that, in their
Perfidy, have troubled His Wisdom,
Especially The Most Villainous Leaders of this Savage
Band, Red Mane and Talking Dog.

Success will be Greatly Rewarded:
5 Silver Shekels per Pair of Gnoll's Ears
200 Silver Shekels Each for Red Mane and Talking Dog

An Additional Reward and His Wisdom's Eternal
Gratitude and Respect
For Disposing of this Issue Once and for All.

The PCs can find out more by asking around. His Wisdom, Pasha Hari Abubakkar, has a reputation for being an honest, if somewhat harsh, man. Caravans passing through his territory can expect to receive decent treatment. Criminals, on the other hand, can expect the maximum punishment allowed by law, if not more. In the past, wandering swordsmen and such riff-raff have received little assistance from His Wisdom, and more than a little official harassment. That he is openly requesting the aid of such folk is a sign that he has grown desperate, a situation that an enterprising party can work to their advantage.

It should take the PCs no more than a day or two to reach Salt Springs. The trip is uneventful.

The caravanserai at Salt Springs is a sprawling walled compound encompassing the springs themselves, as well as stables, markets, inns, and the Satrap's Palace. Salt Springs sits at the edge of a large erg, a region of open sandy desert. Its location is the sole reason for its existence, and the entire population is engaged in providing services — both legal and otherwise — to the many caravans traveling through the region. Daily, a string of camels and more exotic draft animals trundles into the maw of Salt Springs. The journey from distant lands is long and arduous, and so most merchants work one stage of the Great Caravan Road. In Salt Springs they can rest, resupply, and exchange goods brought from one end of the Great Road for goods from another. The pasha collects a tax on every transaction, and forwards a portion of it to the caliph far to the west. The next treasure caravan is due to depart in a few months, and worries over the gnoll raids are what have prompted His Wisdom to stoop to hire adventurers.

Most of the structure is fully roofed, thus limiting entrance to a few choice, and well guarded, doors. Slaves are routinely tasked with shoveling away dunes that have piled up against the caravanserai's walls and gates. The structure itself is built from limestone quarried from the Painted Canyons and artfully arranged in bands of color. The roof is also of stone, though centuries of torches and lanterns have stained the vivid colors a dull black. Navigating the caravanserai is difficult, and a local guide is highly suggested, lest one become lost in the maze of covered streets and markets. Lanterns light the merchant and market areas, as well as some of the residential neighborhoods, but beyond these a wanderer should bring his or her own light source.

Salt Springs is divided into six quarters based on the type of people who live there or the tasks they perform.

1. The Pasha's Palace

The central quarter is the Pasha's Palace, a network of rooms and corridors decorated in a restrained opulence and heavily guarded. These areas are well lit at great expense by glass jars containing *continual lights*. The pasha is wealthy enough to maintain a small garden at the center of the palace so that he and his favorites may enjoy natural light, water fountains, and green vegetation.

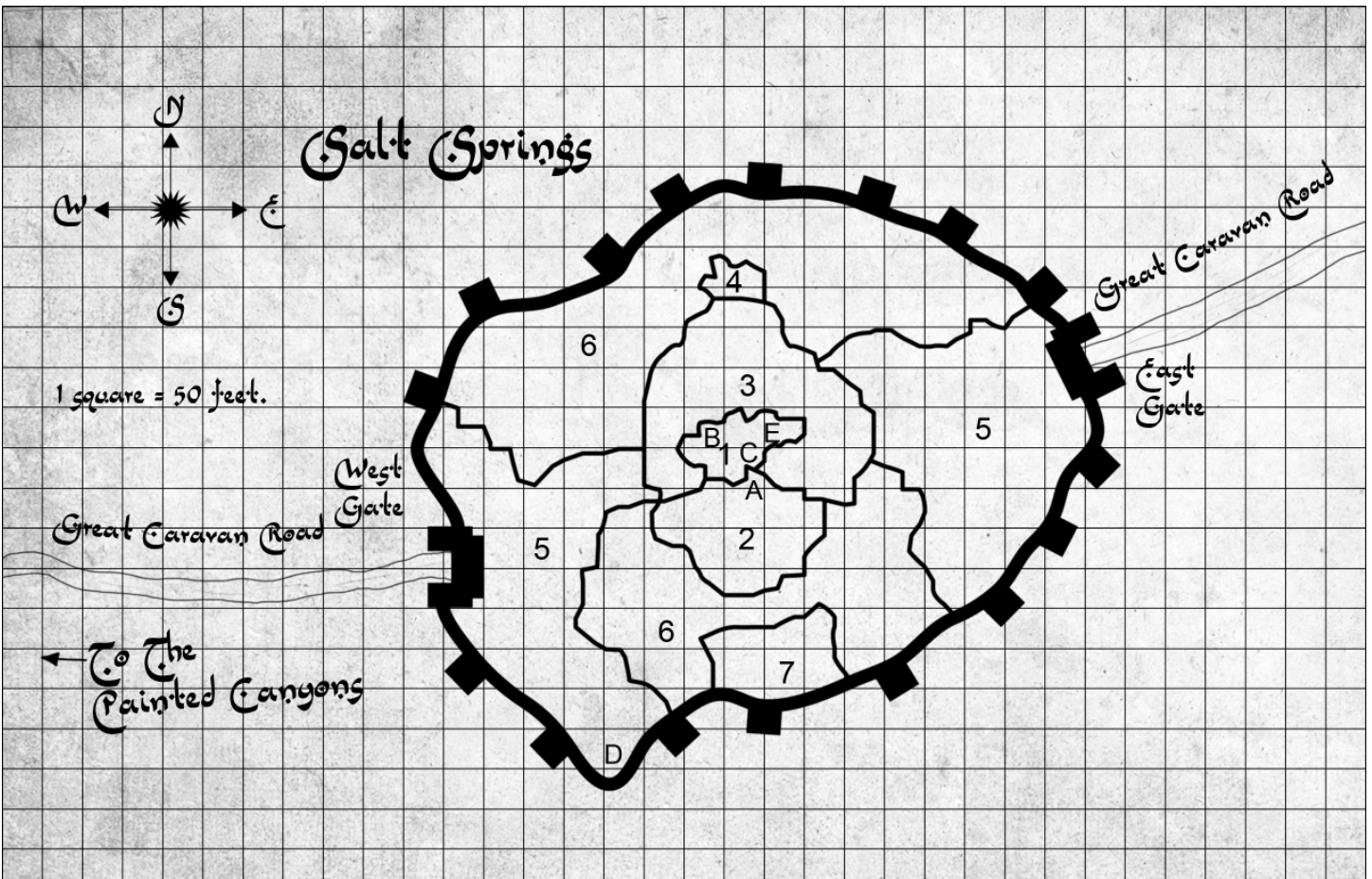
2. Merchant's Quarter

Close to the palace, but also adjacent to the Central Souk, is the Merchant Quarter. In addition to the resident merchants, traveling merchants can find high-class accommodations here. The area is lit by lanterns and well tended by a cadre of slaves (owned by the pasha and rented to the merchants). Guards regularly patrol here, and a guard station sits in the middle of the quarter. It is here that the infamous bitter springs of the caravanserai flow (**Area A**), closely controlled by the merchant's consortium and only open for public use during certain hours of the day.

3. Central Souk

The Central Souk is the largest of several open markets within the walls and roof of the caravanserai. Goods of all kinds change hands here, mostly in bulk. A few vendors work the edges selling food and water, but the souk is largely given over to the larger merchants. Other souks throughout Salt Springs are dedicated to various types of goods, such as preserved food, bulk water, livestock, clothes, and manufactured goods.

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4. Dwarven Souk

The Dwarven Souk is home to the small Stoneholme clan of dwarves from the near-fabled Northlands who operate a large smithy and are willing to repair or manufacture metal goods, weapons, and armor.

5. Caravaneers' Quarters

At the East Gate and West Gate are twin Caravaneers' Quarters designed to serve the caravans directly. Here there are stables, inns, taverns, brothels, wine shops, and gambling dens. All these businesses, even those of ill repute, are legal in Salt Springs, provided that they pay their taxes to the pasha. Large beasts cannot navigate the deeper corridors of the caravanserai, and so must remain in the stable areas. Smaller animals are permitted further within the caravanserai, provided the owner is willing to put forth a deposit against any damages they might cause (and defecating outside a privy is considered damage) This amount varies based on the nature of the creature, though a minimum of 3 drachmas (sp) will be levied. These quarters are lit by torches or lanterns and only loosely patrolled.

6. Laborers' Quarters

Backing onto the Caravaneers' Quarters and forming a narrow band from gate to gate is the Laborers' Quarter. This is the home to the free men and women who load and unload the caravans, shuttle goods from one gate to the other, and perform most of the day-to-day work of the caravanserai. This area is rarely patrolled and is lit only by what means the locals can afford, which means very little and only when necessary.

7. Slave Quarter

Adjacent to the Laborers' Quarter, but only connected to it by two narrow, guarded corridors at the east and west ends, is the small Slave Quarter. Slaves are used for the least pleasant tasks in Salt Springs, such as cleaning out privies and hauling the muck to the roof to be dried for use as low cost fuel or fertilizer. Below the Slave Quarter is a large natural cavern that has been expanded, and is used to grow certain varieties of edible mushroom and raise stunted, blind cows (both originally brought at great expense from the Dwarven Holds to the north).

Most districts of Salt Springs are safe; the pasha makes sure travelers and merchants can pass though unmolested. However, there are no laws or rulership so draconian as to completely stamp out crime, and smuggling as well as con games and the occasional robbery do occur. The areas around the Caravaneers' Quarter, the Laborer's Quarter, and Slave Quarters are the most notorious.

Meeting the Satrap

The PCs are asked their business when they approach the gates, and if they reply that they are here to answer the Satrap's call for adventurers, they are escorted to a set of rooms inside the gates where they may rest and recover from their journey. Although treated with respect, they are not able to wander the caravanserai without an escort. After some time, they are brought to the palace for an audience with His Wisdom, Pasha Hari Abubakkar.

The audience room is small, but well decorated with rich tapestries and ornaments of gold. The floor is covered with a detailed mosaic map of the satrapy, including the Great Caravan Road through the Painted Canyons. As His Wisdom explains matters to the party, he leaves his throne and walks around the tile, pointing out areas as he mentions them.

"I am an open and honest man, so I will tell you what is in my mind and heart. I find your kind abhorrent; your unbound and vagabond lifestyle mocks all that is good and orderly in society, and you are little more than bandits, renegades, and cutthroats. However, I find myself in need of your sort of scum, and so you can expect fair and equitable treatment from me. During your stay in my satrapy, you will receive food and lodgings equal to the task I am placing before you, and not equal to your station — that is, you will be treated far better than you deserve.

"Caravans traveling from here to the oasis at Beni-Hadith must pass through a region 100 miles in length known as the Painted Canyons. As they travel through that blasted and desolate land, they are often being attacked by a band of unclean beastmen — gnolls. These brutes, less than savages in my view, have so far eluded my soldiers and managed to escape back into the maze of canyons from which they spring forth.

"The gnolls are lead by an infamous savage named Red Mane, a beast of great size and cunning. A pagan shaman called Talking Dog assists him in his depredations. We have reason to believe that these base creatures enslave captives taken in these raids, and that some have even been sacrificed to their dark gods.

"The attacks have been well planned, and seem to strike at the caravans when they are at their most vulnerable. Furthermore, the most valuable cargoes are targeted with too much regularity to be a mere coincidence. Red Mane has managed to even sniff out hidden cargoes and carry these off. How such lowly and barely intelligent creatures — who all know are not much more than animals — have managed this is beyond me. You have no doubt seen the posts I have had placed throughout the region and are thus aware of the rewards I am offering. That will be your total reward for this enterprise, as I wish to have any goods taken by the gnolls returned to their rightful owners or, if such cannot be found, I will gift their value to worthy causes.

"If you have any needs that must be addressed, please feel free to bring them to Hiram Parth, a respected merchant of this caravanserai and my wisest advisor. You may now leave my presence until you can return in triumph and glory. May the gods be with you!"

The pasha's starting attitude towards the party is indifferent, although this may change in the course of the conversation if the adventurers either impress him or lower themselves in his (already low) esteem.

If the PCs impress the pasha, he will be more respectful and provide them with better accommodations. If they are disrespectful or appear inept, he will become quite unfriendly and signal an end to the already chilly reception. In this case the party can expect a minimum of assistance; they are merely servants tasked with an unpleasant chore, after all. The

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party is then escorted back to their quarters and told that Hiram Parth will be available to meet with them the next morning.

If the pasha's attitude remains basically unchanged as a result of the interview, the PCs will be quartered in the servants' quarters of his palace (**Area B**) and given a fine meal to fortify them before their coming endeavors. They may come and go from these quarters as they please for up to 1 week before the pasha grows impatient and his attitude changes back to indifferent. If the pasha is impressed by them, that night the PCs are given lavish guest chambers in the palace (**Area C**) and are treated to fine food and wine, as well as, entertainment provided by a minstrel and several dancing girls. They are given free run of the palace (including passwords to the dungeon) and the caravanserai. They will remain in favor for 2 weeks, after which point the pasha might rethink his general impression if the party seems not to be worth his high regard. If the party bungled the interview, they will be barracked in unused bunks in the guardhouse of the Pasha's Dungeon (**Area F2**) but given the password to come and go freely. Finally, if the adventurers managed to appear simultaneously incompetent and rude, the party is on its own and must find and pay for its own lodgings out in the caravanserai while in Salt Springs. If they have not left the caravanserai within a week of accepting their audience, the pasha grows impatient, and there is a 30% chance each day that one of them will be arrested by the pasha's secret police and thrown in the dungeons for 1d4 days for some minor violation, e.g. vagrancy, loitering, etc. (see "Complications in Salt Springs").

The House of Parth (Area D)

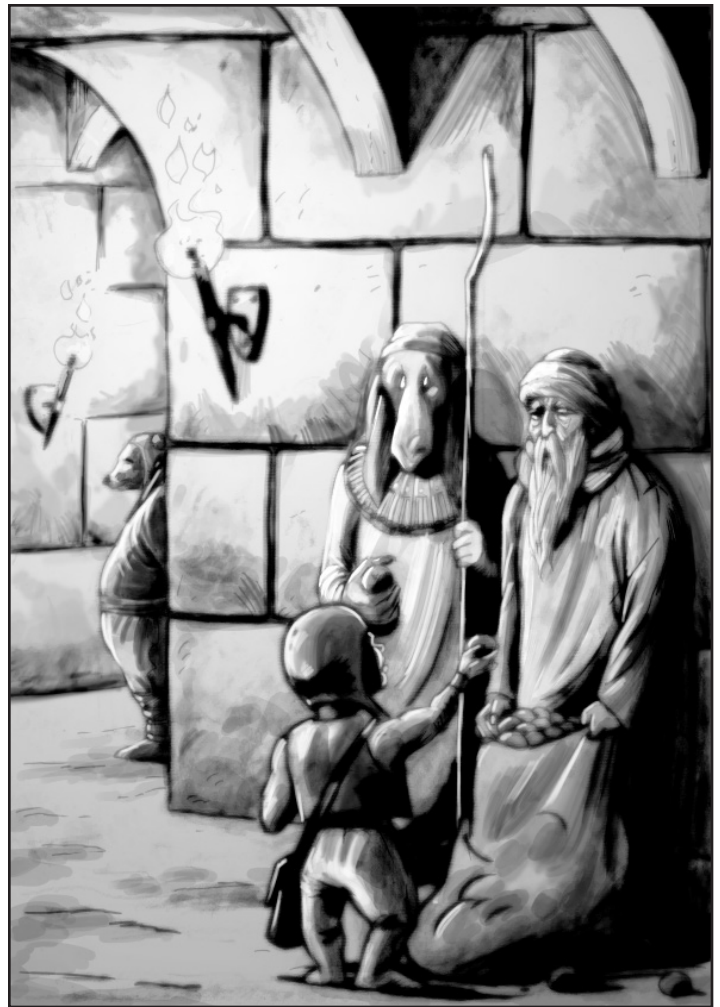
The morning following their audience with the pasha, the PCs are again escorted through the caravanserai, this time to the house of Salt Spring's most prosperous merchant, Hiram Parth. Parth lives in a modest home built on the inside of the caravanserai's outer wall (**Area D**). The outside lacks adornment of any type, but once inside, the party is struck by the sheer opulence of the dwelling. Golden threaded tapestries hang on the walls, the furnishings are made of exotic hardwoods, every possible ornament is made from gold or silver, and the cushions upon which Hiram and his guests sit are covered with silk. Servants abound, and during their interview, the PCs each have their own personal attendant to fill their drinks, bring them food, and stand ready with bowls of water with which to clean their fingers. After being led into Parth's opulent dining salon and being seated upon silk cushions around a low table, their jewel-bedecked host arrives. He is fat and jowly, wearing fine silks, silken slippers, and a bright green turban ornamented with strings of tiny pearls. Once all the PCs have seated themselves and been attended to by their assigned servants, Parth seats himself and addresses them.

"Greetings to you, O brave souls, I am pleased beyond words that His Wisdom has chosen such bold and heroic figures such as yourselves to rid us of these bothersome pests. Please, sit and break your fast with me, I wish to hear tales of your many exploits."

The PCs may ask Hiram for anything they may need, within reason (100 shekels or less per individual), and will receive it. The party may very well wish to question the fat merchant about the gnolls, the Painted Canyons, or other issues (see sidebar below).

GM's Note

If the PCs question Hiram Parth, he freely provides the information in normal font below if the right questions are asked. He chooses not to disclose the information in italics, since it is not in his interest to do so. How (and if) the party gets this additional information depends on how you choose to play the encounter, but if they simply accept the briefing at face value, they will get none of it. If the party contains a PC with



high Charisma, Parth's reaction to that will likely bring out a bit more information, and if the party questions him actively, they will not only receive more information but will also realize that Parth is definitely avoiding certain details. Even if the party does not get all the information from Parth, but they ask around with the suspicion that they didn't hear the whole story, they are likely to get more of the italicized information from other sources in the caravanserai.

If the PCs attempt to use magic or force to coerce Hiram Parth, he calls for his guards — **3 eunuchs** armed with scimitars — who arrive in 1 round and attempt to take the PCs captive. They will resort to deadly force if Hiram is threatened or one of them is killed. Captured PCs are turned over to the pasha on charges of "assault upon a person of station," sentenced to 10 days in the dungeons, and garner consequences as explained under "Complications in Salt Springs." Killing any of the eunuchs does not produce additional charges against the PCs. Killing Parth results in a death sentence unless they are able to prove his guilt (see "Rewards and Further Adventures").

Eunuch Guard (3): AC 13; HP 90 (9d8+27); Spd 30ft; Melee scimitar x3 (+6, 1d6+4 slashing); **Str** +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidate +2; **AL** LN; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

What Parth Knows

- The attacks have been at random locations along the Great Caravan Road through the Painted Canyons *but always at the most opportune places and upon specific pack camels carrying the most valuable goods.*
- The gnolls are little more than filthy beasts, attacking like savage animals *but appear to show a shrewd grasp of military strategy, relying on different and varied tactics in their ambushes.*
- The gnolls are of the Two Bloody Spears tribe that has dwelt in the depths of the Painted Canyons for hundreds of year, *however they have only become this aggressive and coordinated since the coming of the chief*

QUESTS OF DOOM 2

Red Mane and his shaman Talking Dog.

- His Wisdom has dispatched men to track the gnolls and, though the gnolls apparently make no effort to hide their trail, the men have returned empty handed or not at all. *The gnolls apparently plant traps and false trails for pursuers and take prisoner those that fall into their hands.*

- None of the goods taken from the caravans has reappeared in the markets of Salt Springs *but there are other markets available farther afield such as the distant city of Bhutan beyond the Painted Canyons at the western end of the Caravan Road.*

- The settlement of Beni-Hadith is small and could be easily avoided by anyone seeking to circumvent it in order to reach the markets of Bhutan, *but if the gnolls were doing so they would need some sort of merchant contacts within that city in order to sell their ill-gotten goods.*

In addition to their audience with Hiram Parth, at some point the PCs may wish to break into his home and search it for clues if they become suspicious of his involvement. He stays out late at his warehouses most nights, so it would be a simple matter to try and gain entry after the servants have left for the day and before he has returned. He has a personal contingent of **12 guards** who are always posted at the gates to his manor, but these could be avoided with proper planning. Picking a lock will be necessary to gain entry through a locked window or side door.

Guard (12): AC 16; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 30ft; Melee scimitar (+3, 1d6+1 slashing); **Str +1, Dex +1, Con +1, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +0; Skills** Perception +2; **AL** LN; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25

Once inside Parth's house, the PCs may search his personal quarters. A search turns up several bottles that are marked as a cheap vintage of wine (certainly out of place here) but if uncorked they are revealed to hold a colorless oil with a peculiar odor. Searching papers may uncover a list of names among his personal papers that includes both merchants of distant Bhutan among their number and a number of notable smugglers and bandits (use a check for secret doors to see if these papers are identified during the search). No explanation is given for the presence of these names, and they do not comprise incriminating evidence in of themselves, but a rogue PC will recognize them to be members of the notorious thieves' guild known as the Zuma Qulldishi. It is also possible that a non-thief will recognize the connection to the thieves' guild, although this is unlikely unless the PC would have some reason to have learned this, either through shady connections or asking around in the caravanserai about criminal activities.

Unless the party has in some way manipulated Parth's schedule, there is roughly a 40% chance that Parth and his eunuch guards will return to the house during the first hour of the search, increasing cumulatively by 20% with each hour of searching. If the PCs do not keep a lookout, then Parth takes note of their entry due to several small telltale signs that are prepared throughout his house and attempts to ambush them as they leave. In this case Parth and the eunuchs will fight to the death to prevent anything the PCs have discovered from leaving the house. If the party is warned by a lookout and escapes, Parth will know that someone has been in the house, but is actually unlikely to suspect that it was the party.

Hiram Parth: AC 14; HP 136 (16d8+64); Spd 30ft; Melee scimitar x2 (+6, 1d6+3 slashing), dagger (+6, 1d4+3 piercing); **Str +1, Dex +3, Con +4, Int +1, Wis +1, Cha +3; Skills** Deception +6, Insight +4, Perception +6; **AL** NE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Equipment: *potion of healing.*

Further Trouble with Hiram Parth

After their meeting with Hiram Parth, the PCs are free to travel about Salt Springs at their leisure. If Hiram suspects the PCs may be competent, or if they are getting close to discovering his crimes, he will first approach them under the pretense that he does not wish for His Wisdom's reputation to be sullied by consorting with hired mercenaries and offer up to 10,000 silver drachmas (sp) to just forget the whole thing and leave town. If they refuse the money, or if they seem too trustworthy, Hiram then hires some itinerant ne'er-do-wells from the Laborers' Quarter to kill them.

The **8 thugs** lack finesse, and will simply kick in the door of the party's quarters one night in an attempt to slaughter them before they are armed and armored (even if they are staying in the palace servants' quarters, which have an exterior entrance). If slain or captured, the assassins still have the 200 silver drachmas on them that they were paid with. They will not rat out Hiram (for fear of reprisal) unless put under torture, a process that will require 1d3 days and that the pasha will attend to with relish if his attitude is generally friendly toward the PCs. If Hiram's involvement is uncovered, he will claim it was done to protect the honor of his satrap; he will be given a stern rebuke and placed under house arrest for 30 days by a slightly bemused pasha.

If the party leaves town before the "assassins" get their chance, or is staying in the palace guest quarters, these curs will simply take Hiram's money and leave town in the opposite direction — you just can't hire good scum these days.

Thug (8): AC 11; HP 32 (5d8+10); Spd 30ft; Melee scimitar x2 (+4, 1d6+2 slashing); **Ranged** heavy crossbow (+2, 100ft/400ft, 1d10 piercing); **Str +2, Dex +0, Con +2, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +0; Skills** Intimidation +2; **Traits** pack tactics; **AL** CN; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

The Investigation

The PCs can use whatever means they deem necessary to find the clues that lead to Hiram Parth and his scheme. Several options exist, and enterprising parties will no doubt invent their own. They can follow a caravan and hope it is attacked, talk to locals and witnesses, press Hiram for more information, or simply go to the site of the latest attack and attempt to follow the tracks back to the gnoll's encampment. If they decide to follow a caravan or investigate the site of the latest attack, go to "The Ambush at the Ford", in The Painted Canyons chapter. If the PCs decide to return to Hiram Parth's residence to gain more information, see "The House of Parth" above.

Talking to locals and witnesses requires a good deal of legwork for the party. Hiram Parth has been instructed to aid the party in their investigation, and he will search for any witnesses or survivors of previous raids. Sadly, he finds none (or at least that is what he tells the party), and will explain that other than the resident merchants (who rarely leave) most of the population is rather transitory, and it seems that all witnesses have moved on. If they investigate on their own, the PCs will face a certain level of reluctance by the residents of Salt Springs.

A better avenue would be to work the Caravaneers' and Laborers' quarters. It will take 1d4 hours of asking around to find a witness to one of the gnoll attacks, and no more than three witnesses can be located (caravan workers spend their time on the caravans, not remaining in the caravanserai itself for very long at a time, so there are not many available to find).

If the party questions one of the witnesses, 1d3 of the following information can be gleaned from each:

- The gnolls used differing tactics each attack, sometimes swooping out of a side canyon, other times causing a rock fall to separate the caravan into easily picked off pieces.

- The gnolls are lead by a large and particularly ferocious packmaster called Red Mane. He wields a magical flaming great axe in battle.

- Talking Dog, the shaman of the Two Bloody Spears tribe, is a potent spellcaster, and his acolytes aren't unskilled either.

- Most of the attacks took place at the far end of the Caravan Road, nearer to Beni-Hadith than Salt Springs.

- The gnolls seemed to single out certain camels, usually ones with more valuable loads — even if those loads have been disguised or there are decoy camels included in the caravan.

- One caravan scout allegedly was able to follow the gnolls back to their encampment and escape back to Salt Springs. His name is Hurgash, but he is currently imprisoned in the Pasha's Dungeon for murdering a man in a bar fight and faces execution soon.

Complications in Salt Springs

Salt Springs is in an isolated and barren region, and so nearly all raw materials and manufactured items need to be imported at great expense. Adding to this are the pasha's high taxes and tariffs on all goods that pass through the caravanserai, as well as, all transactions that occur within its walls. This means that all legal purchases and services are increased by 150% over the list price. Goods and services can be found for less if the buyer is willing to turn to the black market. If the party is native to this area, any PC can make a connection with the black market and buy goods for regular prices, with only a 5% chance of being caught. Assuming, however, that the PCs are strangers to the area, making a purchase on the black market requires a successful saving throw to avoid being caught. Rogue PCs make the saving throw with a +4 bonus. If the party takes particularly good precautions, or is particularly obvious about what they are doing, assign appropriate bonuses or penalties to the saving throw roll.

Failing the save results in the PC being caught by the pasha's secret police, tried, and imprisoned until he can pay a fine of 300% of the list price of whatever he was trying to buy (See **The Pasha's Dungeon** below).

PCs who are arrested find that the pasha is unhappy that the adventurers he has hired proceeded to break his laws. He will not meet with them, but if they obtained a favorable reaction during their initial interview, the pasha will allow them to pay the fine out of their reward, though in this case an additional 200% will be levied for "court fees". If any PC that has been arrested has not met with the pasha yet, he is out of luck and must pay the fine. Furthermore, the pasha's initial attitude with him is extremely unfriendly.

In addition, losing the pasha's favor, run-ins with Hiram Parth, attempts to break into Parth's house, heavy handed tactics during the investigation, or any number of other acts undesirable to the pasha can land the PCs in

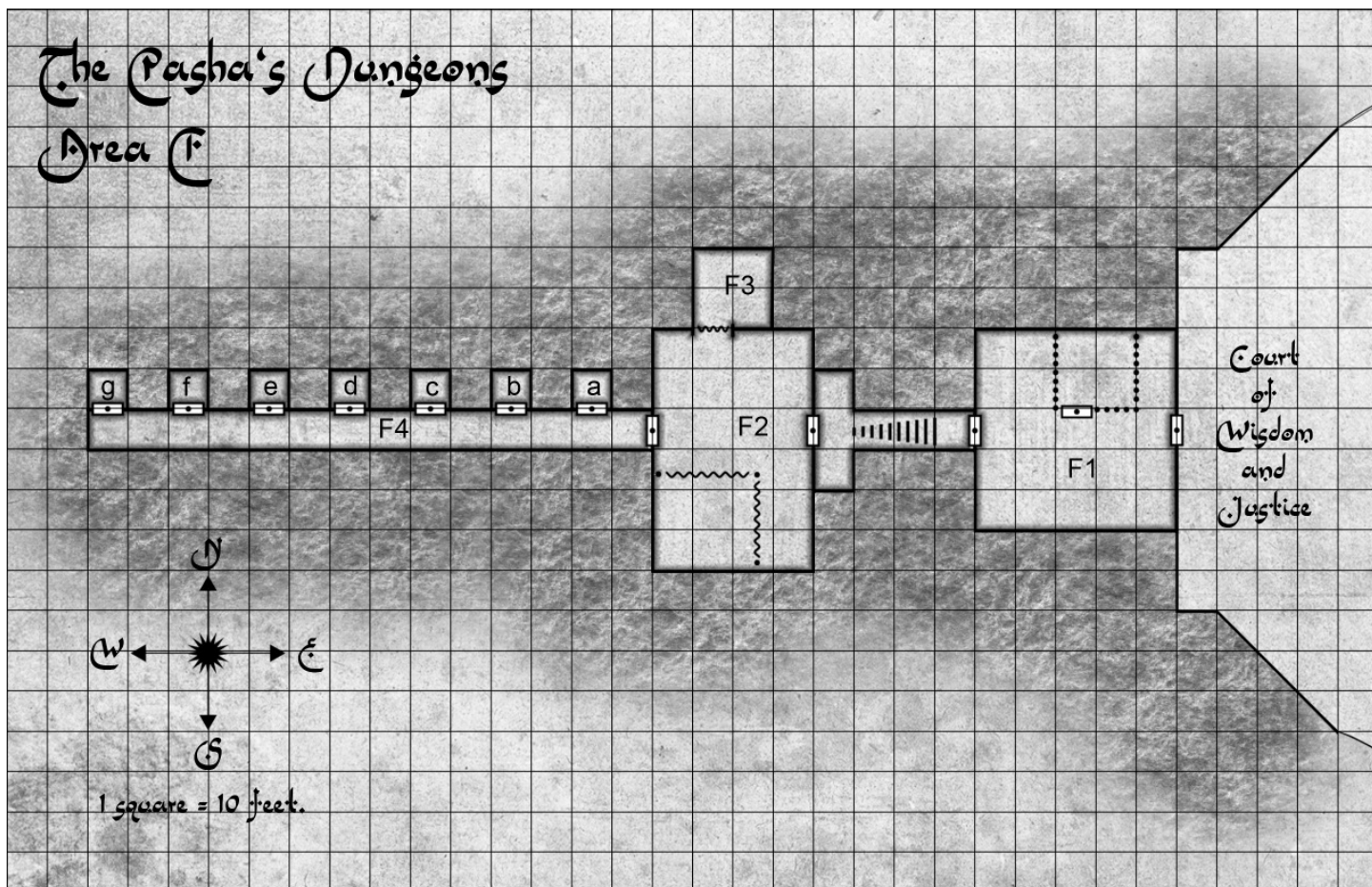
hot water with the caravanserai's soldiers or its secret police and result in arrest and imprisonment. In addition, attempts to reach and/or rescue the caravan scout Hurgash might lead the PCs to the Pasha's Dungeon on their own.

The Pasha's Dungeon (Area F)

It is a very poor idea to try to break out of the Pasha's Dungeon, but PCs being what they are, someone will no doubt attempt this approach if so incarcerated. The Pasha's Dungeon is built beneath the caravanserai and is constructed from the same stone as the rest of Salt Springs. The dungeon lies beneath the palace proper and can be reached through the Court of Wisdom and Justice (Area E), which is full of guards and court officials during the day but has a single **guard** (see "Guards" below) making rounds at night every few minutes. In addition, it has many large (locked) windows that could be forced open.

There is but the one entrance to the dungeon, and it is heavily guarded. Any attempt, successful or not, to free prisoners from the dungeons results in the guilty parties being branded as outlaws in the Satrapy of Salt Springs. This means the PCs are not able to collect any reward should they decide to strike against the gnolls on their own. Of course this also means that they would be able to keep any treasure acquired. As word of these misdeeds spreads, legal authorities throughout the Caliphate will be alerted about the criminals. A wise move on the part of the party at this point would be to flee the region, at least until things die down. The Northlands are nice this time of year, and a sojourn in that far-off lawless land is no doubt in order.

Ceilings are 10ft high, and light is provided by heavy stone globes that have been impregnated with *continual flame* spells. Doors are of stout oak reinforced with bands of iron. The guard captain carries the keys.



Area F1: Entrance

Beyond the reinforced door it lies a room for receiving prisoners, complete with a holding cell and a table at which the guard captain can fill out the necessary paperwork on any prisoners entering or leaving the dungeon. The far door leads to a set of stairs. These steps go down deeper into the dungeon. *Continual flame* globes mounted on the walls light the room and the stairs. Locked in a drawer in the table (the guard captain has the key) is a list of four passwords. One of them is the daily password for the dungeon, but there is no indication of which is correct.

Creatures: There are **2 guards** and a **sergeant of the guard** on duty at all times. The two guards stand ready at the far door. There is a 30% chance each half hour that another pair of guards may come in to transport a prisoner to or from the dungeon.

Captain of the Guard: AC 15; HP 65 (10d8+20); Spd 30ft; **Melee** scimitar x2 (+5, 1d6+3 slashing), dagger (+5, 1d4+3 piercing); **SA** multiattack, parry (reaction, +2 AC vs. 1 melee); **Str** +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Athletics +4, Perception +2; **AL** LN; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Guard (2): AC 16; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 30ft; **Melee** spear (+3, 1d6+1 piercing); **Str** +1, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +2; **AL** LN; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25

Area F2: Guardhouse

At the bottom of the stairs is another door and another **2 guards** (see **Area F1** for stats). They do not allow anyone to enter or leave unless the daily password is given, and they shout an alarm if it is not.



Beyond this door is the main guardroom, a combination bunk and ready room for the guards. The room is a spacious and features three exits: a reinforced door that leads to the cells, another reinforced door that leads up to the entrance, and a doorway blocked by a curtain of beads that leads to the adjacent slave quarters. A curtained-off bunk area fills one corner. A small round table with four chairs sits in the middle of the room, and normally has either a meal or a quirkat game spread out upon it. Two small braziers of coal are in the room, one in the bunk area and one near the table. Spare clothes, suits of half-plate, heavy crossbows, and halberds line the walls (as do crude drawings of an adult nature), along with any equipment and belongings taken from the prisoners in **Area F2**.

Creatures: A total of **8 guards** (see **Area F1** for stats) can be found in the guardhouse at any time, half sleeping in the bunk area and the other half loafing until needed. Additionally, there is a 30% chance per half hour that an additional 2 guards come through escorting a prisoner to or from the dungeon.

Area F3: Slave Quarters

Creatures: This small room is the home of the **3 slave women (commoners)** who clean the dungeon and cook the meals for the guards. They are violently unattractive women, long ago broken in body and spirit by the hopelessness of their life and the drudgery of their tasks. The three share one dirty pile of rags as a bed and own nothing more than their raggedy clothes.

Area F4: Cells

A long corridor stretches into the darkness. The heavy stone globes of *continual light* would normally illuminate this area, but it is the custom of

DEATH IN THE PAINTED CANYONS

the guards to throw heavy cloths over them when leaving the room. When entering from the guardhouse, the right hand wall is broken into seven cramped cells. Each cell is closed by a locked iron gate. The cells contain little save for prisoners, a bed of straw, and a necessities bucket.

Creatures: Six of the cells are full, and any PCs will be stuffed into the last cell (Cell G). Cell A contains Hirus Burningwrath, a local dwarfish merchant (LN **commoner**) who was convicted of falsifying weights; he will be beheaded in the morning. Nasim Ba, a known and convicted smuggler (CN **bandit**), languishes in Cell B; he will also be executed in the morning. Cell C is currently the home of Sara bint Hamza (LN **commoner**), who has been convicted of teaching slaves to read; she is sentenced to 30 days in the dungeon. As the PCs pass Cell D, Hurgash the Mighty calls to them to free him from false imprisonment on trumped up charges. Though he really did beat a man to death in a tavern brawl, Hurgash acted in self-defense, but his victim was a citizen, and so the caravan scout loses his head in the morning. Estevan Cordoba strums his lute in Cell E, serving 30 days for public performance without a license, while his traveling companion, Chani Morning Star awaits 50 lashes in Cell F for interfering with the satrap's soldiers when she intervened in Estevan's arrest. She is gagged and manacled to prevent her from casting spells.

Hurgash the Mighty, Fighter: AC 10; HP 13 (2d10+2); Spd 30ft; **Melee** unarmed (+2, 1 bludgeoning); **Str** +1, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +3; **Traits** action surge, fighting style (dueling), second wind (1d10+2); **AL** U; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Estevan Cordoba, Rogue: AC 10; HP 9 (2d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** unarmed (+2, 1 bludgeoning); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Perception +2, Performance +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +3; **Traits** cunning action, sneak attack +1d6; **AL** CN; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Chani Morningstar, Cleric: AC 10; HP 9 (2d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** unarmed (+2, 1 bludgeoning); **SA** channel energy (preserve life, turn undead), spells (Wis+3, DC 11); **Str** +0, **Dex** +0, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Religion +2; **AL** LN; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*guidance, light, resistance*;
1st (3)—*bles, command, cure wounds, detect magic, protection from evil and good.*

Development: Obviously Hurgash may be of interest to the party, and if they mention a desire to find the Two Bloody Spears gnoll encampment, he quickly promises to guide them there if freed. He can be used as an NPC to join the party or can replace a PC casualty if you wish. Nasim Ba will also make this promise but is lying and attempts to flee at his first chance. Hirus Burningwrath likewise knows something of the Two Bloody Spears because a number of his clansmen were captured by them a few years back. If given his freedom, he offers this tidbit, "My cousin, Havrak's a vengeful dwarf and a master stoneworker. If he's still alive, don't be surprised if he's fixed up some nasty trick in order to have his vengeance on his captors. Bring him or any of our kin home to the Dwarven Souk, and you'll be well rewarded." Estevan and Chani don't know anything of value, but can serve as henchmen if needed out of gratitude if given their freedom.

The Painted Canyons

The Painted Canyons are a stretch of badlands that lie two days' journey outside of Salt Springs. They are a maze of canyons, colorful sandstone bluffs, and limestone escarpments, mostly devoid of water and forage save for a thin strip of green along the Havari River. This relatively verdant strip is the route that caravans take from Salt Springs to the oasis town of Beni-Hadith. The caravans have been seemingly nowhere, strike, and are gone almost as quickly as they appeared.

Navigating the Painted Canyons is difficult, as the badlands are riven with blind canyons, side passages, rock jumbles, and sheer bluff walls. Finding water and food, especially forage for horses, is not easy, though those who are familiar with desert environments should fare nicely.

Thirst and starvation are not the only dangers in the canyons. The locals say that everything in the Painted Canyons either bites or stings, and this includes the native plant life. Movement through the canyons is difficult due to the rugged terrain, so that a caravan only makes about 15 miles a day and usually requires a week or more to pass through the dreaded region. From the edge of the canyons, it is less than a day to reach Beni-Hadith. Parties should roll daily on the random encounter table below while they are within the Painted Canyons. Encounters may be direct or indirect, at the GM's whim, as the canyons cut line of sight to tens of feet within them, but someone on a bluff can see for miles. Encounters marked with an asterisk do not occur as long as the PCs follow the main trail along the Havari River and should be treated as no encounter. The Attack Site encounter can *only* be encountered along the Caravan Road and is otherwise treated as no encounter.

Random Encounters in the Painted Canyons

3d10	Encounter
3-6	No encounter
7-9	Band of Gnolls
10-11	High Desert Nomads
12-14	Giant Horned Toad
15-16	Pack of Coyotes
17-18	Sun Worshipers
19-21	Giant Scorpion
22	Ogres
23-25	Smoke on the Horizon
26	Hidden Spring*
27	Dead Bodies*
28	Ant Colony*
29	Attack Site
30	Escaped Slave

No encounter

Nothing unusual occurs that day.

Band of Gnolls

Three gnolls, their **3 mates** and **5 cubs** are out hunting. If they spot the party, or if the party attacks and any gnolls escape, they return to The Gods' Needles and warn Red Mane. Any captured gnolls can be coerced into giving away information about the band and its encampment in exchange for their freedom.

Gnoll (3): AC 15; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), spear (+4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Ranged** longbow (+3, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+1 piercing); **Str** +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** rampage; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Gnoll Female (3): AC 15; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+1 piercing), spear (+4, 1d6+1 piercing); **Ranged** longbow (+4, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+2 piercing); **Str** +1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** rampage; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Gnoll Cub (5): AC 13; HP 9 (2d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+2, 1d4 piercing), spear (+2, 1d6 piercing); **Ranged** shortbow (+3, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+1 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** rampage; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

High Desert Nomads

A group of ten camel-mounted nomads and their sheep, the nomads are knowledgeable about the territory and gladly offer to guide the party through the Painted Canyons. If the party hires a nomad as a guide, he expects to be paid 5 silver drachmas (sp) a day, and leads the PCs away from danger and to sources of food, fodder, and water. For an additional 20 silver shekels (gp) he will take them to The Gods' Needles (Area H). If the party is in a sad state, the nomads may rescue them and take them back to their camp to recover if you choose.

Nomads (10): AC 16; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 30ft; Melee longsword (+3, 1d8+1 slashing); **Str +1, Dex +1, Con +1, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +0; Skills** Perception +2; **AL LN; CR 1/8; XP 25**

Giant Horned Toad

A deadly giant lizard is out hunting, and has caught the party's scent. It follows the PCs and attacks if they are otherwise engaged or begin to look weak.

Toad, Giant Horned: AC 15; HP 93 (11d8+44); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+6, 2d8+4 piercing); **Ranged** acid blood (recharge 6, +3, 50ft, 6d6 acid); **Str +4, Dex +1, Con +4, Int -4, Wis -1, Cha -2; AL U; CR 3; XP 700. (Monster Appendix)**

Pack of Coyotes

These large coyotes (resembling very small, hunched wolves) follow the party, staying out of sight as best they can, hoping someone will eventually drop something tasty or, better yet, die of thirst. In the meantime, they shadow the party, which could cause a rising of paranoia amongst intrepid adventurers. The coyote moon songs at night are lovely, if that's any consolation.

Coyote (10): AC 12; HP 3 (1d6); Spd 40ft; Melee bite (+1, 1d4-1 piercing); **Str -1, Dex +2, Con +0, Int -4, Wis +1, Cha -2; Skills** Perception +3; **Senses** keen hearing and smell; **Traits** pack tactics; **AL U; CR 0; XP 100.**

Sun Worshipers

These 3 giant lizards have recently finished eating a stray camel and are now sunning themselves on a large rock. They hiss at any who approach them, but are currently too lazy and well fed to bother attacking except in self-defense.

Lizard, Giant (3): AC 12; HP 19 (3d10+9); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d8+2 piercing); **Str +2, Dex +1, Con +1, Int -4, Wis +0, Cha -3; Senses** darkvision 30ft; **AL U; CR 1/4; XP 25.**

Giant Scorpion

This monster lies in wait along the party's route, hidden under sands or in a cave alongside the trail. When the PCs are close, the giant scorpion springs out, attempts to grab something meaty, and then scuttles off to enjoy its meal.

Scorpion, Giant: AC 15; HP 52 (7d10+14); Spd 40ft; Melee claw x2 (+4, 1d8+2 bludgeoning), sting (+4, 1d10+2 piercing plus 4d10 poison [DC 12 Con half]); **SA** multiattack; **Str +2, Dex +1, Con +2, Int -5, Wis -1, Cha -4; Senses** blindsight 60ft; **AL U; CR 3; XP 700.**

Ogres

Two ogres have been lost in the Painted Canyons for some time, and are getting tired of a diet of cactus fruit and giant lizard. As soon as they spot the party, they charge in and fight to the death.

Ogre (2): AC 11; HP 59 (7d10+21); Spd 40ft; Melee greatclub (+6, 10ft, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); **Ranged** javelin (+6, 30ft/120ft, 2d6+4 piercing); **Str +4, Dex -1, Con +3, Int -3, Wis -2, Cha -2; Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL CE; CR 2; XP 450.**

Smoke on the Horizon

The party spots several pillars of smoke on the horizon. If they follow them, they find the gnoll encampment. Use the notes for following the gnoll's tracks under "Attack Site" below.

Hidden Spring

The party comes across a spring of fresh water hidden in a side draw.

Dead Bodies

The party comes across the bodies of three dwarves, long dead in the desert sun, their flesh picked clean. There are signs of violence, and the bodies have been looted. These are members of Hirus Burningwrath's clan that have been missing for over a year.

Ant Colony

This canyon is riddled with huge mounds of a giant ant colony; the party must either backtrack or risk causing the ants to swarm. The area of the colonies covers 100ft of the canyon. Each round that one or more PCs are in this area, there is a 1 in 6 chance (per PC) that swarms of ants will emerge to defend the colony. If combat is taking place over the top of the colony, an additional swarm will emerge in each combat round.

A swarm is made up of 2 giant warrior ants and 5 giant worker ants, and multiple swarms may emerge. If the party retreats, the ants will not pursue them more than approximately 200ft before returning.

Ant, Giant Warrior (2): AC 15; HP 13 (3d6+3); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing plus 1d6 poison); **Str +2, Dex +1, Con +1, Int -4, Wis -3, Cha -4; AL U; CR 1/4; XP 50.**

Ant, Giant Worker (5): AC 15; HP 9 (2d6+2); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Str +2, Dex +1, Con +1, Int -4, Wis -3, Cha -4; AL U; CR 1/8; XP 25.**

Attack Site

This is one of the sites where the gnolls have previously ambushed a caravan and can be encountered multiple times. The sites show a level of organization normally unheard of amongst the more savage humanoids. Several different tactics have been used, such as wild ambushes from the side canyons, dropping rock falls to break the caravan up into pieces, and some signs point to lookouts and archers being posted on the cavern walls.

Searching the sites of the latest attacks does yield some clues. Gnoll tracks (if the party searches for tracks, treat this as a secret door check), as well as those of several hyenas, camels, and assorted humanoids lead off into the Painted Canyons, eventually reaching the gnoll encampment (Area H).

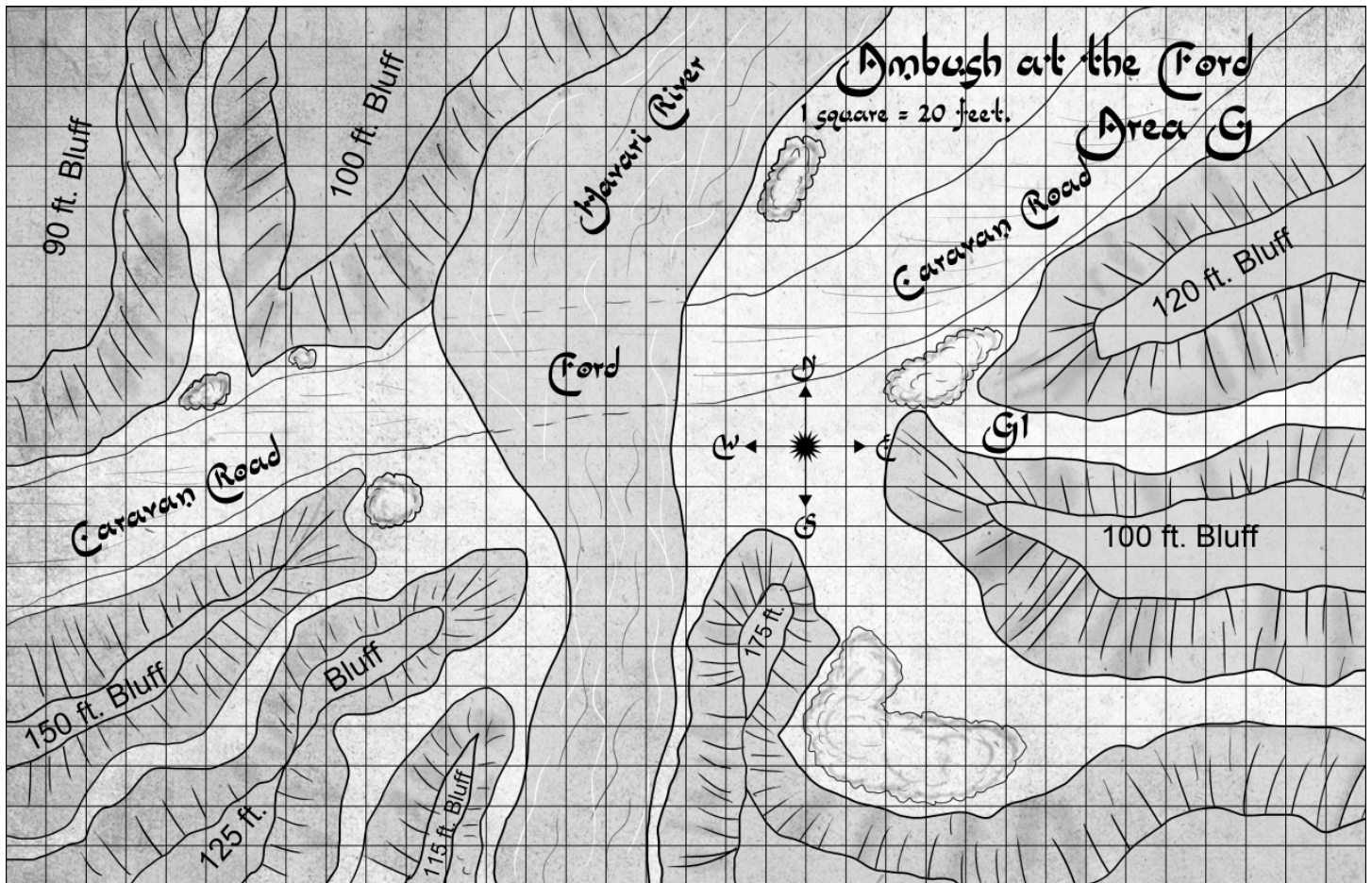
Escaped Slave

One of the slaves in Area H-6 or H-7 of the Gnoll Encampment has escaped. He or she is almost dead from thirst and exposure but, if rescued, can lead the party back to Red Mane's encampment; however, he will not assist in battle or risk recapture.

Ambush at the Ford (Area G)

If the PCs decide to follow a caravan and look for an attack, there will be one leaving in 1d3+1 days. This caravan, led by Samir ibn Faoud, consists of 36 camels, 30 guards (human guards), 40 drovers (commoners), and 12 camp followers (commoners). It is carrying the usual assortment of silks and bundles of tea, plus a collection of rare and exotic feathers from the fabled flying lizards of Tynnos

DEATH IN THE PAINTED CANYONS



Island valued at 3,000 gold darics (pp). The feathers are hidden on one particular camel whose non-descript nature fails to hint at the small fortune riding on its back. PCs that wander through the caravan looking for anything out of place or unusual will detect a strange smell on the camel (recognizable as the oil from Parth's house if the PCs managed to locate it). Hiram Parth personally sees off every caravan in his official capacity as His Wisdom's personal advisor. His attention to detail is legendary, and he goes so far as to check the straps on random loads, inspect the camels and other beasts of burden, and direct the guards as to their duties.

As the party travels with Samir's caravan, they have a tense, but fairly uneventful journey through the twisting passages of the Painted Canyons (roll for encounters normally but subtract 5 from the die result due to the 30 armed guards that accompany the column). Side canyons open off of the main canyon that the Havari River passes through. The vibrantly colored bluffs rise up on either side, casting at least half of the canyon in shadow. Natural rock falls line both banks of the river, creating numerous opportunities for ambushers to take cover. The Great Caravan Road stays to the southern bank of the river, crossing at the only good ford near the far western end of the canyons (**Area G**). There is a 50% chance each day that Samir points out a place where the gnolls have ambushed caravans (see "Attack Site" above), and the party may investigate these if they wish. However, the caravan is not waiting for them, and will press on even if the adventurers are left many miles behind. If the PCs become separated, roll for encounters normally.

As the caravan approaches the ford, everybody is tense in anticipation of the threat. At the ford the caravan can easily be caught with half on one side of the Havari, and half on the other. Guards are posted on both banks as side canyons open up to the east and west. The party needs to decide how they are arranging themselves for the crossing, and it would not be unreasonable to split the party into teams in order to watch both sides. Samir will wait with a party of mounted guards on the far side of the river, figuring that since the last time the gnolls attacked at the ford they attacked the part of the caravan waiting to cross, and will likely vary their tactics somewhat.

Creatures: When the caravan is about halfway across, one of Red Mane's pack lords leads his warriors in a howling charge out of the side canyon (previously screened by seemingly impassable thorny brush) at **Area G1**. They are targeting the marked camel with their scent ability but will grab other camels that are nearby, striking down any who get in their way. The grizzled pack lord is obvious in directing his raiders, pointing out a specific camel and barking orders. While the warriors are busy with this, Talking Dog leads his acolytes in rounding up prisoners for eventual sacrifice, with a special eye towards attractive females, as these seem to please the packmaster the best (unless Talking Dog and both of his acolytes are slain, assume that they make off with 1d4+4 captives from among the camel drovers and camp followers). The attacking force that the PCs must contend with consist of **Talking Dog**, **2 gnoll acolytes**, a **gnoll pack lord**, **2 elite gnoll warriors**, **8 gnolls**, **2 hyenas**, and a **giant hyena**. Do not subtract or add any of these forces to the Gnoll Encampment (**Area H**) other than Talking Dog himself. Other attackers are present, but assume that they are occupied by the caravan guards fighting under the direction of Samir. In total, 1d10+10 guards and drovers are slain. Samir will not pursue any stolen property, hurrying instead towards Beni-Hadith and its relative safety. See "The Gnolls" sidebar below for gnoll stat blocks and the "Talking Dog" sidebox for more information regarding the mad shaman.

Development: The whole thing will be done with as much speed as possible and, unless thwarted, the raiders will be back up and into the canyons within 6 rounds. There Red Mane awaits with a reserve force that hampers pursuit by his use of tactics he picked up while serving as a mercenary, one of which is to cover his retreat. As soon as the ambushers and the loot are clear (and possibly Talking Dog and the prisoners if there is time) Red Mane will trigger a rock fall that seals off the canyon behind them causing a delay of several hours unless the PCs have the means to fly over or otherwise bypass the obstacle quickly. Red Mane's reserve force never openly engages the PCs and unless the PCs scout by air, will never be seen by them as they make their way back to the encampment by hidden routes.

The Two Bloody Spears

The Two Bloody Spears gnoll tribe has lived in the Painted Canyons for generations. For many years their depredations were minor, the occasional raid of a small caravan or harassing the high desert nomads who wandered the region. All this changed when a young gnoll warrior called Red Mane returned from a long journey to the north. There he had served as a mercenary for less-than-finicky humans and dwarves, learning a great deal about how the world outside of the Canyons functions. He also made contacts with a large criminal organization in the city of Bhutan, the Zuma Qulldishi.

Mostly the Zuma engage in smuggling operations and robbery, though they have been known to occasionally commit highway banditry or take on contracts for murder. Through his contacts Red Mane managed to make an arrangement whereby his tribe would raid the caravans passing through the Painted Canyons and the Zuma collect the loot, and return every few months with goods for the gnolls. This has made the Two Bloody Spears tribe prosperous and Red Mane's rule stable.

The tribe is well armed and armored and this wealth has allowed the tribe to conquer the other gnolls in the area and drive off other savage humanoids. The Two Bloody Spears tribe is now poised to become the dominant force in the Painted Canyons.

The Gnoll Encampment (Area H)

The encampment of the Two Bloody Spears tribe lies deep in the canyons, and is a 50-mile journey from the Caravan Road. Finding the encampment requires either tracking the gnolls after a raid, or a bit of luck.

Red Mane has chosen a defensible and difficult to locate part of the Painted Canyons to be his base of operations. The encampment sits on two large pillars of rock called The Gods' Needles and an adjacent bluff in a small and out of the way box canyon. The Needles are hard limestone pillars that rise 200ft above the canyon floor, surrounded on three sides by the softer sandstone canyon walls. Unlike the brightly colored sandstone that comprises most of the Painted Canyons, the Needles are a flat whitish grey in color.

There are two ways to get onto The Gods' Needles, from the canyon below or from the surrounding bluffs. The top of each Needle connects at two points to one of the surrounding bluffs via shoddy rope bridges that are treacherous to cross. The bridges connecting the Needles to each other and to the bluff lack hand lines and are not of the highest quality. Anyone fighting or moving faster than a walk on the bridges risks falling off. A DC 8 Dex save is required each round to keep one's feet, and any failure results in the PC prone and hanging off the bridge. A second saving throw allows anyone hanging off a bridge to pull themselves back up, but failure of this check by 5 or more will result in a plummet to the canyon floor below (20d6 bludgeoning damage).

The Needles themselves may be scaled with a DC 12 Str (Athletics) check; the first climber can let down rope for others to follow (but this method does provide total concealment to the climbers from any gnoll guards above). The top of the Needles themselves are strewn with rubble and sliced with small fissures.

The gnolls have built huts and structures within in their encampment out of a mixture of construction types. Smaller structures are constructed from the semi-fossilized rib bones of gargantuan animals excavated from the canyon walls in the vicinity of The Gods' Needles. These are lashed together at the top and covered with cured hides. At the apex of the rib bones is an adjustable flap that allows smoke to escape (it gets cold at night in the high desert, and thus every evening a fire is lit). Larger structures are composed of adobe with flat roofs braced by wooden beams, long-dried in the desert sun, and occasionally reinforced by more of the mysterious megafauna bones. Doorways are slightly shorter than a gnoll, about 6ft in height, and are covered by a hide drape. The interior of the typical dwelling contains a pallet of dirty furs for each gnoll or captive living there, a central stone fire circle, the weapons and armor of any

gnolls currently in the huts, assorted food stuffs, several water gourds, 1d4 shrunken heads of various humanoids and gnolls and other items unique to each hut listed in the descriptions below.

The Gnolls

The gnolls (and slaves) of the Two Bloody Spears tribe are as follows:

Red Mane, Gnoll Packmaster: AC 16; HP 74 (10d8+30); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+6, 1d6+4 piercing) or greataxe x2 (+6, 1d12+4 slashing plus 2d6 fire); **Ranged** javelin x2 (+6, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+4 piercing); **SA** incite rampage (recharge 5-6, 30ft), multiattack (weapon x2, incite rampage); **Str** +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** rampage; **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Equipment: chain shirt, flaming greataxe (treat as flametongue), 4 javelins

Treasure: pouch with 27 gold darics (pp) and 2 shrunken heads filled with gold dust worth 35 silver shekels (gp) each. Red Mane's *belt of scalps* acts as a *ring of protection*, although it is a grisly object, a belt bearing 13 human scalps.

Talking Dog, Gnoll Shaman: AC 15; HP 40 (9d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing) or blood spear (+4, 1d6+2 piercing plus wounding); **Ranged** javelin (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+1 piercing); **SA** spells (Wis +3, DC 11) **Str** +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** rampage; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*light, mending*; 1st (3)—*cure wounds, inflict wounds*; 2nd (2)—*hold person, silence*.

Treasure: silver holy symbol set with lizard teeth (worth 35 silver shekels), pouch with 18 gold darics (pp), 35 silver shekels (gp) and a 3 shrunken humanoid heads stuffed with gold dust (35 silver shekels each). Talking Dog's blood spear acts as a *sword of wounding*.

Gnoll Acolyte: AC 15; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), scimitar (+4, 1d6+2 slashing); **Ranged** javelin (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+1 piercing); **SA** spells (Wis+3, DC 11); **Str** +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** rampage; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Spells: 1st (2)—*cure wounds*.

Gnoll Pack Lord: AC 15; HP 49 (9d8+9); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d4+3 piercing) or glaive x2 (+5, 10ft, 1d10+3 slashing); **Ranged** longbow x2 (+4, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+2 piercing); **SA** incite rampage (recharge 5-6, 30ft), multiattack (weapon x2, incite rampage); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** rampage; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Elite Gnoll Warrior: AC 15; HP 35 (5d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d4+3 piercing), scimitar (+5, 1d6+3 slashing); **Ranged** longbow (+3, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+1 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** rampage; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Gnoll: AC 15; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), spear (+4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Ranged** longbow (+3, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+1 piercing); **Str** +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** 2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** 2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** rampage; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Gnoll Female: AC 15; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+1 piercing), spear (+4, 1d6+1 piercing); **Ranged** longbow (+4, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+2 piercing); **Str** +1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** rampage; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.



Gnoll Cub: AC 13; HP 9 (2d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+2, 1d4 piercing), spear (+2, 1d6 piercing); **Ranged** shortbow (+3, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+1 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** rampage; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Hyena: AC 11; HP 5 (1d10+1); Spd 50ft; **Melee** bite (+2, 1d6 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -3; **Traits** pack tactics; **AL** U; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

Hyena, Giant: AC 12; HP 45 (6d10+12); Spd 50ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 2d6+3 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Traits** rampage; **AL** U; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Commoners: These are noncombatants. Refer to rulebook for stats.

Encampment Key

Area H1: Guard Post

At each of these locations, a hyena skull has been mounted upon a short pole. During the day, **3 gnolls** and a **hyena** are tasked with keeping watch here for intruders or escaping slaves. At night, **5 gnolls** and a **hyena** man each of these positions but, as there have never been any intruders and the slaves are locked away before sunset, they are not terribly vigilant, spending most of their time gambling and dozing, and have tactical disadvantage on Wis (Perception) checks. There is a 25% chance at any given time that one of the elite warriors is on duty or checking on the guards (in which case they will be very alert).

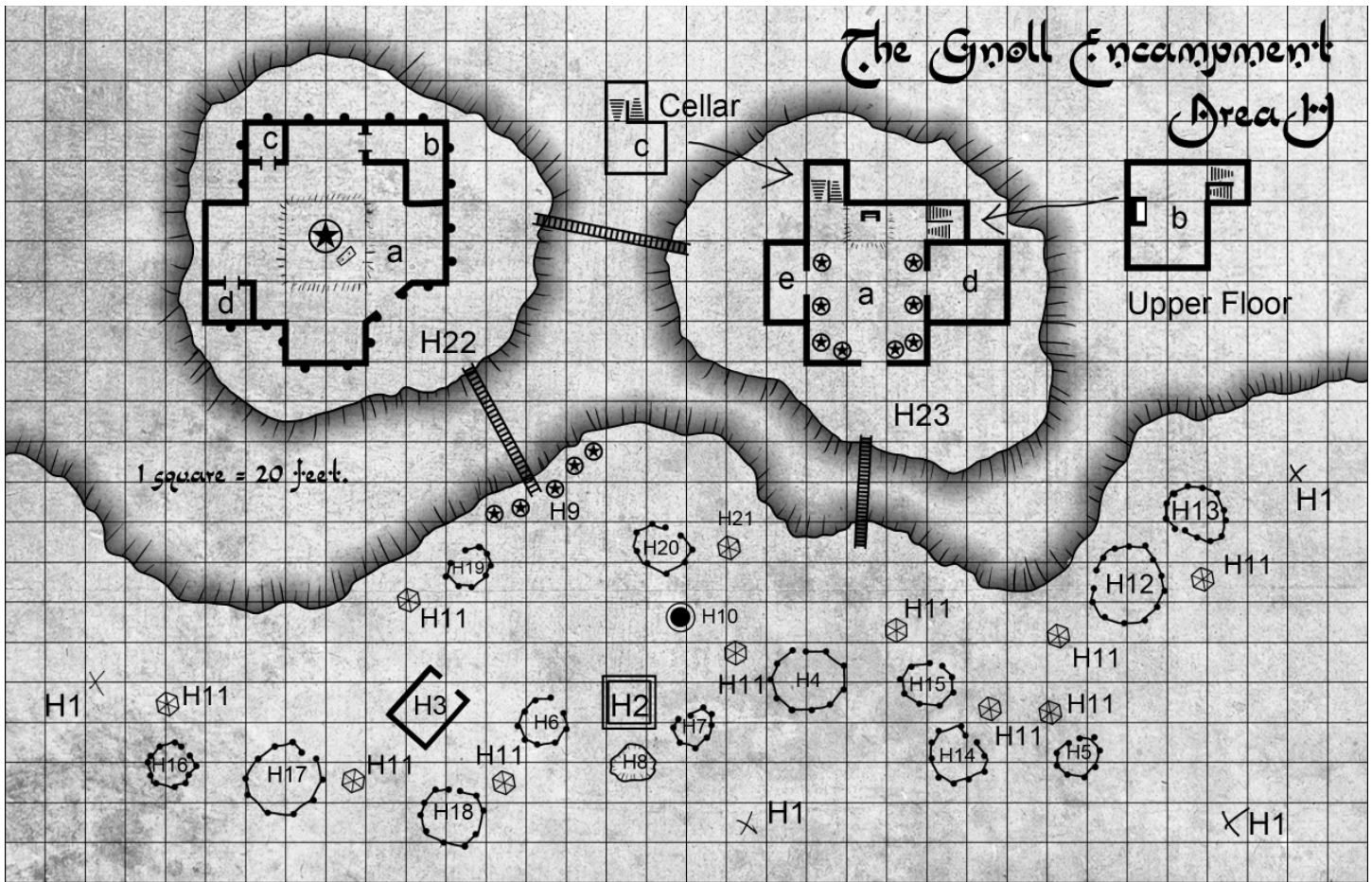
Area H2: Slave Grounds

This area is where the slaves taken by Red Mane's band in their raids are worked each day. Every day there are clothes to be mended, weapons and armor to be cleaned, and other small tasks the gnolls don't wish to perform. There are currently 10 captives (see Areas H6 and H7) being held — all the previous slaves have been sold, eaten, or sacrificed to Alquemadak. A 3ft high wall of poorly dressed, dry-fitted stone surrounds the area. The ground is littered with waste, as the slaves are worked to death and allowed to clean their area only in their "free" time. Whenever slaves are present, **3 female gnolls** keep watch over the area.

Area H3: Storehouse

This large structure is the main storehouse for the goods taken from the caravans and destined to be passed on to smugglers. One of the bachelor **elite gnoll warriors** and his **hyena** are always on guard outside this building.

Every month, a caravan of smugglers sneaks into the valley below to collect their ill-gotten goods and pay Red Mane his share. The smugglers are not due for two weeks, and they do not factor into the adventure. However, one of Talking Dog's acolytes is a clever fellow and has learned how to read. In order to keep from being cheated, Red Mane has ordered the young priest to keep a written record of every item passed on to the smugglers and how much in goods was returned in payment. The bright fellow has gone one step further, and included a list of the names of the people his masters deal with. The inventories and list are written in a very poor form of the Common tongue, but are legible. Anyone who has found the list of names in Hiram Parth's house (see **Area D**) recognizes these as the same individuals that Parth has been dealing with.



The building is packed with crates, boxes, and bales of trade goods: silks, tea, exotic furs, imported foodstuffs, and bars of gold are all stacked inside. In one corner is a small portable writing table. Opening the table reveals a stack of papers (the manifest mentioned above), several quills, a jar of ink, a penknife, blotting paper, and an abacus. The goods (should the party just make off with them and not return them to the Satrap) are worth 45,000 silver shekels (gp) in total, though some items are of dubious nature (a few bags of exotic drugs and illegal alchemical ingredients). It would require an entire caravan to move all of these goods, though 10,000 shekels' worth could be transported in as few as four backpacks if the more valuable goods are picked out.

Area H4: Young Bloods' Lodge

This hide hut serves as the home of **12 gnolls**. These gnolls are the youngest and thus lowest warriors in the band and have yet to earn enough of a reputation to have their own dwelling. Half of the warriors are present here at any given time, usually sleeping, and the rest are on duty at the guard posts. There are also 1d4 **hyenas** here at any given time.

Area H5: Old Pack Lord's Hut

A **gnoll packlord** lives in this hut with his pet **giant hyena**. Once he was in command of the band, but was defeated and cast aside by Red Mane during that packmaster's rise to power. Now, it is his job to watch the slaves and make sure the younger warriors keep to their tasks. He is more than a little peeved that he has been placed in a position he sees as beneath him. Inside there is a dirty fur pallet, the pack lord's spare armor and weapons (a battleaxe, heavy wooden shield, and scale mail), several wineskins (mostly empty), and scattered foodstuffs. Most night he picks out a female slave or two to serve him, and is often drunk and passed out by midnight.

Areas H6–H7: Slave Huts

These two small huts are the living quarters for the most useful slaves kept by Red Mane's band (the others having been sold or killed). The slaves are poorly fed, receive a minimum of water rations, and are beaten on a daily basis. Their living quarters are strewn with trash and debris, as they are worked much too hard to be concerned with sanitation or appearances. They are a sullen and oppressed lot, but will fight with utter frenzy if given the chance to turn the tables on their captors. There are **4 female commoners** in H6 and **6 male commoners** in H7 (one is the dwarf Havrak Dwellingdeep). All the rest are normal human caravaners or desert nomads taken in various raids (1d6hp each).

Development: If Havrak Dwellingdeep is questioned, he will advise the PCs of the trap he built in **Area H23b**. If he is safely returned to the Dwarven Souk of Salt Springs, the PCs will be rewarded with 100 gold darics (pp).

Area H8: Midden Pit

This 12ft deep pit is used as a rubbish dump by the slaves. It provides a potential hiding place, as the gnolls don't bother to search it unless a slave is missing.

Area H9: Votive Statues

These crudely carved wooden statues of the various aspects of Alquemedak the Hyena God stand 8ft tall and are decorated with thin, beaten sheets of gold (250 shekels worth apiece). From right to left the statues depict: the Master of Fortune, an aspect to which the gnolls pray to bring them fat and soft targets to plunder; the Taker of Slaves, who stands with both hands clutching manacles, ready to add another victim to the Hyena God's collection of slaves; the Lord of Carrion, who is crouching in offal, a twisted grin on its face; the Giver of Plentitude in Exchange for

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Sacrifice, its hands holding a bloodstained bowl before it in which small animals and objects are smashed to gain the Hyena God's favor; and finally the Smasher of Skulls, standing tall and strong with its arms crossed, each hand holding a war club. Each of these may be identified by questioning a gnoll prisoner. The gnolls pray to the Smasher of Skulls before each raid, and destroying this totem causes a considerable reduction in morale for any gnoll that witnesses its destruction.

Area H10: Well

Dwarven slaves were worked to death to dig this well 100ft down into the highest aquifer. The current batch of slaves spends a good deal of their time raising water from the well and carrying it to the cisterns and gnoll dwellings. If the party is looking for further adventures, the well no doubt connects with a host of caverns below.

Area H11: Storage Huts

These small huts are only 5ft high and are constructed in the same manner as the common dwellings. Each is claimed by a particular **gnoll** who has a 25% chance of looking through its contents at any given time of the day or night. They are filled with foodstuff, looted amphorae mostly filled with water — though there is a 45% chance of finding one filled with expensive wine worth 25 shekels (gp) — tools, clothes, and other assorted household items. Most of the goods are of little value, though looted trade goods worth 1d10+5 silver shekels (gp) can be found.

Area H12: Veteran's Hut

This hut is the sleeping place for **5 elite gnoll warriors** and **8 female gnolls**. **Five cubs** occupy two of the pallets. Each veteran likewise has his own pet **hyena**. As high-ranking warriors of the band, these veterans are not required to stand watch at night, and can be found here late in the evening and until morning. The females and cubs stay nearby during the day, and retreat to their hut as night falls. Hidden in the pallets is 35 shekels (gp) in assorted coinage.

Area H13: Empty Hut

This dwelling is normally occupied by 6 elite gnoll warriors, their mates, and 3 cubs. However, they are currently out hunting in the mesas to the north of the Needles, and have taken any items of value with them.

Area H14: Warriors' Lodge

This hut is inhabited by **8 gnolls**. Living with them are **10 female gnolls**, **6 gnoll cubs**, and **4 hyenas**. Half the warriors are here at any given time, the others on watch. One pallet has a silver penny whistle worth 20 silver drachmas (sp) hidden in it.

Area H15: Bachelors' Hut

This hut is the home to **3 gnolls** and their **3 hyenas**. These three are all bachelors and the hut looks like it, with items and food debris strewn about. They do not stand watch but are instead tasked with guarding the storehouse (Area H3), where one is always on guard with his hyena. Among the pallets are 4 silver shekels (gp), 45 silver drachmas (sp), and 56 copper obols (cp).

Area H16: Feuding Hut

A hut occupied by **4 gnolls** and their families (**3 gnoll females**, **2 gnoll cubs**, and **2 hyenas**); there is a pallet for a fifth, but he was killed



in a recent caravan raid, and the four remaining gnolls have been busy feuding over his belongings. These four stand opposite watches, two from dawn to midday, the others from dusk to midnight. The belongings in contention consist of a shrunken head filled with gold dust worth 35 silver shekels (gp), and a small collection of coinage worth a total of 22 silver shekels (gp).

Area H17: The Brothers

Although a large hut and thus usually occupied by a gnoll veterans with families, this hut is the living space of **6 gnolls**, all brothers, and their **3 hyenas**. They have learned to combine their meager resources. The brothers all stand night watch at various parts of the encampment, and thus are found here sleeping during the day. Unlike most of the bachelor huts, this one is somewhat clean and organized. Among the pallets are: 3 silver shekels (gp), 15 silver drachmas (sp), and 6 copper obols (cp).

Area H18: The Dying Gnoll

A large hut occupied by an elite gnoll warrior (no longer capable of combat) and his sons (**5 gnolls**). The older gnoll was severely wounded in the last raid, and is barely hanging onto life. In consideration of his decades of service, Red Mane has allowed the old warrior to take his time dying in relative peace. The old gnoll's sons, on the other hand, have been busy standing day watches and trying their best to outperform each other, all in the hopes of being granted their father's possessions after he dies (assuming they haven't already stolen the best parts). Along with the warriors are a total of **8 female gnolls**, **7 gnoll cubs**, and **3 hyenas**, representing their various families. The veteran's treasures consist of 5 gold dust-filled shrunken heads worth 35 shekels (gp) each and assorted stolen trade goods worth a total of 100 silver shekels (gp).

Area H19: Rite of Passage

Four **gnoll females** and their 4 **hyenas** occupy this small hut. They are in seclusion while they await their rite of passage. Two **shaman acolytes** guard the entrance to this hut day and night, changing the guard every six hours. Each female wears crude jewelry made of semi-precious stones worth 5 silver drachmas (sp) each.

Area H20: Swinging Gnolls

This small dwelling was once the home of 4 gnolls. These warriors were charged with guarding the storehouse, but were caught pilfering from it and brutally executed by Red Mane. In his anger, they were flayed alive in their corpses left to hang in the hut until they rot. The smell is obvious to anyone within 10ft of the hut.

Area H21: Looted Storage

This storage hut belonged to the executed gnolls in **Area H20**. As a result, it has been thoroughly looted. The interior is empty, save for discarded sacks and boxes.

Area H22: Temple of the Hyena God

Standing upon the western Needle is a massive construction of adobe bricks. The same giant ribs used elsewhere in the camp are incorporated here as decorative ornamentation and load-bearing supports. The exterior surfaces of the building have been etched with crude totemistic images of death, destruction, and fire.

Area H22a: Worship Hall

The peak of this adobe structure rises 30ft above the ground, and has a 10ft diameter circular opening at the top to allow light in and smoke out. The air reeks of offal and blood, and fat red candles give off the sent of frying meat. In the center of the temple is a large statue of Alquemedak carved from gleaming obsidian. The statue depicts the Hyena God, a gnoll-like demonic figure, standing upright, its hands raised towards the heavens, and the shattered remains of its victims at its feet. The god's hands and face are covered in dried blood, and its elongated, tooth-filled maw is open in a howl of triumph. The statue is 15ft tall and stands on a dais of more of the gigantic bones.

Before the statue sits a 6ft by 6ft by 3ft slab of basalt. Chains to hold sacrificial victims are attached at the four corners of the slab. The altar is covered in dried blood, as is the floor and dais around it. Surrounding the altar and the statue is a circle of twenty 3ft high red candles made from the tallow of humanoids. Each candle is inscribed with Chaos runes and punctuated by humanoid teeth pressed into the tallow.

Creatures: During the day 3 **gnoll acolytes**, accompanied by a **giant hyena**, tend the sacred candles and stand ready to perform any services required of them.

Area H22b: Shaman's Chamber

Here **Talking Dog** and his pet **giant hyena** (if they survived the Ambush at the Ford) lives and works, unless he is performing ceremonies in the temple, or serving as Red Mane's advisor. Two **gnoll acolyte shamans** accompany Talking Dog wherever he goes. Of all the gnoll dwellings, this one is the dirtiest. Talking Dog refuses to be bothered with cleaning, and rarely considers the filth here important enough to order a slave to see to it. There is a small bed of furs opposite the entrance, and next to the bed is a locked, ironbound wooden chest. Inside the chest are a *potion of invisibility*, a *ring of animal influence*, 15 gold darics (pp), 440 silver shekels (gp), and 76 silver drachmas (sp). A wooden table and chair rests against one wall, but the shaman rarely uses it as anything other than a scratching post or acolyte beater.

Talking Dog

"The Great God Alquemedak commands that I offer your soul and flesh to him. His will cannot be denied!"

Description: Talking Dog is old — at least for a gnoll — and his pelt has grown gray. He walks with a slight hunch and a limp but is still a fearsome warrior who can command the powers of his demonic god.

Personality: Mad, mad, mad, mad.

Background: Talking Dog felt the power of the Hyena God at an early age and, while still a cub, ran off into the desert to seek the voices that called to him. He found them, and returned to his band to murder and sacrifice all to the glory of Alquemedak. Since then, he has served a variety of packmasters, killing those who don't obey his religious laws, and brining up from the ranks those who will. Red Mane obeys and may live for now, at least as long as Alquemedak commands it.

Area H22c: Acolytes' Hall

This chamber serves as the living quarters of Talking Dog's acolytes. There is little in this room save for eight filthy fur pallets — the acolytes know better than to leave anything valuable unattended. Most of the time the room stands empty, as Talking Dog keeps his minions busy. At night 1d4+1 **gnoll acolytes** can be found here, sleeping off the day's labors.

Area H22d: Larder

This dark room is used as a larder by Talking Dog and his acolytes. Inside are a private cistern and various foodstuffs — all rotten and scum covered as befits worshippers of Alquemedak.

Area H23: Packmaster's Palace

Smaller only than the Temple of the Hyena god, this multi-level adobe structure serves as the palace of Red Mane, Packmaster of the Two Bloody Spears tribe.

Area H23a: Throne Hall

The floor is covered with the dirty pelts of various deadly predators, all hunted down and slain by Red Mane himself. A 50ft long strip of expensive (and now ruined) purple silk leads from the entrance to the base of a dais. Upon this pediment sits Red Mane's throne of bones. The bones are the remains of his greatest foes, intricately woven to provide a fitting seat for the packmaster. The dais itself stretches 20ft from the back wall, and is made from the carved shoulder blades and hipbones of some massive beast excavated from the canyon walls below. Along the walls stand eight carved wooden statues, each the likeness of one of the band's former packmasters, three of whom are Red Mane's ancestors. Each statue is crudely painted in an effort to make it more realistic. The walls of the throne room are painted in rather gruesome detail with scenes from Red Mane's life, from his cubhood, through his years among northmen mercenaries, his rise to power among the gnolls alongside Talking Dog, and his cunning in striking a deal with a human merchant (if the party looks closely at the painting they will recognize a resemblance between the pictured merchant and Hiram Parth). Behind the throne is a large unlocked ironbound chest that contains the shrunken and preserved heads of every gnoll who has dared to challenge Red Mane for leadership of the band — 17 in all, each stuffed with gold dust worth 35 silver shekels (gp). Unless a council has been called, this chamber is empty.

Area H23b: Packmaster's Bedchamber

As befits the leader of a prosperous band of gnolls, only the finest decorations and accouterments serve the packmaster's needs. Against one wall is a feather mattress and carved wooden bed complete with silk

DEATH IN THE PAINTED CANYONS

canopy looted from a caravan. Sadly, gnolls are hard on their furnishings, and the bed has been cut and rent in multiple places. An actual fireplace, built by dwarven slaves, complete with a brick chimney provides heat and light throughout the day and night. A jumble of wood sits next to the fireplace, and is refilled daily by slaves.

Opposite the fireplace is an upright harpsichord, again looted from a caravan. Red Mane does not know how to play it, but is always on the lookout for a slave who can. Currently, that slave is an elven woman named **Elisa Stardream (commoner)**. Elisa is Red Mane's favorite, and along with his 3 mates (**female gnolls**) and 2 slave concubines (**commoners**), can usually be found here with **Red Mane** and is his trained **giant hyena**. Nearby is a table and chair, at which Red Mane takes his meals (the women must sit on the floor and watch). Nailed to the underside of the table is a small wooden box that contains Red Mane's greatest treasure, a ruby and gold gorget-style necklace worth 3000 silver shekels (gp).

Traps: The fireplace was built by dwarven slaves now all dead save for Havrak Dwellingdeep (see **Area H7**). The whole thing is rigged to collapse when the proper stone is depressed (AC 15 to be struck from across the room by a ranged attack). Hidden beneath the wood pile is a waterskin filled with lamp oil as part of the trap planned by the now all but dead dwarves. When the trap is triggered, the hearth and chimney collapse into the 10ft by 10ft area directly in front of them, dealing bludgeoning and fire damage to anyone occupying those squares. This in turn spreads the burning contents of the fireplace onto the wood pile. In the next round the oil-filled skin explodes dealing fire damage to anyone still in the room for 3 rounds and requiring an additional saving throw to avoid catching on fire. A DC 18 Wis (Perception) check will reveal the trap.

Red Mane

"I will enjoy your death, almost as much as I will enjoy eating your flesh afterwards."

Description: Red Mane is a big, scarred gnoll of unknown age — at least twenty-three summers. His namesake hair is kept long and wild, as wild as the rampant rage in his eyes.

Personality: Red Mane is cruel, callous, demanding, and fearless.

Background: Once, many summers ago, Red Mane served in a mixed group of mercenaries that fought in the wars of the softer races. There he learned how to lead men in a civilized way, as well as how to seek out the dark underbelly of city life. Red Mane used this knowledge, and the support of the prophet Talking Dog, to cement his hold over the Two Bloody Spears band of gnolls. Now, he tries to balance his instincts with his learning and raise his people up to become a major force in the region. Luckily for the other races, he lacks the intelligence to do this, and instead merely mimics the military discipline and tactics he saw as a mercenary.

Area H23c: Treasury

Inside this subterranean chamber is Red Mane's personal treasure hoard of 150 gold darics (pp) 1280 silver shekels (gp), 3,450 silver drachmas (sp), 9080 copper obols (cp), and three diamonds worth 500 silver shekels (gp) each.

Area H23d: Bodyguard Barracks

This is the home of Red Mane's personal bodyguard, a troop of 7 **elite gnoll warriors** and their 3 **hyenas**. These gnolls are the finest in the band and absolutely loyal to Red Mane — at least as long as he is strong enough to discourage one of them taking over the band. None of them are married, but they do have their pick of available females, and all have their eyes on the young gnoll females awaiting their rite of passage and eventual mating in **Area H19**. Searching the nooks and crannies of this room reveals a +1 *dagger*, 56 silver drachmas (sp), 45 copper obols (cp), and three shrunken heads filled with gold dust worth 35 shekels (gp) each.

Area H23e: Packmaster's Larder

This foul-smelling chamber is used as a larder by Red Mane, his personal bodyguard, and favored warriors. Inside are a private cistern, various foodstuffs (including haunches of smoked human, elf, and dwarf

meat), and thirteen casks of rare Monrovia Fire Wine worth 55 silver shekels (gp) each stolen from a caravan. Drinking at least one glass forces the imbiber to make a DC 12 Con save or become drunk (poisoned). The PC can make another save for every hour that passes, with a cumulative +1 bonus on the saves.

Rewards and Further Adventures

Assuming the party is successful, His Wisdom will be more than generous. Payment will be prompt and in full, with additional rewards for exemplary behavior. If the entire gnoll band is wiped out or driven off, he will give each hero a +1 enchanted weapon or armor appropriate to their class and profession, plus gives the party an additional 2,000 gold darics (pp). If they managed to uncover Parth's conspiracy, they will receive the above rewards, plus an extra bonus of one fifth of the value of Parth's property (His Wisdom comes into possession of it after the trial and execution of the traitor). This sum will total 5,000 gold darics (pp), but the party will have to wait at least three months for the property to be auctioned and sold. If they choose not to wait, the Pasha will happily hold it for them until their return. All rewards are, of course, subject to the taxation of the satrapy at the rate of 33%.

As long as the PCs have not made fools of themselves and have managed to eliminate the gnolls, they will be welcome at Salt Springs anytime for as long as they want to stay, and given the best accommodations and treatment available. If the PCs have become fugitives from the law of Salt Springs, they can clear their names and collect the above reward by proving that Hiram Parth was in league with the Two Bloody Spears (probably by recovering the gnolls' loot manifest together with the evidence from Parth's own residence). If the PCs do not clear their name, then they receive no rewards and remain on the run from the pasha's men.

If they manage to defeat the gnolls, but fail to uncover Parth's treachery, His Wisdom will not be very happy with them when the attacks resume. He will issue an arrest warrant for the party, and should they ever find themselves in his satrapy again, they had best be disguised and using assumed names. If they are arrested (and assuming that they don't do anything stupid such as resisting arrest) they will be taken to Salt Springs and placed in the dungeon for three days. Once they have had a chance to cool their heels a bit, the guards come and escort the PCs to the edge of the satrapy, returning to them any weapons or other items they carried (minus a small amount of coin and jewelry that was 'lost'). There the guards inform them that they are no longer welcome in the Satrapy of Salt Springs, and to return is to discover that failure is punishable by death. Additionally, His Wisdom will have sent messages to neighboring rulers and to the Court of the Grand Caliph describing the PCs and their perfidious ways. The party can expect complications should they get into trouble in any nearby domain.

Our heroes adventures need not end here, however, and the Painted Canyons as well as the Satrapy of Salt Springs would be a suitable place to explore and profit from. The Painted Canyons are no doubt filled with other interesting places to explore and loot (where did the strange gigantic bones used by the gnolls come from, and are there more of those creatures still living somewhere in the fathomless depths of the canyons?). The destruction of the Two Bloody Spears tribe has left a power vacuum in the Painted Canyons, one that any number of would be warlords might be happy to fill. Further, rumors abound that somewhere in the Painted Canyons is the Lost City of Omlach-Tur, a cliff-dwelling ruin and once-capital of a long dead empire.

Having a permanent base is and being the only adventurers the Pasha Abubakkar will allow to operate in his area is a great boon to such endeavors. Seeing the success of paying bounties for the gnolls, His Wisdom may desire to see other foul creatures hunted down in the Painted Canyons. Finally, the PCs could follow the leads learned from Parth and the gnolls and travel to far off Bhutan and root out the Zuma Qulldishi.

Jungle Ruins of Madaro-Shanti

An adventure by Scott Casper for 5th level PCs

Introduction

A century ago or more, when the town of Chologadi was just a frontier fort on the coast, Madaro-Shanti was the most powerful city-state in the entire Ambicuarua Jungle. Its citizens were highly advanced in the arts of magic, and even retained some vestiges of magical quasi-technologies perhaps more ancient than humankind itself. Their prosperity made for jealous enemies, none more covetous than the powerful and sorcerous Kiengaa Tribe of the deep jungles. The Kiengaa plotted against Madaro-Shanti, making dark pacts with the monstrous ape-centaurs known as the Borsin, and with the monkey-faced, snake-like monsters known as the Hanu-Naga. Once this terrible, unnatural army was gathered, the Kiengaa and their allies laid siege to Madaro-Shanti itself.

As the walls of Madaro-Shanti fell, and the invaders swarmed into the city, the high priest of the city closed himself within the royal shrine, praying to all the gods for intervention. Yet none of the gods answered his prayers until the last – and that was Ojala, whom the people of Madaro-Shanti knew as a god of evil and treachery. A deadly bargain was struck that night, and true to his promise, Ojala caused a horrible wasting disease to strike the besieging army. But the full extent of the evil god's treachery became clear when the surviving people of Madaro-Shanti themselves began to succumb to the same disease which had slain their enemies. Within a fortnight, all the people of Madaro-Shanti had either died of the plague or scattered into the depths of the predator-filled jungle.

In only a few years, the city was overgrown by the jungle and fell into ruin, but the magical disease was to have one final consequence. Not only did the contagion affect the Kiengaa and the Madaro-Shanti – it also infected the mind of a powerful nature-spirit that inhabited the surrounding jungles. The nature-spirit Cho-Odaa, driven mad by the disease and hungry for vengeance against all humankind, has discovered the means to exact a terrible reckoning (see **Player Background** and **The Storm Basin** at the end of the module).

Player Background

The port city of Chologadi lies in the tropical southern lands, on the perilous coastline of a dark, jungle-shrouded continent. It is a town of explorers, trappers, and traders, making tenuous alliances with the civilized tribes of the region, but also forced to battle off raids by savages and cannibals, who inhabit the region in hordes. In recent weeks, a new threat has appeared to endanger the town's precarious existence on these dangerous coasts. Within the jungle, trappers and hunters have encountered a spreading pall of black clouds and roiling fog, a terrible phenomenon that causes death and rot as it slowly expands. The dark clouds are now only thirty miles from the town itself, and advancing at a rate of perhaps two miles in a day. The town's livelihood has been brought to its knees; trading has virtually stopped, and there are no living animals left to hunt, for all are fleeing. The town leaders have offered great rewards to anyone who can discover the source of this threat and end it, for it is terribly clear what will happen to the town itself if the cloud should reach its walls. Thus far, however, no one who has taken up the challenge has returned from the tangled depths

of the jungle. In a final attempt to combat the threat at its source, the town has outfitted everything that is needed for a full-scale expedition – all that is needed is a brave party of adventurers to lead it.

GM Notes

If you are using this adventure in the **Lost Lands** campaign setting, the port of Chologadi is located on the southeastern coast of the continent of Libynos where the waters of the Vahari Delta spill into the Reaping Sea. The Ambicuarua Jungle is part of the vast inland forest of Libynos that runs from the Seething Jungle in the south to the Malagro Jungle far to the north.

The Ruins of the City of Madaro-Shanti contain four important adventure areas: the Gatehouse, the Plaza Well, the Palace, and the Dungeons below the Palace; the secret to the black death-cloud is to be found in the Dungeons. It is possible for the players to bypass the Gatehouse and the Plaza Well and still reach the bottom of the dungeons, but the areas under the Plaza Well allow the players to open areas of the Dungeons that cannot otherwise be reached without breaking down stone walls.

The town leaders of Chologadi have outfitted an expedition for a party of adventurers to lead into the jungle against whatever threat faces them in the City of Madaro-Shanti. The players can bring with them whatever of these resources they choose to take.

5 porters (**commoners**)
 5 guards
 2 mules
 2 mule drivers (**commoners**)
 1 jungle guide (**scout**)
 1 wagon drawn by 2 mules

In addition to the normal benefits of support personnel, such as carrying loot and lanterns, the hirelings in the expedition will also be able to decipher some of the ancient Madaro-Shanti language, which is likely to be very useful. The players may choose whether or not to bring along the entire outfit, parts of it, or no extra support at all.

There is no effect to remaining in the cloud for up to three days. However, if a person remains within the cloud more than three days, he must make a DC 15 Con saving throw once every six hours. Once a save is failed, he loses 1 hit point per hour he remains in the cloud. A long rest outside the cloud resets this effect.

Rumors

The town of Chologadi is talking about nothing but the approaching black clouds, and many people are packing up their belongings to flee. The players cannot avoid learning that everyone suspects the clouds to originate in the ruins of an ancient city about thirty miles into the jungle. The ruins have always been considered to be cursed, and the clouds seem to center upon the area where the city is said to be.

Each PC will also start the scenario having heard one of the "Basic Rumors" below (roll 1d6 for each, do not re-roll duplicate results). Players





who make any effort to learn more about Madaro-Shanti before their expedition to the ruins (or upon returning to civilization in the course of the scenario) can roll for an additional rumor (roll 1d12 using both tables together). If they spread some money around, they will receive all of the basic rumors, and may roll for additional “Uncommon Rumors” (roll 1d8+6 on the table) at a rate of about 10gp per rumor.

Basic Rumors

1. A people called the Madaro-Shanti once lived in a jungle city twenty miles or so from Chologadi. The city is the reason why the jungles are called “Madaro-Shanti.” A curse drove them out long ago, and only their empty villages remain. (Mostly true)

2. The dark cloud is not dangerous as long as you don’t stay in it for several days. (True)

3. It was only five years ago that the dark cloud cover over Madaro-Shanti was first observed, but there have always been rumors that the area is cursed. The dark clouds have been spreading slowly ever since. (True)

4. A ruined stone road leads to the ruins, but the jungles have grown past the place where the road begins. However, a well-paid guide can lead the adventurers to the place where the road starts. (True)

5. The vegetation has all died in the ruins of the jungle city, and yet some appears to be alive in undeath. (False)

6. Beware of the monkeys in the ruins. (True)

JUNGLE RUINS OF MADARO-SHANTI

Uncommon Rumors

7. Only tombs remain intact in the ruins. (False)
8. The heads look outward to reveal their secrets. (True)
9. The people of Madaro-Shanti spoke a language that is similar, but not completely identical to the language of the tribes around Chologadi. (True, and this ought to warn the players that a *comprehend languages* spell or a native guide could be useful)
10. The ancient people of Madaro-Shanti were more advanced than most people today know and had magic at least as great as ours. (True)
11. The people of Madaro-Shanti worshiped the wrathful Iron God and he was the source of their curse. (False)
12. The gatehouse in the ruins might open more than just a gate. (True)
13. Since before the dark clouds, the nature spirits have been in turmoil, speaking rumors about their brother Cho-Oda and the disease that afflicts him. (True)
14. There is an old saying about Madaro-Shanti: "The Well Moves the Walls" (True)

Reaching the Ruins

The easiest way to reach the ruins of Madaro-Shanti, other than flying, is to take the old road which leads to the city from a spot about a mile deep into the jungle. The road is constructed of great stone blocks sunken deep into the ground, occasionally wending its way past large stone statues, most broken, overgrown with vines, or badly cracked. In many places the road has been buckled and ruptured by magical earthquakes during the siege of Madaro-Shanti, and it is mostly overgrown with jungle vegetation. Because of these obstacles, it will take a full three days to travel the thirty miles to the ruined city, even with the benefit of the road. Trying to hack through the jungle without using the road lengthens the expedition to five full days.

Whatever pathway the party takes into the Madaro-Shanti, as soon as they enter the dark, roiling fog they will note that the vegetation is diseased and dying, and that all sounds of wildlife – birdcalls in particular – have ceased. The remainder of the trip will be an eerie journey through silence and darkness.

Should the adventurers approach Madaro-Shanti by way of the ruined road, their first sight of the city will be the ruined gatehouse that once protected the city gates (see, **The Gatehouse** below). Adventurers approaching the ruined city by any other route will first see the partially collapsed city walls and or the surrounding jungle environs.

Wandering Monsters in the Jungle and the Ruins

There is a 2 in 6 chance of a wandering monster encounter per six hours spent in the jungle (not applicable if the party flies overhead). There is no maximum roster for monsters. Roll 1d8 on the following table for results:

1d8	Wandering Monsters
1	1d12 ghouls (day), 2d10 ghouls (night)
2	1d8 giant ants
3	1d4 borsin (day), 1d12 giant vampire bats (night)
4	1d6 spire monkeys (day), 1d4 greater bats (night)
5	1d8 giant centipedes
6	1d4 giant spiders (day), 1d6 zombies (night)
7-8	Special Encounter: roll or determine the result using the Special Encounters section below.

Ant, Giant: AC 15; HP 9 (2d6+2); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Str** +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** -3, **Cha** -4; **AL** U; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Bat, Giant Vampire: AC 13; HP 9 (2d6+2); Spd 10ft, fly 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d8+2 piercing plus attach), blood drain (1d8+2 piercing); **Str** +1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** 4, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -2; **AL** U; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Bat, Greater: AC 12; HP 50 (8d10+8); Spd 10ft, fly50ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 3d6+2); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** 4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **AL** U; **CR** 1; **XP** 200. (**Monster Appendix**)

Borsin: AC 12; HP 60 (8d10+16); Spd 40ft; **Melee** claws (+7, 1d6+5 slashing), bite (+7, 1d8+5 piercing); **SA** multiattack (if both claws hit, +2d6 slashing and bite has tactical advantage); **Str** +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Athletics +7; **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (**Fifth Edition Foes** 36)

Centipede, Giant: AC 13; HP 4 (1d6+1); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing plus 3d6 poison, DC 11 Con); **Str** -3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** 5, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -4; **Senses** blindsight 30ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Ghoul Monkey: AC 13; HP 7 (2d4+2); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **Ranged** rock (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+2 bludgeoning); **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -2; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25. (**Monster Appendix**)

Spire Monkey: AC 13; HP 5 (2d4); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** claws (+5, 3d4+3 slashing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** -4, **Wis** 2, **Cha** -2; **AL** CN; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50. (**Monster Appendix**)

Zombie: AC 8, HP 22 (3d8+9); Spd 20ft; **Melee** slam (+3, 1d6+1 bludgeoning); **Immune** poison; **Str** +1, **Dex** -2, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** undead fortitude; **AL** NE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Special Encounters

As a nature-spirit, Cho-Oda's awareness reaches beyond his lair, and when he discerns the presence of the party approaching the ruins, he will attempt to frighten them off using his spirit-powers. At the same time, other nature spirits are trying to communicate to the party that Cho-Oda should be rescued rather than killed. The result is a strange and mixed set of possible visions, dreams, and actual encounters. If the encounter is in a dream, it will be delayed until the next time the PCs sleep. Roll 1d8 for a special encounter, but do not repeat results.

Special Encounter 1

The party encounters a swarm of buzzing, biting flies. Suddenly, the tone of the buzzing shifts until it sounds more like a deep voice chanting, "Cho-Oda...Cho-Oda..."

Special Encounter 2

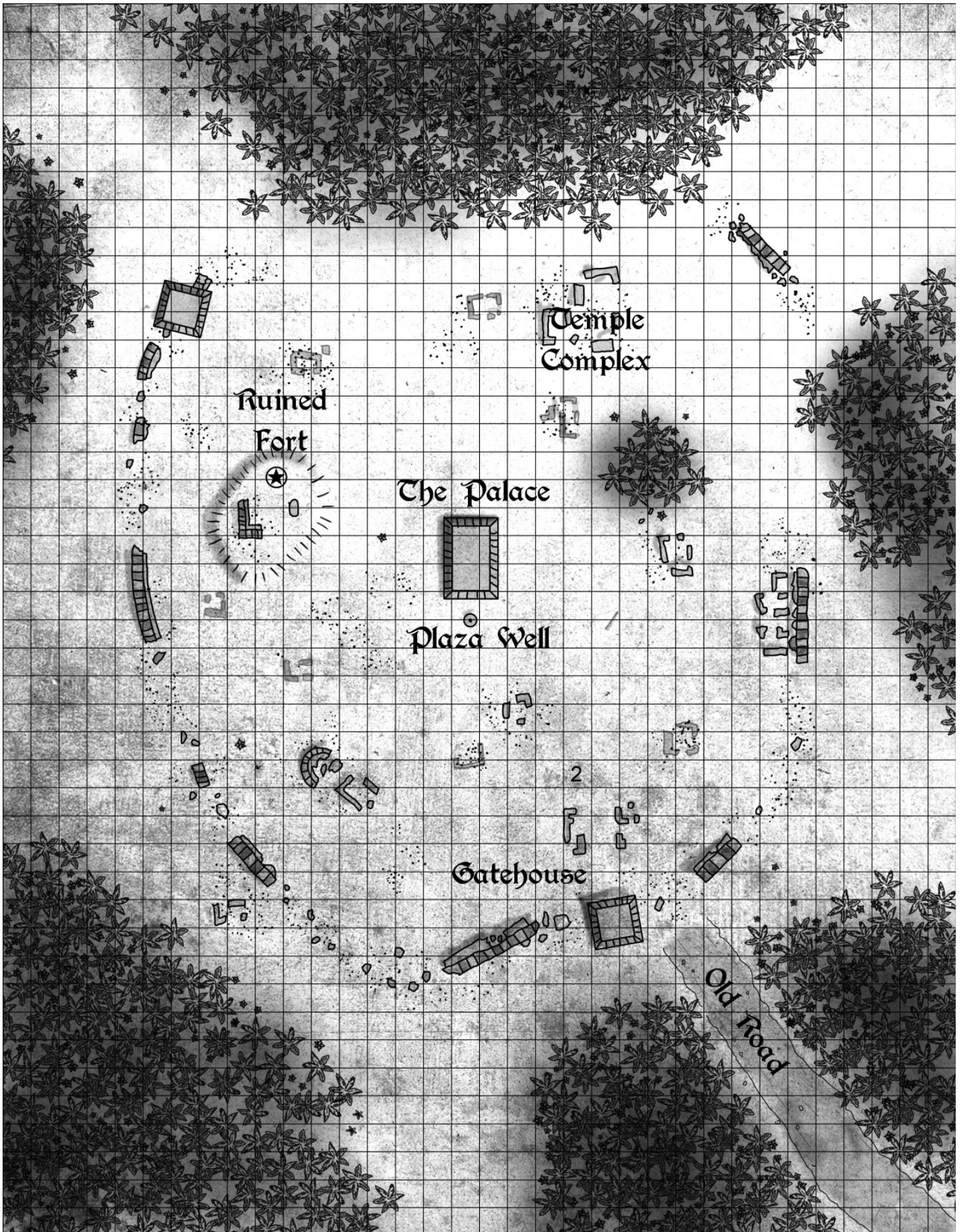
One of the PCs notices a lone antelope in the distance, seemingly staring straight at him. The PC is momentarily transfixed by the staring animal, until the antelope seems to speak to him in a voice that sounds much too close. The voice says, "Beware of Cho-Oda. Rescue Cho-Oda." Then the antelope falls over. If examined, the antelope is dead and appears to have been dead for days.

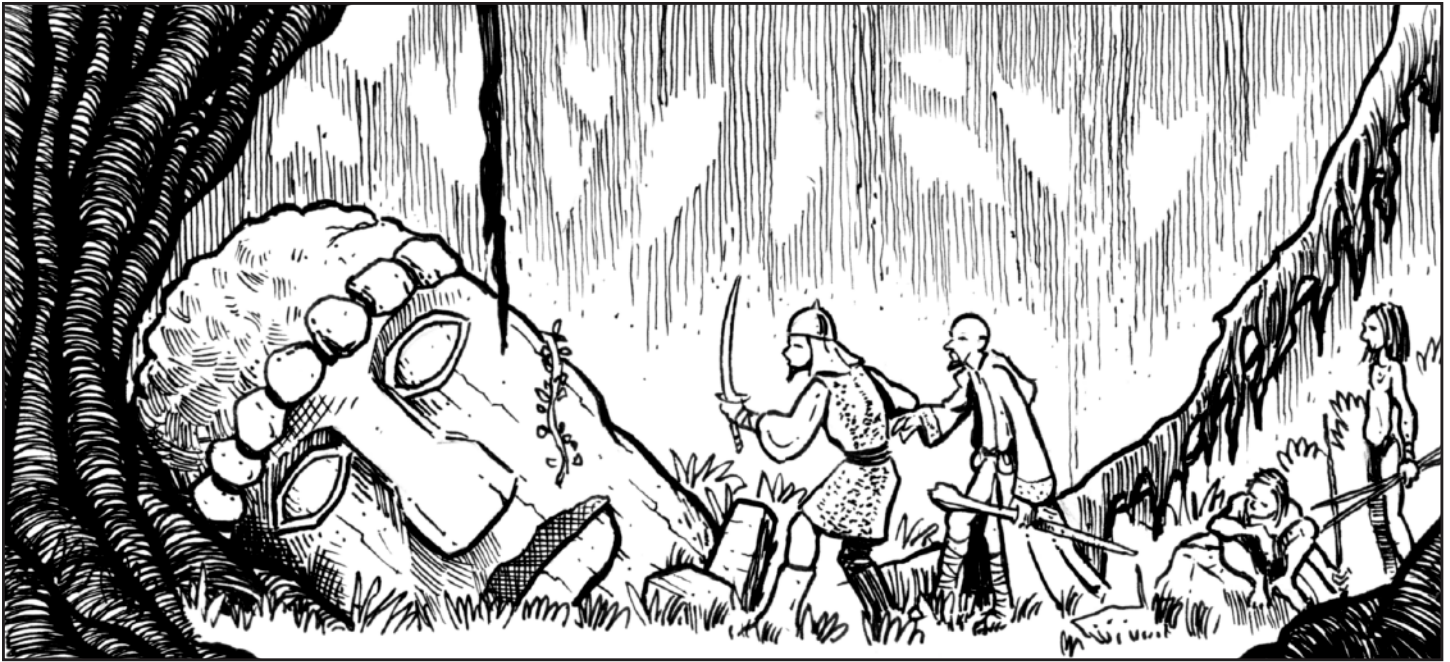
Special Encounter 3

While sleeping – even if sleeping far away from the ruins, but still in the jungle – 1d2+1 of the PCs have the same dream. In the dream, they are surrounded by a darkness so dense that it seems to be a physical thing surrounding them. Unable to move away, the darkness starts to flow over their bodies. A deep voice says, "Explore too deep, and this will be your fate. So speaks Cho-Oda."

Special Encounter 4

There are several monkeys in sight. At the same time, they all lift up rocks and begin pounding them on the stones where they sit. More pounding of stone on stone echoes from elsewhere in the ruins. Suddenly,





the pounding noise sounds like, “Cho-Oda! Cho-Oda! Cho-Oda! Cho-Oda” Then all the monkeys stop pounding rocks at the same time and go back to normal.

Special Encounter 5

One of the PCs – most likely a cleric – has a sudden and momentary vision of a area full of statues (actually **Area D21** in the palace) and a kneeling skeleton in front of them. The skeleton turns its head to face you and says, “Cho-Oda waits for you here.”

Special Encounter 6

A PC has a vision of the same area as in Special Encounter 5. This time, the same deep voice seems to come from no source, but says, “The Basin.”

Special Encounter 7

A PC has a vision of spirits floating in the jungle, taking on the form of jaguars and other forms, then dissolving back into mist. Each one speaks the same message: “Our brother is changed. Help him, and you shall be rewarded.

Special Encounter 8

A PC has a sudden sense of deep water all around him, but it is held back by walls. He knows that he stands in a place where there is great treasure, but cannot see it. He hears the sound of a wall moving, and then the strange feeling disappears.

The Ruins

The Ruins of Madaro-Shanti stretch a quarter-mile in length, but most of the city is nothing more than freestanding stone walls and roofless, gutted-out houses of mud and brick. There are only three locations that are mostly undamaged – the Palace, the Plaza, and the Gatehouse. Camping out in the ruins incurs a risk of wandering monsters. Use the same Wandering Monster table, but check every *four* hours rather than every *six* hours.

The Gatehouse

This is a huge gatehouse, 40ft tall and built of massive, cyclopean stones. The portcullis at the center of the tower is closed, but the walls to either side of the gatehouse are shattered into ruins. The building itself is badly damaged by siege weaponry.

The Gatehouse was once the main defensive tower of the walls surrounding the city, and was not completely destroyed in the siege, although it has clearly been badly damaged. Since the walls on either side of the gatehouse are collapsed, the building can easily be bypassed to enter the city if the players choose to do so.

The party may have heard rumors that opening the gate will be beneficial to their quest, and this is true – as a defensive measure, when the gate is lowered, two walls inside the Palace automatically rise to prevent access to stairs behind them. Since the attackers destroyed the surrounding walls rather than the gatehouse itself, these two staircases in the Palace have remained blocked off for many years.

A small tribe of **12 borsin** make their lair in the area immediately surrounding the Gatehouse. The borsin resemble centaurs, with the upper body of a gorilla upon the lower body of an antelope. If the party approaches the Gatehouse, borsin sentries (1d4) will move to the attack and give warning; others will scramble to join the fray (an additional 1d4 will arrive per 5 combat rounds). If 10 borsin are slain, the rest will scatter in retreat. There are 20 borsin in the tribe.

Borsin (12): AC 12; HP 60 (8d10+16); Spd 40ft; Melee claws x2 (+7, 1d6+5 slashing), bite (+7, 1d8+5 piercing); **SA** multiattack (if both claws hit, +2d6 slashing and bite has tactical advantage); **Str** +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** –3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –1; **Skills** Athletics +7; **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (*Fifth Edition Foes* 36)

Inside the Gatehouse

The party can enter the upper level of the Gatehouse by climbing stairs at the back of the tower (on the side once protected within the walls). The ground floor of the tower is solid stone; the upper level is a single area with a ladder leading up to the tower roof. The area’s floor is covered in bones, many of them complete skeletons. A large winch apparatus in the middle of the area is obviously the means of opening the gate below, and on the wall in front of the winch there is a stone rune on the wall.

If the winch is used to raise the portcullis, the east walls in **Areas P13** and **P14** (in the Palace) will sink into the floor, revealing the hidden staircases. At the same time, the stone rune on the wall will change its appearance into a second rune (which signifies that the doors and portcullis are open instead of closed).

Treasure: a +1 *shield*, a silver-studded half-suit of leather armor (hauberk only) worth 20gp, and a pouch holding 5gp.



The Well

An open courtyard directly in front of the Palace, overgrown with dying jungle creepers and surrounded by ruined buildings. A square stone well, ornately carved, stands in the middle of the Plaza.

The Palace is a huge two-story structure built of massive stone blocks, with a vast, arched doorway. The building is badly damaged from siege engines, and the walls are actually breached in more than one place.

The sides of the stone well are ornately carved. Each side has a deep impression of a handprint; the rest of the carvings are different on each side, pictures of kings and elephants, mainly. At each corner of the well sits a small, carved stone head, probably about twenty pounds in weight.

If anyone examines the heads, he will take note of the fact that they have different numbers of eyes, and that the pupils of the eyes are strange, resembling arrows. The arrows are clues to the operation of the various mechanisms inside the well complex, and are described at the end of the module for reference.

The ornately carved well is the entrance to a series of currently flooded underground chambers which descend deeper and deeper. When four people place their hands into the handprint depressions simultaneously, the water in the underground areas will flood into the drain shaft, and the topmost area will become visible at the bottom of the well shaft (see **Explanation of the Water System**, below, for an explanation of how the complex operates).

Explanation of the Water System: The well shaft contains a concealed, last-ditch defense system for the Palace of Madaro-Shanti, used to open and close various important points of access within the Palace and the Dungeon. If the players explore this area, be prepared to pencil some notes on your Palace and Dungeon maps to show the results of the party's activities in the Well. The description of how it works sounds complicated, but once it is grasped, it is fairly simple. The side-view maps are very helpful.

As shown on the diagram, there is one shaft (the "Drain Shaft") to the west of the areas and another shaft (the "Fill Shaft") to the east. Each area of the well is connected to both shafts by large stone tunnels: one of the tunnels allows water to fill the area (from the Fill Shaft), and the other drains the area into the Drain Shaft. The normal water-position in the well is (a) an empty Drain Shaft, (b) areas filled with water, and (c) a full Fill Shaft. When the well is initially "flushed" at the surface, using the handprints on the well, the seals on the western tubes open, draining water from all the areas of the well, after which they close again. The Fill Shaft refills with water and remains full; if the PCs later open the seal to one of the eastern tubes, water rushes from the Fill Shaft to flood that area.

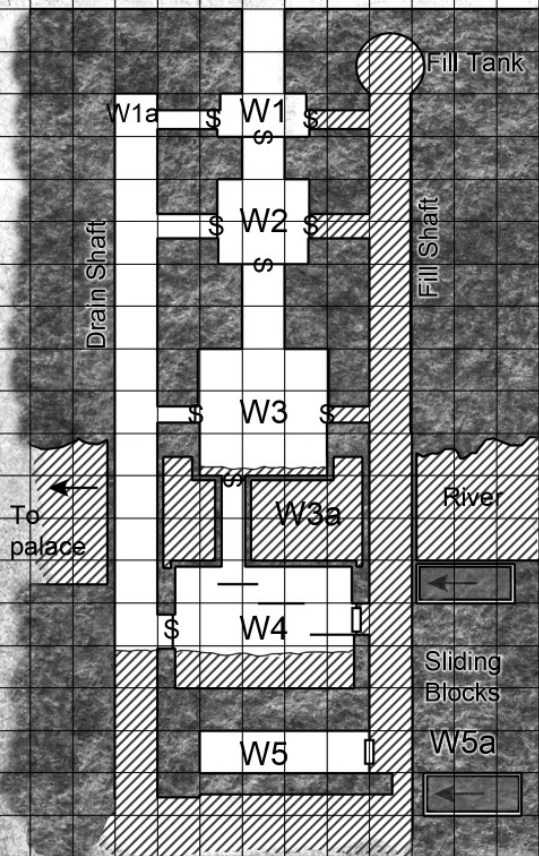
The Fill Shaft draws water upward from an underground river until the Fill Tank is filled. It is extremely unlikely that the party will ever enter the Fill Tank, but if they do, they will find a carved face on the ceiling of the tank, its mouth shaped like an "O." When the Fill Tank is empty, the stone face levitates the river water far below it, sucking water up into the shaft until the Fill Tank and the shaft below are completely filled. There is a way to block this effect, described in **Area W5a**.

The Flood-Gate Seals: Each area contains a secret door in the east (Fill Shaft) and west (Drain Shaft) wall. If one of the *western* doors is found and opened, it will reveal an iron grate (AC 14, 50 hp) blocking the entrance to the tube (which eventually leads to the Drain Shaft). If one of the *eastern* doors is located and opened, water from the Fill Shaft will blast into the area in a raging torrent. All PCs in the area will have to make a DC 12 Str save each round unless they are holding onto a fixed object. Failing the save means that the PC is swept off his feet by the flood – if the door and grate to the Drain Shaft are also open, the PC will be swept through it and into the Drain Shaft. If the seal to the Drain Shaft is closed (i.e., the area is filling with water), the fallen PC will take 1d6 bludgeoning damage from being hurled around in the whirling torrent.

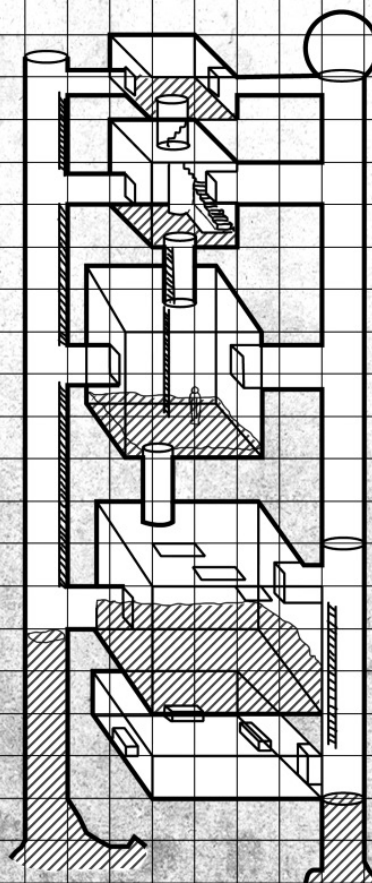
The secret doors and grates can be magically compelled to open, and the grates can also be destroyed by damage. These methods could allow the party to bypass the instructions specific to each area.

The Well Beneath the Plaza (Side Views)

Surface



Plaza Well
Vertical Dungeon
(side view)



Plaza Well
Vertical Dungeon
(Representational,
not to scale)

Area W1: The Bronze Wheel

The floor is wet, with a couple of inches of standing water. In the center of the area, a short metal stem attaches a horizontal bronze wheel to the floor. In the north wall, 5ft off the floor, is a niche with a carving of a stone head resting in it. A tiny pinprick hole in the east wall blasts a fine mist of water 6ft into the area.

Turning the bronze wheel clockwise – and this is the only way it initially turns – causes the flagstones around the wheel to drop incrementally lower until they form a spiral staircase going down.

Opening this stairwell causes **Area D15A** in the dungeon to sink into the floor, allowing access to **Area D16**.

The head in the niche weighs 20 pounds, is identical to the four heads at the top of the well, and rests on a pressure plate. If the head is removed from the niche without its exact weight being replaced on the pressure

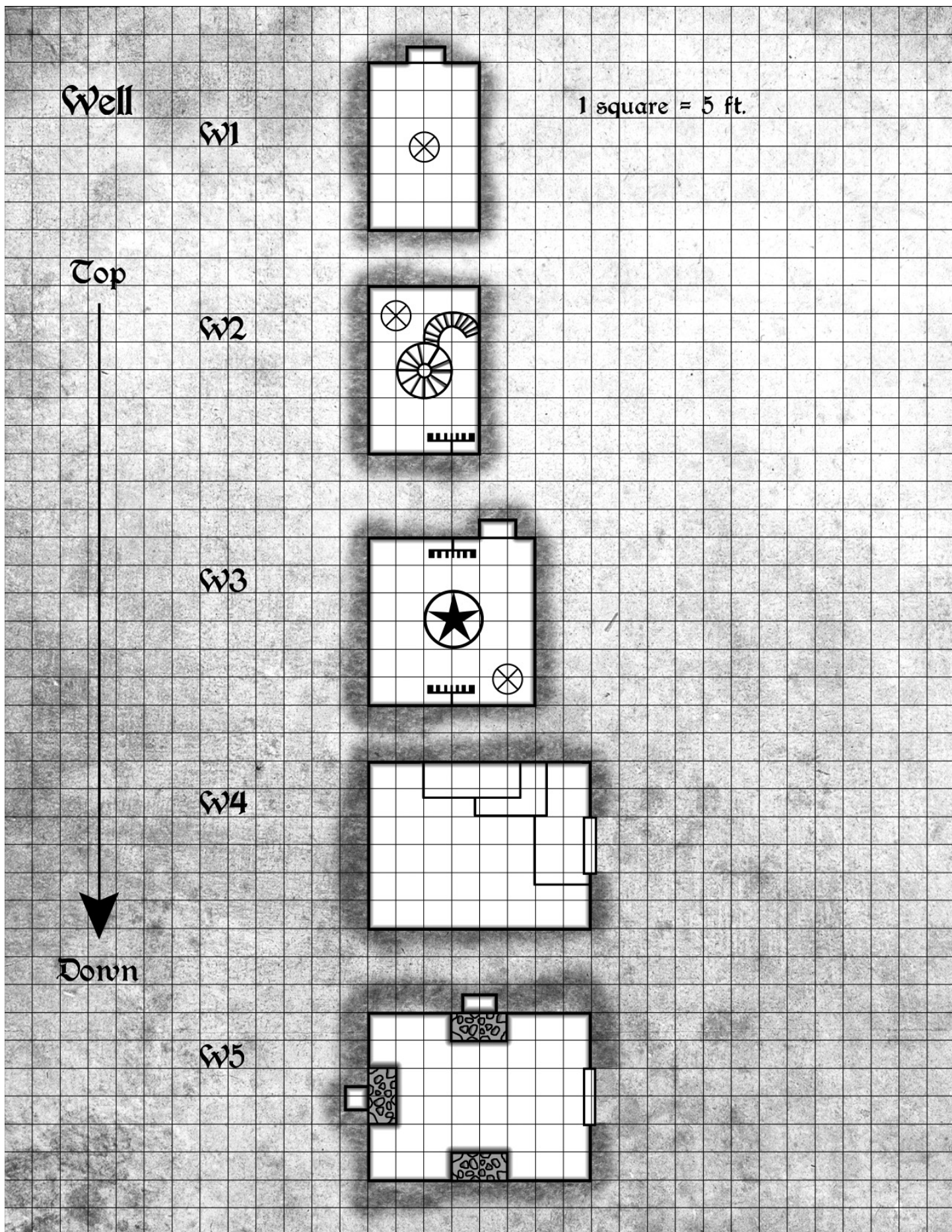
plate, then the bronze wheel is locked from turning clockwise (this is bad) and unlocked to turn counter-clockwise. Turning it counterclockwise causes the eastern secret door to open: a violent cascade of water begins thundering into the area at this point, filling it to the top within 10 minutes (see **The Flood-Gate Seals** for consequences).

The area can be emptied by returning to the surface and using the handprints to “re-flush” the complex using the handprint trigger, or by opening the secret door in the western wall. Even so, the staircase still cannot be opened until the head (or its equivalent weight) is replaced in the niche.

Area W1a: Drain Shaft

The PCs will likely not be using this shaft, but it is possible in any area to smash the grate leading to this shaft. If the PCs are not being washed down the shaft by a roomful of water, they will enter a dry shaft. There is an emergency ladder of stone rungs running down the east side of the shaft. Even someone washed down the shaft may make a DC 12 Dex save

QUESTS OF DOOM 2



JUNGLE RUINS OF MADARO-SHANTI

between each of the areas to grab a rung and stop his fall. Anyone falling into the water below must make a DC 15 Dex save: success means the PC takes no damage, and a failed save means the PC takes half as much damage as he would from falling on a hard surface.

Area W2: Two Bronze Wheels

The unfolding spiral stairs meet a straight set of stairs at the top of this area, and the straight stairs descend to the floor, which is 2ft under water. A horizontal bronze wheel is submerged in the northwest corner, attached to the floor. A second bronze wheel is in the opposite corner, 7ft off the floor and mounted to the wall. Some runes are carved over the top of it. Embedded into each corner of the area, up by the ceiling, is a copper statue of a large fish.

The Wall Wheel (WW) turns either direction, while the Floor Wheel (FW) turns only clockwise. To safely operate the wheels, the WW must be turned clockwise. At this point the FW is reversed and can only be turned counter-clockwise.

If the wheels are turned correctly (i.e., wall-wheel clockwise, floor-wheel counter-clockwise), a section of the floor drops down and slides under the rest of the floor, revealing the ladder down to **Area W3**. This also causes **Area D15B** (in level 2 of the dungeon) to sink into the floor.

There are some clues to the operation of the wheels, left as instructions for regular soldiers who might be sent into the well to close or open walls in the Palace and Dungeon ... and if the wheels are not turned correctly, a dangerous trap is set into motion.

CLUE #1: Strange runes are written above the wheel on the wall; these are in the Madaro-Shanti script, and read, "First turn this wheel clockwise, and then turn the other wheel counterclockwise." This is correct advice, but unfortunately the party cannot read the Madaro-Shanti script. Using a *comprehend languages* spell reveals the text perfectly. If the party does not use magic, but has brought along a tribesman from the area around Chologadi, he will be able to read some of the inscription due to the similarities of the two languages. He can discern that this wheel is supposed to be turned first, but cannot decipher in which direction the instructions say to turn it.

CLUE #2: A counter-clockwise arrow is scratched faintly into the floor around the submerged floor wheel. The scratch is shallow, and under 2ft of standing water, so it is effectively invisible with a DC 25 Wis (Perception check) to find. Anyone feeling carefully around the floor surrounding the wheel will find the scratch, and (by tracing around to the arrowhead) realize that it is an arrow pointing counter-clockwise.

If the party brought no divination magic, no *comprehend languages* spell, and no interpreter, and they don't at least find the arrow scratched in the floor, they will have to trust entirely to luck, and the results of an incorrect guess can be disastrous.

Turning the wall-wheel clockwise switches a gear on the floor-wheel, which will now turn only counter-clockwise. There is no immediate problem with turning the wall-wheel in the wrong direction, but unless it is eventually turned all the way clockwise, the floor-wheel will only turn in the wrong direction.

If the floor-wheel is turned clockwise, it causes the stone column holding the stairs to whirl upward like a fan, collapsing back into the ceiling. Anyone can grab onto the stairs before they go back up, but must make a DC 12 Dex save to scramble back up into **Area W1** safely, or he will be caught up in the upward-folding stairs for 5d6 bludgeoning damage. As soon as the stairs are closed, the two wheels in this area lock into position and cannot be turned. Having a PC or (preferably) some other strong object jammed into the stairs will prevent this from happening.

As the stair column is ascending, the eastern secret door will open and begin flooding the area, which will take 15 minutes to fill with water (see **The Flood-Gate Seals**, above, for results). It gets worse. On the third and fourth minutes, the fish statues will tip from the corners and oil will pour out of their mouths onto the water. After the 10th minute, the fish statues snap back up into place. In the 12th minute, a panel in the ceiling opens, and a flint and steel in the recessed opening scrape together, dropping sparks onto the oil. The oil will burn for 1d3+2 rounds, doing 1d8 fire damage each round to anyone on the surface of the water.

There is no way to re-open the closed stairwell short of using magic and, without that, the party may be forced to descend to **Area W5** before

they can leave. If one PC is still in an upper area, he can reopen the stairs (and unlock the wheels down here) by turning the wheel in **Area W1**.

Area W3: Three Copper Wheels

The floor of this area is covered in about 3ft of water. There is a large copper wheel set in the southwest corner of the floor and identical copper wheels opposite each other in the center of the north and south walls. In the north wall, 15ft off the floor, is an empty, head-shaped niche. In the center of the area is a rust-red statue of a warrior, its features eroded beyond further recognition.

The Wall Wheels (WW) initially only turn counterclockwise, the Floor Wheel is initially locked.

The trick is to place one of the stone head statues (or something of equivalent weight) into the head-shaped niche first. Then, the wall wheels can be turned clockwise; the floor wheel remains locked until the two wall wheels are turned. The third wheel is attached to a hatch that can then be opened, leading into **Area W3a**.

Turning any wheel counter-clockwise opens the eastern secret door that pumps water into the area. It will take 20 minutes for the area to fill with water. Any PC with Str 12 or less must make a DC 10 Str save each round to remain standing in the onrushing water. Worse, during the 3rd, 7th, and 15th minutes after the water starts rising, an electrical charge will be released into the water from the copper wheels. Anyone still in or touching the water during those times will take 2d6 lightning damage (no saving throw).

If the trap has been activated, it can be deactivated by turning the wheel on the wall in **Area W2** again, after which the electrical discharges stop and the water is pumped out of the area through the western secret door.

When the hatch to the air lock opens, **Area D17C** (in dungeon level 2 of the palace) will sink.

Area W3a: Air Lock

This shaft telescopes upward to meet the hatch in **Area W3** when the hatch is being opened. If the hatch is broken open (i.e., the shaft has not been cranked up to connect with it) the PCs will have direct access to the subterranean stream that provides the well water and, ultimately, leads to **Area D5** (in Dungeon level 1). The walls of the shaft are of segmented brass, and there is a ladder leading down to a simple opening below.

Area W4: Platforms

This area is about halfway submerged in standing water. Three large slabs of stone (10ft x 5ft) project from the wall, each one lower by 5ft than the one before. There is a wheel set into each platform, and a door in the east wall at the end of the lowest platform. A message is carved into the stone above the door.

The topmost platform is stable, but the lower two platforms spin on axles to dump anyone standing on them into the water below. Turning each wheel stabilizes the next platform down, to lock it in place. The wheels only turn one direction, so it is easy to handle this part of getting to the door. The difficulty is that the wheels are hard to turn, and the party will be under attack while following the process of turning wheels and moving down from platform to platform. NOTE: the door is only safe to open if all three wheels have been turned.

Each wheel requires a combined strength of 30 to turn; this need not all be applied at once; three PCs with a strength of 10 each (total 30) could turn it in one round, or one PC with a strength of 10 could manage to turn the wheel by exerting his full strength for three rounds (total 30).

The water in the area is infested with piranha fish, including **5 giant flying piranha**. The flying piranha can remain airborne to harry the party at every step of the way unless they are killed.

Piranha, Giant Flying: AC 12; HP 18 (4d6+4); Spd fly 30ft, swim 40ft; Melee bite (+3, 1d6+1 piercing); Str +1, Dex +0, Con +1, Int -5, Wis -4, Cha -4; AL U; CR 1/4; XP 50. (Monster Appendix)

QUESTS OF DOOM 2

The piranha in the water can leap to attack as well, but only when the PCs are on the lowest of the three platforms, at which time 2d6 regular piranha will leap up each round to attack a random opponent. Each piranha deals 1 damage, and the PC may make a DC 12 Dex save to only take half damage from the attacks. After jumping onto the ledge they are helpless.

Any PC falling into the water will be attacked by a **swarm of piranha**.

Swarm of Piranha: AC 13; HP 28 (8d88); Spd swim 40ft; Atk bite (+5, 0 ft, 4d6 piercing or 2d6 piercing if at half hp); Immune charm, fright, paralyze, petrify, prone, restrain, stun; Resist bludgeoning, piercing, slashing; Str +1; Dex +3; Con 1; Int -5; Wis -2; Cha -4; Senses darkvision 60ft; Traits blood frenzy, swarm, water breathing; AL U; CR 1; XP 200.

The script over the door is in Madaro-Shanti. A *comprehend languages* spell will reveal that it says: "Warning: all three wheels must be turned before opening door." A non-Madaro-Shanti interpreter can only discern the words "warning" and "three wheels."

The east door is swollen and damp to the touch. If all three wheels were not turned, then the door opens onto the water-filled shaft that pumps water into each area (see **Area W5a**). It will take 15 minutes for the area to fill with water. However, when all three wheels are turned, a sliding block in the Fill Shaft will move to cut off the shaft, draining the area between this area and **Area W5** (see **Area W5a**).

Opening the west door causes **Area D18d** (in dungeon level 2) to sink into the floor.

Area W5: The Mirror Out of Time

This area is bone dry, and the ceiling is polished into a mirror, reflecting the area below.

There are three blocks of rough stone roughly 7ft on a side. Each block sits on, but does not quite cover, a metal grate; there is one grate along each of the north, east, and south walls.

The stone blocks, grates, and the ceiling are all magical. The blocks appear to be massive and unmovable, but when pushed against are found to be lighter than they should be. Each block can be moved by a combined strength of 36 or more, and up to three people can move a block by hand (or by more than three if rope or other tools are used creatively). The correct direction to push each slab is to the left; moving a block to the right will release a trap – a *cone of cold* spell. However, there is a very odd feature of the area that will allow the PCs to avoid damage from the traps if they are set off.

Anyone watching the mirrored ceiling as the PCs move about will notice that the reflection is not simultaneous; it reflects what happens a moment *before* the action is taken, with about a three second difference. In consequence, if one of the traps is about to be set off, anyone watching the ceiling can give warning, allowing everyone to jump free. There isn't quite enough time to get completely clear, but anyone who was pushing the block will take only 1d6 cold damage. Pushing the blocks from a distance will render the traps completely ineffective, of course.

The traps may be discovered with a DC 20 Wis (Perception) check, or through the use of *detect magic*, which will determine magical auras but not their identity.

Moving the north block left (east) unblocks a niche in the wall behind it containing a scroll with *water breathing* and *raise dead* on it, and two *potions of healing*. Moving the west block left (south) unblocks a niche in the wall behind it containing 5 citrine stones worth 50gp each, 3 large turquoise stones worth 20gp each, and 2 blue quartz stones worth 10gp each.

Moving all three blocks in the area off their grates (in either direction) causes **Area D19E** (on dungeon level 2) to sink into the floor.

Area W5a: Fill Shaft

As described previously, this shaft is usually full of water being magically held upward by a levitation effect. If the door from **Area W4** is opened properly, a sliding block in the shaft moves to cut off the water

above, and the shaft from **Area W4** down is drained and cut off from the water supply beneath it, while the levitation effect of the shaft is temporarily dispelled. Once the shaft is drained, the lower sliding block moves to provide a floor at the bottom of the shaft. After 30 minutes, the process will begin to reverse itself; the lower sliding block will slide back into its slot (making noise and taking 10 minutes to finish moving). Then the top slab will begin to move, and water will begin pouring into the shaft (10 minutes). Once this process is completed, the door to **Area W4** will lock (and the blocks in that area will slide back into place). If the party does not get back into **Area W4** before the door locks, and do not have a way to unlock it, their only escape is to get up the Fill Shaft while it is filled with water, and to get back into the areas through one of the Flood Gate Seals.

The Palace, Ground Level

Access to the Palace from outside

Level 1 of the Palace can be entered from outside by (1) the main entrance in **Area P1** or (2) the holes in the walls of **Areas P2** and **P6**. Level 2 can also be entered via the holes in the walls of **Areas P27** and **P28**. **Area P20** has a small window that is too small to use as an entry.

Area P1: Entry Chamber (Main Court)

Ceiling: The ceiling of this area is open to the upper level of the Palace.

Platforms: Three foot-tall steps run along the entire north and south sides of this large area to form 3ft high raised platforms. The north platform is lined with ten 15ft tall columns, carved into the alternating likenesses of giant men and women. The south platform is half as wide and has no columns, but there are five archways at the back of the platform leading to other areas. A sixth archway seems to have collapsed.

Pit and Statue: Towards the rear of this chamber is an open, square pit in the floor and, a short distance behind the pit stands a 10ft tall clay statue of a bestial, naked man who appears to be half-monkey.

The statues are all harmless. However, the ghoulish monkeys in **Area P2** and **Area P3** will swarm through the south archways and attack in two and three rounds (respectively) after the party enters the chamber.

The monkey god statue is terracotta and not easily smashed, but if it is, the PCs find a mummified monkey buried inside it (for religious purposes, the significance of which is now unknown). The pillars on the north platform are stone and much harder to wreck, but if the PCs were to succeed in doing so, they will pull down the north balcony above them and much of the north wall of the palace as well.

The pit is a 20ft drop and leads to **Area D1** on Level 1 of the dungeons below.

Area P2: Ruined Hall of Pillars

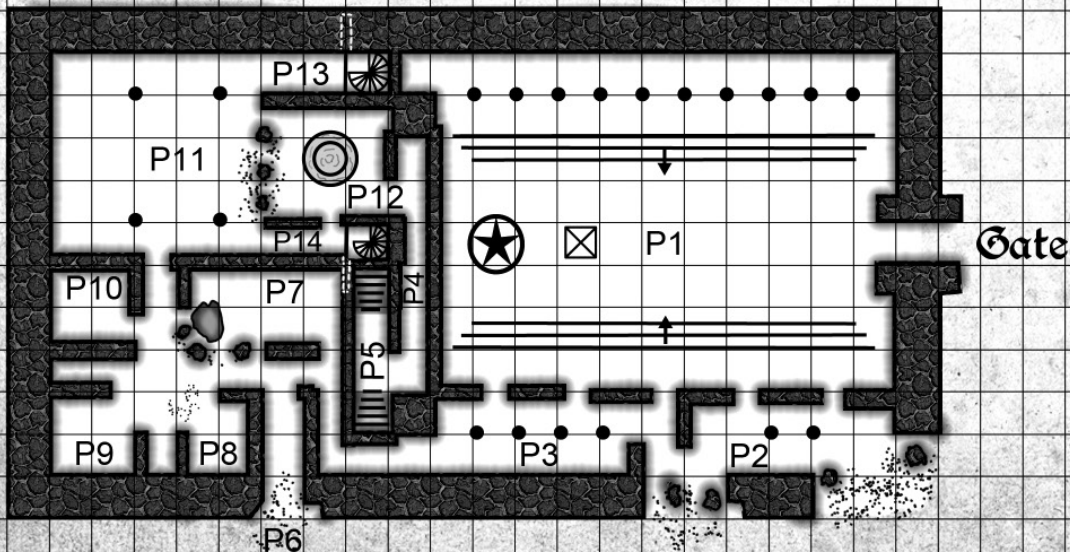
There were once four 15ft tall pillars carved to look like giant apes supporting the high ceiling of this area, but the two on the ends have toppled, taking some of the south wall of the building with them. Fallen bricks and rubble are piled high in the southeast and southwest corners of the area, the latter partially obscuring a large archway in the middle of the west wall. Above these piles of debris are gaping holes in the outer wall of the building, open to the outside.

There are normally **10 ghoulish monkeys** in this hall, though they quickly move to **Area P1** to attack intruders. They do not otherwise leave, even to aid their fellows in **Area P3** should combat occur there first.

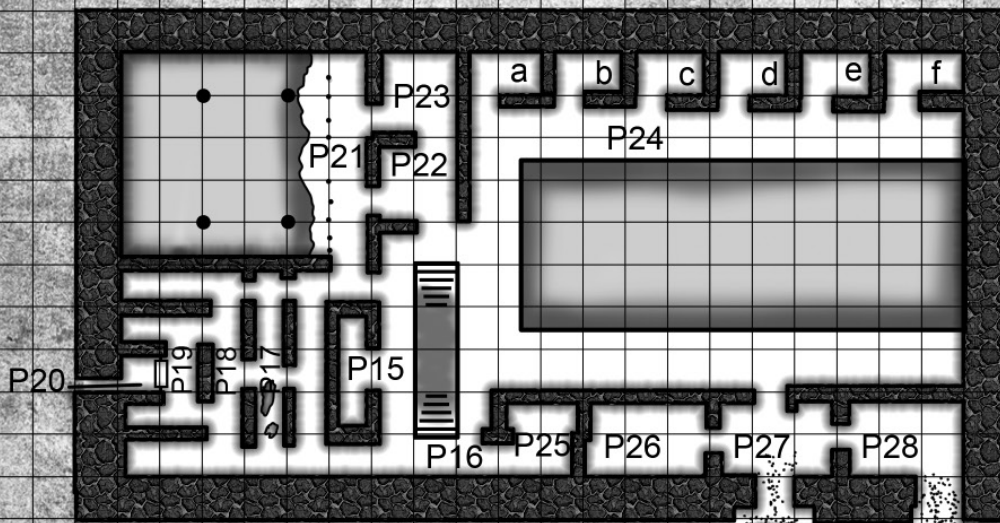
One could easily climb over the debris to the holes leading outside, though the holes are 7ft and 8ft above the ground outside. If the PCs search the rubble in the southwest corner, they will quickly uncover a

The Palace

Ground Level



Upper Level



human skeleton. The skeleton is clutching 3 small amber stones worth 50gp each in one hand and a bronze dagger worth 3gp in the other hand.

Somehow wrecking the last two pillars in this area would crumble the entire southwest corner of the building.

Ghoul Monkey (10): AC 13; HP 7 (2d4+2); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **Ranged** rock (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+2 bludgeoning); **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -2; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25. (New Monsters)

Area P3: Hall of Intact Pillars

The four 15ft tall pillars supporting the high ceiling of this area are carved in the likeness of giant monkeys. There was once a 30ft wide mosaic on the south wall of this area, and though many tiles have now fallen or otherwise gone missing, it seems to have once shown a crowd of dark-skinned people kneeling before a giant monkey.

There are normally 12 ghoulish monkeys (see Area P2 for stats) in this hall. They will attack intruders in Area P1, but will not go to Area P2.

QUESTS OF DOOM 2

Wrecking two of the four pillars in this area would cave in the ceiling of the area. There is no treasure here.

Area P4: Slimy Hallway

The floor of this corridor is coated in mucous-like slime.

A giant slug squats in front of the archway to **Area P12**. There is no treasure here.

Slug, Giant: AC 13; HP 102 (12d8+56); Spd 20ft; **Melee** bite (+2, 2d8+2 slashing); **Ranged** spit (recharge 5–6, +1, 20ft/60ft, 5d8 acid); **Resist** bludgeoning; **Str** +2, **Dex** –1, **Con** +4, **Int** –5, **Wis** –4, **Cha** –3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** U; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (**Monster Appendix**)

Area P5: Stair Landing

The stairs on both sides lead up to the hallway outside **Area P15** (on the second level).

Area P6: Ruined Closet

The walls of this small area are lined with shelves; the ones at the far end of the area are broken and lean on the floor. The floor is littered with clay pots, most of them broken. The back wall has a large hole in it leading outside, with a mound of broken stone debris underneath it. Vines have long ago crept in through the opening from outside, but now lie dead among the stones.

There are two unbroken pots on the floor, one of which holds a *potion of heroism*. One can climb over the debris to the hole leading outside, which is 6ft above the ground. Anyone standing on top of the debris pile can see a crack between the wall and the ceiling directly above, though it would be very difficult for even an experienced climber to ascend without pulling down more rocks.

Area P7: Ruined Barracks

The whole southwest corner of this area has collapsed, leaving a 2ft tall heap of rubble that slopes down into a hole, roughly 10ft wide, broken into the floor. The rest of the area is littered with broken, rotten furniture in such shape that their original forms and functions are now unrecognizable.

There are **5 zombies** here. They have no treasure. One can climb down to **Area D3a** (on dungeon level 1) by descending the rubble slope, or just jump the 10ft to the floor below.

Zombie (5): AC 8, HP 22 (3d8+9); Spd 20ft; **Melee** slam (+3, 1d6+1 bludgeoning); **Immune** poison; **Str** +1, **Dex** –2, **Con** +3, **Int** –4, **Wis** 2, **Cha** –3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** undead fortitude; **AL** NE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Area P8: Ruined Kitchen

The northwest corner of this area (over the door) has collapsed, leaving a 5ft high mound of debris that can be climbed over to enter. The giant centipedes will have tactical advantage to hit anyone during the climb.

There are piles of broken slate and moldy wood along the walls and a char-filled fire pit in the center. There is also a circular hole in the ceiling above the fire pit and a jagged scar of a hole in the ceiling over the debris. Dead vines dangle from the holes halfway to the floor.

There are **10 giant centipedes** here that rush to attack anyone as they climb into the area. There is no treasure here. Anyone smaller than human size can fit through the holes to **Area P17** on level 2, but the vines are not sturdy enough to hold anyone over the size of a halfling.

Centipede, Giant (10): AC 13; HP 4 (1d6+1); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing plus 3d6 poison, DC 11 Con); **Str** –3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** 5, **Wis** –2, **Cha** –4; **Senses** blindsight 30ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Area P9: Lion Statue

Wooden and stone debris is scattered on the floor of this area, around the stone statue of a lion.

The statue is not magical or unusual.

Area P10: Abandoned Guard Post

This area is littered with furnishings rotted beyond recognition, save for a wooden chest.

The chest only *appears* to be in good condition: at a touch, it falls apart. Since it is full of yellow mold, the destruction of the chest causes a cloud of poisonous spores to fill that quarter of the area. If the mold is burned away, the remains of the chest can be dug through, revealing a bronze helmet, greaves, and *bracers of defense* (note: unlike ordinary *bracers of defense*, the helmet and greaves are magically linked to them and must be worn in conjunction for the bracers to work). There are also 150gp of ancient mintage and some mildewed fibers that might have once been clothes.

Yellow Mold: If touched, emits spores in 10ft cube. Each creature in spores makes DC 15 Con save. On failure, 2d10 poison damage and poisoned for 1 minute. Each poisoned PC takes 1d10 poison damage at the start of each of its turns, and may repeat save to end the effect. Destroyed by sunlight or fire.

Area P11: Greater Mosaic

Four plain stone pillars rise to the high ceiling over this two-story chamber. A partially-wrecked balcony overlooks the chamber from above the east wall, which has itself partially collapsed down the middle. The floor of the chamber is covered with a tile mosaic. Time has only partly muted the once-vibrant colors of its patterns. Two skeletons lie in the middle of the chamber.

Nine ghoulish monkeys (see **Area P2** for stats) are hiding behind the pillars and attack as soon as anyone draws near. Also, there are **7 stirges** nesting on the upper balcony (see **Area P21**) that will descend and attack once a battle with the ghoulish monkeys is well enough underway to offer easy prey.

The skeletons have bronze spearheads and pieces of bronze armor around them, but the rest of their possessions have long since been eaten or stolen away. The real treasure here is the mosaic floor itself. Anyone examining the pattern will recognize the floor to be a map. One of the yellow spots on the map resembles the location of the palace in relation to the ruins around it. There are two other yellow spots on the map and anyone with an Int 14 or higher can divine that they represent the well plaza and the gatehouse elsewhere in the ruins.

Stirge (7): AC 14; HP 2 (1d4); Spd 10ft, fly 40ft; **Melee** blood drain (+5, 1d4+3 piercing plus attach); **SA** attach for auto 1d4+3 piercing on turn; **Str** –3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** –4, **Wis** –1, **Cha** –2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Area P12: Basin

The dominant feature of this area is a circular depression, 4ft deep, with a 2ft tall step circling within its perimeter. The east wall is decorated with a large mosaic of what looks like a gatehouse.

This basin was once used for bathing, but it has long since dried up. There is no treasure here.

Area P13: Lesser Mosaic

This small area is featureless except for a mural on the east wall that looks like a staircase with dark-skinned people walking up and down it.

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The brick wall that blocks the true spiral staircase can be bypassed by magic, destroyed by doing 100 points of damage to it, and/or it will sink into the floor on its own when the gate at the Gatehouse is lifted. The staircase goes two levels down to **Area D15** on dungeon level 2.

Area P14: Lesser Mosaic

This area is identical to **Area P13**, except that the stairs go down to **Area D17** on dungeon level 2.

The Palace, Upper Level

In addition to the various ways to enter the second level upward from Level 1, Level 2 can also be entered from outside via the holes in the walls of **Areas P27** and **P28**.

Area P15: Cursed Thrones

On both ends of this small area are small platforms on which sit ornately carved thrones of bronze. Sitting in each throne is a skeleton with the dried husks of some long rotted garments clinging to its bones. Gems are inlaid on the back of the throne, just visible behind (and through) the skeletal occupants.

A curse laid on these thrones might snare the first two PCs to enter. They must succeed at DC 15 Cha save or be compelled to clear the skeletons from the thrones and take a seat. Once seated, the PCs will do all in their power to remain there forever. Each throne has a bubble of stagnant air around it, so that the seated person must make a DC 10 Con save against the poisonous air each round or begin to suffocate.

The gems are ornamental stones, mostly lapis lazuli, and worth a total of 110gp if pried out of the thrones. A number of gems have been pried out of the thrones in the past, primarily from the armrests.

Area P16: Hall of Floating Stones

The floor of this corridor is littered with stones, but the air is littered with them as well. A full score of rocks, the size of four fists clasped together are floating in the air, spread apart, varying between 4ft and 6ft above the floor. In one spot, the wall on one side of the hallway is buckled out somewhat and some of the floor has fallen away by it, creating a scar-like crevice in the foundation of the corridor.

Powerful levitation magic once held these stones at ceiling height as part of a deadly trap, but the magic has weakened so that the stones just float at varying heights. The floor of the hall's western threshold is incised with small magical runes that requires DC 15 Wis (Perception) check to spot unless a *detect magic* or similar spell is used. As soon as someone crosses the line of runes, the levitation is temporarily dispelled and the stones all clatter noisily to the floor. In one hour, any stones still in the hallway will levitate back up to where they were before.

The hole between the wall and floor can be squeezed through with some effort, requiring a DC 12 Dex (Acrobatics) check. If the check is failed by 5 or more, the PC becomes stuck until they make a successful check. PCs squeezing through the hole drop down onto the debris pile in **Area P6** below.

Area P17: Hall of the Flashing Gemstone

This hallway has three pairs of opposing archways leading out of it. At about the center of the hallway, the pavement stones of the floor are crossed with multiple fractures and some sections of these stones have fallen through to the chambers below. There is a faint odor of sulfur in the air.

A magical gem (a beryl to be precise) will rise up from the floor and move on its own accord to intercept anyone trying to cross this hallway from one side to the other. Because the gem flies so fast, it should be able to intercept anyone who does not move unnaturally quickly, no matter what end of the hallway it is moving from. Any creature touched by it must make a DC 15 Con save or be paralyzed for 3 hours. Any damage to the gem renders it inert and non-magical for 1 whole day; treat it as AC 18 and a +8 bonus to Dex saves. The gem can be grasped instead of attacked, but the gem is completely nonmagical whenever it is removed from this hallway. Besides swatting the gem out of the air or otherwise dispelling the magic, one could distract the gem with a living target at one end while someone else runs through at the far end. If kept, the gem is worth 100gp.

Area P18: Hall of the Hanging Vines

The ceiling of this hallway is crisscrossed with cracks through which creeping vines grow. The vines grow so thick it is difficult to see the opposite wall of this corridor. Some of these vines hang as much as 7ft from the ceiling. There is a very, very strong odor of sulfur in the air here.

The dead, creeping vines are under an enchantment that makes them *entangle* (as the spell) anyone trying to move through them. Anyone failing a DC 12 Dex save will be held fast; those who succeed are only slowed down on their passage through. Fire or weapons can also be used to clear away the vines before moving through; 12 points of damage will clear a 10x10ft section of hallway. The plants do not retain their entangling ability if killed or removed from this area.

Area P19: Hall of the Bronze Censers

The reek of sulfur is overpoweringly strong here. The main feature of the hall is a door of bronze engraved with the image of a woman lying in repose. To either side of that door is an alcove holding a large bronze censer. The reek seems to emanate from these.

The bronze door is sealed like a vault door, and can only be opened by magic (such as a *knock* spell) or by doing 100 points of damage to it (AC 16, damage threshold 8). However, the censers are enchanted so that the sulfur smell emanating from them is much more potent than it would normally be. Anyone in this hallway suffers 1 poison damage each round from the sulfur. If the censers are tipped over and the sulfur contents dumped out, the deadly vapors will dissipate in 1 hour. The censers lose their potency if they are taken more than 100ft from this location.

Area P20: Cell of Solitude

There is a 2ft wide, 8ft long stone bench on either side of this tiny cell. A short stone coffer is tucked under each bench. In the back wall is a small window, only a foot wide, which gives a view of outdoors. Rotted wooden shutters for the window lie on the floor in front of it. There is a tiny raised fire pit in the center and the remains of a rotted wooden bucket sitting next to it.

The left coffer holds a phylactery with a *luckstone* wrapped inside it and a scarab brooch made of tourmaline worth 2000gp. The right coffer holds a magical bronze mask that, if worn, protects the wearer from all the traps in **Areas P15 – P19**, a silver ring encrusted with tiny diamonds worth 7000gp, and a ceramic jar holding dried-up crocodile dung.

Area P21: Balcony

This hallway has no western wall, only a 5ft high railing made of stone and slate. An opening in the railing leads out onto a 5ft wide balcony ending in a second railing only 2ft high. The balcony overlooks the large chamber below; it sags dangerously and the smaller railing is bent and

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twisted. A nest made of tree branches, vines, and rocks nestles in the opening of the railing.

The 7 **stirges** that nest here may have already been encountered in **Area P11** (see for stats) below. Their nest contains human bones and, concealed deeper in the nest, 5 lapis lazuli stones worth 10gp each.

The balcony can only hold 400 lbs before it collapses into **Area P11** below, doing 1d6 bludgeoning damage to anyone falling with it.

Area P22: Abandoned Room

Some smashed and rotting furniture is all that remains in this room.

Area P23: Salon

There are three rotting couches here and an overturned bronze censor. Under a couch is a tattered purse with 25gp of ancient mintage in it.

Areas P24a-f: Abandoned Quarters

Each area has the wreckage of a door and some furnishings, all covered in cobwebs. There is no treasure in any of them.

Area P25: Zombie Guard Post

Through this doorway, walking corpses are staring right back at you!

There are 16 **zombies** (see **Area P7** for stats) huddled together in this area. The zombie in front of the doorway will try to grapple the nearest PC and pull him into the area so the rest of the zombies can attack him.

There is no treasure amongst them and they have long since smashed the room's furnishings into pulp.

Area P26: Royal Dressing Room

Six huge wardrobes line the walls of this room, now falling apart and rotting, with their contents spilled out and mildewed. Yellow, mold-covered rags that were once animal hide rugs cover the floor. A huge mirror covers the room's back wall, its frame carved with likeness of various jungle creatures, but mostly great cats.

The yellow mold is a harmless growth of mold that just happens to be yellow. The wardrobes are full of ominous contents: 36 large spider eggs, 10 dead animals (giant centipedes and rats) wrapped in webbing, and 1 dead warrior similarly wrapped. The warrior is wearing chainmail armor, an iron-banded shield, a broken crossbow slung over his back, and a pouch at his side holding 10sp and 5gp of the currency used today in Chologadi. The mirror is 5ft high and 8ft wide. It would probably be worth 1,000gp if sold, but is difficult to remove from the wall without breaking and virtually impossible to transport intact.

Area P27: Royal Living Quarters

Opulent but ruined furniture is draped thickly in webbing, with gold and gems scattered in the wreckage. At the back is a large, crumbled hole in the wall and floor, open to the sky outside and through to the level beneath.

There are 5 **giant spiders** here. The spiders from **Area P28** will also show up after two rounds of combat if they are still alive.

The items previously adorned with gold plating and gems are not salvageable, but the gold and gems can be pried free from the wreckage, and total 550gp in value. The hole in the room can be used to climb down to **Area P3**.

Spider, Giant (5): AC 14; HP 26 (4d10+4); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; Melee bite (+5, 1d8+3 piercing plus 2d8 poison, DC 11 half); Str +2, Dex +3, Con +1, Int 4, Wis +0, Cha 3; Skills

Stealth +7; Senses blindsight 10ft, darkvision 60ft; Traits spider climb, web sense, web walker; AL U; CR 1; XP 200.

Area P28: Royal Bedchamber

A huge, four-poster bed and canopy once dominated this room, but it is now collapsed, rotting away, and layered thickly with cobwebs. The corner of the room has crumbled away, open to the outdoors and, partially, to the room below.

There are 6 **giant spiders** (see **Area P27** for stats) here, unless they have already joined any battle in **Area P27**.

As with the previous room, gold and gems can be found attached to the (unsalvageable) furniture for a total value of 325gp.

The hole here can be used to climb down to **Area P2** on level 1.

Dungeon Level 1

This level can be accessed by the holes in the ceilings in **Areas D1** and **D3a**, and from below by the stairs in **Area D14**.

Area D1: Bones

Light filters down into this chamber from a square hole in the ceiling. The light gleams on piles of bones – mostly human, but some from larger animals -- spread about the area. There is a 15ft wide opening in the middle of the north wall that leads to another chamber.

The opening in the ceiling is from **Area P1** on level 1 of the Palace. There is some treasure amongst all the bones on the floor, but it takes time to find it. For every 10 minutes spent searching, the PC may make a DC 20 Wis (Perception) check to find one of the six items in the area. There is also a (cumulative) 1 in 6 chance every 10 minutes of 1d6 **ghoul monkeys** investigating from **Area D2** until their numbers are exhausted.

The total treasure concealed in the area is as follows: (1) a *ring of warmth*, (2) a *flask of curses* (anyone within a 10ft radius of whoever pulls the stopper is affected by the *bane* spell for 2 hours), (3) a ceremonial silver helmet worth 50gp, (4) a jade sculpture of a monkey worth 100gp, and (5 or 6) two ceremonial bronze broadswords worth 12gp each.

Area D2: Barrels of Ghoul Monkeys

This area is devoid of furnishings, except for three large, ancient barrels against the far wall. The floor is thick with dry feces.

There are 14 **ghoul monkeys** here, minus any already that have already been encountered in **Area D1**, and a **hanu-naga** that treats the 10ft x 10ft alcove in the northwest corner as its personal lair. The monkey-headed naga will rally the ghouls to defend the magical and cursed barrels against the north wall. The hanu-naga will continue its swaying monkey summoning dance throughout combat. In 1d4 rounds, 1d6 more ghouls will show up until there are a total of 20 ghouls.

Any monkey corpse placed in one of these barrels will transform into a ghoulish monkey in 1 day. The alcove has a few complete human skeletons in it, as well as 110gp, 250sp, and 400cp in ancient mintage.

Hanu-Naga: AC 14, HP 39 (6d10+6); Spd 40ft; Melee bite (+5, 1d8+3 piercing damage plus 2d6 poison, DC 11 Con half, tactical disadvantage on save if grappled) or constrict (+5, 1d6+3 bludgeoning plus grappled and restrained); Immune charm, poison; Str +2, Dex +3, Con +1, Int +0, Wis +2, Cha +2; Senses darkvision 60ft; Traits dominate apes; AL CE; CR 2; XP 450. (*Fifth Edition Foes* 175)

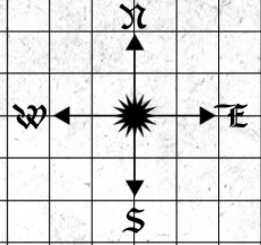
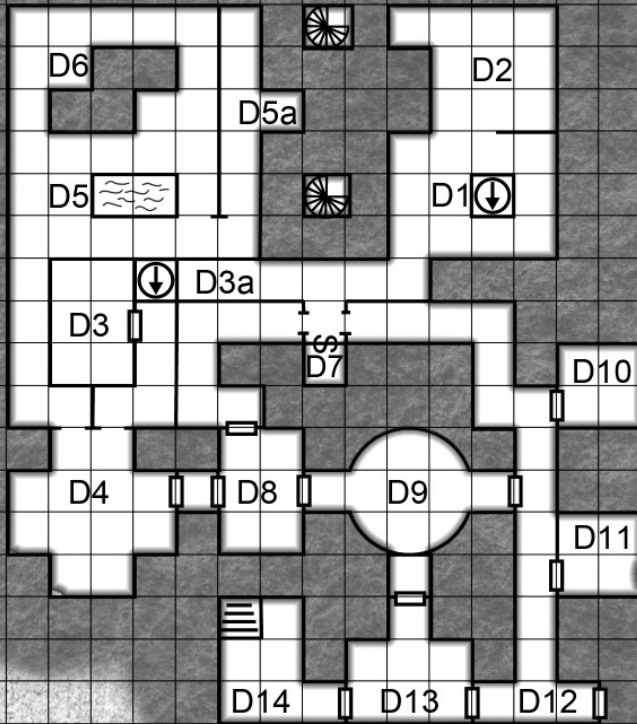
Ghoul Monkey (20 max): AC 13; HP 7 (2d4+2); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); Ranged rock (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+2 bludgeoning); Str +0, Dex +2, Con +1, Int 4, Wis 1, Cha 2; AL CE; CR 1/8; XP 25. (*Monster Appendix*)

JUNGLE RUINS OF MADARO-SHANTI

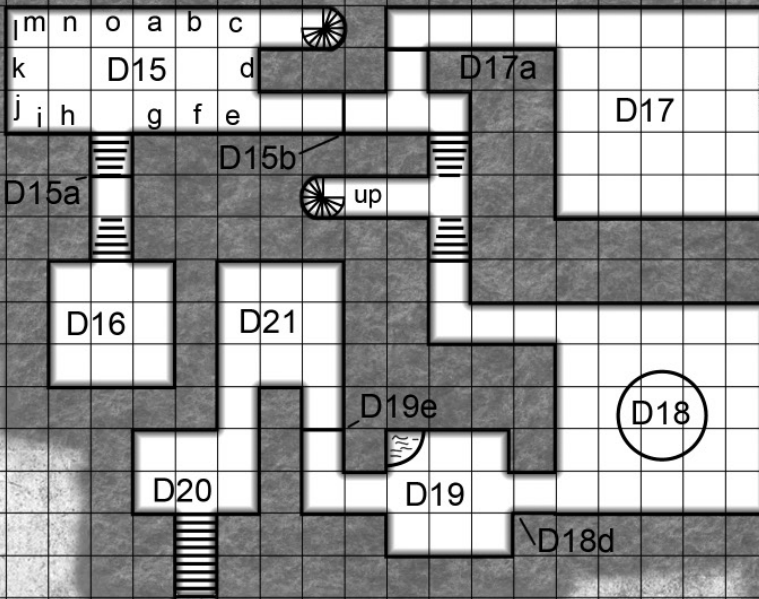
Dungeons beneath the palace

1 square = 10 ft.

Level 1



Level 2





Area D3: Lesser Crypt

There are 8 stone sarcophagi here, each with a simple engraving of a human figure on its lid.

Each sarcophagus holds a normal, mummified human (a former slave) wearing 2gp worth of copper jewelry. Anyone removing jewelry must make a save or contract a rotting disease (lose 1 hp permanently per day until cured).

Area D3a: Debris Pile

This corner of the corridor is about three-quarters filled in with rubble that slopes up through a big hole in the ceiling.

With difficulty, the rubble can be climbed over, or up to reach Area P7 of the Palace.

Area D4: Embalming Chamber

Four stone tables arranged in a square dominate the middle of this area. Behind each table is a wide alcove and in each alcove are shelves lined with clay jars. There is a pungent odor to this area.

The jars all hold embalming materials and tools. There is nothing of value here.

Area D5: Water Chamber

This chamber is wider on one end than the other and has four passages leading from it. Dominating the chamber is a 10ft long, 20ft wide rectangular hole cut in the floor, accessing what appears to be an underground stream running below the chamber.

The stream is 1ft below the level of the floor. The water is fresh, flows from west to east, and is 5ft deep here. The current is strong enough that anyone entering the stream must make a saving throw or be pulled under. Eventually the stream feeds the same underground body of water that surrounds the well, but there is no connection to the well complex itself.

Area D5a: Storage Area

The last 20ft of this hallway, and the alcove before it, are filled with barrels. In front of the alcove are 5 large buckets and 4 coils of rope.

There are 18 barrels at the end of the hallway, all holding stale, undrinkable water, but quite serviceable in condition. The 8 barrels in the alcove are branded with a mark and hold wine instead – half-vinegar now, but still drinkable. Any inspection of the rope reveals that the lot of it is too fragile to use.

Area D6: Black Lotus

There is a horrible looking plant in the southeast corner of this chamber, a bulbous purple shape with black flowers growing from it, its roots driven deep through the stones of the floor and ceiling.

When the black lotus senses anyone nearby, its flowers begin to exhale a delightful, but cloying, smell. Anyone breathing within the range (generally 50ft or so) must make a saving throw or come under the influence of the scent. The scent may have one of 3 effects (roll 1d3):

1. Become charmed; attack others or otherwise defend the lotus plant for 1 hour (DC 15 Cha save avoids)
2. Become confused for 1d6 turns (DC 15 Cha save avoids)
3. Paralyzed for 10 minutes, losing 1 hp per round (DC 15 Con save avoids, repeat save each turn)

This particular black lotus has 4 blossoms, each of which can be sold for 200gp.

Area D7: Secret Treasure

Note: The secret door is locked requiring a DC 15 Dex check with thieves' tools to open.

The slate shelves lining the walls of this small area are covered with treasure!

The area contains the following, all loose and unsorted: a scroll with 3 spells on it (*confusion*, *hallucinatory terrain*, and *polymorph*); a scroll with 3 spells on it (*lesser restoration*, *locate object*, and *remove curse*); a scroll, written in the ancient language of Madaro-Shanti, entitled "Recent Happenings of the Kingdom" (see "The Writings of Madaro-Shanti" at the end of the module if a *comprehend languages* spell is used); 1 aquamarine stone worth 500gp each, 3 tourmaline stones worth 100gp, 1 onyx stone worth 50gp, 11 blue quartz stones worth 10gp each, 2620gp, 4150sp, and 5480cp.

Area D8: Ochre Jelly Lair

This area appears to be empty, except for a pile of what looks like wet offal heaped in one corner.

The pile is 4 **ochre jellies** that attack anyone coming within 15ft of them. They have no treasure.

Ooze, Ochre Jelly (4): AC 8; HP 45 (6d10+12); Spd 10ft, climb 10ft; Melee pseudopod (+4, 2d6+2 bludgeoning); **Immune** blind, charm, deaf, exhaustion, fright, lightning, prone, slashing; **Resist** acid; **Str +2, Dex -2, Con +2, Int -4, Wis -2, Cha -5; Senses** blindsight 60ft (blind beyond); **Traits** amorphous, spider climb, split; **AL U; CR 2; XP 450.**

Area D9: Statue

The walls of this circular area are adorned with crystal torch sconces. The floor is crisscrossed with straight cracks, as if the flagstones were purposely set too far apart. In the center of the area, standing on a tiny, circular dais, is a marble statue of a nude, muscular man in a majestic pose with sapphire eyes. The man is holding a spear, which is also marble and part of the statue.

The crystal sconces are brittle and crumble at a touch. The marble statue (which is facing south) has a powerful curse that is activated by anyone touching the statue's gemstone eyes. Any living being touching the eyes (even indirectly, by trying to remove the eyes with tools) causes a beam of light to radiate from the tip of the spear and swivel quickly around the area. Everyone within the area must make a DC 16 Con save or be caught in the beam and transformed into brittle crystal. The transformation lasts 1d4 hours. However, in 10-60 minutes, the floor will begin to pivot and turn in sections, causing any crystallized PCs still in the area to tip and smash, and the shards to fall through the cracks into a space below the floor sections.

The pivoting of the floor sections is an automatic, mechanical process triggered by people entering the area, not by the magical trap. Thus, the floor sections will turn over in 10-60 minutes after entering the area whether the statue is tampered with or not. If anyone uses something to wedge a floor section open before it turns all the way over, then the PCs can access the crawlspace below the area to find 1080gp worth of crystal shards there. The origin of the shards makes it a rather macabre treasure, of course.

The magical trap can be temporarily disabled with *dispel magic*, or the spear can be smashed by inflicting 20 or more points of damage with blunt weapons. Then the sapphire gems can be safely removed. Each is worth 2000gp.

The door to **Area D13** is made entirely from bronze. It can be sold for 200gp if somehow transported back to civilization.

Area D10: Minor Nobles' Crypt

There is an iron torch sconce by the door. There are five stone sarcophagi arranged neatly in this area. The lid of each sarcophagus is painted with the likeness of a dark-skinned person; obviously nobility, from the way they are dressed.

The body in each sarcophagus wears silver jewelry worth 20gp. One holds a ceremonial silver mace worth 50gp and two others hold ordinary, iron short swords.

Area D11: Royal Crypt

There are three bronze sarcophagi here, the lid of each bearing the painted likeness of a richly-garbed, dark-skinned person. The paintings seem to be decorated with real gems for jewelry.

The lid of each sarcophagus is worth 200gp, counting the lapis lazuli jewelry (which can be removed and is worth half the value of the intact lid). The body in each sarcophagus wears electrum jewelry worth 1000gp.

Area D12: Trapped Hall

At either end of this short hall is a door covered in, or made of, decoratively engraved copper.

If either the true door in the west, or the false door in the east wall is opened, a bolt of lightning will arc between the two doors, inflicting 8d6 lightning damage to anyone between them (DC 13 Dex save for half damage). The lightning bolt will continue to pass through the hallway every round for as long as one door remains open; though anyone who has made a save automatically avoids the later bolts (unless doing something stupid, like standing up instead of staying on the floor).

The trap can be dispelled by *dispel magic*, and will be shut off if both doors are open.

Area D13: King's Crypt

Door Notes: The door to **Area D9** is made of bronze. The door to **Area D12** is made of copper, and is part of the trap in that hall. The door to **Area D14** is made of iron, and is locked. The iron door can take 120 points of damage from blunt weapons before it is bashed down.

A ball of dim, flickering, magical light floats in the air above a single, copper sarcophagus in the center of this area. The walls, particularly the south wall, are covered in a brilliant mosaic

The mosaic shows the history of a kingdom in many small scenes – the raising of its walls, the charge of its armies, the harvesting of its crops, its feasts and famines, and attacks from invaders.

The light is from a *continual light* spell and is not dangerous. If anyone comes within 10ft of the sarcophagus, a dark face appears in the air and speaks telepathically, saying, "Here lies King Tallaharka of Madaro-Shanti. Turn back, for defiling his rest will bring you naught but woe." The face appears and repeats this to each person who steps into this space, and each time they do so. Both the face and the *continual light* spell can

be dispelled.

Inside the sarcophagus is a large, ugly, nude, dark-skinned man covered in scars. This is not the king, but a powerfully **enchanted zombie** that rises and attacks anyone, returning to its resting place only when everyone in the area is dead. The zombie lies atop the lid of a lower cavity beneath the sarcophagus. In this concealed space is the true king's body, clad in *+1 chainmail* and holding a *+1 short sword* over its chest. The king will give up his sword, but if the body is molested enough to remove the chainmail, then the king's spirit will return to wreak his vengeance as a **wraith**.

Enchanted Zombie: AC 8, HP 161 (17d8+85); Spd 20ft; **Melee** slam x2 (+8, 2d6+5 bludgeoning plus 2d8 necrotic); **Immune** poison; **Str** +5, **Dex** -2, **Con** +5, **Int** -4, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** magic resistance, undead fortitude; **AL** NE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Wraith: AC 13, HP 67 (9d8+27); Spd fly 60ft; **Melee** life drain (+6, 4d8+3 necrotic and drain max hp, DC 14 Con); **SA** create specter; **Immune** necrotic, poison, charm, exhaustion, grapple, paralyze, petrify, prone, restrain; **Resist** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder, normal non-silver weapons; **Str** -2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** incorporeal movement, sunlight sensitivity; **AL** NE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Area D14: Supply Room

At the center of this room is an ancient wicker bier with a mummy kneeling in prostration at each end of the bier's hand rails. In a northeast alcove, next to some stairs going down, gold objects rest on the floor. The south wall of the room is decorated with a long mosaic incorporating four rearing snakes with monkey faces. One of them is more realistic than the others and less flat, like a bas-relief sculpture decorated with small tiles.

The bier will crumble at any rough handling or attempt to lift it. The four mummies are of the ordinary, dead variety. The more realistic hanu-naga on the mosaic is real – it is merely held in magical stasis and covered in tiles. If the gold objects in the alcove are touched, the **hanu-naga** is released from its suspended animation and attacks, shrugging off the tiles as it begins to move again. Its monkey-summoning dance will summon ghoulish monkeys in 1d8 rounds at the rate of 1d10 **ghoul monkeys** per round thereafter until 20 have arrived.

The objects in the alcove include a gold box worth 450gp (it holds a folded white robe with gold trim worth another 30gp), a gold ewer worth 150gp, a gold cup worth 60gp, and a gold bowl worth 40gp.

Hanu-Naga: AC 14, HP 39 (6d10+6); Spd 40ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d8+3 piercing damage plus 2d6 poison damage, DC 11 Con save half, tactical disadvantage on save if grappled), constrict (+5, 1d6+3 bludgeoning plus grappled and restrained); **Immune** charm, poison; **Str** +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** dominate apes; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (*Fifth Edition Foes* 175)

Ghoul Monkey (20 max): AC 13; HP 7 (2d4+2); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **Ranged** rock (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+2 bludgeoning); **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -2; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25. (*Monster Appendix*)

Dungeon Level 2

This level can be accessed from above by the secret stairwells to **Areas D15** and **D18**, and by the stairs to **Area D21**.

Area D15: Hall of Kings

The walls of this long chamber are lined with bas-relief sculptures, spaced about 10ft apart, of male figures – warrior kings it would seem, by the look of their crowns and shields. Each carved shield bears a different design. On the flagstone in front of each sculpture, the same design is engraved.

The designs are actually writing in the hieroglyphs of ancient Madaro-Shanti, and each shield-and-flagstone combination represents a different name of a king of old. Anyone standing on the writing on the floor and speaking what it says will be able to speak with the dead king so named and ask him one question. It is recommended that you place limits, geographically, on how much the kings know. Though they can speak of matters that have taken place since their deaths, the kings of old have no interest in the world too far from the region of Madaro-Shanti and have learned nothing about it.

Even when using a *comprehend languages* spell, a PC only have a 25% chance of actually pronouncing the names properly, and even a native guide from Chologadi has only a 50% chance. The names will, of course, be pronounced properly by someone who can speak the ancient language of Madaro-Shanti (such as the people in stasis in **Area D19**).

Further, kings f and m are false, and do not tell the truth.

Area D15A: Sinking Wall

This wall will lower into the floor if the exit in **Area W1** under the plaza well is opened.

Area D15B: Sinking Wall

This wall will lower into the floor if the exit in **Area W2** under the plaza well is opened.

Area D16: Minting Chamber

In the center of this chamber is a large, gear-driven press with long bars all around it for people to push to turn the gears. Along the side walls, bars of bronze, copper, silver, and gold are arranged in piles. Mosaics on the walls just inside the entrance depict a soldier with shield, helmet, and spear at attention on either side.

In the piles there are 4 gold bars (300gp each), 7 silver bars (15gp each), 20 copper bars (30sp each), and 50 bronze bars (3sp each). Each bar weighs 30 lbs. Behind the press are dies (inverted molds) that can be inserted into the press for four different coins, all matching the ancient mintage of Madaro-Shanti found elsewhere in the palace. It takes at least 60 points of combined strength to turn the press and up to eight people can turn it at a time.

The mosaics radiate magic, and their presence helps activate a curse. All precious metals brought out of the area that are not minted with the press are transmuted into the metal next lower in value of the bars listed above, including all precious metals brought into the area (unless protected somehow, such as being carried in an extra-dimensional space). A *dispel magic* spell that succeeds at dispelling a 5th level spell will temporarily make it safe to conduct valuables out of the area. Doing at least 20 points of damage to each mosaic also makes the curse inoperative. If necessary, the party can re-mint their gold pieces and other treasure to get it safely out of the area.

Area D17: Armory

This large chamber is dominated by four long wooden and metal weapons racks, spaced with wide rows between them.

JUNGLE RUINS OF MADARO-SHANTI

This room contains the following: 25 suits of chain mail, 25 shields, 50 short swords, 100 spears, 150 javelins, 200 darts, 30 short bows, and 300 arrows. There is a +1 magic version of each of these items concealed with the others.

Area Dr7C: Sinking Wall

This wall lowers into the floor if the exit in **Area P3** of the plaza well is opened.

Area Dr8: Fire Pit

At the center of the floor of this chamber is a 20ft diameter pit. Flames dance above the edge of the pit, reaching over 10ft high and halfway to the vaulted ceiling. The light from the pit is intensely bright and the heat coming from it is barely tolerable.

The heat is intense enough that anyone staying in the area takes 1 fire damage per round (before even crossed at walking speed). Anyone walking up to the pit takes 1d4 fire damage and anyone looking over the edge takes 1d8 fire damage. Anyone jumping into the pit is incinerated. Anyone staring into the fire for 1 round must make a DC 15 Con save or be blinded for 2d6 hours.

Anyone able to withstand the magical heat and remain in the area for more than 20 minutes will also absorb enough radiation given off by the magical fire to cause one of the following random mutations:

1d10	Mutation
1-2	For the next 1d4 days, the PC has an aura of fearfulness about him. Every fourth melee round, all opponents in melee with the PC must save or be affected as if by a fear spell. For the next week, the PC does not need to eat.
3-4	For the next 1d6 days, the PC gains an extra, external body organ or limb of the player's choice.
5-6	The PC is cured of one disease, and is immune to contracting it again for the next 1d6 months.
7-8	For the next 1d6 days, the PC will be able to breathe both air and water.
9-10	For the next 1d8 days, the PC cannot make use of one set of joints (locked-up knees reduces movement rate to 6, while locked-up elbows makes attacking and spellcasting almost impossible).

Area Dr8D: Sinking Wall

This wall sinks into the floor once the exit in **Area W4** of the plaza well is opened.

Area Dr9: Stasis Chamber

A softly glowing magical light emanates from beneath a cloak hanging on a peg in the southeast corner of this chamber. Two other cloaks hang on pegs along the south wall. The floor is covered in woven mats, and there are three padded benches in the middle of the area, each with a wooden chest behind it. In the northeast corner is a folding screen, and in the northwest corner is a raised basin filled with water.

This chamber holds three citizens of ancient Madaro-Shanti, held here in stasis for the ages. They are released from their magical stasis only when sentient beings come within 50ft of them, so their rest has only been broken for minutes at a time over the centuries. The three citizens are Hakimo (a middle-aged noble, soldier, and judge); Kipenzi (an elderly court enchantress); and Hafsa (a 10-year old girl who was blessed with a clerical connection to the deities of Madaro-Shanti). All of them will be wary of the intruders if they look much different than the people of Madaro-Shanti, but they will not be hostile unless the intruders obviously are. Communication with them will be practically impossible without magical aid. If the party does not establish communication relatively quickly, Kipenzi will cast his *detect thoughts* spell (which the party

might definitely assume to be the beginning of combat). Each of the ancients realizes they have been in stasis, but they will be shocked by and incredulous about what has become of the kingdom.

The magical light is coming from a torch with a *continual light* spell cast on it, concealed under a cloak (the torch is actually in a scone and is not a peg, as it initially appears). Each chest contains two changes of clothes for each occupant. Hakimo's chest also contains a sack of 20gp and a ceremonial bronze dagger worth 7gp; Kipenzi's chest contains her spellbook with all her memorized spells in it; Hafsa's chest contains some wooden dolls and a collection of bronze knickknacks, identifiable as holy symbols to a host of forgotten gods, worth 10gp in total. The folding screen is made of wicker and conceals nothing behind it. The water in the basin is cold and drinkable.

Eventually, if there is a spellcaster in the adventuring party, Kipenzi the Enchantress will think of communicating by writing, in which case, if the party uses a *comprehend languages* spell, the Madaro-Shanti will at least be able to "speak" to the party, although they have no way of understanding what the adventurers write in return.

Hafsa, the child with strong spiritual powers, will immediately perceive that one of the nature spirits in the area has become "wrong," but she cannot explain any more specific details, and the language barrier might make it difficult for her to communicate this fact. These individuals do not know the details of how to operate the machinery in the Well, but they can tell the party that certain dungeon and palace walls will sink into the floor when proper triggers are activated down in the well.

If the situation is explained to them, these three will gladly assist the party in an attempt to free Madaro-Shanti from its curse, but if the adventure is phrased to them in terms of looting, they will not readily be persuaded to help the party.

Hakimo, Gladiator: AC 14; HP 112 (15d8+45); Spd 30ft; **Melee** spear x3 (+8, 2d6+5 piercing); **SA** multiattack; **Str** +4 (+7), **Dex** +2 (+5), **Con** +3 (+6), **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Athletics +10, Perception +5; **Traits** brave, brute, parry; **AL** LN; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Equipment: bracers, helmet, and greaves of defense (see **Area P10**), +1 spear.

Kipenzi, Mage: AC 15; HP 31 (7d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** dagger (+5, 1d4+2 piercing); **SA** spells (Int +6, DC 14); **Str** 1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +3 (+7), **Wis** +1 (+5), **Cha** +0; **Skills** Arcana +6, History +6; **AL** LN; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*light, mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost, shocking grasp*; **1st (4)**—*charm person, protection from evil and good*; **2nd (3)**—*detect thoughts, hold person, phantasmal force, see invisibility*; **3rd (3)**—*counterspell, dispel magic, major image*; **4th (2)**—*greater invisibility, polymorph*.
Equipment: ring of protection, dagger, wand of fear

Hafsa, Priest: AC 13; HP 27 (5d8+5); Spd 25ft; **Melee** doll (+2, 1d6 bludgeoning); **SA** divine eminence, spells (Wis +5, DC 13); **Str** +0, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Medicine +5, Nature +3, Religion +3; **AL** NG; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*guidance, light, mending, resistance*; **1st (4)**—*bles, cure wounds, sanctuary*; **2nd (3)**—*hold person, lesser restoration*.
Equipment: wooden doll (used as club), potion of healing

Area Dr9E: Sinking Wall

This wall lowers into the floor when a certain block is moved in **Area W5** of the plaza well.

Area D20:

The Door That Isn't There

The walls are covered with mosaics of strange beings with human bodies and animal heads. The area appears to be empty, save for thick

dust on the floor, and a door in the north wall.

The door is only a permanent illusion (both visual and tactile) concealing an open archway. The door does not appear to be locked, but no spell or use of force can open the door, since it is not there. Weapons will appear to lodge in the wood, but never cause serious damage to it. Arrows fired into it will disappear, and weapons will pass through it, but PCs pushing directly on the door will still think they are pushing on a door. The only two ways to foil this illusion are *dispel magic* (versus a 6th level spell), or questioning the door's physical existence.

If entering from **Area D21**, PCs will not see the illusion unless they enter and look behind them.

The mosaics represent the forgotten deities of Madaro-Shanti and are unrelated to the illusion – the pictures correspond to the god statues in **Area D21**, with the exception of statue (a), the god Ojala, who is not depicted.

Area D21: Lair of Cho-Oda

The floor is paved in smooth marble. On one side of the area are five statues of different heights. The largest is carved from stone, the next largest is wood, the next largest is made of clay, the next is bronze, and the smallest is of some dark, volcanic rock. A skeleton dressed in ornate robes lies prostrate before the smallest statue, which has gemstone eyes and is studded with smaller precious stones.

The Statues:

A. Black volcanic rock statue: this statue is 4ft tall, an evil-looking depiction of a human-like creature with six arms with a tusked mouth. It is carved to hold a skeleton in two of its arms, a corpse in two of its arms, and its last two hands are empty. The figure is in a crouching position. (This statue radiates an evil aura). This is a statue of the god Ojala, who originated the disease which destroyed the city. It has gemstone eyes and is studded with smaller precious stones.

The statue is worth 15,000gp intact, if somehow transported back to civilization, but the gems from it removed are worth just 5000gp. No harm will come to the party if they remove the gems, but anyone trying to remove the statue itself from the palace will be cursed, turning Chaotic Evil in alignment or, if already Chaotic Evil, will slowly transform into an ogre in 4 days (under the GM's control).

B. Bronze statue: this statue is a 5ft tall depiction of a seated humanoid creature with four arms. It holds a baby in two arms, and a cow in each of the other two hands.

C. Clay statue: this statue is 6ft tall, a representation of a fat, sitting human with the head of a crocodile, holding an axe.

D. Wooden statue: this statue is 7ft tall, a depiction of a standing woman with very long fingers and hair that reaches to her bare feet. She has the head of a long-beaked bird.

E. Stone statue: this statue is 8ft tall, representing a four-armed human figure with the head of a gazelle. The figure is seated, holding a bolt of lightning in one hand, what appears to be a cloud in one hand, and a large, ornate black basin in its lap, supported by the other two hands. The basin appears to be a different substance than the rest of the statue. (The basin, but not the statue, will glow under the influence of a *detect magic* spell, but the glow will only be visible when the basin is not covered by the black pudding – see below).

This area is the lair of the nature-spirit Cho-Oda, and the magical source of the dark clouds which threaten the town of Chologadi. The nature spirit is in the form of a horribly powerful black pudding, covering the basin held by the stone statue. The clouds result from the basin's being covered by Cho-Oda's body (see **The Storm Basin** below).

When the party enters, a thunderous, horridly bubbling voice will speak to them (this is the **black pudding**, but echoes will make it very difficult to discern the source of the voice). "I am Cho-Oda, protector of the jungles; begone from my presence, mortal vermin, carriers of plague and madness. You have cursed me, and I shall take my revenge upon you and all your filthy kind." The voice, even though it is thunderous, sounds vaguely hesitant about what it is saying.

If *remove curse* or *greater restoration* is cast upon Cho-Oda, the nature spirit will be cured of its madness and will return to its normal, benevolent

state. The black-putting shape will transform into a translucent gazelle, which will leap upward through the stone and return to the jungle.

Cho-Oda, Black Pudding: AC 7; HP 126 (12d10+60); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** pseudopod x2 (+8, 1d6+5 bludgeoning plus 4d8 acid); **SA** multiattack; **Immune** acid, cold, lightning, slashing, blind, charm, deaf, exhaustion, fright, prone; **Str** +5, **Dex** 3, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4; **Senses** blindsight 120ft (blind beyond); **Traits** amorphous, corrosive form (1d8 acid, touch or melee, destroys metal or wood), spider climb, split; **AL** CN; **CR** 6; **XP** 2300.

Concluding the Adventure

The Black Clouds

If Cho-Oda is slain or cured, the black clouds and mist will immediately begin retreating back toward Madaro-Shanti, and will completely disappear within a week. Movement of the clouds will be visible as soon as the party reaches the surface. The PCs may collect any rewards they bargained for in the town.

Gratitude of Cho-Oda

If Cho-Oda was cured, rather than slain, the nature-spirit will be very grateful to the party. Each PC will gain an experience point bonus of 1000xp.

Revenge of the Nature-Spirits

However, if Cho-Oda was slain rather than cured, the party will have trouble with his brethren nature-spirits, who (even though they are pleased with the adventurers for dispelling the clouds) deeply resent the killing of one of their kind. During the party's journey back through the jungle they will constantly hear the muttering of the word "murderers" drifting through the trees, and toward the end of the journey they will be confronted by the instrument of the nature-spirits' revenge. This is an owlbear of great size. If the owlbear is defeated, the nature-spirits will lose interest in the entire affair.

Owlbear: AC 15; HP 136 (13d10+65); Spd 40ft; **Melee** beak (+10, 1d10+7 piercing), claws (+10, 2d10+7 slashing); **SA** multiattack; **Str** +7, **Dex** +1, **Con** +5, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, keen sight and smell; **AL** U; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Filling in the Gaps

It is possible that when the adventure is completed, the players will still not understand the full background of what has happened: that a nature-spirit was infected by the disease sent by Ojala, that it covered a basin which had a magical effect on the weather, etc. However, the seers and medicine men of the tribes around Chologadi, who are attuned to the nature spirits, will learn the story from these spirits. Even by the time the PCs return, they will be hailed as heroes by the tribesmen, who will, if necessary, be happy to fill in the details of exactly *why* they are heroes.

Special Features of the Ruins

The Stone Heads

At the top of the Well complex there are four stone heads whose eyes prove clues to the operation of the mechanisms in the Well Complex. Each head looks the same – a royal personage, perhaps. The pupils of the eyes, however, are outlines shaped by arrows. In each case, the top line of eyes

JUNGLE RUINS OF MADARO-SHANTI

represent wheels on the wall. Eyes in the lower line represent wheels on the floor. The arrows show the correct direction to turn a wheel (clockwise or counter-clockwise), but the arrows are correct as seen through the eyes of the head, not from the perspective of a person looking at the head. Hence, when viewed from the outsider's perspective, they are consistently the opposite of the correct solution. Once the players figure this out, the heads will be a useful guide to the Well complex. The eyes of the three heads appear as follows:

Head Number One: Three eyes, two of them in the normal position, but with a third eye centered over the nose. The two eyes on the top line are closed. The bottom, centered, has a counter-clockwise arrow. (This head corresponds to **Area W1**).

Head Number Two: Two eyes, one above the other. The top eye shows a counter-clockwise arrow, the bottom eye shows a clockwise arrow. (This head corresponds to **Area W2**).

Head Number 3: As with head #1, this head has two eyes in normal position and a third centered underneath them over the nose. All three eyes are open, and have counter-clockwise arrows. (This head corresponds to **Area W3**).

Head Number Four: As with heads #1 and #3, this statue has three eyes, but in this case all three eyes are closed (No correspondence to any area).

The Storm Basin

The basin itself is a powerful artifact of the weather-god the statue represents. When the basin is sprinkled with water, rain-clouds form over the area around the city and rain falls. However, the basin is now covered with the dark substance of the nature-spirit, and as a result, dark and poisonous clouds have formed over the jungle and will continue to spread for as long as the spirit's ooze-like form remains in its place.

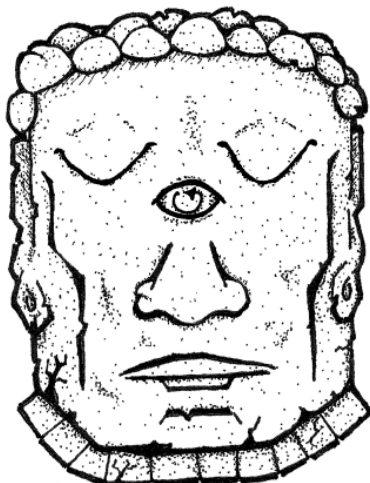
The Writings of Madaro-Shanti

The following text is designated as being found in **Area D7** in dungeon level 1.

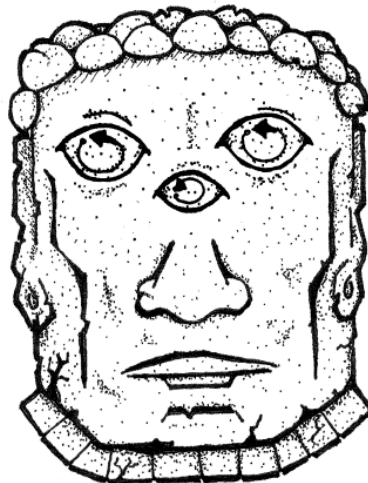
First Entry: Our enemies the sorcerous Kiengaa have made demonic alliances with the monkey-headed hanu-naga, and the gorilla-centaurs, the Borsin. Even now they have laid siege to the city, and despite all our knowledge, it appears that we are doomed. The high priest has gone to the Shrines to seek help, even the help of Ojala the Evil One. And I fear that if we deal with that one, we shall be betrayed.

A Later Entry: We are betrayed. The plague which rescued us has turned upon us. The city dies.

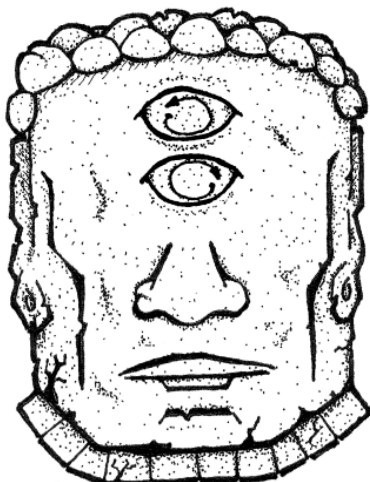
Head
Number
One



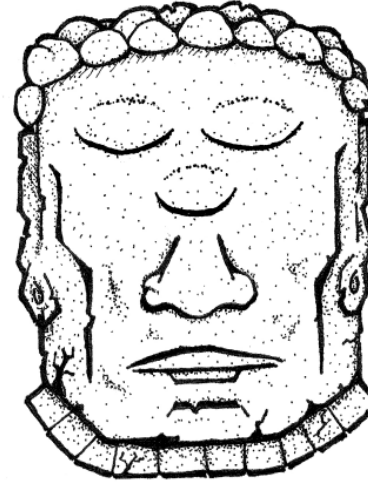
Head
Number
Three



Head
Number
Two



Head
Number
Four



A player handout of the heads may be found at the end of the book.

MEMEXV

An adventure by Bill Webb for 1st level PCs

Introduction

An Old School Primer

This module is intended to show how old school roleplaying provides enhanced descriptions and provides not only storyline and encounters, but creates a feeling of “being there.” I have borrowed from work I did supporting Matt Finch at North Texas RPG Con in 2011, as well as sessions I ran at PaizoCon in 2011 and 2012. Kudos to Tabletop Adventures (<http://www.tabletopadventures.com/>) for the great work they have put in over the years in providing table ready description text. Back in the old days, this was the way it was done—on the fly, by the old timers (and this author counts himself an “old timer”).

Rules were few, people did not really understand roleplaying games as they do today, and we had to make them smell, hear and feel the stench of the dead body, the weird drumming sounds in the deep, and the cold, clammy touch of a ghoul’s claw.

When the game was new, none of the players had read 100+ RPG books. They did not know if a dwarf was a 6in tall faerie or one of Tolkien’s hardened miners with an axe and a love of gold. We had to tell them. As the game has evolved, we deal with a much more educated and cunning set of players. In order to stay a step ahead, the game master must create and describe many situations both hazardous and benign with equal enthusiasm. Players can be kept on their toes and edges of their seats by harmless blue flowers as well as deadly poisonous yellow flowers if they don’t know which is which. The art of storytelling in our favorite game is not dead—heavens no—but to really get back to the roots of the game, it helps to provide mystery and fear.

Some players have joked with me over the years that they never know when to let up—and instead assume combat mode as soon as “flavor text” gets heavy. Having personally never been a fan of the “spot check” or a blind roll to “disarm the trap” without having it fully described, I use flavor text to allow players to creatively solve problems by asking questions and better understanding “what it is” that their PCs see and do. Secret doors are not automatically opened...they must be examined, loose bricks and levers must be searched for, and so on. An orc is not just an orc. It could be a hairy humanoid, with jutting tusks and whitish green skin, barking in an obscene, unintelligible language while it charges at you with its rusted poleaxe! The troll does not simply “regenerate”, but its wounds close over the arrows in its chest almost faster than the blood drips from them.

This is the stuff of 1975.

I have tried in this module to provide a GM with enough information to improvise and make the most of description as a technique in his or her game. Resources exist (Tabletop Adventures, and our very own *Tome of Adventure Design* come to mind) to add to this as deemed needed. It’s not the only way, nor the best way to play. It’s just how I play.

This adventure is designed for 4 PCs of levels 1–3. The setting may seem fairly easy for PCs above 1st level, however, I would enjoin upon the GM to play his or her monsters to kill. Treat them as if they were your own PCs. A goblin with a bow would never get near Joe Platemail III with his huge sword and slow movement rate. A crocodile would grab a lightly armed opponent and drag them into the water—it would never stand and fight a group of 5 men toe to toe. Ghouls would paralyze one opponent and then move to the next, zombies would, well, ok, they would act like zombies and just stand there and attack.

Two things make for fairly played monsters in my games. One is that I

play them as smart as they are, and the second is that I roll all dice openly on the table for all to see, and mandate that all do the same. Oddly, people think I am discouraging player cheating. In reality, I find (even in my own case at times) it’s the GM who more frequently dances the dice to keep the PCs alive. Give these things a shot and see what the results are. I have found that the players are more in love with the challenge of the game and less in love with their PCs. Likewise, a player who has reached higher levels (as high as 4!) has truly made an achievement.

On the player’s side, it is of critical importance, at least to me, that they learn how to run as well as fight. As Gandalf said, “there is always something bigger in this world than yourself”. Truly skilled old school players employed many means of evasion as well as tricky means of fighting the bad guys. Old rules even included methods for increasing odds (gold pieces thrown behind for intelligent monsters, food for the less intelligent monsters), and just because it was “there” did not mean you had to kill it—at least yet. Players would base entire game sessions and plans on taking out a single BEBG (big evil bad guy) that they had previously escaped from.

That is why speed, evasion and care are required. As experience points (XP) for slaying monsters were few, and for gathering loot were big, it made far more sense to avoid wasted resources by killing everything that crossed one’s path, and instead staying goal focused and keeping one’s eye on the ball. The big monsters (intelligent ones) have big treasure (and big XP). The bugs (and purple worms) have none.

(The 5E version of this adventure should be very challenging for a 1st level party, but intelligent play should prevail. I have added a few opportunities to make skill rolls instead of describing to the DM what you’re investigating, but feel free to ignore them for a properly old-school feel!—Ed.)

The Adventure

The adventure begins with the party finding a treasure map that leads them through a forested section of a river valley and down into the swamplands below. The map itself (Players Map 1 and GM Map 1) show the general path to the “treasure” (in reality a small dungeon). The path taken to the dungeon may vary depending on the player’s choices of travel—the GM map is coded with locations of the various encounters and other areas of interest that they could find. No path is the “right” path, although some may be easier than others.

The players’ map is found in the back of the book, and can be copied and given to them as a handout. The GM map varies slightly in that it contains the **map key** detailing various encounter areas, and the players map just shows a dotted line. How the PCs get the map is up to you as a GM. Perhaps it was sold to the PCs by a grizzled old man, or found as part of another treasure hoard. In any case, the introduction to “how” they start the adventure is not detailed here.

The adventure begins as the party leaves the tavern, town etc. and start down the road towards a valley. The valley itself is horseshoe-shaped, and the road the PCs are on is near the top. The treasure map indicates that the “treasure” is in the bottom of the valley along a swampy river course, and is located on an island within the swamp itself. The trick is to find a safe way through the valley to reach the swamp, then to locate the island and the treasure (really a small dungeon). The encounter areas are located on the map, and can be used if the players travel near them.

This adventure can be dropped into just about any location, requiring only a river, a swamp, and a woodland. However, for those who want to

play this game with an official **Lost Lands** location, a likely spot to place it is on the upper half of the Canyon River, 100 miles or so upriver from Zekor's Ferry, just before it enters the Forest of Hope. In this situation the unnamed town of the western edge of the map is a small settlement called Habscomb that lies within the odd economic sphere of Renderby (see *The Lost Lands: Borderland Provinces* from *Frog God Games* for more information on Renderby and its strange trading practices).

Random Encounters

Random encounter checks should be made twice per day and twice per night. A random encounter typically occurs on a 1 in 20 chance (roll a d20, an encounter occurs on a natural 1). Forests double this chance to 2 in 20, and swamps have a 4 in 20 chance of an encounter occurring each check. Encounter tables are organized by terrain.

Plains above the Valley (roll 1d12)

1. Circling birds

The party sees a group of birds circling a mile distant. One by one, the birds drop to the ground. If approached, and before they can see what the birds are doing, they smell the cloying odor of rotting flesh. The birds sit pecking at the corpse of a large elk. If the PCs approach the carcass, the birds squawk and shift around the body but do not give up their feast. One, sitting on the head of the dead creature, eyes them balefully.

2. Weird snowfall

The PCs wake in the morning to find that all the ground is white. Lying over everything is a layer of white stuff that looks like snow. But the moment they move, it shifts and rises in ways snow never does. As they brush it off, it hovers in the air, gradually settling. There are thousands of tiny seeds, each surrounded by a gossamer sphere of tiny white fluff that helps it float lightly in the air. They came, apparently, from the great tree (cottonwood) and covered the ground, plants, and people. They get into everything, though they do no damage. They are annoying to breathe but are only very dense right around the tree. Within a short time, although one or two can be seen still floating on the breeze; most have dispersed with the wind.

3. Falling star

(Only at night, else reroll). The night sky is bright and clear here in the grasslands. The stars themselves twinkle like diamonds in the void. Shooting stars race through the night, first white and then darkening to orange. It looks as if they will fall to earth here and perhaps bring luck and fortune with them, but they always just disappear before they come to earth. Sometimes shooting stars do come to earth and great good fortune is said to favor those who find one. Well, fortune is certainly smiling on the players as a rock the size of a large dog lands not far from the campsite. The rock is still glowing slightly and there is a trail of blackened, scorched grass to show where it initially landed and slid fifty paces along the ground. It is too hot to handle for 2d6 hours, and a rock that size is very heavy, but it is well-known that the iron from meteors can be used to make superior steel and swords made from it may have a telling advantage. Two long swords or four shorter blades could be made from the meteor, if it can be successfully brought to a suitably skilled blacksmith. Those weapons may, at the GM's discretion, have a +1 bonus to hit in combat or else just be light, flexible and well-formed. The meteor is found only once, although shooting stars can be a recurring encounter.

4-5. 2d4 Bandits

Bandits are usually looking to ambush travelers. If the encounter occurs in the late afternoon or evening, the bandits have a 50% chance to be in camp, in which case the party can surprise them. If the bandits are in camp, this can be played in several ways. One idea is to have the group spot a smoke trail (from the bandit's campfire). Bandits typically have

leather armor, crossbows and hand weapons. They carry 2d6 gp of random loot each. The bandit camp contains foodstuffs and camp gear. There is a 10% chance that each bandit carries an oil flask (and torch) for use against heavily armored opponents.

Bandit: AC 12; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 30ft; **Melee** shortsword (+3, 1d6+1 piercing); **Ranged** light crossbow (+3, 80ft/320ft, 1d8+1 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **AL** CN; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

6. 2d6 Wolves

Wolves seldom attack a party during the day unless wounded are present, or the wolves outnumber the party by three to one. At night, the wolves attempt to gang up on one or two PCs in hopes of making a quick kill and then dragging off their prey. If the party has horses, the wolves attempt to kill one and then retreat a short distance to wait, having learned that human groups often leave behind dead animals.

Wolf: AC 13; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 40ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 2d4+2 piercing plus trip); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Traits** pack tactics, trip (Str DC 11 avoids); **Senses** keen hearing and smell; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4; **AL** U; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

7. Trade caravan

These encounters typically involve 2d6 wagons and are accompanied by 1d8 armed men and 2 merchants/drivers per wagon (also armed). Guards are armed with crossbows and hand weapons and typically wear chainmail. Goods range in value from 10-100 gp per wagon and usually include items of value to local villages (cloth, metal goods and sundries, farm equipment, food and drink). There is a 10% chance that the caravan is carrying adventuring supplies (such as arms or armor). If so, the number of guards is doubled. Caravans are happy to sell (at 125% of book values) or buy (at 25% of book values) items from players. Each merchant carries from 20-200 gp in cash.

Guard: AC 16; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 30ft; **Melee** spear (+3, 1d6+1 piercing); **Ranged** light crossbow (+3, 80ft/320ft, 1d8+1 piercing); **Str** +1, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +2; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25

Merchant (Commoner): AC 10; HP 4 (1d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** dagger (+2, 1d4 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +0, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Bluff +4; **Insight** +4; **AL** LN; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

8-9. Herd animals

A herd of deer, wild cattle or otherwise innocuous beasts is spooked by the party and runs by. Fast thinking players can shoot arrows and get a few free meals (assume each animal is AC 12 and has 2d6 hp).

10. Insect swarm

One of the PCs accidentally steps on a nest of hornets or some other type of nasty, biting insects. This releases a swarm of insects that attack the party. If you are feeling kind, you might allow a DC 11 Wis (Perception) check to avoid the encounter.

Swarm of Insects: AC 12; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 20ft, fly 20ft; **Atk** bite (+3, 0ft, 4d4 piercing or 2d4 piercing if at half hp); **Immune** charm, fright, paralyze, petrify, prone, restrain, stun; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing; **Str** -4; **Dex** +1; **Con** +0; **Int** -5; **Wis** -2; **Cha** -5; **Senses** blindsight 10ft; **Traits** swarm in target space; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

11. Crazy old man/woman

A slightly unstable old man or woman is lost/wandering about in the wilderness. The GM can have fun with this one; perhaps the old lady is carrying a fishing pole and casting into the grass, or the old geezer is digging a large hole with a shovel, trying to unearth a "treasure" or

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“dungeon” and asks for help. If the party attacks the old person, it is, of course, an evil act!

Crazy Old Person (Commoner): AC 10; HP 4 (1d8); Spd 30ft; Melee club (+2, 1d4 bludgeoning); Str +0, Dex +0, Con +0, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +0; AL CN; CR 0; XP 10.

12. Ankheg

This large praying mantis-like insect attacks from below. If it fails to surprise the party, they notice mounds of disturbed dirt present on the ground and can avoid or ambush the beast instead. The huge insect has no treasure, however, a skilled armor worker can use its hide to make one breastplate.

Ankheg: AC 14; hp 39 (6d10+6); Spd 30ft, burrow 10ft; Melee bite (+5, 2d6+3 plus 1d6 acid plus grapple); SA acid spray (recharge 6, 30ft line, 3d6 acid, Dex DC 13 half); Str +3; Dex +0; Con +1; Int -5; Wis +1; Cha -2; Senses darkvision 60ft; tremorsense 60ft; CR 2; XP 450.

Forest in the Valley (roll 1d12)

1. Storm

A bolt of lightning lances down from the sky, squarely striking a small tree nearby. A shower of small wood chips fly about as the tree virtually explodes under the electrical onslaught. A few gray clouds have gathered overhead, but nothing to indicate a storm. A gigantic flash of lightning is followed immediately by a deafening clap of thunder and with a rush, the rain starts. The water pelts down mercilessly, instantly soaking everything. The rain seeps under armor and through clothing. Gusts of wind whip through the grass, swirling it wildly. For a few moments, the rain comes down so hard that vision is reduced to 10ft. Overhead, the sky grows completely black with thick clouds, and each flash of lightning illuminates the boiling mass of thunderheads above. Lightning and thunder are now virtually simultaneous, and each boom shakes the ground. The torrent continues for what feels like hours, and then quickly dies off with a few final stinging drops. The rain passes, though the clouds overhead promise to deliver more. Flashes of lightning still burst in the sky, but the thunder sounds farther away. The sky has a sickly greenish-yellow cast to it, turning the clouds an unearthly shade. After some time, a sudden change takes place. The clouds darken and the wind begins whipping ferociously. Sheets of rain fall from the sky drenching everything, followed closely by heavy hail. (The party should be taking shelter in low areas or protected places at this point.) Lightning streaks across the sky; the black clouds are piled high above you. A roaring sound is heard and the ground begins to shake. A writhing, grey finger of cloud begin to descend from the sky towards the earth. As it touches down, the dust of the fields mushrooms up around its base. Like a snake preparing to strike, the storm writhes its way on a parallel course to your own, spreading destruction in its wake (a tornado). The PCs are safe as long as they stay under cover.

2. Loud birds

The woods are filled with birdsong today. From the lilting twitters of tiny, brightly feathered finches to the throaty calls of surly crows, the birds all seem to be trying to outdo each other in volume and persistence. Above there are glimpses of the singers darting away from the group to continue their serenades from more secluded branches. The music is at times lovely, other times cacophonous. The one thing it never is, is silent.

3–4. 2d4 Kobolds

These nasty little buggers are full of tricks and surprises. If not surprised, the kobolds will either flee (if no surprise) or ambush (if they have surprise) the party with missiles and traps. Each kobold carries a dagger, a sling and one of the following:

1. A poisonous snake on a 5ft pole; snake is AC 13, HP 2 (1d4), Melee bite +5 (1 piercing plus 2d4 poison, DC 10 Con half).
2. 1d2 oil flasks and a torch and tinder box

3. Caltrops
4. A thin leather trip rope, 10ft long
5. Has a trap set nearby and tries to lead a PC into it (see **Encounter 10** below).
6. A flask of (1-3) blood (4-5) vile feces or (6) green slime

Kobolds will hit and run, and will not engage the “big people” unless they clearly have an advantage. They carry no treasure.

Kobold: AC 12; HP 5 (2d6); Spd 30ft; Melee dagger (+5, 1d4+2 piercing); Ranged sling (+4, 30ft/120ft; 1d4+2 bludgeoning); Str -2, Dex +2, Con -1, Int -1, Wis -2, Cha -1; Senses darkvision 60ft; Traits pack tactics, sunlight sensitivity; CR 1/8; XP 25



5-6. 1d4 Giant Wolf Spiders

These nasty critters typically attack from above. If the party is not surprised, the party sees webbing in the trees before the spiders attack. They have no treasure.

Spider, Giant Wolf: AC 13; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 40ft, climb 40ft; Melee bite (+3, 1d6+1 piercing plus 2d6 poison, DC 11 Con half); Str +1, Dex +3, Con +1, Int 4, Wis +1, Cha 3; Traits spider climb, web sense, web walker; Senses blindsight 10ft, darkvision 60ft; Skills Perception +3, Stealth +7; AL U; CR 1/4; XP 50.

7. 1d2 Worgs

These evil wolves hunt the forest, slaying all they encounter. Typically they will both attack the same opponent, trying to down each foe in turn. They retreat from fire if strongly presented, and are intelligent enough to avoid heavily armored foes if offered a “softer” target.

Worg: AC 13; HP 26 (4d10+4); Spd 50ft; Melee bite (+5, 2d6+3 piercing plus knock prone); Str +3, Dex +1, Con +1, Int 2, Wis +0, Cha 1; Traits knock prone (DC 11 Str avoids); Senses keen hearing and smell; Skills Perception +4; AL NE; CR 1/2; XP 100.

8-9. Herd animals

A herd of deer, elk or otherwise innocuous beasts is spooked by the party and runs by. Fast thinking players can shoot arrows and get a few free meals (assume each animal is AC 11 and has 2d6 hp).

10. Trap

One thing about woods that have kobolds in them, is that they often are filled with traps. These little devils have constructed several traps in this area. Roll randomly to determine the type. All traps may be detected with appropriate searching techniques:

1. Pit trap, 10ft deep, DC 15 Wis (Perception) to find, 1d6 bludgeoning, DC 15 Dex avoids.
2. Log swings down, hitting all within its path for 1d6+1 bludgeoning, DC 13 Wis (Perception) to find, DC 15 Dex avoids)
3. Foot snare catches a random PC, DC 12 Dex avoids being swung up into a tree or other hard surface for 1d6 bludgeoning damage and being left hanging by one's leg, 10ft in the air, DC 15 Wis (Perception) to find.
4. Javelin trap attacks a random PC: +4, 1d6+2 piercing, DC 15 Wis (Perception) to find, DC 10 Dex to disarm with thieves' tools).
5. Pungi sticks, a 3ft deep pit full of spikes, 2d6 piercing, no save, DC 13 Wis (Perception) to find.
6. Swinging bees nest trap. This is treated as an **insect swarm**, DC 15 Wis (Perception) DC 15 to find.

Swarm of Insects: AC 12; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 20ft, fly 20ft; Atk bite (+3, 0ft, 4d4 piercing or 2d4 piercing at half hp); Immune charm, fright, paralyze, petrify, prone, restrain, stun; Resist bludgeoning, piercing, slashing; Str -4; Dex +1; Con +0; Int -5; Wis -2; Cha -5; Senses blindsight 10ft; Traits swarm; CR 1/2; XP 100.

11. Crazy old man/woman

A VERY unstable and dangerous madman who is initially encountered singing softly to him/herself. This madman seems harmless until the PCs go to sleep or are otherwise unawares. The madman then attacks with ferocity. This encounter only occurs once.

Madman: AC 13; HP 37 (5d8+15); Spd 30ft; Melee club (+5, 1d4+3 bludgeoning); Str +3, Dex +1, Con +3, Int -1, Wis +0, Cha -1; AL CN; CR 1; XP 200.

12. Owlbear

This horrific creature plows through trees and brush to get at its victims. A clever tracker can find its lair (a small cave). The lair contains the remains of a fighter (splint, longsword and 23gp in a pouch).

Owlbear: AC 13; HP 59 (7d10+21); Spd 40ft; Melee beak (+7, 1d10+5 piercing), claws (+7, 2d8+5 slashing); SA multiattack; Str +5, Dex +1, Con +3, Int -4, Wis +1, Cha -2; Senses darkvision 60ft, keen sight and smell; AL U; CR 3; XP 700.

Swamp/River in the Valley (roll 1d12)

1. Fog

Fog has settled in during the night. Being on watch consists of straining to see further than 20ft in any direction. It seems the croak of frogs and the swish of passing crocodiles and snakes are just outside of your visible range. A sudden flurry of wings erupts a short distance from the camp, quickly followed by the frustrated cry of a swamp cougar. The swamp's nightlife is happening all around you, but you cannot see any of it.

2-4. Crocodile

A crocodile stalks the party. It attacks any that enter the water or PCs at the back of the party that are unaware of it. If it kills someone, it immediately grabs the body and retreats to deep water.



Crocodile: AC 12; HP 19 (3d10+3); Spd 20ft, swim 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d10+2 piercing and grapple); Str +2, Dex +0, Con +1, Int -4, Wis +0, Cha 3; Skills Stealth +2; Traits hold breath; AL U; CR 1/2; XP 100.

5. Gray Ooze

Anyone who has seen a blob movie knows how this one goes. The ooze retreats into the water if it is reduced to half hit points. Otherwise it attacks mindlessly.

Gray Ooze: AC 8; HP 22 (3d8+9); Spd 10ft, climb 10ft; Melee pseudopod (+3, 1d6+1 bludgeoning plus corrode); Immune blind, charm, deaf, exhaustion, fright, prone; Resist acid, cold, fire; Str +1, Dex -2, Con +3, Int -5, Wis -2, Cha -4; Skills Stealth +2; Senses blindsight 60ft (blind beyond); Traits amorphous, corrode metal (-1 AC or damage to metal), false appearance; AL U; CR 1/2; XP 100.

6. Quicksand

A random PC falls into quicksand unless found with DC 18 Wis (Perception). This is not particularly hazardous as long as they are not alone. A PC in the quicksand immediately sinks 5ft and sinks an additional 4ft each round. A PC can escape with a successful Str check against a DC of 10 plus depth, as long as they are not entirely submerged. Submerged PCs can't breathe and must be pulled free with a Str check (DC 5 plus depth).

7. Giant Beaver

This large animal is not dangerous as long as they are left alone. Encounters can range from having the party “trespass” on the beaver’s territory (and dam) to randomly encountering one chewing down a tree. If the PCs back off, the beaver will do the same. Beavers are territorial; however, if anyone can *Speak with Animals*, they can be friendly to a group as long as no threat is perceived. The safety of a giant beaver dam could be a wonderful hiding spot/campsite if the beaver is befriended or slain.

Beaver, Giant: AC 13; HP 22 (5d6+5); Spd 20ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** bite (+3, 1d6+1 piercing), tail (+3, 1d4+1 bludgeoning); **SA** multiattack; **Str** +1, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** 2, **Cha** +0; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

8-9. Herd animals

A herd of deer, elk or otherwise innocuous beasts is spooked by the PCs and runs by. Fast thinking players can shoot arrows and get a few free meals (assume each animal is AC 11 and has 2d6 hp).

10. 1d2 Ghouls

These creatures are encountered mostly at night, although daytime encounters are possible. They haunt the swamp looking for flesh to eat; preferably human flesh.

Ghoul: AC 12; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+2, 2d6+2 piercing) or claws (+4, 2d4+2 slashing plus paralysis); **SA** paralysis (1 min, DC 10 Con repeat); **Immune** poison, charm, exhaustion; **Str** +1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

11. Giant Constrictor Snake

Preying even on small crocodiles, the valley is home to large pythons that act as the local apex predator (excepting the dragon). These snakes typically do not attack anything during the day, preferring to sleep in the large trees that make up their nests. A typical encounter would be for a sleeping PC to be attacked. Anyone bitten and squeezed while asleep cannot make a sound if they are dropped to 0 hp. The snakes typically retreat if reduced below half of their hp.

Snake, Giant Constrictor: AC 12; HP 60 (8d12+8); Spd 30ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** bite (+6, 10ft, 2d6+4 piercing) or constrict (+6, 2d8+4 bludgeoning plus grappled and restrained); **Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -4; **Skills** Perception +2; **Senses** blindsight 10ft; **AL** U; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

12. Wyrmling Black Dragon

Living in the swamp is Recaltrix, a **black dragon wyrmling**. She is a fine swimmer, and prefers to come out of the swamp (posing as a crocodile) to flying (due to the heavy tree cover). Recaltrix is almost cat-like in her hunting techniques, and prefers to watch her prey and attack when it suits her.

Black Dragon Wyrmling: AC 17; HP 33 (6d8+6); Spd 30ft, fly 60ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d10+2 piercing plus 1d4 acid); **SA** acid breath (recharge 5-6, 15ft line, 5d8 acid, DC 11 Dex half); **Immune** acid; **Str** +2, **Dex** +2 (+4), **Con** +1 (+3), **Int** +0, **Wis** +0 (+2), **Cha** +1 (+3); **Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +4; **Senses** blindsight 10ft, darkvision 60ft; **Traits** amphibious; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.



Keyed Encounter Areas

Area 1: The Black Spire

As the PCs journey through the lush green land they see ahead a round grassy mound with a slender finger of stone at its top. When they approach, you can see the hill is about 20ft high and 40ft across at the base. Atop this mound is a granite obelisk 7ft high. The stone is old and weather worn, with an inscription at its base written in a forgotten script. Behind the obelisk is a large patch of freshly turned earth.

Against the horizon is a tall, black spire. It stands about 15ft tall, its surface beaten and cracked by weather. There are marks all over the surface, but too much time has passed since they were carved, and they are now just shallow tracings in the stone. If the adventurers try to read the marks they will realize the carvings are in an ancient tongue that they cannot read. The obelisk is merely a border marker of an empire that fell long ago.

Area 2: Empty Armor

Lying beside the road is a set of leather armor. A full torso of tiny leather plates sewn together lies on the grass, still in a round shape with the straps closed, so it gives the eerie impression of still being worn, even though the wearer cannot be seen. The owner must have been a middle-sized man, quite broad-shouldered. If the area is searched, they find the leg armor scattered in the grass, dispelling the illusion that anyone is in the body armor. No helm, weapons pack or shoes can be found, only leather armor. The armor is still supple and soft, although in some places grass is growing up through it. Grass grows fast and leather weathers quickly, so this cannot have been here long.

Area 3: The Bandit Camp

There is an odd structure up ahead, instantly distinguished by straight lines in an environment where all things curve. As the PCs near the structure, they can determine that it is the wall of an old building. Two sides still stand but the grassland has reclaimed all the area around the walls. The two walls, only a story high, are at right angles to each other and protrude awkwardly out of the plain. PCs approaching the structure are struck by reflections off an old mosaic that covers the wall. The tiles are still bright blue and white. Despite the gaps from missing tiles, the scene is recognizable as a mountain above a blue lake. No real mountains or lakes are visible anywhere nearby.

Living here are **3 bandits**, there is a 50% chance that one is on guard.

The first bandit has a belt pouch with a lump of translucent amber wax the size of an apricot worth 5cp. Inside the wax ball is a jagged piece of pink rhodochrosite the size of a child's thumbnail worth 9gp, that can be dimly seen inside with a DC 12 Wis (Perception) check.

The second bandit has a small sack on his belt containing a pair of beeswax candles perfumed with lavender. The candles were originally shaped like dancing girls, but as they have burned down, the wax has deformed the dancers strangely. Only the legs and hips remain clearly defined.

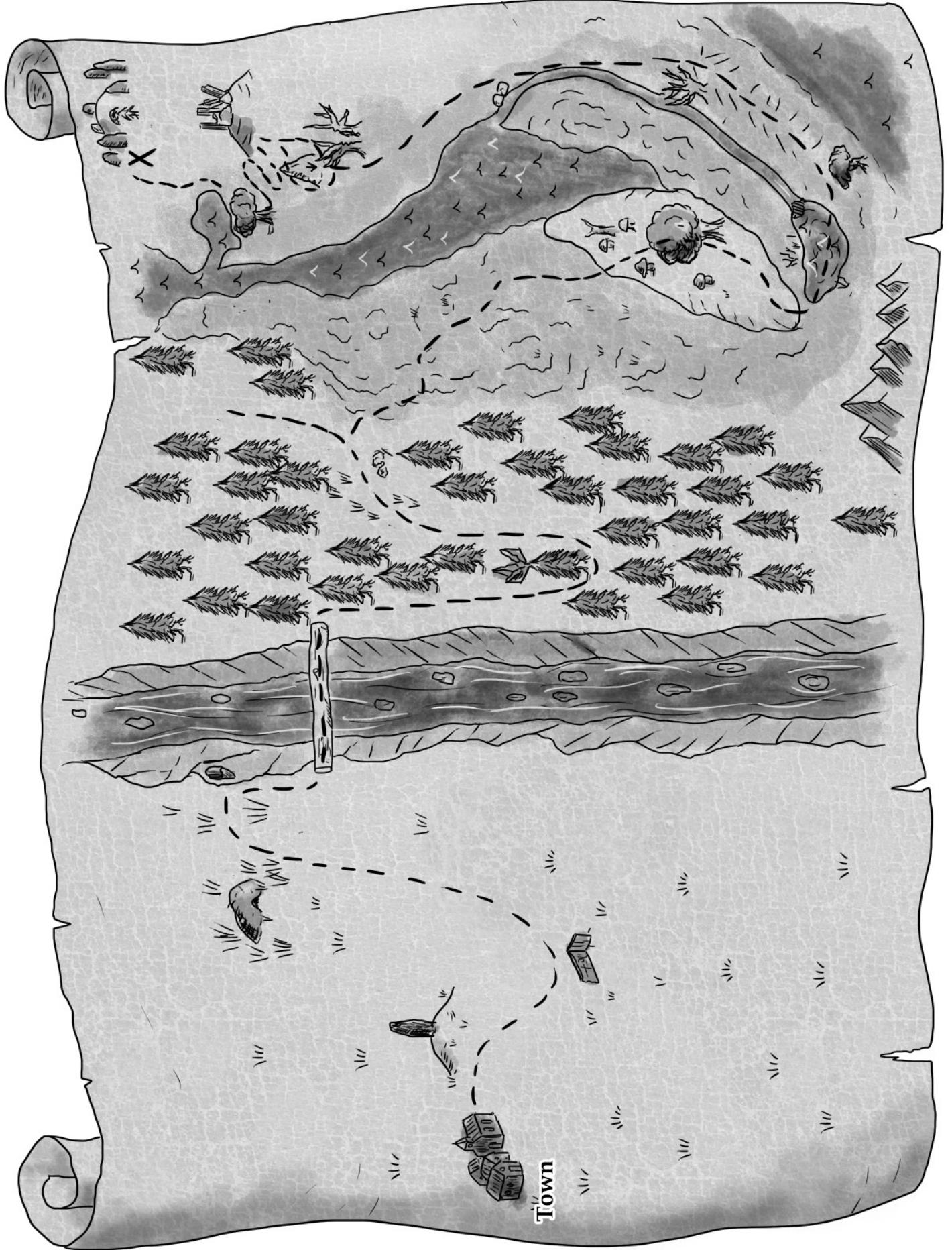
The third bandit's pouch contains three gold coins, a round wooden box full of a fragrant yellow wax (mustache wax, 2gp) and a bright woven ribbon, red, purple and white, made of some fine material (silk) about as long as one arm but thinner than your little fingernail.

Bandit (3): AC 12; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 30ft; Melee shortsword (+3, 1d6+1 piercing); **Ranged** light crossbow (+3, 80ft/320ft, 1d8+1 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **AL** CN; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Tactics: The bandits will not openly engage a larger party if they have surprise, but instead spread out in the brush and attack from all sides with missiles, targeting lightly armored foes first. They run if one of them is slain.



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QUESTS OF DOOM 2

Treasure: In the camp are 4 boxes of foodstuffs (20 days rations), a small keg of wine (worth 10gp), bedrolls, a tinderbox, 4 flasks of lamp oil and a lantern. A sack of 60 tallow candles hangs from a hook on one wall. In one bedroll is a pouch containing a set of dice and 36sp. Stretched between two poles are the partially tanned hides of three deer and a beaver (worth 1gp each for the deer hides and 4gp for the beaver pelt). Wedged into one of the poles is a hide scraper (worth 2gp), and at the base is a pot of oily wax (worth 10sp) used in tanning hides. A pile of firewood rests against another wall, and a chopping axe lays on top of it.

Area 4: An Empty Burrow

Concealed amongst the tall grass is a large, flat boulder. Below the front edge, someone or something has burrowed under the rock, creating a small shelter. The small space is damp and smells strongly of wet fur. There are scatterings of bird bones and small piles of dried dung littering the floor. There is no other life in here except for a few beetles, crawling slowly along the wall. A ceramic drinking mug decorated with a rose quartz (worth 11gp) lies on the floor and is filled with torn paper. Mixed in the dirt near the mug are an assortment of 25 silver temple coins, stamped with the faces of saints (worth 25gp). At the bottom of the mug, is a golden sphere the size of a die (worth 15gp). The wadded, torn-up fragments of paper each bear strange writing in deep indigo ink. This is the remains of a scroll of the arcane spell *suggestion*. Amazingly, none of the tears broke any of the lettering, so if the scroll is repaired, or if the pieces are carefully laid out, it can still be used.

Area 5: For the want of an axle . . .

Nestled in the tall grass is a broken-down wagon. The peeling paint on the wind-blasted sideboards reads “Mygo’s Traveling Mystical Emporium.” The rear axle is broken, causing the wagon to sag drunkenly to the left. The leather harnesses are rotting away, but are still connected to the shaft. The tattered canvas cover has been destroyed, leaving the metal frame highlighted against the sky like the ribs of some great beast. The wheels have sunken into the prairie ground several inches. It would seem that the wagon was abandoned long ago.

A heavy woolen cloak (worth 14gp), dyed dark blue, lies crumpled in a corner. Lighter blue ink has been used to trace wandering spiral patterns on the cloak, and the fine garment’s edges have been trimmed in bone-white thread and feathers. A silver clasp in the shape of a walrus (worth 36gp) has been used to secure the cloak. The right interior pocket holds a leather scroll case. Within scroll case are three sheets of plain parchment scribed in a utilitarian, easy-to-read script. Each sheet is labeled “Protection for the traveling wizard” in the Common tongue. Each of the scrolls is identical, and contains a copy of *mage armor*. The thick leather scroll case has been repeatedly treated with oils to make it waterproof and flame proof. It weighs one pound and is worth 50gp.

Area 6: The Ogre Cave

If encountered during the night, the PCs can see a dim light illuminating a cave entrance on the side of a steep cliff. If encountered during the day, the party can see several dozen bones and skulls at the base of the cliff below the cave entrance, and an area of brown, dead vegetation along the cliff face.

The cave itself sits on the edge of a 40ft cliff near to a trail winding down into the valley. The trail is approximately 20ft wide, with a sandy and crumbly edge held together by vegetation. The entrance is 10ft wide and 7ft high, and is obscured with brambles and vines tacked onto a crossbar set of tree limbs. The vines are dead (unlike the rest of the vegetation on the hillside, and it is easy to determine that this is probably a (poorly) concealed door.

The back of the concealed door has 4 large brass bells hanging from it that clink and ring loudly and with a considerable echo if the door is handled roughly. Careful examination of the false door (rather than just tossing it aside) reveals the bells and can prevent the Ogre and his pet bear



from immediately knowing they have company. Alternatively, a DC 15 Wis (Perception) check may reveal the bells if you’re feeling kind.

Beyond the door is a cave tunnel that widens to 20ft wide and 12ft high, branching left and right sides after 30ft. The floor of the cave is comprised of coarse sand, and broken stalactites and stalagmites (obviously broken intentionally) litter the floor. A campfire is immediately within the door. It is lit at night, but has been doused with water during the day.

Area 6a: The Pantry and Spring

The left tunnel leads to a 40ft diameter, dead-end cave that contains a 10ft diameter pool of clean, clear water. The pool is 8ft deep and flows through cracks in the walls of the pool in both directions, providing an excellent and replenishing water source. Many small, blind crayfish crawl around the pool.

Hanging from the walls of the cave are three gutted deer, one stretched wolf pelt, and one dead (and gutted and dressed) human. Blood stains the sand near the hanging corpses, and flies and small cave beetles have been attracted to the remains.

Note that if the bell trap was sounded, and the PCs went this way first, it is highly likely that they will be attacked from the rear after 1d4 rounds.

Area 6b: The Ogre’s Den

The right tunnel leads back 80ft to a 50ft long, 30ft wide chamber. The cave smells foul, like sweat and filth of some sort. The ceiling is 12ft high, and has had all of its lime deposits knocked down (the ogre was tired of hitting his head on them). A large pile of rubble lines the back wall of the cave, obscuring the ogre’s nest (see below). A huge pile of firewood is stacked against the left wall, and a fire pit made of stacked rocks rests in the center of the cave, complete with a cooking spit and a large pot. The ceiling is well ventilated, and bats flutter about the roof. The bats are able to leave the cave through small cracks in the roof.

Unless the players have been very stealthy, the **ogre** and his pet **black bear** are here and ready for combat. They fight to the death if encountered in the cave (there is nowhere for them to retreat). If a PC speaks Giant, it is possible to parley with them, although the Ogre considers any intrusion

into his home as burglary, and will be unfriendly from the outset of negotiations. The pair will not pursue a large group outside of the cave.

Ogre: AC 11; HP 59 (7d10+21); Spd 40ft; **Melee** greatclub (+6, 10ft, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); **Ranged** javelin (+6, 30ft/120ft, 2d6+4 piercing); **Str** +4, **Dex** -1, **Con** +3, **Int** 3, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Bear, Black: AC 11; HP 19 (3d8+6); Spd 40ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+3, 1d6+2 piercing), claws (+3, 2d4+2 slashing); **SA** multiattack; **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +3; **Senses** keen smell; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

The ogre's nest is a foul collection of torn bedding and soiled clothing, most of it shredded into long, worthless strips. The hilt of a greatsword pokes out from beneath the pile. It is in decent condition, if a bit rusty. Next to the sword is a suit of worn but serviceable banded mail, sized for a large human or half-orc. A few bones are still lying near the banded mail, and they show evidence of having been gnawed on. A backpack lies by the armor; like the bedding, it has been shredded to worthlessness. Its contents lie strewn throughout the pile. The remains of trail rations are mixed with a destroyed pile of rope and scraps from a canvas sack. Several dozen coins are scattered amongst the refuse (69gp, 148sp). Buried in the back is a shortbow which, surprisingly, shows no wear although it is missing its bowstring. A quiver of arrows is here as well; chewed through, but still containing three silver arrows.

A longbow of yew with a grip of pale calfskin worth 75gp lies near the bedding beside a quiver of deer hide tooled all over with cleverly intertwined hunting scenes worth 5gp. There are no arrows in the quiver but it holds a silver flask etched with flower decorations (worth 10gp), which is full of rich red wine. The chest contains a light leather riding saddle (worth 10gp), a square of fine lace (worth 5gp) and a pair of white elbow-length gloves sprinkled with freshwater pearls around the top (worth 340gp). Beside them, wrapped in a rag, is a stick of charcoal and a 3-inch diameter *sphere of clear crystal* (see below). A tall thin book with poorly executed carving on its wooden covers is half-full of amateur sketches of people and animals, done in charcoal (worth 5sp). Caught in a seam at the bottom is a red-brown garnet worth 100gp.

A heavy, solid brass bucket holds two fine silver platters worth 30gp each, a black stone cat with yellow eyes (actually onyx with 2 small citrines worth 250gp), a hinged box with a tiny hunting scene on the top in bright enamels worth 15gp, and a heavy coin pouch. The little box holds a fine powder; in fact, half a pound of cinnamon worth 5sp. In the coin pouch are 65gp, 393sp, 203cp and 3 pieces of turquoise worth 10gp each.

Polished to a mirror-like sheen, this smooth *sphere of clear crystal* is surprisingly heavy, and is about the size of a plum. The sphere erupts in bright silver light that clearly illuminates the area around. When held in hand, this crystal sphere radiates silver light brightly out to 20ft, and dimly out to 40ft. The sphere automatically activates when grasped, and deactivates one round after being released.

Area 7: River Crossing

The path is split by a deep chasm, 60ft wide, with a river at the bottom. A big tree has been cut and dropped over the chasm, forming a bridge. There is no other way across except to walk on the tree. The tree was about a 100ft tall. White rushing water between tall boulders flows in the river below. The bark still remains on the tree, but its branches have been chopped off. A slightly lighter color down the center shows the path. It's about 1ft wide and level. On both sides another 6in of log slopes away. It's not a difficult path, if you don't mind being suspended in space 60ft above a wild river.

Area 8: Ruined Cottage

The trail winds over a dark sandy soil, comfortable to walk or ride on, as it gives slightly and makes little dust. The temperature is pleasant in the shade of the great trees. The air carries sweet plant scents, such as pine and

wintergreen. In all directions the trunks of tall broad-leaved trees reach upward. Occasionally the trunks are those of pines, leaking sticky, fragrant sap. Middle-sized shrubs dot the forest floor. Some ferns and grasses are evident, but most of the ground is bare, except for fallen, brown leaves and fuzzy deep green mosses. A ruined building ahead makes a stark contrast. Only a single wall stands, but the party can see a dark empty area where the interior was, and sections of the fallen walls are visible.

In front of the ruins, weeds form a wild tangle of green and brown shoots. The sight is both forlorn and ugly. Four transparent glass bottles with cork stoppers are lined up side by side on a small shelf inside the remains. Each holds about one pint of liquid. Each of the bottles contains a fairly thick liquid in which different items of food are packed. The first contains pickled garlic bulbs, the second pickled eggs of some sort, perhaps hens' eggs, the third, strands of red cabbage and the final one has small, silvery fish. In the bottom of the fish bottle are also 4 large, silver-appearing coins (actually platinum) worth 40gp.

Area 9: Spiders and Flies

What began as the occasional spider web has now blossomed into gossamer curtains and sheets of webbing. There is evidence that the webs have been hacked and burned away from the trail, but the surrounding forest contains web upon web. You can smell dust and decay everywhere. Here and there, you see hanging objects that could be bodies; too many of them seem to be humanoid in shape. Everywhere you look, you see lights that seem to be glittering eyes staring back at you. Eerily, you notice that you can no longer hear the normal sounds of the forest – only the gentle sighing of a mournful wind.

Four giant wolf spiders lurk in the trees. Each round 1d2 spiders notice the party and begin to stalk them. Once three or more spiders have noticed the group, they attack.

Spider, Giant Wolf (4): AC 13; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 40ft, climb 40ft; **Melee** bite (+3, 1d6+1 piercing plus 2d6 poison, DC 11 half); **Str** +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** 4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** 3; **Traits** spider climb, web sense, web walker; **Senses** blindsight 10ft, darkvision 60ft; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +7; **AL** U; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

One of the corpses has a sack. In the sack a large, half-burned yellow candle, two thin, gray blankets made of wool (2gp each), a heavy black skillet (iron, 2sp), an old, large wooden spoon, a mink pelt worth 20gp, a rabbit pelt worth 2gp, and a black leather belt, carefully made with inconspicuous, very fine tooling along its length. However, the buckle is missing and was very sloppily cut off; the belt is worth 3gp. The sack also holds a coil of coarse rope, a pair of gauntlets of heavy cowhide dyed black, held by solid iron rivets reworked to look like stars worth 5gp, and a silver key worth 1gp. In the bottom of the sack are various coins and black and white stones. (7gp, 19sp, 33cp; 2 pieces of obsidian worth 10gp each; 1 small piece of onyx worth 20gp; 2 pieces of quartz worth 10 gp each). Also present is a club hewn from a gnarled oaken limb, preserved with a dark finish. The large burl of wood at the business end has been stained a dark, rusty red from repeated use. The grip is bound in strips of cream-colored leather bearing fine runes dyed into the material. The leather strips can be unwrapped from the club to reveal two castings of the spell *heat metal*. Each strip is 4in wide and 2ft long.

Area 10: Mysterious Shrine

Next to the path, but partially hidden by a screen of smaller plants, a small shrine composed of stacked rocks and twigs has been established around a crudely carved 3 foot statue. The statue has chubby arms and legs and a welcoming smile, together with some tiny clay bowls and plates. Bits of food and drink have been set in front of the god as a form of tribute. A small scorched area might indicate where a fire had been set, although it may have been nothing more than a large candle.

Area 11: A Fork in the Road

The ground surrounding the path here is completely blanketed with a vibrant, blue clover, the bright full blooms almost glowing in the gloom of the woods. Hovering and darting above the clover are tiny white butterflies. A rustling among the clover is caused by a small green viper, coursing his way through the plants.

Careful inspection reveals a glimpse of something gleaming dully among the greenery —DC 15 Wis (Perception) check: A small pewter skeleton key, the top of which is carved to resemble a squat little face of a mouse with a protruding tongue. There is a 10% chance that the little viper, which slithers quickly from the clover bed and across the path, is disturbed by the party and attacks.

Snake, Poisonous (Viper): AC 13; HP 2 (1d4); Spd 30ft, swim 30ft; Melee bite (+5, 1 piercing plus 2d4 poison, DC 10 Con half); **Str** -4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -4; **Senses** blindsight 10ft; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Area 12: Mushrooms and Fishhooks

The trees are spaced more widely apart here, allowing more sunlight to reach the forest floor. Some of the trees are ancient, reaching heights of 100ft or more and spanning 10ft to 15ft across. The trees' great, twisted roots have grown over the trail in many places, at times rising 4ft above the ground before delving back into the loamy earth. Dozens of tiny red mushrooms sprout from the soft wood of the roots, creating a strange almost anthill-like appearance. Along in the trail, two of the enormous trees have grown toward each other, their great roots intertwining and forming a latticework wall that completely bars the path.

At the blocked section, the roots have grown in a way that suggests a ladder, easy to climb despite the slippery nature of the moss and the mushrooms growing on them. The roots go up about 8ft. If any of the party climb them, they find a small 'nest' of twigs and leaves tucked up against the trunk of one great tree. It is about the right size for a creature 2ft tall. It contains a dirty suit of clothes in a very small size, a tiny pair of shoes, and a small locked iron box. (If any of the party has the skeleton key above, it will fit into the keyhole and can be used to unlock the box.) Inside is arrayed rows of fish hooks in different sizes and materials. The smallest would be suitable for landing minnows while some of the larger ones would probably be strong enough to cope with a particularly fierce shark. Some of the smaller hooks are fashioned from stone and some kind of crystal, while the larger ones are made from some kind of steel. There are 80 hooks, worth a total of 50gp. If anyone steals the hooks, the leprechaun Jasper that owns them will become very upset.

Leprechaun: AC 13; HP 21; Spd 30ft; Melee dagger (+5, 1d4+3 piercing); **SA** innate spells (Cha +5, DC 13); **Str** -2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3; **Skills** Deception +5, Insight +4, Perception +4, Stealth +7; **Senses** keen hearing; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Innate Spells: at will—*dancing lights*, *invisibility* (self), *major image* (permanent), and *polymorph* (converts an object into a creature or plant for up to 1 hour; Con avoids).

The little fellow hides invisibly high in a tree, and does not bother the party unless his abode is disturbed. Should the group leave food (or wine), Jasper might be favorably disposed towards them, even helping them in their next fight, although he still will not reveal himself. He will instead use his polymorph ability to transform opponent's swords into mushrooms and the like. If the hooks are stolen by the party, the opposite is true. The little fellow plagues the group with untied shoelaces, spoiled food, misplaced items and turns a sword into a snake when the group is in combat. The GM can use his imagination to create havoc as desired.

If a great quantity of wine or spirits is left as an offering, the party has an opportunity to capture Jasper. Like all his kind, he has a propensity to indulge a bit heavily when given the opportunity. While he remains

invisible, the drunk leprechaun can be located by his loud snoring. If captured, Jasper offers his pot of gold (400gp) for his freedom. The gold is buried on a small hill not far from the tree lattice.

Area 13: Into the Swamp

At the edge of a thickly forested territory, the PCs marvel at the new plant life all around, and feel water begin to creep into their boots. Anyone looking down notices that the forest floor ahead is flooded. The swamp ahead is alive with new growth; yellow birch trees with new catkins (flowers) hanging from the branches, and the dark green scale-like leaves of white cedar trees. They also notice the intense smells all around. Some enticing aromas come from new flowers blooming above the water, but others are not so appealing, like the smell of fetid leaves still decaying from last year's fall season. PCs cannot see very far ahead into the swamp due to the overgrowth of the trees; vision is limited to 90ft in the swamp.

The path descends into the dark waters of the swamp. Tall grasses grow up in the shallows where the path should be, and sections of the trail are underwater. The murky waters swirl sluggishly and ripples indicate something large swimming across the road just below the surface. Ahead the path rises out of the water and continues on. If the adventurers follow the path they will find that the water covering it is waist deep. Anyone who misses a DC 5 Dex check could slip and fall. The GM should decide if there is a risk of an encounter. Also, if the adventurers move to the right or left of the road the water quickly rises to neck deep.

Area 14: Rats!

A plump, insolent-looking rat sits on the matted moss on top of a dead stump in the water at the side of the trail and licks its lips suggestively. It waits there, daring anyone to throw a stone, which it might well ignore. The water bubbles around the rat and a burst of foul-smelling gas suddenly fills the air. The rat looks like it is smirking. Long white whiskers stand out against its grey, well-groomed fur. Green eyes gleam in what remains of the daylight and they have a look of intelligence far greater than any rat should have. If attacked, the rat can easily be slain (AC 13; HP 1). A better idea would be to toss it something shiny.

The rat's nest is a few yards into the swamp, just off the trail. In its nest are several items. For some reason, this rat feels a need to "trade" shiny objects from time to time. Should the PCs toss it an object, it runs off and returns with an exchange gift. It will do this up to three times. What the rat brings back is randomly determined, but can include:

1. A silver piece
2. A gold piece
3. A small gem (10gp)
4. A worthless polished rock
5. A broken piece of china or glass
6. A large white tooth (of a crocodile or other beast)
7. A small mirror made of silver (15gp)
8. A magical *ring of protection*

Items 7 and 8 can only be gotten once.

Area 15: Bubble Spit and Chomp

The swamp bubbles and spits, methane deposits just under the water exploding rhythmically. The air is so humid and close that it's hard to breathe. In the water is a **crocodile**, although this one is on the opposite shore, and resting, having eaten recently, and only attacks if someone enters the water. If the party comes back this way again, the crocodile may be hungry (50% chance), and lying in ambush near the water's edge.

Crocodile: AC 12; HP 19 (3d10+3); Spd 20ft, swim 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d10+2 piercing plus grapple); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -3; **Skills** Stealth +2; **Traits** hold breath; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Area 16: Just Chomp

Here the swamp forest forms a gallery overhead. Great trees with air plants dangling from them arch over the swamp. The water is so still one can see their reflection in its dark surface. The tree trunks are gray or occasionally light brown, thin and smooth. Most are quite plain, but a few are twisted round and round with climbing vines. They branch far overhead, but the limbs are long and bend down to dip leaves in the water. A bright red and white butterfly basks on an olive green leaf near the water's edge, its wings flicking slowly up and down. In the water is a **crocodile** (see **Area 15** for stats), which attacks anyone within 10ft of the trail's edge.

Area 17: The Island of Screams

About 30ft through chest deep water is a 40ft diameter island, rising up out of the swamp. This portion of the bog smells of rot, decay, and fermenting wood. Every place where the ground rises up out of the water is speckled with tiny white and tan mushrooms. Fallen logs lay soaked and decomposing all around, most of them covered with broader, slimy looking fungus and moss.

The trees on the island that are still standing are ringed with brown shelf-like fungi in tiers around their trunks. The mushrooms are getting larger the further onto the island. In the center of the island is a small area where they seem to have replaced the trees entirely. About a half-dozen of the fungi are tall enough that the caps are spread above the party's heads and there is a fine mist of yellowish green spores sprinkling down from each. Beyond these few large ones, the mushrooms gradually get smaller again. These large mushrooms include 3 **shriekers**. There is a 50% chance that each round they shriek, a **young troll** will be attracted. The troll carries a sack, which contains a length of fine brown silk (3 yards, 30gp), a plain gold cup too small for a halfling to get a good drink (25gp) and a large piece of carved white rock. The carving is two hands long and is the head of a man with an aquiline nose and thinning hair. It was obviously broken off from a larger sculpture. The sack also contains an iron mace studded with pointed spikes longer than a finger - a ball of thick white yarn (1gp) has tangled all around the mace and its spikes - and a small shiny round metal cylinder with a cap that holds toothpicks (cylinder silver 5gp, toothpicks 1cp). Scattered across the bottom are coins and 2 pale blue gems, (19sp, 25cp, and 2 pieces of blue quartz, 10gp each).

Shrieker (3): AC 5, HP 13 (3d8); Spd 0; SA shriek (1d4 rounds, audible to 300ft); **Immune** blind, deaf, fright; **Str -5, Dex -5, Con +0, Int -5, Wis -4, Cha -5; Senses** blindsight 30ft (blind beyond); **Traits** false appearance; **CR 0; XP 10.**

Young Troll: AC 13; HP 51 (6d8+24); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), claws x2 (+4, 2d4+2 slashing); **SA** multiattack; **Str +2, Dex +1, Con +4, Int -2, Wis 1, Cha -2; Skills** Perception +1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; keen smell; **Traits** regeneration (10 hp/turn); **CR 2; XP 200.**

Area 18: A Really Big Tree

Even among the towering trees in this swamp, this one is huge. If six men held hands, they still might not be able to reach around its base. The bark is weathered and dark, with odd cracks and crevices. In places the bark has come off and the rich red-brown wood can be seen. On this side, along the trail, the great tree is on land, but the other side of the immense trunk is surrounded by green swamp water. The branches, some bigger than many individual trees, spread far overhead. At the tree's base is what must be a forest altar of some sort, fresh flowers are lying there, atop older dry flowers and unidentifiable items. A large granite boulder lies ahead, the path snaking around it.

Past a granite boulder, the size of a small mountain is a colorful sight. A field full of vibrant flowers, of every shape and size, dances to the tune of the breeze. Floral scents fill the PC's nostrils, along with the tickle of pollen. The soft trickling sound of a stream nearby makes this an almost serene place. It appears initially that they have exited the swamp; however

another step proves this wrong, as their feet submerge into the cold and inundated soil. (A rare find indeed, as normally flowers like the ones mentioned above do not grow in swamps. There may, however there may be a special reason behind this, it is possibly the domicile of a swamp druid, or perhaps the soil here is just perfect for this type of plant life.)

Gnarled, pungent vines grow out of deep cracks in the head of an ancient statue. Taller than a grown man, it lies upside down in the oily muck, with only the base of its nose and its snarling lips visible above the scum of dead leaves and still water. The statue must have once been painted in striking greens, yellows and reds, but age has reduced its brilliant colors to pastels. The roots of a twisted river oak grow in thick tangles around the severed head. Some distance away lies an enormous hand, missing half its fingers, which is now home to a nest of vipers. The **snakes** are highly aggressive, and attack if disturbed, with 1d4 of them joining combat each round until all 12 are slain or the party retreats more than 60ft from the statue. Of the rest of the forgotten statue, there is no sign.

Snake, Poisonous (Viper) (12): AC 13; HP 2 (1d4); Spd 30ft, swim 30ft; Melee bite (+5, 1 piercing plus 2d4 poison, DC 10 Con half); **Str -4, Dex +3, Con +0, Int -5, Wis +0, Cha -4; Senses** blindsight 10ft; **CR 1/8; XP 25.**

Area 19: The Pond

The trail vanishes into a pond here. Circling along the edge, looking for the trail, branches slap at your faces and your gear (such as packs or protruding weapons) gets caught by vines. The pond appears to be at least 100ft across, but its edge is irregular and not easy to see. At the far edge, at what ought to be the pond's exit, is a beaver dam. The dam is woven of logs, sticks and leaves, easily 6ft high above the stream at its center, 3ft at its edges. It is in excellent repair; some of the branches on it still have green leaves. The pond spreads out from there and one can see the top of a beaver lodge 20 yards out in the pond. The stream spills under the dam, filling a wide channel there. The pond covers the trail. The players have to pick a place to ford the stream, either above or below the dam. The trail continues once the pond is crossed or river forded. Curiously, there is no beaver.

Several small turtles, mostly a hand span across but sometimes larger or smaller, can be seen in the pond. Most are scrunched together on a log a dozen yards out in the center of the pond and around the beaver lodge. They bask in a strange posture in the occasional beam of sunlight, their heads and legs all sticking stiffly out from the shell. A **giant turtle** hides in the pond. Anyone at the ponds edge for more than 3 rounds will likely be attacked. The turtle has tactical advantage on Dex (Stealth) checks while in the pond.

Turtle, Giant: AC 16; HP 51 (6d8+24); Spd 10ft, swim 20ft; Melee bite (+4, 2d6+2 piercing); **Str +2, Dex -2, Con +4, Int -3, Wis +0, Cha -1; CR 1; XP 200.**

Area 20: Narrow Path, Big Pig

The path travels alongside a stream for a space, and rises up out of the mud a few feet, creating a ledge down to the water of about 8ft. Although the trail is clear and the stream is obvious, the plants along the stream edge are very dense and difficult to move through.

Along the ridge, a female **giant boar** noses for grubs before a gently swaying wall of cattails. Six piglets nose along the ground, their snouts and stubby, immature tusks covered in rich brown mud. They oink happily, till the mother catches sight of the party. She stands her ground, grunting angrily, as her young barrel into the thicket. As soon as they are out of sight, she joins them, knocking over cattails in her haste to get to safety. If the group does not retreat in 3 rounds, she attacks. The only way around her is to swim or wade through the water below.

Boar, Giant: AC 12; HP 42; Spd 40ft; Atk tusk (+5, 2d6+3 slashing); **Str +3, Dex +0, Con +3, Int -4, Wis -2, Cha -3; Traits** charge (+2d6 slashing plus prone, DC 13 Str), relentless; **CR 2; XP 450.**

Area 21: St. Elmo

Each step causes a sucking sound from the bottom of the PCs' boots as they release from the muck. Ahead is an unusually large tree. It is has lost all of its leaves, and its branches reach out like arms, stretching towards the group. The dark gray lines that run vertically through its pasty white trunk seem somehow to form a face. A large knot protruding from the center of the tree resembles a nose, while a hollowed opening under the knot has the appearance of a mouth. A slowly pulsating, yellowish light flies from this hole, reminiscent of a firefly, and dances off into the trees.

The glowing light is a highly dangerous **will-o'-wisp**. It will not attack unless attacked, but instead will try to draw the group into a nearby patch of quicksand. If the PCs are not drowned, the wisp heads off in search of other victims.

Will-o'-Wisp: AC 19; HP 22 (9d4); Spd 0ft, fly 50ft (hover); **Melee** shock (+4, 2d8 lightning); **SA** consume life (bonus, 0hp still alive, DC 10 Con, regain 3d6 hp), invisibility, variable illumination (bonus, 5ft to 20ft bright with equal dim); **Immune** exhaustion, grapple, lightning, paralysis, poison, prone, restraint, unconscious; **Resist** acid, cold, fire, necrotic, thunder, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from normal weapons; **Str** -5, **Dex** +9, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0; **Senses** darkvision 120ft; **Traits** ephemeral, incorporeal movement; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Area 22: Bobblehead

A curiously-shaped white stone bobbing just beneath the surface of the water is, in fact, an elongated skull. The skin has withered away and a few tendons have been exposed, as has sections of bone. The jaw bone is particularly prominent, much more so than any other skull previously seen. A few wisps of hair cling to its pate. A copper coin appears to have been pushed into its empty mouth. The coin is very old and unidentifiable, while the skull has in fact been mummified by the effects produced by the swamp. Extensive digging would ultimately reveal the rest of the skeleton but would also cause a significant cave-in of the submerged branches and vegetable matter on which the adventurers walk.

Area 23: The End is Near!

The hanging moss and drooping tree branches part to reveal a small clearing next to a moving stream of clear water. One can actually hear the sound of the water moving as it swirls past a small statue of a man in the stream channel. Fashioned from dark marble, the figure is carved with an ornate suit of armor, sword and shield. Lichen and moss cling to its base, swayed by the motion of the water rippling past. Even a few golden fish dance beneath the sunlight dappled surface as the birds sing a cheerful song above. This seems to be the only place in the swamp-land where the choking torrents of green slime and brackish water do not touch, as if it's protected by magic or another force – even the air smells fresher.

If the party follows the stream channel path, they reach the edge of the swamp and head up out of it. The trail turns gravelly and the land seems solid, no longer waterlogged. The smells are much less intense and the humidity drops noticeably. Overhead the trees thin and the sun beats down. Bird songs are fewer and more distant. Pink and purple flowers are small and hidden on the ground amid thin, pale green leaves. A few of the biting flies follow for several dozen paces, but then they too are gone. Only the mud remains, drying out in hard cakes on legs and everywhere it splattered. Of course, someone might find a leech sucking on their leg later in the day. The forest ahead is sparsely populated by very large trees and huge granite boulders, creating a maze-like atmosphere.

Area 24: Trees and Rocks

The trail emerges from the rocks and forest into a glade. The path, which has been clear through the trees, vanishes under the vibrant plants

of the meadow. Long slender leaves of various grasses cover the ground. The area where the trail leaves the meadow on the other side can be seen, leading uphill. The path up the rocky ground under the trees 100 yards away is obvious even from this distance. A straight line to the path will have the PCs stepping on buttercups and iris, pushing bright flowers into the soft ground. It is squishy underfoot and water oozes into their footprints. At the center of the meadow, the area is flooded, with a few inches of water flowing over everything.

The low hill ahead has a strange shape on the top, a badly misshapen tree. The tree has suffered some terrible accident. It is split down the middle; each half now hanging from the base of the trunk as if the tree was struck with a giant axe. Closer examination reveals obvious charring along the bark and the interior wood. The smell of burnt wood is barely noticeable. The lightning that destroyed this tree did so months ago. A few feet further on stands a large rock, covered with crude writing.

The large, moss-covered rock stands 10ft in height, directly ahead in the center of the path. The path goes around it on each side. Drawn in tree sap on the surface of the rock is an arrow pointing down. At the base of the rock, partially buried in the dark soil, is a roll of soft tree bark, tied with string like a scroll. Upon investigation, several crude depictions of orcs, scratched into the surface of the bark itself are obvious.

Area 25: Goblins!

From this distance, it looks like a there is an old, ruined building of some sort sitting on top of the hill. Closer (200ft) examination reveals that the building is a ruined temple of some sort, and from the look of things, it has been abandoned for dozens of years. Only part of one wall remains, standing grimly over the rubble strewn around the site. A single stone staircase leads 6ft or 7ft into the air, ending at nothing. Planks and timbers stick up from the ruin randomly. The entire site is strewn with stones that vary in size from pebbles to blocks too large for anyone to lift. This ruined building is the home of **4 goblins**, a **goblin boss** and a **goblin shaman**. There is a 50% chance during the day that they have no one on guard (the designated guard fell asleep!) and can be surprised. Otherwise, they have an alert guard and have a chance to surprise the party.

Goblin 1—armed with a hand axe, and wears studded leather armor. He has several strips of salt pork and planks of jerked trout and a hard rye roll crusty with age and speckled with greenish mold are wrapped in a worn linen cloth (2sp). The meager lunch is stuffed inside a dented tin drinking cup (7cp).

Goblin #1: AC 14; HP 7 (2d6); Spd 30ft; **Melee** handaxe (+4, 1d6+2 slashing); **Str** -1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** nimble escape; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Goblin 2—armed with a spear and a sling, and wears leather armor and shield. In his pocket are several coins (2gp, 3sp, and 8cp), twenty sling bullets and a round, smooth white stone. The stone has chunks of other rock, dark brown and orange, imbedded in it and a hole bored through the center (2cp).

Goblin #2: AC 15; HP 7 (2d6); Spd 30ft; **Melee** spear (+1, 1d6-1 piercing); **Ranged** sling (+4, 30ft/120ft, 1d4+2 bludgeoning); **Str** -1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** nimble escape; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Goblin 3—armed with a shortbow and 15 arrows, a dagger, and wears leather armor. He has a handful of coins (4gp, 12cp), a single- person sized loaf of bread wrapped in a cloth scrap, an S-shaped iron hook no bigger than your thumb but very strong (4 sp) and a length of white string, rolled in a ball.

Goblin #3: AC 13; HP 7 (2d6); Spd 30ft; **Melee** dagger (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **Ranged** shortbow (+4, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **Str** -1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** -1, **Cha** 1; **Skills** Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** nimble escape; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.



Goblin 4—armed with a light crossbow, 4 quarrels and a hand axe, and wears studded leather armor and shield. He has a small leather pouch (2gp) is embossed with a stylized bird, most likely a pheasant. The pouch is kept closed with a bone toggle, and opens to reveal four needles (5sp each) and a small skein of milk-colored thread. A tin thimble shaped like an acorn is also in the kit (2sp), kept in its own leather pocket.

Goblin #4: AC 16; HP 7 (2d6); Spd 30ft; **Melee** handaxe (+4, 1d6+2 slashing); **Ranged** light crossbow (+4, 80ft/320ft, 1d8+2 piercing); **Str** -1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** nimble escape; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Goblin Leader—armed with a scimitar, a handaxe, and wears chain shirt and shield. In the pocket are several coins (3gp, 2sp, 10cp), a small piece of cheese wrapped in a waxed cloth and a pair of tweezers made of gray metal with enameling on the sides, showing a miniature set of flowers in a garden (6gp). A dagger has an ornate, gilded hilt studded with blue and red gemstones and embossed in arabesque patterns. The blade itself curves back up near the point and is forged from high-quality steel. Fine writing has been engraved along the back of the blade on either side, evidently written in the language of a desert people. The blade is a +1 dagger, though its jewels (red and blue spinels) give it a slightly higher-than-normal value.

Goblin Boss: AC 17; HP 21 (6d6); Spd 30ft; **Melee** scimitar x2 (+2, 1d6+2 slashing); **Ranged** hand axe (+2, 30ft/120ft, 1d6 slashing); **SA** multiattack (scimitar x2, second with tactical disadvantage), redirect attack (reaction); **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** -1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** nimble escape; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Goblin Shaman—armed with a quarterstaff, and wears studded leather armor. His pockets contain handful of rough six-sided dice (5cp), carved

from cow bone within a tiny leather pouch, along with a dozen yellow and black wood tokens (1cp total) the size of a coin and a small white ceramic container. What game they are used for, you do not know. Some of the dice are numbered normally, and others have two faces each of three colors, yellow, black and plain. Contained within the white ceramic container is a creamy white salve flecked with crushed herbs; it bears a strong, pleasant aroma of lanolin and thyme. The small jar is sealed with a silver-embossed glass screw cap. This beauty salve heals minor wounds and blemishes, instantly curing acne, boils, rashes, cuts, and similar lesions in a 2 x 2 inch area of skin for each application (which also heals 1hp of damage). There are a total of 12 applications remaining in the jar.

Goblin Shaman: AC 14; HP 7 (2d6); Spd 30ft; **Melee** quarterstaff (+1, 1d8-1 bludgeoning); **SA** spells (Cha +1, DC 11); **Str** -1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** -1, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** nimble escape; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Spell (slots): 1st (3)—*charm person, sleep, protection from evil and good.*

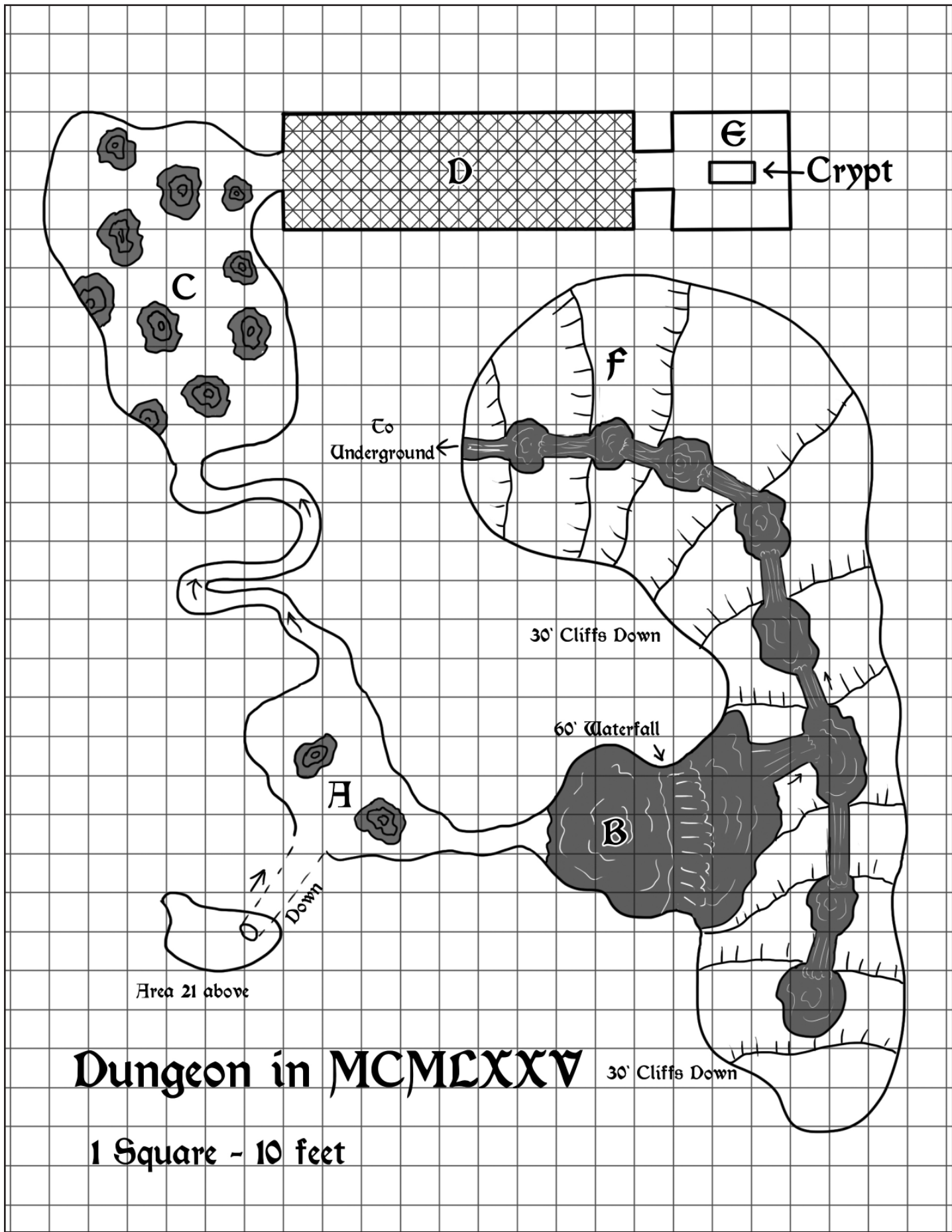
Inside the goblin lair is an old wooden chest. The large wooden chest crumbles and falls apart as it opens, the wood having rotted over years of sitting in this place (latch and hinges are still useable). Anyone sorting through the old wood and dust finds a leather tunic. This sleeveless piece of clothing is of such thin leather that it would provide no protection against attack, but it is decorated nicely and in good condition (13gp). Lifting the tunic reveals something is stored within it. Inside is a hinged metal box about a hand wide, a finger tall, and a palm deep (no lock, 8gp), that contains several coins (14gp, 11sp), and a small figurine fashioned from gold (2.5 inches tall). The sculpture is of an elf maiden sitting on her knees, looking down as if in meditation (pure gold statuette, 62gp).

Area 26: Another Pond

Past the ruined temple, the ground turns back to the den of rocks and huge trees, and resumes its maze-like character. Traveling along, the PCs hear the sound of water, as if from a rippling stream. If the adventurers follow the sounds of the water, about fifty yards further when the sound becomes more distinct. Behind a particularly large tree is the source of the noise. About twenty yards ahead is a large pool of water, big enough to call a pond, but too small to describe as a lake. A stream is feeding the pond on the opposite side from where you stand. It seems odd that although the gurgling rivulet is running into the pool of water, there is no stream running out. Intelligent players will realize that water must be leaving the pond from somewhere, or else it would continuously rise and flood the area, which doesn't seem to be happening. There must be an egress below the surface of the water where the overflow makes its way underground to some unknown destination. (The GM may decide that the hidden waterway pathway leads to an underground cavern or all the way to another stream that resurfaces elsewhere.) The sun holds sway here due to the size of the pond, and one can see about 10ft down into the clear water, but beyond that you can't tell how deep this pool goes. The water is fresh and drinkable. The pond is about 30ft deep and the cavern that leads underground is at the bottom.

Area 27: X Marks the Spot

Past the pond and down into some thick rocks is where the map indicated that the "treasure" exists. After passing through some thick undergrowth, the party comes upon a wide circular clearing. Around the edge is a ring of menhirs, each about 10ft tall and situated a few paces from the surrounding trees. The ground between the stones is an overgrown mix of clover, wildflowers and stunted berry bushes — except in the center of the clearing. The middle of the clearing is dominated by a massive slab of weathered stone, fully as wide and long as a hay wagon. The stone sits atop a mound of earth, and a circle of ground around it has been cleared down to the dirt in the recent past. The slab itself has been tipped halfway off the mound, as if someone tried to knock it from its perch, and one can see that the surface is covered in dark stains.



Hidden behind a small copse of trees 50ft past the mound is a 4ft diameter cave entrance leading to a small dungeon complex below. Once entered, torchlight reveals intricate stone etchings and highly detailed cave paintings depicting warfare, hunting, and even marriage rituals. No one has entered this cave for hundreds of years, as a localized landslide exposed the tunnel entrance to the outside only recently. The entrance opens into a 30ft long, 15ft wide cave passage, ending in a sinkhole. The sinkhole drops deep into the bowels of the earth. Warm air can be felt blowing up the hole from below. The ground inside the cave makes crunching noises when walked upon. Examination of the floor reveals that hundreds of bone fragments are mixed with the sand and gravel that make up the floor detritus.

The Dungeon

This small cave complex is the treasure trove indicated on the map. The dungeon itself can be expanded by the GM if desired, and several offshoot tunnels lead to unmapped (and unwritten) areas. This allows for the GM to add his own chambers and encounters to this area and can act as a starting point for an extended dungeon adventure if desired. As written, no wandering monsters are present here, however, if additional encounters are desired, they can certainly be added.

The cave complex contains a couple of very dangerous encounters and an ancient tomb. The traps laid by the creators of the complex are old, and often fail to function. The mechanical traps in **Area D** (as noted in that section) are particularly affected, although the other physical hazards (and pits) still function normally.

The Entrance

The cavern entrance from the sinkhole above opens into a roughly 30ft chamber with tunnels leading out to the left and right. The walls and floor are damp, and drops of water rain down sporadically from the ceiling, draining into the loose gravel floor. Bats flit about above, and guano covers the rocks and stalactites below. The floor itself is relatively even, sloping only slightly to the left. The right tunnel is dry and leads to **Area C**, and a tiny rivulet of drainage runs down the left tunnel to **Area B**.

Area A: The Wet Cave

The tunnel opens into a large cave (60ft in diameter) with a low ceiling (8ft). The stone walls are stained with iron bacteria, and the cave itself is filled with 3ft of orange colored water (from the iron). The water cascades out of the far side of the entrance, creating a splashing, waterfall-like sound as it plunges down 60ft to **Area F**. Anyone getting within 10ft of the waterfall area must make a DC 12 Dex (Acrobatics) check or slip and fall into the water. Any PC that falls into the water must make a DC 10 Str save to avoid being washed over the cliff edge for 6d6 bludgeoning damage.

Area B: Stone Rats

The tunnel leads up a total of 90ft, winding a bit to the left and ascending 40ft in the process. The floor of the tunnel lacks much of the gravel and sand that the cave below has, and is in places smooth. Careful inspection of the floor areas reveals two small stone rat statues right at the entrance to the cave. They are perfect simulations of the small rodents, and are in fact victims of the **cockatrice** that lives in this cave.

The cave itself is 100ft long and over 60ft wide, with a tunnel exit leading to **Area D**. The floor and ceiling have grown together with numerous stalactites and stalagmites forming columns around the room, forming a maze-like structure. Each round after the party enters the room, there is a 25% chance of encountering a large, purple and red chicken, with hellish green eyes.

Cockatrice: AC 11; HP 27 (6d6+6); Spd 20ft, fly 40ft; **Melee** bite (+3, 1d4+1 piercing plus petrifying touch); **SA** petrifying touch (restrained then petrified, DC 11 Con repeat); **Str** -2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

The cockatrice has no real tactics, other than pecking at intruders until they stop moving and then feeding on the soft stone created by its horrible ability. There is no treasure here. The beast fears **Area D**, and will avoid it (having once been burned by an old trap).

Area C: Tricks and Traps

This cavern is 90ft long and 30ft wide, and appears to have been cut and carved, and is less natural than the rooms leading to it. The floor and walls are flat stone, although the ceiling itself is naturally formed. The ceiling has the usual array of stalactites, though many are broken off. Minor dust and rock detritus lies scattered across the floor.

The floor is paved with a diamond within square patterned pavers of 3ft squares. At the 40ft mark, there is evidence of scorching and soot staining covering a 10 foot wide swath.

Careful examination or a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check reveals a round tube is placed about knee level at this point. This is a **flame jet trap**. It is triggered by a pressure plate within the diamond patterns in line with the nozzles. If triggered, there is only a 50% chance that it still works. Anyone in the 10ft section must make a DC 13 Dex save or take 3d6 fire damage.

Just past the flame jet trap, at the 60ft mark, is a series of **covered, counterweighted pits**. Prodding these with a light pole or such will only reveal them 33% of the time, as the counterweights prevent easy detection needing a DC 20 Wis (Perception) to find. Any weight over 100 pounds placed on a pit causes it to open, requiring a DC 12 Dex save to avoid falling 20ft into the pit (2d6 bludgeoning). Anyone inside a pit becomes trapped when the pit closes again, and must be rescued from above.

At the tunnel exit (the 90ft mark), a final pressure plate is set in the square sections of the flooring — the diamonds are the safe route. Stepping on it triggers a **scything blade trap** that cuts across the 10ft exit tunnel. This trap has only a 50% chance to function, and each creature in its path must make a DC 10 Dex save or take 6d6 slashing damage. Careful examination or DC 15 Wis (Perception) check of the wall inside the tunnel reveals the blades set between two sets of stones on either side of the tunnel.

Area D: The Tomb

This small room has been completely finished with stonework. The room itself is 30ft square, with a 12ft ceiling. The walls are painted with intricate scenes and hieroglyphs of some ancient make. A *comprehend languages* spell will reveal that this is the tomb of a high priest of the god Set. The writing on the wall contains various unsavory scenes related to Set's dismembering of Osiris and of foul rites performed in his service. The writing contains a series of prayers to the dark god and promises to serve him in the underworld by the deceased.

In the center of this chamber is a 12ft long, 5ft wide stone sarcophagus in the Egyptian style. It is quite heavy to open (requires pry bars and at least 3 PCs). Inside is an inanimate mummy. The mummy wears a death mask of pure silver (worth 1500gp), and a golden brooch inset with various semiprecious stones (250gp). Near the mummy's feet are 6 canopic jars carved of various materials and decorated (worth 100gp each), and a *tome of understanding*. If the PCs dump oil and set it ablaze immediately (thinking mummy), the book is destroyed.

While the mummy is inert, there is a curse on anyone disturbing the mummy's rest. Three rounds after any portion of the mummy or the canopic jars are removed from the sarcophagus, a **vrock** is summoned to the chamber. The demon fights for only 6 rounds (the length of the summoning magic), then disappears.

Demon, Vrock: AC 16, HP 104 (11d10+44); Spd 40ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** beak (+6, 2d6+3 piercing), talons (+6,

QUESTS OF DOOM 2

2d10+3 slashing); **SA** multiattack, spores (recharge 6, 15ft cloud, poisoned, 10 poison each turn, DC 14 Con repeat), stunning screech (1/day, 20ft radius, DC 14 Con or stunned 1 round); **Immune** poison; **Resist** cold, fire, lightning, normal weapons; **Str** +3, **Dex** +2 (+5); **Con** +4; **Int** -1; **Wis** +1 (+4); **Cha** -1 (+2); **Senses** darkvision 120ft; **Traits** magic resistance, telepathy 120ft; **CR** 6; **XP** 2600.

Area E: The Waterfall Chamber

This large cave is very wet, and consists of many pools and ledges dropping to lower pools. The cavern itself is over 300ft in diameter, and water flows in from above (from **Area B** as well as wilderness **Area 26**). An underground river flows through the far edge of the cavern. It is swiftly flowing and deep. No monsters or other dangers (other than possibly drowning or falling) are present.

As the GM feel free to add your own material to the cave. Perhaps there are multiple exits from the cave? Maybe the river leads deeper into the earth to areas that can be explored? In any case, this ends the module, and we hope you have enjoyed it!

Grimmsgate

An adventure by Matt Finch for 1st level PCs

Introduction

If you're already an old hand at using adventure modules, and you don't need any explanation about what's going on here, then feel free to skip forward to the rest of the adventure. On the other hand, if this is your first time reading a published adventure, welcome! You might need a few words of introduction to get you started with your first time as a GM, but fear not – the game isn't complicated, and neither is running an adventure. Presumably you've taken at least a quick look at the rulebook, and you've got the idea of how the game is played. The non-GM players create PCs in a fantasy world, and as the players tell the GM what their PCs are doing, the GM describes the results. Using dice, a few rules, and this back-and-forth exchange of information, questions, and descriptions, the story of the PCs emerges as they explore the world, fight monsters, gain treasure, and become more powerful. Because the GM is not in control of the PCs, and since the players aren't in control of the GM's world, the epic story that emerges will contain surprises for everyone.

As the GM, one of your most difficult tasks is preparing the adventures that will confront your players. When everyone sits down at the gaming table, the players are going to be asking you for information about the fantasy world: "What do we see?" "Do we know any rumors?" "Where should we go?" For many GMs, preparing the adventure ahead of time is part of the fun of the game. Other GMs enjoy playing the game, but prefer to use pre-prepared modules like this one. This adventure is a good introduction to running an adventure even if you never plan on using a published adventure module again. One tip to start out with, though. If you plan on writing your own adventures, they don't need to be as detailed as what you read here: all you really need are quick notes to jog your memory.

Enjoy!

The Lost Lands

Grimmsgate can be dropped down in any campaign world, but if you use the Lost Lands world-setting, you might be curious about where Grimmsgate is located and what is nearby. Grimmsgate lies within the regions known as the Borderland Provinces of the Lost Lands, in an area called the Gaelon River Valley far to the west of Endhome. The little-used road described in the adventure runs from the free city of Mirquinoc to the ruins of the Town of Keot — Keot's destruction is the reason why the road is no longer much used, for it leads to nowhere other than a wild region of scattered villages not much larger than Grimmsgate itself. In the **Lost Lands**, the village's Temple of Law is primarily dedicated to Thyr the Lawgiver, God of Justice, but recognizes other Lawful deities as well. The Elder Temple was once dedicated to Muir, the ancient goddess of paladins before its corruption by the spirit of Vuod the Putrefactor.

Further information about the setting may be found in the forthcoming book *The Lost Lands: Borderland Provinces*, published by **Necromancer Games** for fifth edition.

Background

The Present Day

Deep in the wooded wilderness, the village of Grimmsgate is an outpost town on a seldom-traveled trail, right at the edge of nowhere. The village's half-ruined temple of Law, dilapidated inn, drunken blacksmith, exiled trader and a few fur-trappers are enough to keep the bloody-minded denizens of the dark forest at bay, but nobody really expects the village to still be there in another ten years. The woods have become too dangerous for the trappers who once caught animals for fur, and merchants no longer travel the poorly-maintained road because of bandits. None of the nearby barons are willing to accept responsibility for the village, because the one and only attempt that was ever made to subdue this part of the wilderness, a patrolling troop of knights and soldiers, completely disappeared in the forest without leaving a trace. When the search parties also failed to return, civilization gave up on Grimmsgate and departed, making no further efforts to stave off the slow advance of Chaos.

Imprisonment of the Demon

The slow deterioration in this area is rooted in events long ago, at a place that is now referred to as the Elder Temple, a partially-collapsed hillside not far from the village of Grimmsgate. In the almost-mythic past, a group of three paladins killed a manifestation of a demon named Vuod the Putrefactor. They burned the body and placed the ashes into a magically-sealed jar made of green glass. The jar was given over to the priests of Law at the Elder Temple, and left under their protection. For as long as the demon's ashes remained within the protective jar, the demon would not be able to manifest itself again in the material plane of existence.

Arumvel's Crime

For centuries the ashes of Vuod were kept safe by the priests of the Temple, until the unforeseen day when one of the priests, the acolyte Arumvel, became so curious about the forbidden jar on the pedestal in the Temple that he decided it could do no harm to at least touch it. The moment Arumvel reached out his hand and made contact with the demon's prison, the ashes of Vuod the Putrefactor exploded outward and coated Arumvel's body, destroying most of his soul and taking complete possession of the too-curious priest. With Arumvel possessed by the demon, the other priests were taken by surprise and either killed or enslaved to Arumvel's will. A few of the Temple servants managed to leave warnings before they died, but the bloody events of the Temple's desecration left no survivors. After the carnage, Vuod the Putrefactor escaped from the material plane, leaving Arumvel behind – still alive, but with his body and soul horribly warped. Slowly, the wilderness has encroached into the area where the Elder Temple once held it at bay.

For over two hundred years after the slaughter at the Elder Temple, Arumvel the Wicked remained quiet, resting and regaining his strength. Now, with his assembled minions and the strength of centuries, he has finally turned his eye upon the lands beyond his lair.

The Rise of Arumvel

Arumvel the Wicked, horribly altered during his possession by the demon Vuod, is dedicated to the cause of Chaos. Unlike many servants of the dark powers, he is only slightly interested in conquest or power;

instead, ruin, decline, and decay are his cherished goals. His influence upon the area around the Elder Temple has been subtle but very destructive over time, as trade in the area has been choked off, the Temple in Grimmsgate has become less and less able to protect the village, and monsters have begun to return to the area. These monsters included a band of mogura-jin looking for a base of operations and new sources of human prey; the mogura-jin are a race of cannibalistic mole-men, descended and degenerated from human beings. Seeing an opportunity, Arumvel recruited the mogura-jin to be his followers, supporting their raids and depredations with his own demonic and magical powers. Even worse, Arumvel began to create more of these degenerated beings by capturing and transforming humans into new stock that would increase the numbers of mole-men in his ranks. These cursed humans are only partially transformed into mole-men, but their offspring will be condemned to the same cursed existence as the true mogura-jin.

GM Notes

Before running this adventure, read all the way through it to become familiar with the different parts. The first section of the module is about the Village of Grimmsgate, which is where the PCs arrive at the start of play. After the map and key for Grimmsgate, the next section is the wilderness map, describing the area in the vicinity of the village, the wandering monsters that may be found while exploring, and various interesting locations. The third section is the main adventure area for the module, the forbidding Elder Temple where Arumvel the Wicked makes his lair.

The Elder Temple contains several monsters that take only half damage when hit by normal weapons. Spells, magic weapons, and holy water are all ways to inflict damage on demons and undead. Holy water inflicts 2d6 radiant damage to such creatures. It is worthwhile to remind the players of the properties of holy water, especially if they are new players that might not know holy water can be used as a weapon in this way.

There are several reasons that might bring the PCs to the Village of Grimmsgate, and if you choose to give the players some direction you can assign one of these missions to the PCs ahead of time. Otherwise, simply tell the players that their PCs are in search of treasure and adventure ... then wait and see what they do.

1. The PCs have been charged by the priests of Law in another area to discover what has become of the Elder Temple. Unless the party is made up primarily of hero-types, there will likely need to be a financial reward involved if the PCs are successful.

2. The PCs are hired by a nearby baron to see if a small group of adventurers can do a better job of discovering and rooting out the evil in the area than the (already failed) military approach using knights and men-at-arms.

3. One of the PCs has been deeded one of the abandoned houses in Grimmsgate, and the party is traveling to the village to see if it would be a good place as a base of operations for an adventuring career. The PC might have won the house in a card game, inherited it, or bought it cheaply from someone who left the village due to the growing sense of hopelessness and defeat there.

Start

After several days of traveling, you and your companions are at last approaching the small village of Grimmsgate. The narrow road that leads for miles through this forest is overgrown with weeds, beginning to blend and disappear entirely back into the wilderness. Indeed, everything you have seen since the last real signs of civilization has had the same feeling of slow retreat and disintegration. More than once, you have passed by strange signs and indications – bones arranged in a circle around a human skull; a small, red-stained wicker basket by the side of the road; an

unmarked grave in the dappled shade of the trees.

Finally, though, you see ahead of you the distinctive hill upon which the village of Grimmsgate is built. At the top, there is a small cluster of buildings – you can just barely see the half-collapsed roof of the old Temple of Law that was once said to be the pride of the village. Even at this distance, the place looks run down. Although the village is not fortified, the hill is very steep and only one path leads up to the top.

Do you head toward the village?

The Village of Grimmsgate

The village sits atop a steep hill, with a single pathway leading around the hill's natural curve and up to a gatehouse that protects the buildings at the summit. There are three farmhouse-type buildings along the path, but the rest of the village appears to be located behind the gatehouse, so that any attackers would have to take the gates before they could reach the regular buildings.

Rumors

Assuming the players tell you that their PCs ask some questions in Grimmsgate, the answers will automatically yield the following two pieces of information about the area:

“Seems like things have been going downhill for years, here in Grimmsgate. Ever since the barons lost a big patrol in the forest, they haven't sent anyone since. Seems like we lost a fur trapper or a farmer every month for a while, and now there aren't enough people to keep things going.”

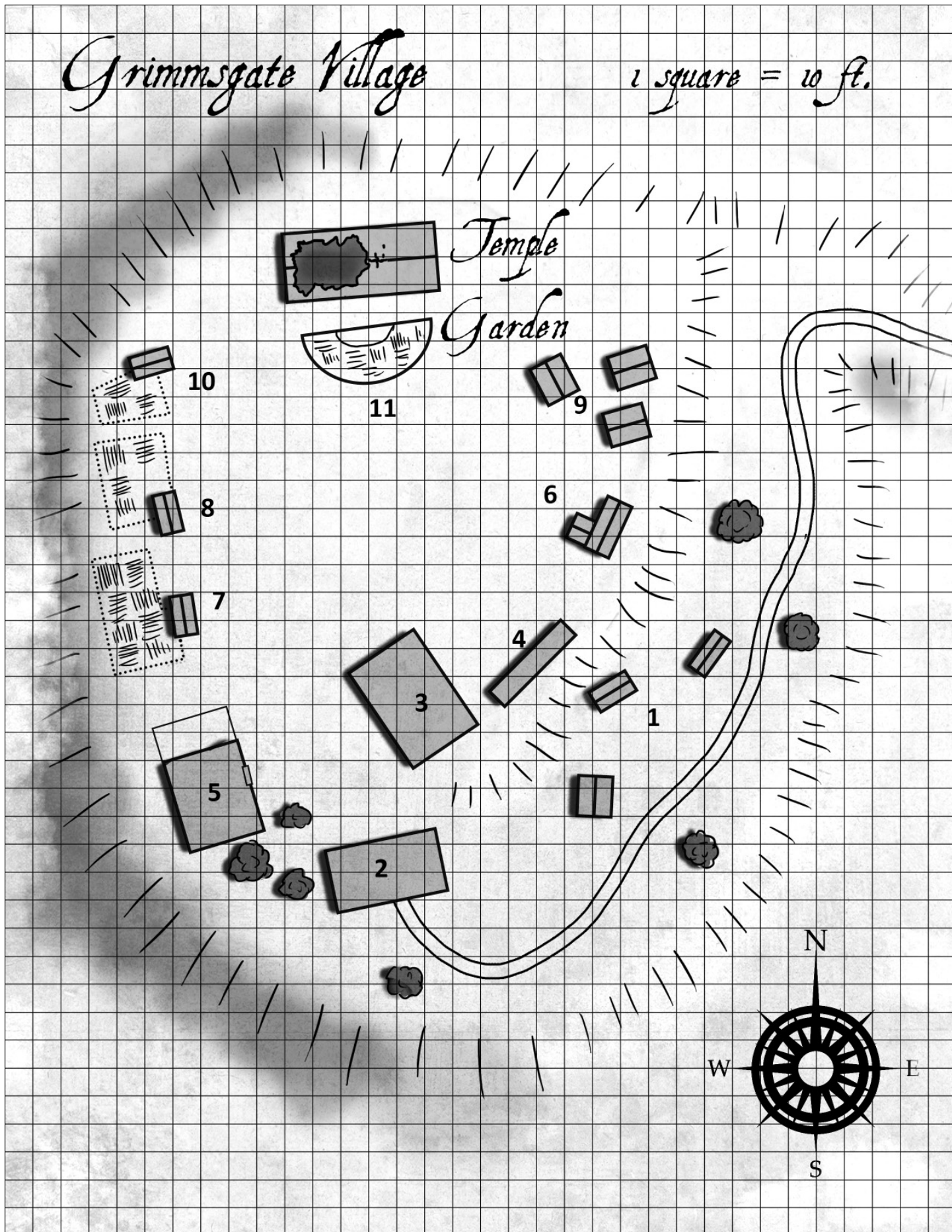
“There is an old temple out there somewhere nearby. It's called the Elder Temple because it was before we had a temple here in the village. Something bad happened there a long time ago.”

Once this basic information is conveyed to the players, there are a few more rumors that might be floating around in Grimmsgate. You might choose to give the party 1d3+1 of these additional rumors (rolling randomly on a d6 to see which ones they hear), or, if the players themselves are new to the game, you might decide to tell them all these rumors as a way of helping them along a bit. Note that rumors 4 and 5 contradict each other; #4 is technically the truth, but it is not the whole story and is actually a bit misleading.

1d6	Rumor
1	Two nearby farmers, Albraith and Etarra, disappeared from their farmhouse only a couple of days ago.
2	To find the Elder Temple, go south downriver from the ford.
3	The Elder Temple was a building on a hill, but now all that is left is the catacombs underneath the ruins.
4	Someone freed a demon in the Elder Temple, and it killed all the priests before it disappeared.
5	Someone freed a demon in the Elder Temple, and the demon is still there to this very day.
6	Something must be keeping travelers away from Harkin's Ford up to the northeast, because no one has come to the village from that direction in several days.

Grimmsgate Village

1 square = 10 ft.



Area G-1: Abandoned Farmhouses

Three stone farmhouses were once built beside the pathway that leads up to the top of Grimmsgate Hill, but they appear to be abandoned now. One of them has a wooden shutter that bangs open and closed in the wind. A cat sits in one of the dark windows, watching you as you pass by.

The cat is a regular cat, but it is feral and will run away if anyone tries to approach it.

Area G-2: Grimm's Gatehouse

The trail up to the hilltop is blocked by a half-ruined gatehouse. The gates have fallen off and have been pushed to the side to keep them from blocking the entrance. However, the rusting iron portcullis has been lowered, and there is a guard standing atop the building with his crossbow leveled at you.

Area G-3: Silver Dagger Inn

A large building with a wooden sign out front painted to represent a silver dagger. It has recently been painted, and shows other signs of attempted repairs, but this is obviously an old building and the repairs are not expertly done. As you draw nearer to the inn, one of the wooden roof shingles comes loose in the breeze and slides down, falling to the ground in the overgrown grass.

The Silver Dagger Inn has six rooms for rent upstairs (1gp/night), each of which can sleep as many as three people if two share a bed and the third sleeps on the floor. On the ground floor, there is a common room where meals are served; the common room serves as a tavern for the rest of the village as well, for on most nights there are no guests staying at the Inn at all. The rooms are clean, but all of them have ceilings that leak if it rains, and the floorboards squeak.

The innkeeper of the Silver Dagger is Ralmar Prath (**veteran**), a tall, thin fellow with a shiny, bald head. His wife Miralda and his two sons Ullin and Jark (**commoners**) help him with the various tasks of running the inn and the stable.

Veteran: AC 17; HP 58 (9d8+18); Spd 30ft; **Melee** longsword x2 (+5, 1d8+3 slashing), shortsword (+5, 1d6+3 piercing); **Ranged** heavy crossbow (+3, 100ft/400ft, 1d10 piercing); **SA** multiattack; **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +2; **AL** LN; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Commoner: AC 10; HP 4 (1d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** dagger (+2, 1d4 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +0, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **AL** LN; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

Ralmar's room contains a strongbox with 320gp, 426sp, and a small emerald (200gp).

Area G-4: Stable

This long, stone building has broad double doors and smells of horses and manure. There is no sign on the front, but this is obviously the village's stable. The stones in one corner of the building appear to be coming loose, but as far as you can tell at a glance, the building is still structurally sound.

The stables are owned by the temple, but Ralmar Prath of the Silver Dagger manages them on the temple's behalf. There are three horses and five mules kept here.

Area G-5: The Emporium (Merchant)

This is a well-tended stone building with a roof of wooden shingles. A sign over the door reads: "The Hilltop Emporium."

The Emporium is a combination of a store and trading post, the headquarters of Pantro Panga's tiny mercantile empire. Pantro is an extremely flamboyant and somewhat manic person with big dreams of becoming a great merchant owning caravans and fleets of ships. Unfortunately, he is in what might be the worst possible location to succeed in such a plan. He owns a mule (in the stables), the small amount of merchandise in his store, and not much else.

The PCs can buy any equipment from the standard equipment list here, but quantities will be limited. Pantro has only one suit of plate mail, for example. He will buy anything valuable that the party brings to him, with the hopes of either selling it here or shipping it by caravan to a town or even a city.

At some point, Pantro can easily become a source of adventures, especially if you decide that he is running out of cash and needs to take all these things he has been buying from the party into a town for sale. At that point he might hire the party to guard him and the caravan (he will rent the other mules in the village stable for the journey). He would be expecting to join up with a larger caravan within a day or so, but if the rendezvous fails due to a delay somewhere, he would likely choose to go on alone if he has guards. Guarding a caravan through the wilderness and past the threat of bandits and monsters can make for an excellent adventure.

Area G-6: "Drunken" Smith

The building has a blacksmith's forge in the front. A sign on the side of the building reads "Blacksmith," but it is so faded that you can barely read it.

The blacksmith of Grimmsgate is nicknamed "Drunken" Smith, and the nickname describes him well. When he is sober, he can shoe horses, repair armor and weapons, and even make swords and daggers. When he is not sober, his creations and repairs tend to be off center, bent, or slightly twisted.

Area G-7: Stevin's Farmhouse

This building is in excellent repair, and the stone wall around the garden is painted a cheery yellow color.

An elderly couple named Yorbin and Melly Trake live here. Their three adult children have all left the area to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

Area G-II: Temple of Law

This large building is obviously a Temple of Law, but it is in terrible disrepair. Parts of the roof have collapsed into the building, and the garden in front of the temple is choked with weeds.

An old cleric named Rhall is the last remaining **priest** here, although he has a letter claiming that an acolyte will be sent to him from a larger temple “soon.” Rhall has been camping out in the semi-ruin ever since the roof started to fall in. He has been trying to figure out how to restore some kind of spirit to the villagers, but so far he has been unsuccessful at fighting off the sense of defeat that has been eating away at the community for years. He has begun to suspect that there are supernatural forces at work, and it has crossed his mind that the old stories about the Elder Temple might have something to do with the way that Grimmsgate seems to be dying away.

Although Rhall is unable to do any sort of adventuring – he lost an arm several years ago, and his lungs are weak – he can be of invaluable aid to the party as long as they are helping the village. He owns several scrolls of clerical spells, some of which are more powerful than he could cast without the help of the scroll. In one case, the scrolls could literally mean the difference between life and death. The scrolls are: *raise dead* x2, *remove curse*, and *lesser restoration*. Rhall will not allow adventurers to take the scrolls with them, but he will use the spells to restore them if they return battered from an expedition to help the village.

Priest: AC 13; HP 27 (5d8+5); Spd 25ft; **Melee** mace (+2, 1d6 bludgeoning); **SA** divine eminence, spells (Wis +5, DC 13); **Str** +0, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4; **AL** LG; **CR** 2; **XP** 450

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*light, guidance, resistance*; 1st (4)—*bless, cure wounds, sanctuary*; 2nd (3)—*lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*; 3rd (2)—*dispel magic, remove curse*.

The Wilderness

The wilderness map shows the area around the village of Grimmsgate, including the location of the Elder Temple. One square on the map represents a half mile, and it will take the party about a half hour to travel across a square. The terrain here is rough, and this movement rate assumes that the party is also moving slowly and carefully.

Area W-1: Village of Grimmsgate

The village of Grimmsgate is described in its own section. If the module is being placed into an existing campaign, you, as the GM, could certainly choose to change the name of the village or to create your own.

Area W-2: The Elder Temple

The Elder Temple is described in its own section.

Area W-3: Harkin's Ford

Harkin's Ford is a shallow point in the river, where it is possible to cross without a bridge or ferry. An **ogre** has recently taken up residence near



This farmhouse belongs to Stevin Farmer. Stevin's farm is a half hour walk from the bottom of the hill.

Area G-8: Farmer Ezrac's House

This half-timbered house leans slightly to one side, and there are some holes in the plaster.

Farmer Ezrac is not friendly to visitors, and generally keeps to himself even with the other villagers.

Area G-9: Abandoned Houses

Three farmhouses are clustered together here, all of them obviously abandoned.

If the players think of it, their PCs could actually rent or buy one of these houses from the Temple (Rhall). The price to rent would be 30gp per month, and the cost to buy would be 600gp (no farmland would come with the purchase or rental of the house, just the building itself).

Area G-10: Trake Farmhouse

This building is a farmhouse with two cows in the stone-walled enclosure behind the building.



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the ford, finding that it is a good place to attack small groups of travelers. The ogre is careful not to attack groups of more than three people, but anyone coming to the ford and looking around will find traces of the ogre's presence: a skull here and there, a mortar and pestle where the ogre grinds bones, and even its pile of sleeping furs if they range far enough around the area. If the party stays long enough, the ogre will lose patience and come out from its hiding place to attack these interlopers. If the party is simply approaching the ford before heading south, following directions to the Elder Temple, they are not likely to be stopped by the ogre.

Ogre: AC 11; HP 59 (7d10+21); Spd 40ft; **Melee** greatclub (+6, 10ft, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); **Ranged** javelin (+6, 30ft/120ft, 2d6+4 piercing); **Str** +4, **Dex** -1, **Con** +3, **Int** -3, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Treasure: The ogre carries a bag that contains two human skulls, a gallon of beer, a haunch of venison, 25gp, a jeweled dagger (100gp), and an ivory drinking horn (50gp).

Area W-4: Black Dragon Wyrmling

This is the lair of the **black dragon wyrmling** Iscarax, a recent arrival in the area. Iscarax's lair is a very small cave, and the dragon intends to find a deeper lair or perhaps a swamp in the future. For the time being, though, the wyrmling has found itself drawn to this area for some reason it does not understand, and it intends to stay for a while. The reason why Iscarax has been drawn to this area, of course, is due to the influence of Arumvel.

Black Dragon Wyrmling: AC 17; HP 33 (6d8+6); Spd 30ft, fly 60ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d10+2 piercing plus 1d4 acid); **SA** acid breath (recharge 5-6, 15ft line, 5d8 acid, DC 11 Dex half); **Immune** acid; **Str** +2, **Dex** +2 (+4), **Con** +1 (+3), **Int** +0, **Wis** +0 (+2), **Cha** +1 (+3); **Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +4; **Senses** blindsight 10ft, darkvision 60ft; **Traits** amphibious; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.



Treasure: Iscarax has not yet assembled a very impressive hoard of treasure, although it is enough to allow a peasant to retire. The hoard includes 50gp, 337sp, 1,452cp, a golden chalice (100gp), 3 small rubies (100gp each), and a +1 shield.

Area W-5: Bandit Camp

This area is the camp of a small group of 6 bandits, led by a thug named Yarithor Bloodmark.

Bandit (6): AC 12; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 30ft; **Melee** shortsword (+3, 1d6+1 piercing); **Ranged** light crossbow (+3, 80ft/320ft, 1d8+1 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **AL** CN; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Thug: AC 11; HP 32 (5d8+10); Spd 30ft; **Melee** mace x2 (+4, 1d6+2 bludgeoning); **Ranged** heavy crossbow (+2, 100ft/400ft, 1d10 piercing); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidation +2; **AL** CN; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Treasure: In addition to the value of the bandits' armor and weapons, each of the bandits carries a belt pouch with 1d6+1gp. Yarithor has 26gp and a medallion worth 25gp.

Area W-6: Hill of Statues

Although there is no particular threat on this hilltop, the circle of statues is unusual. There are five statues of hooded figures here, very worn by many seasons of rain and snow. Each wears a holy symbol of Law (the players will not know it, but these are statues of the 5 high priests who ruled the Elder Temple before it was destroyed).

The Elder Temple Wandering Monsters

Check for wandering monsters once every three turns. There is only a 1 in 10 chance of encountering a wandering monster – on a roll of 1, check the table below to see what has been encountered.

1d10	Encounter
1	1 manes demon
2-3	1d3 giant rats
4-6	1 mogura-jin (mole-man)
7-8	1d2 cursed humans
9-10	1d3 giant centipedes

Centipede, Giant: AC 13; HP 4 (1d6+1); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing plus 3d6 poison, DC 11 Con); **Str** -3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -5, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -4; **Senses** blindsight 30ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Cursed Human: AC 10; HP 13 (3d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** claws (+3, 2d4+1 slashing); **Str** +1, **Dex** +0, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Traits** sunlight sensitivity; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CN; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50. (**Monster Appendix**)

Demon, Manes: AC 9; HP 9 (2d6+2); Spd 20ft; **Melee** claws (+2, 2d4 slashing); **Immune** charm, fright, poison; **Resist** cold, fire, lightning; **Str** +0, **Dex** -1, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

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Mogura-Jin: AC 12; HP 19 (3d8+6); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft; **Melee** claws (+6, 2d4+4 slashing); **Str** +4, **Dex** -1, **Con** +2, **Int** 1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Traits** sunlight sensitivity; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 30ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (Monster Appendix)

Rat, Giant: AC 12; HP 7 (2d6); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +0, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Traits** pack tactics; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, keen smell; **AL** U; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Area T-1: Slopes of the Elder Temple

A rocky hill rises steeply beside the trail; a few massive blocks of dark stone at the crown making it clear that this is the site of the Elder Temple. No buildings remain, although several blocks of masonry are scattered here and there on the hillside as if they had been tossed around by an unthinkable powerful force. Two small groves of trees have taken hold near the bottom of the slope, and you can see three cave entrances into the hill itself. The lower two entrances are doorways crafted from carved stone. The highest entrance, near the top of the hill, is quite different. It is very large, wide enough for several people to enter side by side, and it is closed by what appears to be a metal door.

Area T-2: Servants' Quarter Tunnel Entrance

This cave entrance is built of plain, undecorated stones. Light from the outside shines just far enough into the hallway to show that the entrance passageway makes a "T" junction after twenty feet or so, with passages leading to the left and right. Where the passageway ends, you can see that a face is carved into the stone, but you can't see any more details without entering the tunnel.

For details on the inside of the tunnel, see **Area T-4**.

Area T-3: Guards' Entrance

This tunnel entrance is hidden away in a grove of young trees that have probably grown since the time when the tunnel was first excavated. Over the top of the entrance, a shield has been carved into the stone. There is no device upon it, but at the edges of the carving you can see what appear to be flecks of white paint.

This entrance into the underground complex of the Elder Temple was primarily used by the temple's guards. As PCs enter tunnels, check to make sure that the party is carrying light sources and that they have established a marching order.

Area T-4: Entryway

The entrance from the outside leads to an area that is a landing halfway down a broad staircase. The steps go up to the left, and down to the right. In front of you on the wall of the landing, there is a bas-relief carving in the wall, the face of a bearded man.

As PCs enter tunnels, check to make sure that the party is carrying light sources and that they have established a marching order. In this entrance, for example, marching order is important because it may determine which PC falls into the pit trap at **Area T-5**.

Area T-5: Pit Trap

READ THIS DESCRIPTION ONLY IF THE PCs ARE SPECIFICALLY CHECKING THE CEILING AS THEY GO DOWN THE STEPS!

Your light illuminates a dark spot on the ceiling about the size of a large coin.

The dark spot is a recessed button in the ceiling that will lock the pit trap in place so that the trapdoor will not swing open when weight is placed on it. Since the ceiling is 10ft high over the top of the steps, the adventurers will need to use some sort of tool to press it.

Unless the PCs probe the floor ahead with a staff or pole, press the overhead button, or do something else that would detect it (DC 16 Wis (Perception) check to find), the covered pit trap here is likely to catch at least one of them. The pit is 10ft deep, and has a hinged covering painted to look like the flagstones of the dungeon floor. Each person who steps onto this concealed trapdoor has a 4 in 6 chance to trigger the trap, in which case they must succeed on a DC 14 Dex save or fall into the pit for 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

Area T-6: Servants' Quarters

When you open the door and peer into this room, you see that there are five skeletons lying on the floor, each one of them surrounded by pieces of rotting wood and cloth.

The skeletons here are all normal skeletons (not animated). These are servants of the Elder Temple that were enslaved by Arumvel the Wicked. The pieces of rotting wood and cloth are all that remains of the beds and other simple furniture that was once in the room – if the PCs dig through the bits and pieces, they will find several rusted nails but nothing of value.

Area T-7: Pantry

This room has several wooden shelves around the walls, but they are badly rotted and most have collapsed. Apparently the room was looted at some time in the past, for there is nothing on the shelves and only some broken glass and pieces of pottery left on the floor. Rather ominously, there is a human skull in one corner of the room.

Searching through the trash on the floor allows the PCs to find 2gp and 4cp. Searching takes 10 minutes, and has a 1 in 6 chance to alert the cursed humans in **Area T-8**.

Area T-8: The Cannibals' Kitchen

Note: it is possible for the PCs to enter this room through the regular door or through the secret passageway from **Area T-18**.

This room is obviously a kitchen, with a large fireplace, several wooden counters along the walls, and a table

in the middle of the room. Iron cooking pots and other implements are hung by hooks from the ceiling. Six human-like creatures are sitting around the table, eating what looks like raw rat meat. They are skinny and hairless, with snout-like faces and long, claw-like fingernails.

These creatures are **cursed humans**. They are halfway altered into cannibal mole-men, and their offspring will most certainly be members of that malignant species. These cursed humans are part of the larger group of mole-men and cursed humans that makes its lair in **Area T-10**.

There is a bundle of bones wrapped in burlap in one corner of the room. The bones are fresh, with scraps of meat still clinging to them, and they are obviously those of a human being.

Cursed Human (6): AC 10; HP 13 (3d8); Spd 30ft; Melee claws (+3, 2d4+1 slashing); **Str +1, Dex +0, Con +0, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +0; Traits** sunlight sensitivity; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL CN; CR 1/4; XP 50. (Monster Appendix)**

Treasure: Each of the cursed humans has a belt pouch with 1d10 gold pieces in it. One of the iron cooking pots hanging from the ceiling contains a leather bags that contains 3 gems (25gp each) and 5gp.

Area T-9: Empty Room

This room is empty.

There is nothing of interest to the party in this room.

Area T-10: Mole-Man Lair

This room was evidently used for storage at some time in the past, for there are several large alcoves in the room, each one large enough for a person to stand in, each of them carved with stone shelves. You only have a moment to notice the room's details, though, for there are also several mole-men in the room, moving to the attack. Their leader is a big, fat brute of a mole-man covered with scars and standing over six feet tall. At the back there is also an old-looking cannibal mole-man with tattoos all over his skin and a bone through its nose.

This is the main group of the cannibal mole-men who inhabit the Servants' Quarter area of the Elder Temple. The big mole-man **Gobura Scar** is the war leader and the one with the bone through its nose is **Jylagura the Demon-Speaker**, a servant of Arumvel the Wicked (see **Area T-43**). Jylagura has a smear of ash on his forehead like the manes demons of Arumvel's court, but this is ordinary ash, not ashes from Vuod the Putrefactor.

Gobura Scar: AC 13; HP 28 (3d8+6); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft; Melee claws (+7, 2d4+5 slashing); **Str +5, Dex -1, Con +2, Int -1, Wis +1, Cha -2; Traits** sunlight sensitivity; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 30ft; **AL CE; CR 1/2; XP 100.**

Jylagura the Demon-Speaker: AC 12; HP 19 (3d8+6); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft; Melee claws (+6, 2d4+4 slashing); **SA** spells (Wis +3, DC 11); **Str +4, Dex -1, Con +2, Int -1, Wis +1, Cha -2; Traits** sunlight sensitivity; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 30ft; **AL CE; CR 1/2; XP 100.**

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*guidance, resistance*; 1st (3)—*cure wounds, inflict wounds*; 2nd (1)—*hold person*.



Mogura-Jin (2): AC 12; HP 19 (3d8+6); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft; Melee claws (+6, 2d4+4 slashing); **Str +4, Dex -1, Con +2, Int 1, Wis +1, Cha -2; Traits** sunlight sensitivity; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 30ft; **AL CE; CR 1/2; XP 100. (Monster Appendix)**

Treasure: Gobura wears a necklace of gold nuggets (50gp) and has a belt pouch with 12gp and 23sp. Each of the ordinary cannibal mole-men has a belt pouch with 1d10gp. Jylagura the Demon-Speaker has a shoulder bag made of cured human skin, which contains a number of disgusting items used in his demonic rituals, and also contains a piece of jet carved in the shape of a demon's head. This gem is worth 100gp.

Area T-11: Main Temple Entrance

This entrance to the hill is blocked by a closed, metal double door, wide enough for several people to enter side by side. The door is marked with a large circle, one of the symbols of Law, but eight arrows have been roughly gouged into the iron around the circle, transforming it into a Chaos symbol.

The great doors are not locked, but they are not easy to open. It takes at least three PCs with a combined strength of 35 to open them. A dwarf might notice that the gouges in the iron door were not made by normal tools, but look almost like claw marks (the claws of the mole-men are strong enough to gouge the metal quite deeply).

As PCs enter tunnels, check to make sure that the party is carrying light sources and that they have established a marching order.

Area T-12: Temple Antechamber

This impressive underground chamber has double doors at both ends. Over the top of the eastern doors there is a mosaic image of a green jar surrounded with light.

The mosaic tiles comprising the “light” around the jar are actually magic, and if there is no light in the chamber they will be seen to glow faintly. If someone is boosted up to touch the mosaic jar, that PC will instantly have a very powerful vision sent by the powers of Law. In the vision, the PC sees a demon being burned in holy fires by three knights in plate mail, each wearing armor that shines with white light. One of the knights has a helmet bearing the crest of a phoenix, one bears the crest of a horse, and one bears the crest of a golden dragon. The demon’s ashes suddenly rise into the air like smoke, and are sucked down into a green jar. The three knights lift the jar (it is about the size of a person) and place it behind a carved wooden screen that bears magical holy symbols. When the jar is placed behind the screen, the symbols on the wooden panels suddenly blaze with light. The knights step back, and the vision fades away. Just as it does so, however, the person seeing the vision will suddenly become convinced that whatever this vision represented, something about it has since gone terribly wrong.

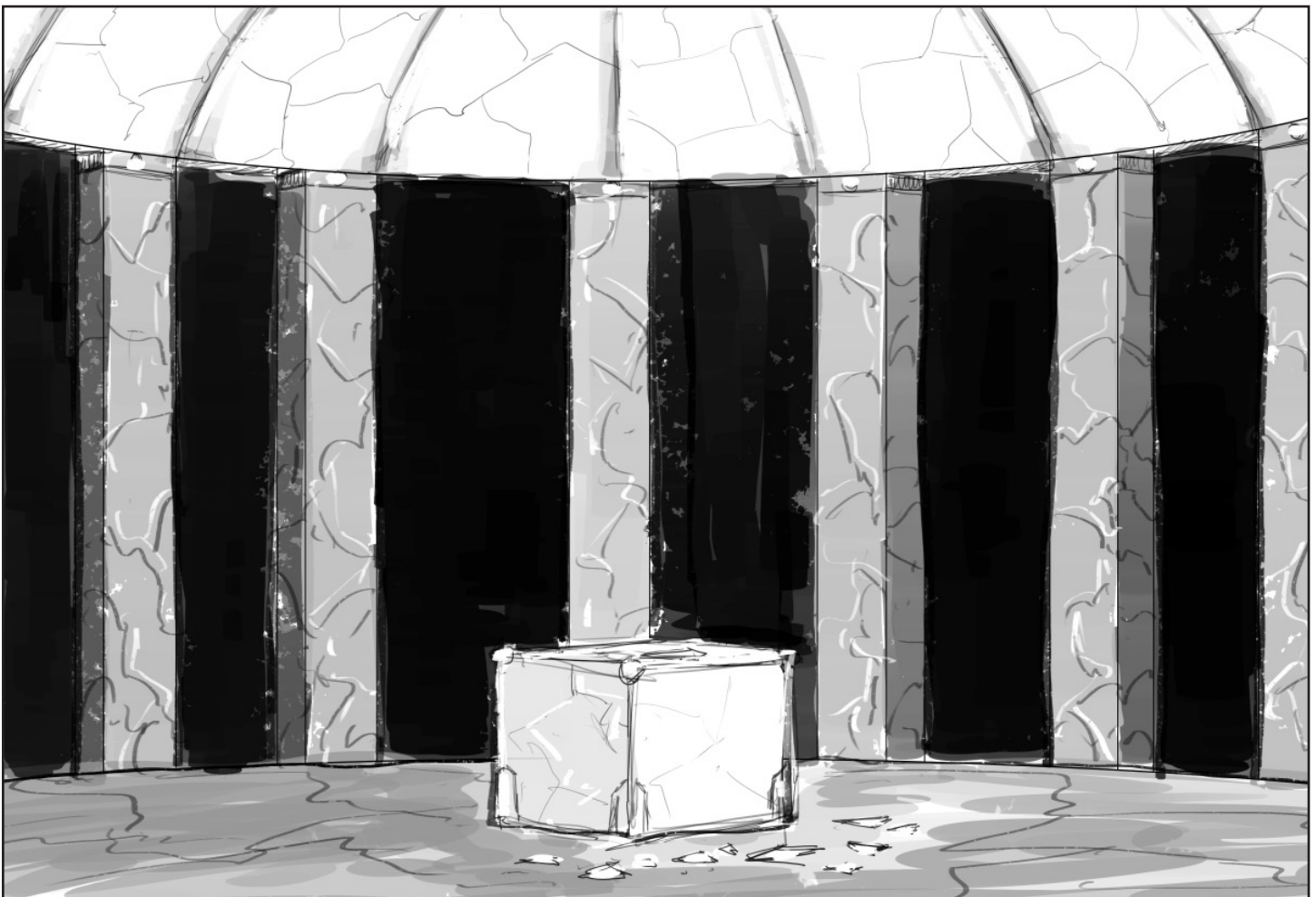
The mosaic of the jar was created here as a warning and a reminder to the priests of Law who once lived in the precincts of the Elder Temple. It depicts the imprisonment of the demon Vuod by the three paladins who killed him, burned the flesh, and placed the ashes in the jar, a magical artifact created for this purpose.

Area T-13: Fane of the Elder Temple

This chamber is circular, the domed ceiling supported by carved stone pillars. At the center of the room there is a short pedestal, about three feet tall. Broken shards of green glass surround the pedestal. The room has a sense of brooding power in it, but it feels like an echo or a residue rather than an active source of anything magical.

A *detect magic* spell will reveal that the shards of glass are infused with an extraordinarily powerful enchantment. Anyone touching the shards will be knocked unconscious by the intense power that remains in them even after the jar was shattered. The PC will remain unconscious for 1d6x10 minutes, and during each 10-minute period will have dreams resulting from the shock of contacting the remains of the artifact. Some of these dreams may repeat; roll on the table below, once per period that the PC is unconscious, to determine what dreams come.

1d8	Dream
1	The PC hears a frightened voice repeating the words “beneath the sun alone for safekeeping.”
2	The PC repeatedly sees a person wearing the robes of a priest of Law reaching out to touch a jar made of green glass. The man is muttering to himself, but the dream contains no sound. It looks like the man might be saying the word, “dangerous.”



1d8	Dream
3	The PC repeatedly hears the words, "It can't be that dangerous." If a player asks if this is the same frightening voice mentioned in #1, the answer is no – this is the jar's memory of the voice of Arumvel just before he touched the jar and released Vuod from captivity.
4	The PC sees the same vision as when the mosaic picture of the jar is touched in Area T-12 . However, the scene is viewed from the perspective of the jar, so the demon's ashes rise from the fire and seem to jump into the PC. After this startling moment, the PC will see the three knights placing the wooden screen in place as if they were putting the screen around the PC. At this point, the dream ends.
5	The PC sees a fountain of dark dust, or possibly powder, rise into the air and form the shape of a demon. This viewpoint is very strange, because it appears to be seen from several different perspectives at once. (The multiple-viewpoint effect is due to the fact that it is seen from the perspectives of several shattered pieces of the jar, just after the demon shattered it from within).
6	The PC sees a person's lying on the floor in the middle of several pieces of broken green glass (this can be recognized as the same person – Arumvel – as seen in result #2 who was reaching out to touch the jar). Suddenly a stream of dusty smoke begins to stream into the person's mouth and nose, as if being inhaled.
7	The PC sees the man (Arumvel) speaking to a small group of squat but disturbingly human-like beings, about 5ft tall and having pale skin, small beady red eyes, no body hair, and nails overgrown to claws.
8	The PC sees a human being chained to a wall. Time seems to pass rapidly, and a nauseating change come over the man as he slowly transforms into a human-like creature with pale skin, small beady red eyes, no body hair, and nails overgrown to claws.

If a PC is knocked unconscious as a result of touching the green shards of glass, **3 giant centipedes** will crawl out of unseen holes in the stone pillars, and attack the party. The centipedes are bright green and shiny.

Centipede, Giant (3): AC 13; HP 4 (1d6+1); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing plus 3d6 poison, DC 11 Con); **Str** -3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -5, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -4; **Senses** blindsight 30ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Area T-14: Secret Room

This room is relatively featureless – the only unusual object in it is located in the center of the room, a square pedestal two feet high, with a concavity in the top shaped like a hemisphere. The concavity would contain exactly half of a one foot diameter sphere.

This area was the secret altar room of the priests of Law. The base of the altar is the pedestal, but at one time a sphere floated above the altar, and without the sphere the altar has no unusual properties. As Arumvel, possessed by the demon Vuod, was destroying the temple's aboveground structure, the priest quickly hid the altar sphere away. It can be found in **Area T-25**. If the sphere is returned to the altar, any Lawful PC within 60ft will gain 100 XP as a divine blessing for restoring the altar to wholeness.

Area T-15: Flooded Room

Steps lead down the corridor to a dark chamber. You can hear the sound of water dripping into a pool.

The floor of this chamber is flooded in about two inches of water, although on first glance the PCs will not be able to tell that it is so shallow. The water is dripping from the ceiling. Anyone walking through the water will have 1d3-1 leeches stick to the PC's boots before reaching the other side. The leeches are not dangerous, although they might suggest to novice players that water in dungeons can pose unexpected dangers.

Area T-16: Guard Room

This room is empty. Dead leaves are scattered on the floor, probably blown into the tunnel during storms.

If the players specifically say that they are looking at the pattern of leaves on the floor (and this must be before the PCs traipse into the room and scatter everything all about), they will notice that there is an area against the back wall of the room where there is much less leaf coverage on the floor than elsewhere in the room. (This is directly in front of the secret door).

Area T-17: Side Storage Room

Note: If the party inspects the door to this room, they will discover that something seems to have gnawed away some of the wood at the bottom, leaving a gap about 3in high by 6in wide.

This room contains several wooden crates, probably ten of them, stacked in a jumbled pile at the back of the room. Two of the crates at the front and top of the pile appear to be in good condition, but the rest of the crates are very old and rotted. Piles of rotted wood lie on the floor around the crates, and it looks as though these have been created by stripping pieces of the rotted wood away from the boxes. There is a very bad smell in the room.

10 giant rats live in the nest they have made in this pile of crates.

Rat, Giant (10): AC 12; HP 7 (2d6); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +0, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Traits** pack tactics; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, keen smell; **AL** U; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25

Treasure: Searching the pile of crates will reveal a fair amount of junk that the rats have accumulated, but will also yield some valuable finds. In with the trash, the party will find 73sp, 89cp, and a silver brooch worth 25gp.

Area T-18: Guard Barracks

There are several rotted wooden beds in this room, a line of wooden boxes against the wall in the northernmost part of the chamber, and long weapons racks on the walls.

This spacious underground hall was once the barracks of the Elder Temple's guard unit. The weapon racks are empty, and there is no sign of the warriors that once inhabited this barracks. The wooden boxes in the northern part of the room are where the soldiers kept their personal belongings. They have been ransacked, and are empty except for a few scraps of cloth.

Area T-19: Entrance to the Catacombs

This tunnel entrance is about halfway up the hill. It has definitely been carved from the rock, for the walls of the tunnel are straight and the floor is level. All around the opening, carved into the hillside rock, there are carvings of skulls and skeletons. Ancient runes are carved over the top of the tunnel.

The ancient runes are too old to be understood by the PCs without magical aid, but if they cast a *comprehend languages* spell, they will find that the words read: "Crypts of the Elder Temple."

When the PCs enter tunnels, check to make sure that the party is carrying light sources and that they have established a marching order.

Area T-20: Tomb of the Guardian

Note: the passageway leading into this room may be the first side passage that the party encounters, if they have entered through the cave at **Area T-19**. In that case, you may wish to read them the following description when they reach the intersection, and allow them to decide whether to enter the side passage or continue deeper into the complex.

A narrow passage leads off from the main corridor. The image of a human skull has been carved over the top of the entrance to the corridor.

If the party continues down the corridor to the tomb:

Shortly after it turns, the corridor opens into a rectangular chamber that has been excavated from the rock. The walls, ceiling, and floor all have uneven surfaces that still bear marks of the miner's tools. Five stone sarcophagi have been placed here.

Obviously, this chamber is a tomb. However, as the chamber nearest to the entrance/exit of the catacombs, this was also the post of the tomb guardian. If anyone enters the room, setting foot beyond the corridor, a column of white smoke will rise from the floor and coalesce into the shape of a human wearing robes and a medallion of the symbol of Law (whatever this might be in your campaign). The ghostly figure speaks:

"I am the guardian of the Catacombs of the Elder Temple. What is your purpose here?"

From this point on, there may be a conversation with the party. Based on your judgment as GM, the party's responses might cause the guardian of the tomb to aid them or to ward against them. Many of the chambers in the tomb area will have different characteristics based on whether the tomb guardian is neutral (hasn't met the party yet), friendly (party has agreed in some way to try and defeat the evil that is now resident in the temple), or hostile (the party said or did something stupid when talking to the guardian).

The guardian knows that the Elder Temple has been desecrated and overtaken by Arumvel the Wicked. Under these circumstances, it is willing



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to trade certain of the material possessions in the graves in exchange for the destruction of Arumvel and his minions, and the restoration of the temple to its original state. As you, in your capacity as the GM, conduct the discussion between the tomb guardian and the party, keep all this in mind, and decide at the end of the discussions whether the guardian will elect to be friendly, neutral, or hostile to the party.

The guardian is a being very similar to a ghost; it has an existence in the ethereal plane, but its manifestation in the material plane of existence is incorporeal. It cannot be damaged other than with magical weapons, and if it is attacked it will vanish, leaving various rooms in the catacombs in a state of hostility to the adventurers. It has enough hit points to survive one combat round of anything that a low-level party could conceivably throw at it; even if the GM is modifying the adventure for higher level PCs, it is still suggested that the Guardian be kept as a non-combat encounter.

The sarcophagi in this room all contain normal (not animated) skeletons. If the party attempts to loot this tomb, under the very eyes of the Tomb Guardian, the guardian will raise its arms and each of the skeletons in the sarcophagi will rise as extremely powerful undead beings:

Guardian Skeleton (5): AC 14; HP 37 (5d8+15); Spd 30ft; Melee claws (+4, 2d6+3 slashing); **Immune** exhaustion, poison; **Vulnerable** bludgeoning; **Str** +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Treasure: Each of the sarcophagi contains valuable grave goods that were buried along with the skeletons.

Sarcophagus #1: necklace of bloodstones worth 500gp

Sarcophagus #2: bracelet of blue stones worth 50gp

Sarcophagus #3: dagger with yellow jewels (cursed: touching the dagger causes the victim to turn into a snake for 1 hour unless the PC makes a successful DC 14 Con save)

Sarcophagus #4: a *brooch of protection* (grants a +1 bonus to all saving throws; requires attunement)

Sarcophagus #5: 100gp in a box encrusted with semi-precious stones worth 50gp

Area T-21: Paladins' Tomb

This tomb chamber contains 3 stone sarcophagi. The ceiling is painted with now-faded pictures of three knights, one of them wearing the shield-device of a dragon, one of a horse, and one of a phoenix. The knights are seen fighting against goblins, trolls, and other such evil enemies of humankind.

If the Tomb Guardian is Friendly: Traps on the sarcophagi will not activate.

If the Tomb Guardian is Neutral: Traps on the sarcophagi are as normal.

If the Tomb Guardian is Hostile: Traps on the sarcophagi do +2 damage.

Sarcophagus #1: This sarcophagus has an inlaid image of a phoenix on the heavy stone lid. The lid has not been opened as far as the party can tell. It requires 2 people to shift the lid, and when it is moved it will cause a magical shock of power to anyone holding the lid (1d6 radiant damage). This can only be avoided if the PCs are pushing the lid aside using tools of some kind that are longer than 1 foot in length. Because the shock is radiant energy, not electric, it does not matter if the tools would conduct electricity or not. Because this is a magical trap, it cannot be detected by a thief, although a *find traps* spell would certainly locate it and a *detect magic* spell would determine there was something odd about the chest.

Inside the sarcophagus is a normal skeleton wearing plate mail and holding a longsword. The sword is magical; in the hands of a Lawful PC, it has a +1 bonus. In the hands of a Chaotic PC it will inflict 1 force damage on the wielder every time it hits an opponent, and cannot be put down without the assistance of a *remove curse* spell.

Sarcophagus #2: This sarcophagus has an inlaid image of a horse. The lid has not been opened as far as the party can tell. There is no trap set

upon this sarcophagus, but the lid is unusually heavy and requires three people to slide it to the side. Inside the sarcophagus there is a (normal) skeleton wearing plate mail and carrying a sword. If one of the PCs inspects the floor of the sarcophagus very closely (unless there is magical light such as from a *light* spell, this would require being *inside* the coffin to check), a small latch may be found that will open a compartment in the floor of the sarcophagus. The latch is wired to release poison gas if the wire is not spotted with a DC 12 Wis (Perception) and carefully unwound with a DC 11 Dex check using thieves' tools; the compartment contains a flawed ruby worth 250gp.

Sarcophagus #3: This sarcophagus has an inlaid image of a dragon. The lid has not been opened as far as the party can tell. Opening the sarcophagus requires two people, and when the lid opens, if any weight is removed from the bottom of the sarcophagus, a scything blade will slash across the opening to inflict 1d6 slashing damage to anyone reaching inside at the time. The blade can be discovered with a DC 15 Wis (Perception) check and disarmed with a DC 15 Dex check using thieves' tools. The sarcophagus contains a (normal) skeleton wearing a tarnished silver necklace worth 100gp.

Area T-22: Ransacked Tomb

This chamber once contained three stone sarcophagi, but the remains of the heavy coffins are shattered and broken. The walls of the chamber are scorched, and several bones are scattered around. The bones are not scorched.

If the Tomb Guardian is Friendly: No effect.

If the Tomb Guardian is Neutral: No effect.

If the Tomb Guardian is Hostile: No effect.

This chamber has been ransacked by grave robbers who set off a fire trap while doing so (the reason for the scorched walls). The trap no longer works, so there is no danger for the party. The bones are those of the initial residents of the sarcophagi. If the PCs replace the bones in the sarcophagi, the tomb guardian at **Area T-20** will be very favorably disposed toward them.

Area T-23: Tombs Antechamber

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this chamber are painted yellow, although the paint is now faded and old. The stone walls of the room contain twenty large niches, each of which contains what appears to be a human skeleton. On each side of the southern door is the statue of a dog.

If the Tomb Guardian is Friendly: The dog statues will not animate.

If the Tomb Guardian is Neutral: One of the dog statues will animate.

If the Tomb Guardian is Hostile: Both of the dog statues will animate.

The skeletons in the niches are normal skeletons; they are the remains of priests of Law that were buried here before the temple was taken over and desecrated by Arumvel. The two stone dogs at the exit, however, are guardians of the tombs beyond this chamber, and one or both of them will animate and attack if a PC tries to continue south past this room (or if a PC starts messing with the skeletons in this room). Only if the party has already spoken to the tomb guardian in **Area T-20** will the statues remain inanimate.

Dog Statue (2): AC 16; HP 44 (8d6+20); Spd 40ft; Melee bite (+4, 2d8+2 slashing); **Immune** charm, exhaustion, poison; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing that are non-adamantine normal weapons; **Str** +1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** 4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** LN; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Area T-24: Main Tomb

All around the walls of this room, there are niches containing skeletons, a total of 15. All of them wear rusting chain mail and carry notched swords and riven shields.

If the Tomb Guardian is Friendly: Skeletons will not animate.

If the Tomb Guardian is Neutral: 1d4+1 skeletons will animate per round.

If the Tomb Guardian is Hostile: All skeletons will animate immediately.

As noted above, the **15 skeletons** in this area will animate to defend the room unless the tomb guardian in **Area T-20** has made an agreement with the party that they will destroy the evil force that has taken residence in the Elder Temple. If the Tomb Guardian is neutral to the party, not all of the skeletons will animate immediately; 1d4+1 of them will animate immediately and each round thereafter until they are all slain.

Skeleton (15): AC 13; HP 13 (2d8+4); Spd 30ft; Melee shortsword (+4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Ranged** shortbow (+4, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **Immune** poison, exhaustion, poisoned; **Vulnerable** bludgeoning; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** 1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Treasure: There is no treasure in this room.

Area T-25: Treasure Room

This room contains a large, strangely-shaped stone chest, five feet long by two feet tall and two feet deep.

The chest has three stone lids, all hinged, next to each other. The leftmost lid is engraved with a picture of a deer, the middle lid is engraved with the picture of a sun, and the right lid is engraved with a picture of a sword.

If the Tomb Guardian is Friendly: A gem worth 100gp sits on top of the “sun” lid.

If the Tomb Guardian is Neutral: No effect.

If the Tomb Guardian is Hostile: Anyone touching the “sun” lid must make a saving throw or run screaming for 1d4 turns.

The chest contains nothing unless only the middle (sun) lid is open, and the other two lids are closed. If the PCs have the lids open and closed in this combination, there will be two things underneath the sun lid: the first is a bag containing a *+1 mace* and 500gp, and the second is a stone sphere about 1ft in diameter. This sphere glows if a spell is used to detect whether or not it is magical. This is the missing part of the altar at **Area T-14**.

Area T-26: Ransacked Tomb Chamber

This room contains six sarcophagi, but they have been broken open and ransacked.

This room contains nothing of interest to the party.

Area T-27: Night Sky Room

The walls of this chamber are painted with an intricate pattern of trees and flowers. The ceiling is painted black with hundreds of small white spots placed at apparently random locations.

The room is empty.

Area T-28: Sun Room

The ceiling of this room is painted with a yellow sun, and there are four stone spheres on the floor, each one foot in diameter. All four of the spheres are painted blue.

None of these spheres is magical. Each sphere sits in a concave depression in the floor, which keeps them from rolling (unless they are rolled out, which is not difficult). The concavity beneath one of the four spheres is much deeper than the other three – it is a hole 10ft deep. At the bottom of the hole there are **4 giant centipedes** that guard a scroll case.

Centipede, Giant (4): AC 13; HP 4 (1d6+1); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing plus 3d6 poison, DC 11 Con); **Str** -3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** 5, **Wis** 2, **Cha** 4; **Senses** blindsight 30ft; **AL** U; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Treasure: The scroll inside the case contains the spells *sleep*, *web*, and *fly*.

Area T-29: Cloud Room

The ceiling of this room is painted with grey and white swirls and spirals. The walls are painted to resemble vines with grapes growing on them.

The painting is interesting, but there is nothing else in the room.

Area T-30: Mogura-Jin Lair

There are two rickety wooden cots in this room, each with a leather bag underneath it.

This chamber is the lair of **2 mogura-jin**, the cannibal mole-men who serve Arumvel the Wicked. The bags underneath the cots only contain scraps of cloth and bits of bone; the mole-men carry their valuables with them.

Mogura-Jin (2): AC 12; HP 19 (3d8+6); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft; Melee claws (+6, 2d4+4 slashing); **Str** +4, **Dex** -1, **Con** +2, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Traits** sunlight sensitivity; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 30ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (**Monster Appendix**)

Treasure: Each of the mogura-jin has a belt pouch containing 1d10gp. Additionally, the larger one has an electrum ring on one of its claws worth 100gp.

Area T-31: Empty Room

The chamber is empty.

Area T-32: Green Bird Room

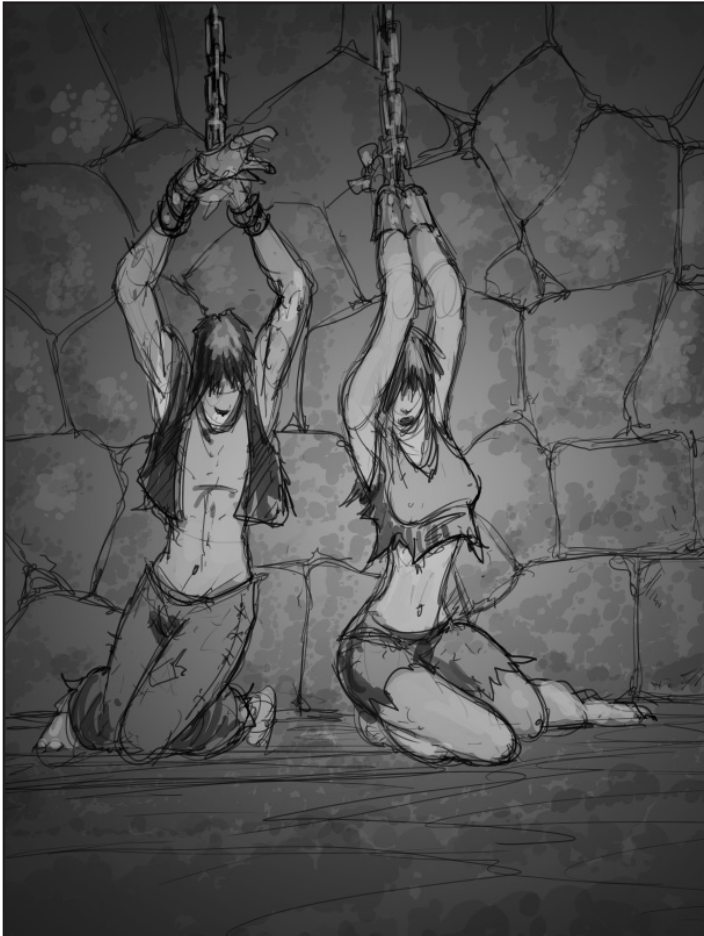
The walls of this large room are painted with bright green images of hundreds of birds. One of the paintings is significantly larger than the others, and the word “Aelbos” is written beneath this image.

The “Aelbos” painting is very old, and might even pre-date the Elder Temple. The word has no known meaning, but might refer to a bird-god or bird-spirit of some kind.

Area T-33: Face Room

The walls of this room are painted with numerous highly-stylized faces. A man-sized statue of a demon blocks a hallway that leads out of the room to the northeast.

This room is the guard post for Arumvel’s prison (see **Area T-34**). The demon “statue” is actually one of Arumvel’s manes demons, holding itself perfectly motionless as it stands guard. If the party engages the demon in combat, the prisoners in **Area T-34** will hear the battle and start calling for help.



Demon, Manes: AC 9; HP 8 (2d6+2); Spd 20ft; **Melee** claws (+2, 2d4 slashing); **Immune** charm, fright, poison; **Resist** cold, fire, lightning; **Str** +0, **Dex** -1, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Treasure: The demon has no treasure.

Area T-34: Prison Cell

Two humans are chained to the wall in this room, one male and one female. They are thin and haggard from the imprisonment.

These humans are Albraith and Etarra (**commoners**), a married couple that were kidnapped from their farm only a couple of days ago. They are still alive, although they have not been fed and are weak from starvation. Arumvel has appeared once in the prison, saying magic words and feeding them alchemical preparations that would – if repeated enough times – turn the two prisoners into cursed humans with twisted minds, under Arumvel’s control. Thus, if they are asked (or if it is clear that the information would be useful) they can describe Arumvel to the party.

Area T-35: Trap Chamber

A small demon head, made of bronze, is indented in the wall just before the eastern wall of the corridor opens into a large chamber. The mouth of the demon head is about two inches across, and you can see that it contains several small gears and switches, so small that a needle would be required to move them around with any precision.

This entire room has been rigged as a magical trap to guard the demon-lair on the far side; the trap may be detected with a DC 20 Wis (Perception) check. The only way to disarm the mechanism is to treat it as a lock and successfully pick it requiring a DC 14 Dex check with thieves’ tools. This will deactivate the trap for a period of 2 hours. If the PCs disregard or do not successfully pick the “lock,” then the trap will activate whenever a living being tries to walk through the corridor past the room (or into the room). The demons and undead, of course, do not need to bother with the lock.

If anyone walks into the chamber without disabling the trap mechanism, 1d6 darts will fire from holes in the eastern wall of the chamber at that creature, each attacking with +2 to hit for 1d3 piercing damage.

The room itself is empty – it has been cleared out to maintain a clear field of fire for the darts.

Area T-36: Demon Lair

The walls of this chamber appear to be stained with blood, and there is a pentacle marked on the floor. Inside the pentacle there is a pair of ordinary dice. Four skeletons stand around the walls, near what appears – for a moment – to be the statue of a demon, until the statue suddenly snarls and moves toward you.

Demon, Manes: AC 9; HP 8 (2d6+2); Spd 20ft; **Melee** claws (+2, 2d4 slashing); **Immune** charm, frighten, poison; **Resist** cold, fire, lightning; **Str** +0, **Dex** -1, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.



Skeleton (4): AC 13; HP 13 (2d8+4); Spd 30ft; Melee shortsword (+4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Ranged** shortbow (+4, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **Immune** exhaustion, poison; **Vulnerable** bludgeoning; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Treasure: The dice in the pentacle are made of a precious reddish-black stone found only in the lairs of demons. Each of the two dice is worth 50gp.

Area T-37: Empty Chamber

There appears to be nothing in this room, although a dark powdery substance on the floor might possibly be a smear of dried blood where something was dragged from north to south or south to north.

The room is empty.

Area T-38: Warning Chamber

There is a treasure chest in the western part of this chamber.

There is a small bronze “lock” attached to the bottom of this chest, and if the chest is moved or opened (without this trap being disabled), a very loud, siren-like noise will begin to shriek from the inside of the chest. The chest itself contains 500cp. The trap may be detected with a

DC 15 Wis (Perception) check, and disarmed with a DC 10 Dex check using thieves’ tools.

If the PCs make the mistake of activating the alarm inside the chest, the mole-men in **Area T-39** will ready themselves for combat (cannot be surprised) and the cursed humans from **Area T-40** (if they are still alive) will circle around to enter this chamber from **Area T-37**, hoping to catch the intruders between them, attacking with the mole-men on one side and the cursed humans on the other, to prevent escape.

Area T-39: Mole-man Lair

This room has a rank smell to it, wafting upward from piles of garbage that rise three feet high against the north and west walls. There are three sleeping furs in here, and a single wooden chest.

This room is the lair of **3 mogura-jin**. Combat in this room will draw the cursed humans from **Area T40**, who will arrive through the secret door in 1d4 rounds.

Mogura-Jin (3): AC 12; HP 19 (3d8+6); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft; Melee claws (+6, 2d4+4 slashing); **Str** +4, **Dex** -1, **Con** +2, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Traits** sunlight sensitivity; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 30ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (**Monster Appendix**)

Treasure: The treasure chest is locked; it will have to be broken open (automatic check for wandering monsters) or the lock will need to be picked. The chest contains a necklace of human bones and gold beads (100gp), a short sword, 3 bottles of holy water, 61gp, 232sp, and an intricately carved sandalwood fan (50gp).

Area T-40: Lair of the Cursed Humans

This room contains five wooden cots, and there is a single padlocked chest against the southern wall.

This room is the lair of **5 cursed humans**, not fully transformed into mole-men by Arumvel's sinister magic. Any combat in this room will draw the mogura-jin from **Area T-39**, arriving in 1d4 rounds.

Cursed Human (5): AC 10; HP 13 (3d8); Spd 30ft; Melee claws (+3, 2d4+1 slashing); **Str +1, Dex +0, Con +0, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +0; Traits** sunlight sensitivity; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CN; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50. (**Monster Appendix**)

Treasure: To open the chest, either the padlock (or chest) must be broken, or the lock must be picked. Breaking the chest or lock by any violent means will also shatter the 2 *potions of healing* that are inside. In addition to the healing potions, the chest contains various filthy items of clothing and a bag containing 50gp.

Area T-41: Mural Room

The walls of this large chamber have apparently been plastered over, and the smooth surface has been painted with murals that circle the whole room. The paintings depict what is obviously the hill of the Elder Temple, beneath which you currently stand, but there is a shining building that stands at the top of the hill itself. Not far below the building you can see the metal door that you have seen from the outside. The lower tunnels were either not built at the time the paintings were made, or they were simply left out of the pictures. As the paintings proceed around the room, you can see pictures of religious ceremonies of Law taking place, and then a procession of three knights carrying a large, green jar to the building. This is the last picture in the sequence: there is still room left for more to be painted on the wall, but the plaster in the blank space is slashed and marked with dark stains that look unpleasantly like blood.

Although this room is fascinating as a historical record, it contains nothing else of interest.

Area T-42: The Holy Water Font

At the center of this room there is a pool of water, ringed with a border of purple-painted stones. There is a large quantity of shattered glass in the southern part of the room.

If the PCs sift through the broken glass, they will be able to find three unbroken bottles. The pool in the room contains holy water, which is the reason why the demons have smashed all of the bottles. There is enough in the pool to fill ten bottles of holy water, and, although it is unlikely to be relevant, the pool produces another bottle's worth of holy water each week.

Area T-43: Lair of Arumvel the Wicked

As you turn the last curve in the spiral, you see a horrific sight. There is a room in the middle of the corridor's serpentine curve, and the creature in the chamber is obviously the source of the corruption that has overtaken the Elder Temple. A thing stands in the center of the room, once a human but now strangely eroded into a mix of flesh and ashes, as if it had been halfway burned through at some point and yet lived on. A cloud of ash surrounds it, but its eyes glint clearly through the darkness, burning with a red and evil light. There are three man-sized demons in the room as well, their faces marked with a smear of ashes in the shape of eight outward-pointing arrows. Behind this array of supernatural foes, you can see the broken and toppled statue of a bearded man holding a sphere. Where the statue has broken open, you can see the glint of gold and jewels.

This room is the Court of Arumvel the Wicked, the pathetic but extremely powerful remnant of Arumvel's body after it was possessed and then discarded by Vuod the Putrefactor. As the players may have figured out by this point, the fall of the Elder Temple was caused when the novice priest Arumvel became curious and touched the green jar in which the dreaded demon Vuod had been imprisoned by three paladins: the Knight of the White Phoenix, the Knight of the Grey Stallion, and the Knight of the Golden Dragon. When Arumvel touched the jar, it shattered and allowed Vuod to take possession of Arumvel, who, using the demon's powers, first enslaved and later killed all those who had once lived in the precincts of the temple.

A **demonic remnant** and **3 manes** are here.

Demonic Remnant: AC 15; HP 27 (5d8+5); Spd 30ft; Melee touch (+3, 1d8 necrotic, DC 11 Con or max hp reduced); **SA** choking ash (60ft; 1d4 fire plus suffocation, DC 11 Con repeat), multiattack (touch and choking ash); **Immune** exhaustion, fright, poison, unconscious; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from non-magical weapons, fire, necrotic; **Str +1, Dex +0, Con +0, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +0; Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200. (**Monster Appendix**)

Demon, Manes (3): AC 9; HP 8 (2d6+2); Spd 20ft; Melee claws (+2, 2d4 slashing); **Immune** poison; charmed, frightened, poisoned; **Resist** cold, fire, lightning; **Str +0, Dex -1, Con +1, Int 4, Wis -1, Cha -3; Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Treasure: The statue contains 820gp, 2,745sp, 4,309cp, 4 gems worth 25gp each, and a +1 *longsword*.

Concluding the Adventure

It is probably clear that the "Wilderness Encroachment" around the village of Grimmsgate can be expanded to fill several gaming sessions or even to serve as a permanent "headquarters" for the party to which they return after their various adventures. If the PCs succeed in restoring the altar in the Elder Temple, or at least they manage to destroy Arumvel the Wicked, they will almost certainly be rewarded by the nearby barons with a bit of money and – almost certainly – offers of employment as caravan guards, explorers, mercenaries, spies, or other interesting situations.

Monster Appendix

Allip

XP 1100 (CR 4)
NE Medium undead (incorporeal)
Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 12
HP 60 (8d8+24)
Resist bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from normal weapons, necrotic
Immune exhaustion, fright, poison, unconsciousness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30ft
Melee maddening touch (+4; target loses 1d4 points of Wis and the allip regains 1d8+4 hit points)

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), **Dex** 15 (+2), **Con** 18 (+4),
Int 11 (+0), **Wis** 11 (+0), **Cha** 18 (+4)
Languages none
Senses darkvision 60ft

TRAITS

Babble The allip mutters constantly to itself, surrounding itself in an aura of confusing sound. Each creature that begins its turn within 60ft of the allip that can hear it must make a



DC 14 Wis save. On a failure, the creature is incapacitated and can't move until its next turn as it attempts to understand what the allip is saying. Creatures that cannot hear are immune to this effect.

Incorporeal An allip can move through solid objects and other creatures as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 1d10 force if it is still inside something solid at the end of its turn.

Madness: Anyone targeting the allip with any sort of mind influencing or mind reading spell or ability makes contact with its tortured mind and loses 1d4 Wis (no save).

Undead creature composed of boiling madness and dark screams.

Basidron

XP 1100 (CR 5)
Unaligned Medium plant
Init +1

DEFENSE

AC 16 (natural)
HP 76 (9d8+36)
Immune cold, paralysis, poison, stun

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft
Melee slam (+5, 2d8+2 bludgeoning and the target must make a successful DC 15 Con save or be unable to breathe as spores clog the creature's respiratory tract. As an action, the target or another creature may remove the spores with a successful DC 15 Dex check; they are also removed by an effect that cures disease.)

Area hallucinatory spores (recharge 5–6, The basidron emits spores in a 20ft radius sphere centered on it. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Con save or be afflicted with hallucinations for 1d4+1 rounds. A hallucinating creature must make a 1d8 roll to discover the hallucination they are afflicted with.)

STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), **Dex** 13 (+1), **Con** 18 (+4),
Int 1 (–5), **Wis** 11 (+0), **Cha** 8 (–1)
Languages none
Senses: tremorsense 60ft

TRAITS

Cold Immunity: Basidrons take no damage from cold spells, but cannot release their hallucinatory spores on their next turn.

- Hallucinations:** Typical hallucinations are as follows (roll d8):
- 1 – Creature is in a swamp, and must strip off armor to avoid sinking.
 - 2 – Creature is being attacked by a swarm of spiders and must attack floor and surrounding area.
 - 3 – Creature believes an item held has turned into a viper and must drop it.
 - 4 – Suffocation – the creature believes it is suffocating and gasps for air and clutches its throat.
 - 5 – Creature believes it has shrunk to 1/10 normal size and calls for help.
 - 6 – Creature believes its associates have contracted a

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- disease and will not approach closer to them than 10ft
- 7 – Creature believes it is melting; clutches itself to hold itself together.
 - 8 – Creature believes its back is covered with leeches. It tears armor, clothing and other possessions from its back to get at them

A strange ambulatory fungus with hallucinatory spores.

Bat, Giant Vampire

XP 50 (CR 1/4)
Unaligned Small beast
Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 13 (natural armor)
HP 9 (2d6+2)

OFFENSE

Speed: 10ft, fly 30ft
Melee bite (+4, 1d8+2 piercing damage and the giant vampire bat attaches itself to its target)
Melee blood drain (automatic hit, creature bat is attached to, 1d8+2 piercing damage; the vampire bat detaches itself after inflicting at least 20 damage in this manner)

STATISTICS

Str 12 (+1), Dex 14 (+2), Con 13 (+1),
Int 2 (-4), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 7 (-2)
Languages none
Senses darkvision 60ft

These creatures are very big vampire bats.

Bat, Greater

XP 200 (CR 1)
Unaligned Large beast
Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 12
HP 50 (8d10+8)

OFFENSE

Speed 10ft, fly 50ft
Melee bite (+4, 3d6+2 piercing)

STATISTICS

Str 15 (+2), Dex 14 (+2), Con 13 (+1), Int 2 (-4), Wis 12 (+1),
Cha 7 (-2)
Languages none
Senses darkvision 60ft

Massive bats, but they do not suck blood, unlike their vampiric-bat cousins.

Bleeding Horror

XP 1100 (CR 6)
CE Medium undead
Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 18 (natural)
HP 60 (8d8+24)
Resist bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from normal weapons

Immune exhaustion, fright, necrotic, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft
Multiattack The bleeding horror makes two claw attacks. If both claws hit the same target, the creature must make a DC 15 Con save or reduces its maximum hit points by the damage dealt by both attacks.
Melee claw (+7, 2d8+4 necrotic and bleeding horror regains that many hit points)
Area A bleeding horror creates a whirlwind of blood (cylinder: 20ft radius, 20ft high) within 120ft. Each creature in the whirlwind at the start of its turn must make a DC 15 Con save. On a failure, the creature takes 5d6 acid and is blinded for 1d4 rounds; half damage on a success, no blinding. The area of the whirlwind is heavily obscured. The *bloodstorm* has a duration of concentration, up to 1 minute.

STATISTICS

Str 19 (+4), Dex 10 (+0), Con 17 (+3),
Int 18 (+4), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 12 (+1)
Languages Common
Senses darkvision 60ft

TRAITS

Horrific Experience Each living creature within 60ft that sees a bleeding horror for the first time must make a DC 14 Wis save. On a failure, the creature loses 1d6 Str.
Magic Resistance The bleeding horror has tactical advantage on saving throws against spells and magic effects.

A bleeding horror is foul undead creature that appears as sunken corpse covered in and continuously dripping with thick red blood. Their eyes glow with a desire for blood.



Bleeding Horror

Crystalline Tree

XP 1800 (CR 5)
 Unaligned Large plant
Init -2

DEFENSE

AC 17 (natural)
HP 120 (9d10+72)
Immune charm, fright, lightning, poison, prone, psychic, unconsciousness
Resist piercing and slashing
Vulnerable bludgeoning

OFFENSE

Speed 20ft, crystal glide 30ft
Multiattack A crystal tree can attack with up to 8 roots each round; each root must attack a different target.
Melee root (+8, 15ft, 1d8+5 bludgeoning and the target is grappled and restrained until it escapes (DC 15). A root that is grappling a target may not attack any other target.)

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), **Dex** 7 (-2), **Con** 27 (+8),
Int 4 (-3), **Wis** 7 (-2), **Cha** 14 (+2)
Languages none
Senses darkvision 120ft

TRAITS

Crystal Glide: A crystal tree may glide through crystal at the movement rate of 30ft, leaving no passage behind.

These creatures can grow only in environments where crystal deposits in the ground are coupled with frequent lightning strikes or ambient electricity (although varieties that feed on other sources of energy such as fire or even life force might also be encountered). They appear to be huge, branching growths of crystal resembling a tree. Around the base there is a studding of precious stones, in patterns much like parasitic fungi might form upon a real tree. Most of the crystal trunk and branches are just mineral growth that has built up on and around the actual creature, which is a stump-like being of living crystal forming the trunk's base and extending downward as a crystalline root system. Attacks against the upper trunk and branches will be ineffective. The stump-creature "sees" through the gems at the tree-base. It can move its roots through crystal and earth without difficulty. The crystalline tree can bring one root to bear on an opponent at each of the eight points of the compass. The roots can make these attacks through walls and even (if the roots are long enough) down into a lower dungeon level.

Cursed Humans of the Elder Temple

XP 50 (CR 1/4)
 CN Medium humanoid
Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 10
HP 13 (3d8)

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft
Melee claws (+3, 2d4+1 slashing)

STATISTICS

Str 13 (+1), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Con** 10 (+0),
Int 11 (+0), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 10 (+0)

Languages Common
Senses darkvision 60ft

TRAITS

Sunlight Sensitivity Cursed humans have tactical disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight and attack rolls when they're in sunlight.

For the last several years, Arumvel has been capturing humans from nearby settlements and villages – never quite enough to cause a major search, for settlements near the wilderness are dangerous, and people do occasionally disappear. Once these victims are in Arumvel's power, he uses a combination of foul alchemy and demonic magic to slowly transform them into mogura-jin, the cannibal mole-men who serve him. The cursed humans are those that have not fully transformed – many of them will never completely change into mole-men, although the curse is carried in the blood, and will take hold in any descendants.

Demonic Remnant

XP 200 (CR 1)
 CE Undead
Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural)
HP 27 (5d8+5)
Resist bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from normal weapons; fire and necrotic
Immune exhaustion, fright, poison, unconsciousness

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft
Multiattack The demonic remnant makes both a touch attack and a choking ash attack.
Melee touch (+3, 1d8 necrotic and the target makes a DC 11 Con save; on a failure, the target's maximum hit points are reduced by the damage dealt)
Ranged choking ash (auto, 60ft, 1d4 fire and the target makes a DC 11 Con save; on a failure, the target begins to suffocate. The target may make another save at the end of their turns to end this effect)

STATISTICS

Str 12 (+1), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Con** 13 (+1),
Int 14 (+2), **Wis** 17 (+3), **Cha** 16 (+3)
Languages Common, Infernal
Senses darkvision 60ft

There might somewhere be other demonic remnants similar to Arumvel, but each of them would have a different story, for the cause of Arumvel's condition was a unique set of circumstances and events. First, the imprisonment of a powerful demon; second, the fateful curiosity of Arumvel the novice priest, who disobeyed the strictest instructions not to touch the green jar in which the demon had been cached. When Arumvel unintentionally set free the demon, Vuod's power literally burned parts of Arumvel's body into ash, although the tortured vessel that had been Arumvel survived, living beyond the time when Vuod the demon abandoned the captured shell and returned to the infinite hells that spawned him.

Arumvel is perpetually surrounded by a cloud of ash that blows from the charred ruin of his own body. In addition to striking with his hand, Arumvel can direct his ash cloud toward any opponent within 50ft of his own body, where it attempts to burn and choke the opponent.

QUESTS OF DOOM 2



Ghoul Monkey

Ghoul Monkey

XP 25 (CR 1/8)
CE Tiny Undead
Init +3

DEFENSE

AC 13
HP 7 (2d4+2)

Immune charm, exhaustion, necrotic, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft, climb 30ft
Melee bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing)
Ranged rock (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+2 bludgeoning)

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 12 (+1),
Int 3 (-4), **Wis** 9 (-1), **Cha** 7 (-2)
Languages none
Senses darkvision 60ft

Ghoul monkeys are cunning, undead monkeys that often appear in jungle areas where there is great residue of evil and chaos, such as forgotten temples or altars where dead monkeys might rise in this vile form of undeath. Unlike “human-type” ghouls, their bite does not cause paralysis.

Golem, Crystalline

XP 700 (CR 3)
 Unaligned Medium construct
Init +1

DEFENSE

AC 16 (natural armor)
HP 59 (7d8+28)
Resist bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from normal non-

adamantine weapons
Immune charm, force, fright, lightning, paralysis, petrification, poison, psychic, radiant, thunder; any effect that would alter the golem's form

OFFENSE

Speed 25ft
Multiaction The crystalline golem makes 2 slam attacks
Melee slam (+5, 2d6+3 bludgeoning, and a Medium or smaller target must make a DC 13 Str save or be knocked prone.)

STATISTICS

Str 16 (+3), **Dex** 12 (+1), **Con** 18 (+4),
Int 3 (-4), **Wis** 8 (-1), **Cha** 1 (-5)
Languages understands its creator's language but can't speak
Senses darkvision 60ft

TRAITS

Magic Weapons The golem's slam attacks are magical.
Magic Resistance The golem has tactical resistance on saving throws versus spells and magical effects.

Crystalline golems are man-shaped growths of crystal, animated by a powerful magic-user and possessed of rudimentary intelligence. Crystalline golems are immune to lightning and fire of all kinds. They attack by clubbing with their rock-like fists. These are comparably quite a weak form of golem, but the process of creating them is not so arduous as for the other sorts.

Gray Render

XP 2300 (CR 6)
 NE Large monstrosity
Initiative +2

DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural)
HP 95 (10d10+40)

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft
Multiaction bite and 2 claws, plus one rend against a grappled creature.
Melee bite (+8, 4d8+5 piercing plus grapple), claws (+8, 10ft, 2d8+5 slashing), rend (+8, grappled target, 4d8+5 slashing)

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Con** 18 (+4),
Int 3 (-4), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 8 (-1)
Languages none
Senses darkvision 60ft

A large, gray humanoid with several asymmetrical yellow eyes and a toothy maw.

Iomnogoron

XP 2300 (CR 6)
 CE Large monstrosity
Init -3

DEFENSE

AC 12 (natural)
HP 126 (11d10+66)
Immune charm, lightning
Resist bludgeoning

OFFENSE

Speed 20ft

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Multiaction Iomnogoron attacks with two tentacles and can cast one spell.

Melee tentacle (+6, 20ft, 2d8+3 bludgeoning)

STATISTICS

Str 17 (+3), **Dex** 5 (–3), **Con** 22 (+6),

Int 19 (+4), **Wis** 11 (+0), **Cha** 15 (+2)

Languages Korog

Skills Arcane +9

Senses darkvision 60ft

TRAITS

Spells (Int +7, DC 15): 0 (at will)—*light, mage hand*;

1st (4)—*charm person, shield, magic missile*;

2nd (3)—*hold person, misty step, see invisibility, web*;

3rd (3)—*counterspell, lightning bolt, nondetection*;

4th (1)—*greater invisibility*.

Once of the Korog race, Iomnogoron is now a desiccated, almost skeletal creature encased in a huge pillar-like glob of transparent ooze, dependent upon it for his almost immortal lifespan. The creature is no longer sane, but is cunning and still evidences a dangerous intelligence.

Kenckoo

Existing official monster: Refer to rulebook.

Korog Technician

XP 450 (CR 2)

LE Medium monstrosity

Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 12 (natural)

HP 52 (7d8+21)

OFFENSE

Speed: 30ft

Melee longsword (+4, 1d8+2 slashing)

Ranged *wand of paralysis* (auto hit, 60ft, 5 charges, target must make a DC 13 Con save or be paralyzed for 1 minute. Target may make another save at the end of each of their turns to end the effect.)

STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), **Dex** 11 (+0), **Con** 17 (+3),

Int 17 (+2), **Wis** 13 (+1), **Cha** 14 (+2)

Languages Korog

Skills Arcane +5

Senses darkvision 60ft

The Korog are the ancient race of beings from which the wizard Iomnogoron evolved. Few yet live, but some of these still continue very limited operations in the Spire, collecting surface essences for their machinations in deep underground strongholds. The Korog resemble tall men, but with a head somewhat like that of a hairless horse with long teeth, and smoldering, malevolent eyes. Various Korog “castes” exist, with differing abilities, but adventurers will most frequently encounter the technician and warrior castes. Korog technicians carry a silver wand of paralysis. These wands can be used by non-Korogs, but they can only be recharged in the Korog laboratories beneath the earth.

Lightning Lamprey

XP 100 (CR 1/2)

Unaligned Small monstrosity

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 12

HP 7 (2d6)

OFFENSE

Speed fly 20ft

Melee bite (+4, 1d6+2 slashing plus 1d6 lightning, and the lightning lamprey attaches to the target; it automatically hits each turn thereafter until it is detached or slain)

STATISTICS

Str 15 (+2), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 10 (+0),

Int 2 (–4), **Wis** 6 (–2), **Cha** 4 (–3)

Languages none

Senses darkvision 60ft

Lightning lampreys are floating creatures about 3ft long that feed upon powerful electrical currents and lightning. Schools of them drift along in the wake of storm clouds. They are not normally encountered away from electrical storms (some may sniff their way down from higher altitudes if lightning is actually striking the ground). However, they might be found in unusual magical environments where electrical discharges or lightning is plentiful. Their bodies are extremely good electrical conductors.

Lightning Bladder

XP 1800 (CR 5)

Unaligned Medium ooze

Init –3

DEFENSE

AC 7

HP 170 (9d10+72)

Immune charm, fright, lightning, poison, prone, psychic, unconsciousness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30ft

Melee touch (+3, 4d8 acid)

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), **Dex** 5 (–3), **Con** 17 (+3),

Int 1 (–5), **Wis** 7 (–2), **Cha** 8 (–1)

Languages none

Senses blindsight 60ft

TRAITS

Electrical Discharge: Whenever a lightning bladder takes piercing or slashing damage, lightning escapes from within. Each creature within 20ft of the bladder takes 6d8 lightning damage, or half damage if a DC 13 Dex saving throw is made.

Lightning bladders are a form of ooze, contained within a thin, membranous skin; they resemble massive, half-filled blue water balloons. The inside of the creature is charged with immense electrical potential, clearly visible as lightning-like flashes and forks within the bluish-hued interior of the shapeless mass. The exterior membrane is highly acidic, and the creature will attack by slumping up against its opponents to touch them. The more dangerous aspect of a lightning bladder, however, is what happens when a pointed or cutting weapon pierces its outer membrane. Any hit scored against a lightning bladder with a non-blunt weapon opens a hole in the membrane, through which lightning-like charges of electricity will blast out each subsequent combat round. These bolts of lightning inflict 2d6 points of damage against a randomly determined opponent (save for half damage). The bladder can have any number of such openings before it is eventually killed from the damage.



Mogura-Jin (Mole-Man)

XP 100 (CR 1/2)
CE Medium humanoid
Init -1

DEFENSE
AC 12 (natural)
HP 19 (3d8+6)

OFFENSE
Speed 30ft, burrow 20ft
Melee claws (+6, 2d4+4 slashing)

STATISTICS
Str 18 (+4), **Dex** 9 (-1), **Con** 15 (+2),
Int 8 (-1), **Wis** 13 (+1), **Cha** 6 (-2)
Languages none
Senses darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 30ft

TRAITS

Sunlight Sensitivity Mogura-Jin have tactical disadvantage on attack rolls and Wis (Perception) checks that rely on sight when they're in sunlight.

Mogura-Jin are a race of subterranean humanoids, descended from a group of villagers who resorted to cannibalism during a particularly fierce winter and were cursed by the Gods. They are squat beings, between 4ft and 5ft tall with pale skin, small beady red eyes, no body hair, and nails overgrown to claws. Mogura-Jin are always hungry and need to consume human flesh every so often to remain alive. Like their animal namesake (the mole) they are proficient tunnelers and their preferred method of attacking

their victims is to tunnel under them and emerge from the ground in a swarm attack to surprise them.

Mogura-Jin can see perfectly well even in total darkness; however their over-sensitive eyes are easily blinded by bright lights.

Author: edsan

Mosquito, Giant

XP 100 (CR 1/2)
 Unaligned Small beast
Init +3

DEFENSE
AC 13
HP 26 (4d6+12)

OFFENSE
Speed 20ft; fly 60ft
Melee bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing, and the giant mosquito attaches itself to the target. On its turn, instead of attacking, an attached giant mosquito deals 1d6+2 damage as it drains its target blood. It may detach itself as a bonus action on its turn. Once it has dealt 20 damage, it is full and will no longer attack.)

STATISTICS
Str 13 (+1), **Dex** 17 (+3), **Con** 16 (+3),
Int 1 (-5), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 11 (+0)
Languages none
Senses darkvision 60ft

Exactly what magic causes mosquitoes to grow to the size of a small dog is unknown, but there is no doubt they are dangerous predators, generally found in swamps.

Oozanderthal

XP 700 (CR 3)
 NE Medium humanoid
Init -1

DEFENSE
AC 12 (natural)
HP 102 (12d8+48)
Immune lightning

OFFENSE
Speed 30ft
Melee claws (+6, 3d6+4 slashing and the target must make a DC 13 Con save against poison or fall prone and become incapacitated and unable to move. Repeat the save at the end of each of that creature's turns; the effect ends on a success.)

STATISTICS
Str 18 (+4), **Dex** 9 (-1), **Con** 18 (+4),
Int 7 (-2), **Wis** 8 (-1), **Cha** 9 (-1)
Languages none

Oozanderthals are cave men that have been magically altered in a terrifying fashion. The bones of their forearms have been magically grown outward from the skin, and drastically elongated, with the fingers extending out into foot-long, semi-crystallized claws. These creatures are coated in a slimy substance about an inch thick, a product of ancient and forgotten magic that sustains their lives into centuries. This slime is highly toxic to others, however, and can paralyze opponents. If the cave man inside an oozanderthal dies of old age (not in combat), the power of the sustaining slime is enough to retain a zombie-like existence for many years, although in a weaker and deteriorated condition. These dead oozanderthals inside the slime resemble zombies, but are not actually undead. Dead oozanderthals

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are completely non-intelligent and will use straightforward tactics. These have only 2hp, but otherwise are identical to other Oozanderthals. (Treat as CR 1/8).

Piranha, Giant Flying

XP 50 (CR 1/4)
Unaligned Small beast
Init +0

DEFENSE
AC 12 (natural)
HP 18 (4d6+4)

OFFENSE
Speed fly 30ft, swim 40ft
Melee bite (+3, 1d6+1 piercing)

STATISTICS
Str 13 (+1), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Con** 12 (+1),
Int 1 (-5), **Wis** 3 (-4), **Cha** 2 (-4)
Languages none

Pool Monster

XP 2300 (CR 6)
Unaligned Large monstrosity
Init +1

DEFENSE
AC 14 (natural)
HP 168 (16d10+80)

OFFENSE
Speed 10ft, swim 30ft
Multiattack The pool monster makes 4 tentacle attacks
Melee tentacle (+8, 20ft, 2d8+5 bludgeoning and grapples a medium or smaller creature. A tentacle that is grappling a creature can only attack that target.).

STATISTICS
Str 20 (+5), **Dex** 13 (+1), **Con** 20 (+5),
Int 3 (-4), **Wis** 6 (-2), **Cha** 7 (-2)
Languages none

Lurking in dark pools and subterranean waterways, no-one is quite sure where pool monsters come from or what they do – only that they should be avoided!

Skeleton, Fossil

Fossilized skeletons are normally found only in underground caverns or complexes that have been left undisturbed for millennia, although they might also be found in inter-dimensional pockets, or in areas where the fossilization has been deliberately induced. In some limestone caverns where the mineralized water is in constant contact with the bones, skeletons might also fossilize relatively quickly – over the course of a hundred years rather than a thousand. Older fossilized skeletons may show pre-human features; fossilized Neanderthal skeletons are not uncommon. Since fossilized skeletons are effectively made of rock rather than bone, they are harder to hit and harder to kill than normal skeletons. (Stat-wise, they are variant skeletons with superior hit points and AC).

Skeleton, Fossil: **AC** 16; **HP** 34 (4d8+16); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** claws (+4, 1d8+2 slashing); **Immune** exhaustion, poison; **Vulnerable** bludgeoning; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 50.

Slitherrat

XP 200 (CR 1)
Unaligned Small monstrosity
Init +3

DEFENSE
AC 13
HP 44 (8d6+16)

OFFENSE
Speed 30ft, burrow 20ft, crystal glide 60ft
Melee bite (+5, 2d8+3 piercing)

STATISTICS
Str 16 (+3), **Dex** 16 (+3), **Con** 14 (+2),
Int 2 (-4), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 4 (-3)
Languages none
Senses darkvision 60ft

TRAITS
Burrow: Slitherrats may burrow through earth and solid rock with a movement rate of 20ft. They leave small paths behind in rock, but the tunnel collapses behind them through earth.
Crystal Glide: Slitherrats may glide through crystal at the movement rate of 60ft, leaving no passage behind.
Crystal Bite: The slitherrat bite attack is considered magical.

Slitherrats are a bizarre variant of the giant rat, sometimes found in places with heavy crystalline mineral deposits. These rodents have a long (4ft)



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snakelike body covered in fur, with four almost vestigial legs on each side. The long body tapers into a ratlike tail at the end, adding another foot to the creature's overall length. The head, although large, is clearly that of a giant rat; but the long front teeth glitter, for they are made of thin, sharp diamond. These strange creatures use their teeth to dig through earth and solid rock when they encounter such obstacles, but they pass through crystal as if it were not even present, leaving no trace of their passage.

Slug, Giant

XP 700 (CR 3)
Unaligned Large beast
Init -2

DEFENSE
AC 13 (natural)
HP 114 (12d10+56)
Resist bludgeoning

OFFENSE
Speed 20ft
Melee bite (+6, 3d8+3 slashing)
Ranged spittle (recharge 5-6, +0, 30ft/60ft, 6d8 acid)

STATISTICS
Str 17 (+3), **Dex** 7 (-2), **Con** 18 (+4),
Int 1 (-5), **Wis** 3 (4), **Cha** 5 (-3)
Languages none
Senses darkvision 60ft



Spire Monkey

XP 50 (CR 1/4)
CN Tiny beast
Init +3

DEFENSE
AC 13
HP 5 (2d4)

OFFENSE
Speed 30ft, climb 30ft
Melee claws (+5, 3d4+3 slashing)

STATISTICS
Str 10 (+0), **Dex** 16 (+3), **Con** 10 (+0),
Int 3 (-4), **Wis** 7 (-2), **Cha** 7 (-2)
Languages none

The spire monkey is a two-headed, six-armed monkey that lives on roofs (spires and minarets are preferred) and high in the treetops. In some tropical countries they are tolerated in cities as messengers of the gods, and roam temples with impunity. Omnivorous and foul-tempered, they race from rooftop to rooftop and steal food (and occasionally loose coins or trinkets) from the streets below. Spire monkeys attack by clawing, as well as by throwing rocks or other small objects (such as roof tiles), and can divide their attacks between two opponents. They can climb as fast as they can run, and leap from tree to tree or building to building. (Contributed by Scott Wylie Roberts, "Myrystyr").

Swamp Brute

A tribe of primitive bugbears that lead a crude, barbaric existence.

Swamp Brute: **AC** 13; **HP** 39 (6d8+12); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** greatclub (+5, 2d6+3 bludgeoning); **Ranged** rock (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d4+3 bludgeoning); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Traits** brute; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Toad, Giant Horned

XP 700 (CR 3)
Unaligned Medium beast
Init +1

DEFENSE
AC 15 (natural)
HP 93 (11d8+44)

OFFENSE
Speed 30ft
Melee bite (+6, 2d8+4 piercing)
Ranged acid blood (recharge 6, +3, 50ft, 6d6 acid)

STATISTICS
Str 18 (+4), **Dex** 12 (+1), **Con** 19 (+4),
Int 2 (-4), **Wis** 8 (-1), **Cha** 7 (-2)
Languages none

These lizard-looking creatures are as large as wolves, and are armored with a thick, knobby hide. The head of a giant horned toad is wedge-shaped, with short, thick horns protruding from the sides. They can squirt a jet of caustic blood from their eyes. Giant horned toads are normally found only in dry regions such as deserts or badlands.

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Vidas Osterkleig

XP 2300 (CR 6)
NE Medium plant
Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 17 (chain shirt and shield)
HP 119 (1d8+56)
Resist force damage
Immunities: *magic missile* and poison damage; poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft
Multiaction Vidas Osterkleig makes two weapon attacks
Melee +1 *battleaxe* (+8, 1d8+5 slashing)
Melee/Range dagger (+7, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+4 piercing)
Ranged shortbow (+5, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+2 piercing)
Area spore cloud (1/day, all within 15ft; 6d6 poisoned damage and poisoned, DC 15 Con avoids; repeat save to end condition. The cloud hangs in the air for 1 minute or until dissipated by a strong wind; each creature starting its turn in the cloud must make another save or be affected.)

STATISTICS

Str 19 (+4), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 18 (+4),
Int 13 (+1), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 14 (+2)
Languages Common
Senses darkvision 60ft

TRAITS

Create Spawn: The body of a creature killed by damage from a fungal creature's spore cloud is slowly transformed into a fungal creature. This transformation takes 1 day. Once fully converted the creature can no longer be raised, but can still be resurrected or reincarnated. The

application of *plant growth* halves the transformation time. The spores can be destroyed by any spell that cures disease.

The fungal creature lacks the class levels and memories of the creature from which it gained its form. The fungal creature awakens as a free-willed being knowing all it needs to know (including language) in order to use its abilities and survive. Although it bears no allegiance to the fungal creature that created it, the new fungal creature immediately recognizes other fungal creatures as its own kind.

Poisonous Blood: Vidas's blood and flesh function as ingested poisons. Any creature that makes a bite attack against him, or otherwise ingests part of him is poisoned, and takes 2d8 poison damage at the beginning of each of its turns. At the end of each of that creature's turns, it may make a DC 15 Con save to end this effect.

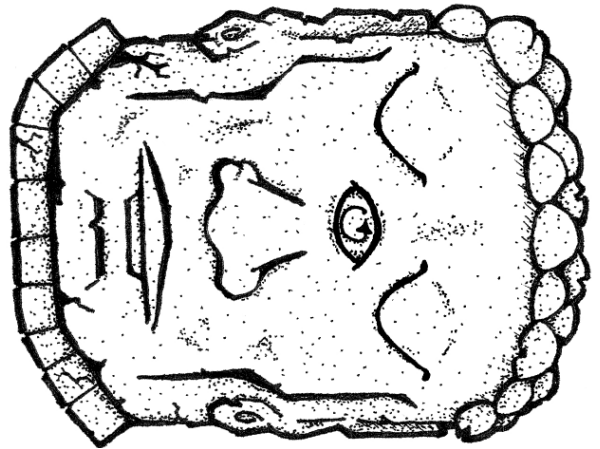
Equipment chain shirt, shield, *brooch of shielding*, +1 *battleaxe*, 2 daggers, short bow, quiver of 11 arrows, feather token (anchor), signet ring, pouch with 35gp.

Vidas Osterkleig is the lost heir of old Wilbane and the last of an ignominious line. He lived as a petty bandit for much of his life, before being killed by an odd swamp fungus. However, the spores of the odd swamp fungus that killed him caused his body to reanimate as a fungal creature.

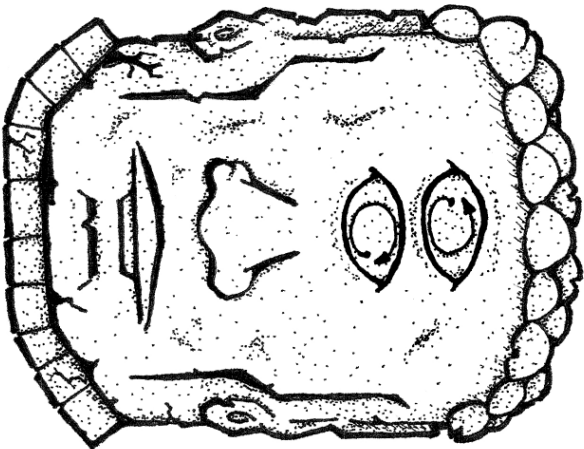
Working on instinct for many months, the new fungal Vidas was able to piece together much of his former life and discovered once again the secret of Wilbane's treasure. Simultaneously energized and repulsed by his new existence, Vidas has spent the last several years marshaling his resources in order to locate and plunder the Black Ward in hopes that the money will help him find a cure for his condition.

Vidas resembles his old self a great deal—black beard and hair, pinched facial features, and a lazy eye—but now his face is further adorned by shelf fungi, mushrooms sprout from his shedding scalp and beard, and an odor of wet, putrid flesh hangs perpetually over him.

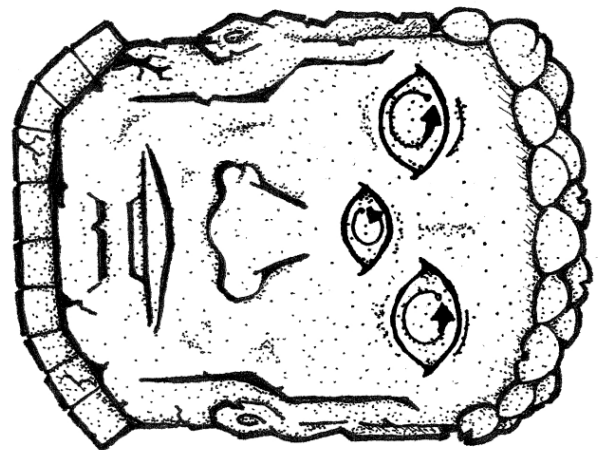
Head
Number
One



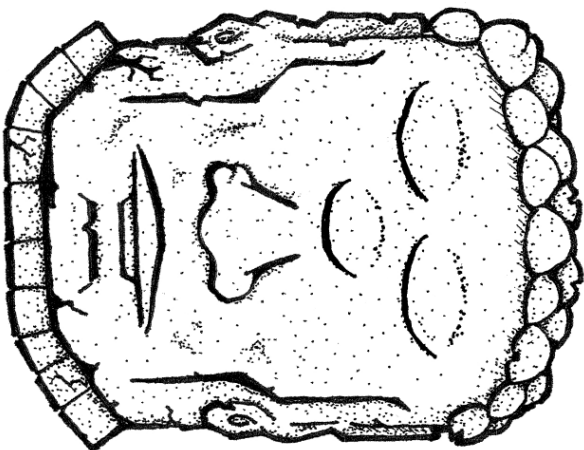
Head
Number
Two



Head
Number
Three



Head
Number
Four



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