

TOMB OF THE SERPENT KINGS

VERSION 4.0

THE CONSISTENTLY INCONSISTENT UPDATE



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Playtesting by an *astonishing* number of people. You know who you are. If you've run this dungeon and posted notes, I've read them. Thank you.

Encouragement from many people, but particularly
ARNOLD K.
(goblinpunch.blogspot.com).

Keep on being weird.

LICENSE

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You can share it for free, adapt it to your own system, edit it, print it and leave it in local game stores. You just can't sell it for money, and you have to credit me somewhere. Same goes for the art.

Introduction

WHEN YOU FIRST START UP Super Mario Bros., the game doesn't give you any instructions. The first level is cunningly designed to teach you the rules: jump on enemies, pick up mushrooms, look for secrets, get coins, avoid pits. There is no tutorial; the game itself is the tutorial.

Everyone can name “classic” dungeons—*Tomb of Horrors*, *Barrier Peaks*, *The Temple of Elemental Evil*, etc.—but in order for those adventures to make sense, there needs to be some sort of introduction. *Tomb of Horrors* and *Death Frost Doom* are both reactions to something, but what they are reacting to doesn't really exist as a published product.

It's like all the adventures we have are Bach concertos. People keep writing amazing works of staggering genius, but someone needs to write a book on how to play the piano.

This dungeon is designed to be “classic” without being full of callbacks and nostalgia. It has some, but not all, of the major tropes. It also has full design notes.

THIS MODULE IS FOR...

1. Experienced GMs with new players.
2. GMs who want to learn more about dungeon design.
3. Experienced GMs with experienced players, but who are new to OSR-style content.

As a completely new GM, you can still use this dungeon and learn a lot from it, but it will test your skills immediately. Experienced players may also enjoy it.

I DISAGREE WITH...

Chances are pretty good that an experienced GM will disagree with a few lessons, traps, or encounters in this dungeon. That's completely fine! This isn't a handbook on the “one true way” to run a beginner dungeon. It's just one way to do it.

- **If you think diplomacy is vital**, put a helpful but cowardly goblin named Smee in 7: **FALSE TEMPLE**.
- **If you think time pressure and a sense of looming danger are important from the start**, add Wandering Monsters to all levels of the dungeon, not just **LEVEL 3**.
- **If you don't like snakes**, replace them with goats.
- **Add folklore tropes**.
- **Add your favorite traps**, or remove the traps entirely.

By disagreeing, you're learning something about your own preferences. Learning what you don't like is as valuable as learning what you do like. Maybe this module will inspire you to write a “learning dungeon” of your own.

GROUP SIZE AND BALANCE

Tomb of the Serpent Kings is designed for level one characters. I have tried to make it as system-neutral as possible. You can run this dungeon for one player or ten. The encounters are not balanced. They don't have difficulty ratings. There are very few rewards for fighting, and many for executing a good plan.

Treasure amounts are balanced around the idea that 200gp is enough to level a single character. By the end of this dungeon, surviving PCs should be level 2 or 3, assuming the usual rates of attrition, loss, and panic. Adjust the value of treasure accordingly. Large groups will have an easier time (and get less treasure per PC).

Damage is scaled around PCs having between 4 and 16 hit points, and daggers dealing 1d6 damage. Saves are listed in a general format (Save vs Poison, Save to Dodge, etc.).

A group of mid-level PCs, run by experienced players, could demolish this dungeon in record time. They might still enjoy it. A group of low-level PCs run by new players will (hopefully) have a great time.

Depending on play style and speed, side adventures, time in town, and other diversions, it could take between 12 and 24 hours at the table to completely explore this dungeon. In a first session that involves character creation, the party should be able to explore Level 1 fully.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Read the entire module.
2. Makes notes on things you like and don't like.
3. Replace monsters listed on pp. 16–20 with ones from your system of choice.
4. Adjust treasure values where needed.
5. Print pages 4 to 15, and the map on pg. 3.

LURING THE PCS

Assuming the PCs start broke and know that tombs contain treasure, here are some ways to get them to the Tomb of the Serpent Kings.

1. They find an ancient map to a long-forgotten tomb.
2. A landslide reveals the tomb's entrance.
3. The goblins kidnap someone close to the PCs.
4. The lich Xiximanter's experiments induce strange dreams.
5. They stumble across the tomb's entrance while dealing with an unrelated matter.
6. They are sent to explore the newly-discovered tomb by a powerful patron.

LESSONS

Every room, trap, or encounter is designed to teach new players (and GMs) a useful lesson. Some are general, while others are specific to this dungeon. Attentive players should begin to understand the structure, nature and dangers of the tomb so they can begin to predict and exploit it for their own gain. These lessons might seem trite for experienced GMs, but I think it's useful to list them anyways.

STRUCTURE

Tomb of the Serpent Kings is a buried dungeon with three levels and four main themed areas. There are no "read-aloud" text boxes.

Level 1: The False Tomb

This level introduces the very basics of dungeon design and exploration in seven rooms. Assuming character creation is fairly quick and the PCs have a good reason to explore the tomb, it's just the right length for a first session.

Level 2: The Upper Tomb

Lessons learned in the False Tomb are tested and applied in the Upper Tomb. There is still a clear path "forwards," but branching side rooms are tempting. It may take two or three sessions to fully explore, and possibly require a trip back to civilization to resupply.

Level 3: The Lower Tombs

The Lower Tombs branch and loop with two main "horizontal" paths and three main "vertical" paths.

The PCs can reach the surface or go deeper or even end up back where they started. This level is significantly more dangerous than the preceding levels. Dungeon diplomacy and trade also comes into play, as do wandering monsters.

Level 3 is open-ended. You can add material to extend the dungeon as far as you like. By this point, if you are a new GM or new to OSR games, you should be ready to write your own material.

THEMATIC AREAS

The False Tomb

The dungeon gets weirder and less mundane as you descend. Initially, you're cracking wooden coffins to loot tiny amulets. By the end, you're digging through fungus goblin muck for crowns, trading with a dead snake-man, and hauling treasure chests of gold to the surface.

The False Tomb represents the joy of discovery, the "Oh, I see!" moment, and the thrill of possible treasure. Be sure to praise any players who figure out it's a false tomb. Cleverness should be rewarded.

Describe this area with words like "shoddy," "chipped," and "damp." It's a root cellar. There are little white roots in the ceiling and gravel on the floor.

The True Tomb

Represents power and unspoken threats. Statues loom. Things shudder in locked coffins. Giant lizards stalk you in the darkness, immortal wizards cut deals, and invincible, undead oozes slither after you.

Describe this area with words like "enormous," "looming," and "cold." This area is the work of a civilization older, wiser, and crueler than the PCs. The deeper they go, the jumper they should be.

The Chasm

Represents the unknown, and the wonder of the unknown. There could be anything down there. It could go to the core of the world. There could still be snake-men living untroubled lives in the depths. It's a blank canvas for GMs to add things to this module.

Describe the chasm with words like "bottomless," "distressing," "it's like the world just falls away," and "quiet, restless sounds, if you are patient." The PCs should not want to spend any time near the chasm.

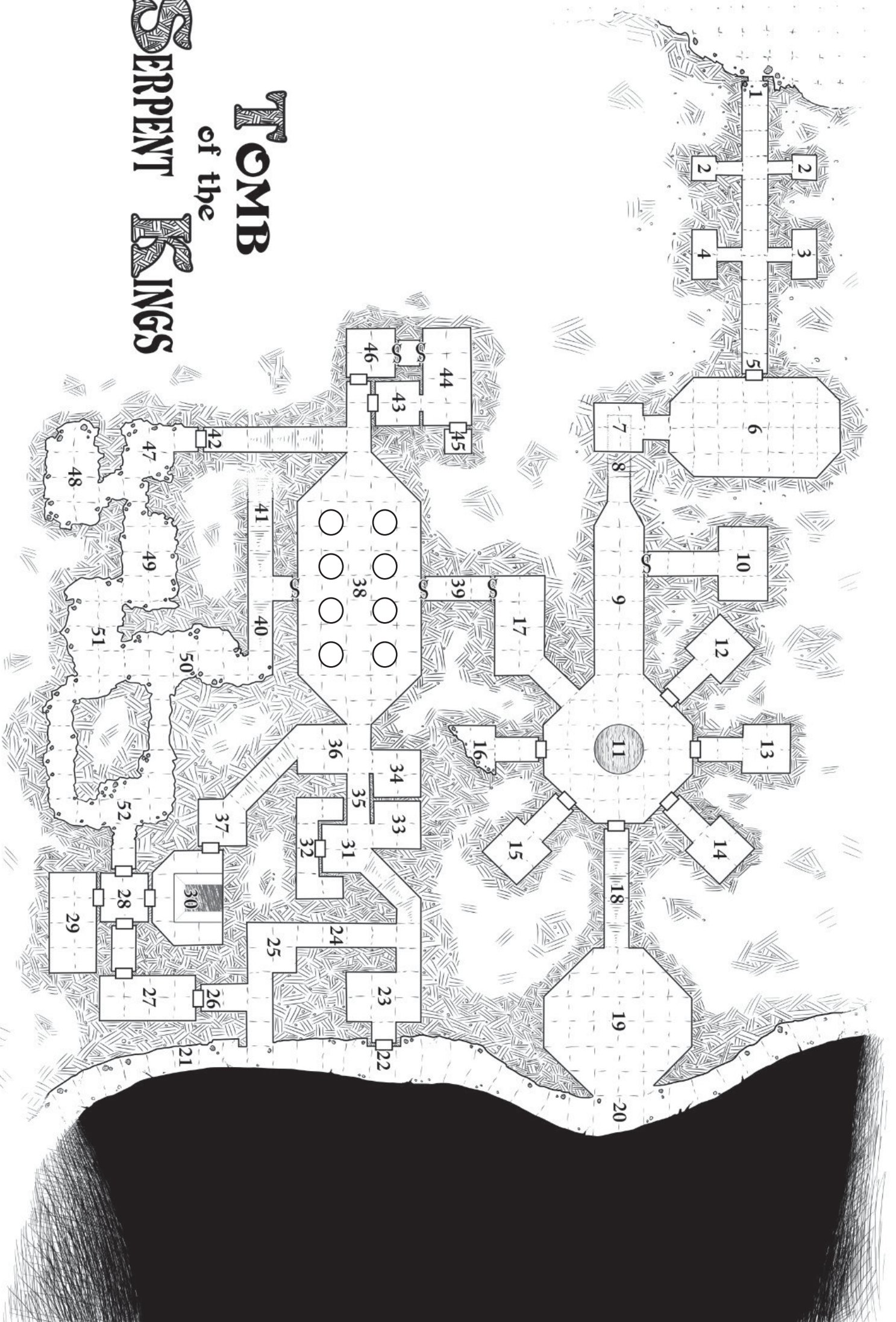
The Goblin Warrens

Represents the mirror of the PCs. They live in filth, they respawn and make the same mistakes, they are hungry, foolish, superstitious, murderous, and somehow sympathetic. The warrens are the intrusion of vital and noisy barbarism into cold and moribund civilization.

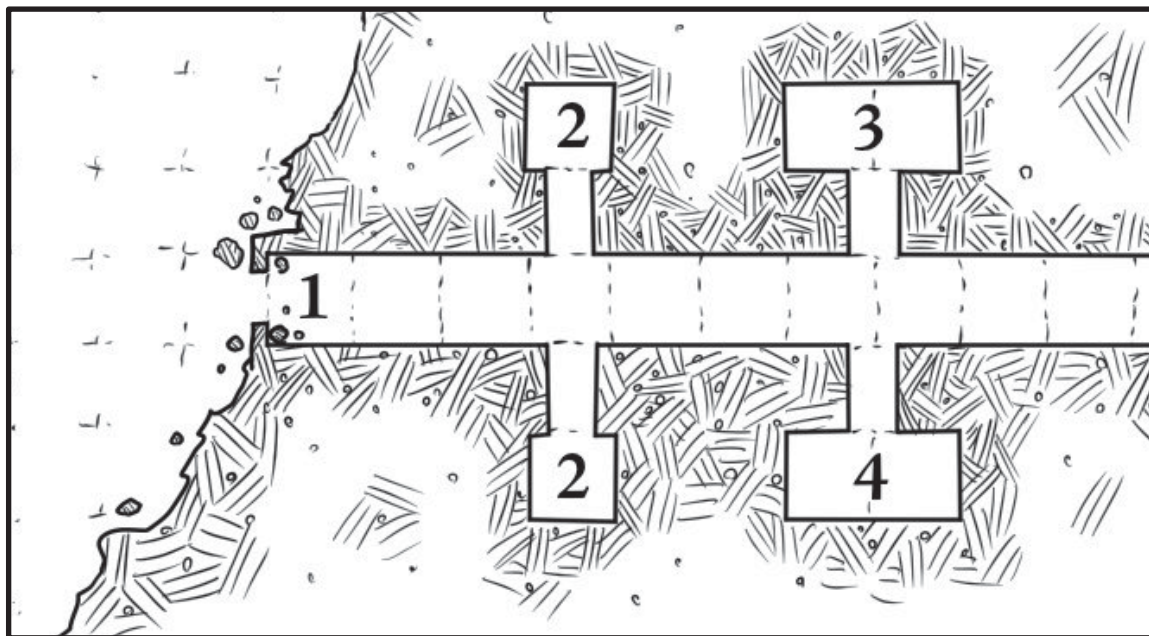
Describe the warrens with smells and sounds. It stinks. You'll stink if you spend any time in them, and the Tomb of the Serpent Kings doesn't have any complimentary baths. Chattering teeth, tiny red goblin eyes, and sharp knives wait in the darkness.



TOMB of the SERPENT KINGS



The False Tomb



1: ENTRANCE HALL

A long corridor with four open rooms, two on either side. The hallway ends at a large, barred door made of stone, leading to **6: FALSE KING'S TOMB**.

2: GUARD TOMBS

These small rooms are identical in size and content. They both contain a wooden coffin with a clay statue of a snake-man warrior inside. The statues are hollow. Each contains a gold amulet worth 1gp, a dried snake skeleton, and a cloud of poison gas (d6 damage, can only reduce a PC to 0 HP).

Lessons: the dungeon is *organized*. There are *patterns*. There is hidden *treasure*. There is also hidden *danger*.

The PCs will probably approach the 2nd coffin with more caution, and earn their reward (gold) without the danger (poison) by using their brains (and a rock or long stick).

3: SCHOLAR TOMB

Similar to **2: GUARD TOMBS**, but inside the coffin is a clay statue of a thin and sly-looking snake-man scholar. Its scrolls have crumbled to dust. The statue contains the same amulet, snake skeleton, and poison as the others.

4. SORCERER TOMB

Similar to **2: GUARD TOMBS**, but inside the coffin there is a clay statue of a robed snake-man sorcerer wearing a silver ring. If the PCs didn't already learn that the other statues were hollow, they'll almost certainly try to pry the ring off, breaking the statue open and revealing the poison gas and amulet.

The ring is a magical, but also cursed. If worn on a finger, the fingernail becomes long, bifurcated, and pointed like twin fangs. It can be used like a poison dagger (living targets must Save vs. Poison or take +1d6 poison damage on a hit), but each morning, the wearer must Save vs. Poison or take d6 damage. If they take 6 damage at once from the poison ring, their finger falls off and turns into a snake.

Lessons: Hidden treasure can be *magical*, *useful*, and sometimes *cursed*.

5: DOOR/HAMMER TRAP

A large door, barred with a lengthy piece of stone hung on two iron pegs set into either side of the doorframe. Requires at least three PCs to lift (or, if the party is smaller, all PCs). When the bar is lifted, the iron pegs begin to rise. When the bar is fully removed a trap is activated. A huge stone hammer swings down from the ceiling, aiming straight for the backs of the now-trapped PCs. It nearly fills the corridor, but there is a small gap on either side. The PCs can:

1. Save to Dodge **OR**
2. Use another PC as a springboard, giving them +2 to Dodge but giving the shoved PC -2.

PCs hit by the hammer automatically die (or take serious damage, like 2d6+4).

This trap can be identified by examining the door or pegs, by noticing that the iron pegs slowly rise as the bar is lifted, or by checking the ceiling. If the bar is quickly replaced, if the pegs are held down, or if the trap mechanism in the ceiling is damaged, the trap will not activate.

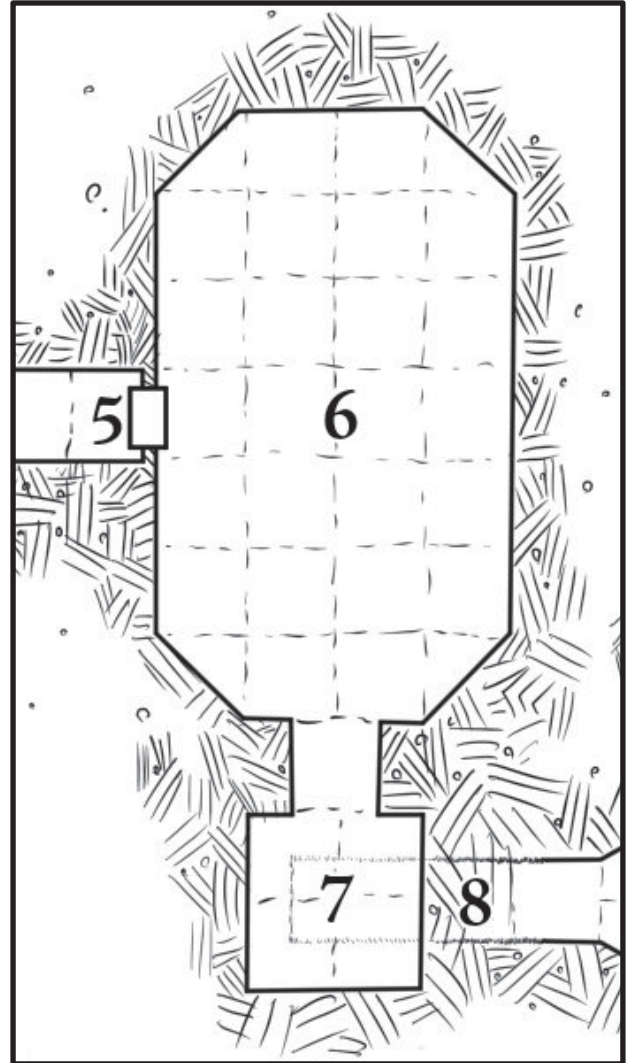
Lessons: there are deadly *traps*. The dungeon can be *lethal*.

After firing, the hammer slowly retracts into the ceiling unless blocked. It can be reactivated by lifting up the iron pegs, either by hand or by a rope. Its first activation knocks open the stone doors leading to **6: FALSE KING'S TOMB**.

6. FALSE KING'S TOMB

The burial chamber of a decoy snake-man king and his two brides. On the north wall are three wooden coffins painted with stylized sleeping snake-men. The coffin in the middle is larger and more ornate. Each coffin contains a **Skeleton** (*HD 2, MORALE 12, ATK 1d6 [Claw]*) who will immediately attack if their rest is disturbed.

Lessons: there are *undead* in the dungeon. They take *less damage* from slashing weapons. PCs can *use the environment* against them (lure them into the hammer trap).



7: FALSE TEMPLE

This room contains a giant statue of a hideous snake-man god, resembling a cross between a toad, a heap of intestines, and a melted candle. Water leaking into the tomb has eroded the floor, revealing a secret passage under the statue to **LEVEL 2** of the dungeon.

Lessons: there are *secret passages*. They are associated with *statues*. This might be a *false tomb*.

Throughout this dungeon, statues will be associated with secret passages and treasure.

8: SECRET PASSAGE

This damp, narrow room lies directly below **7: FALSE TEMPLE**. It is an alcove-like passage that widens to become **9: STATUE HALL**.

The Upper Tomb

9: STATUE HALL

A long, wide corridor. Six huge statues of heavily armed and armored snake-men loom over the hall, glaring at the party. One of the statues is twisted slightly out of alignment with the wall. It can be moved to reveal **10: SECRET GUARDROOM**.

Lessons: the party should have learned in 7: **FALSE TEMPLE** that *secret passages* are hidden behind *statues*.

10: SECRET GUARDROOM

This room was once a secret guardroom for temple assassins. Now it is empty and dark. The furniture has rotted to fragments. On the wall are two hooked polearms that are still usable, along with a silver icon of a scowling snake-man king worth 5gp.

Lessons: secret rooms sometimes contain more *treasure*.

11: TOMB ATRIUM

The hallway opens into a large chamber octagonal chamber, also ringed with glaring snake-man statues. Some carry weapons, others carry implements of torture or agriculture. The doors to rooms 12–16 are made of heavy stone, but can be levered without much difficulty. Room 15 has an unlocked wooden door. Room 18 has a stone door, but it is much more ornately carved than the others. There was once a pit in the center of the room, but water trickling from the surface (through rooms 7 and 9) has filled it to the brim with dark, oily water that smells like licorice. The pool is 10' deep.

Inside the pool are 2 **Mummy Claws** (*HD 2, MORALE 12, ATK 1d4 [Claw] or 1d6 [Strangle]*). These rotting hands will jump out to attack anyone who comes within 5' of the pit.

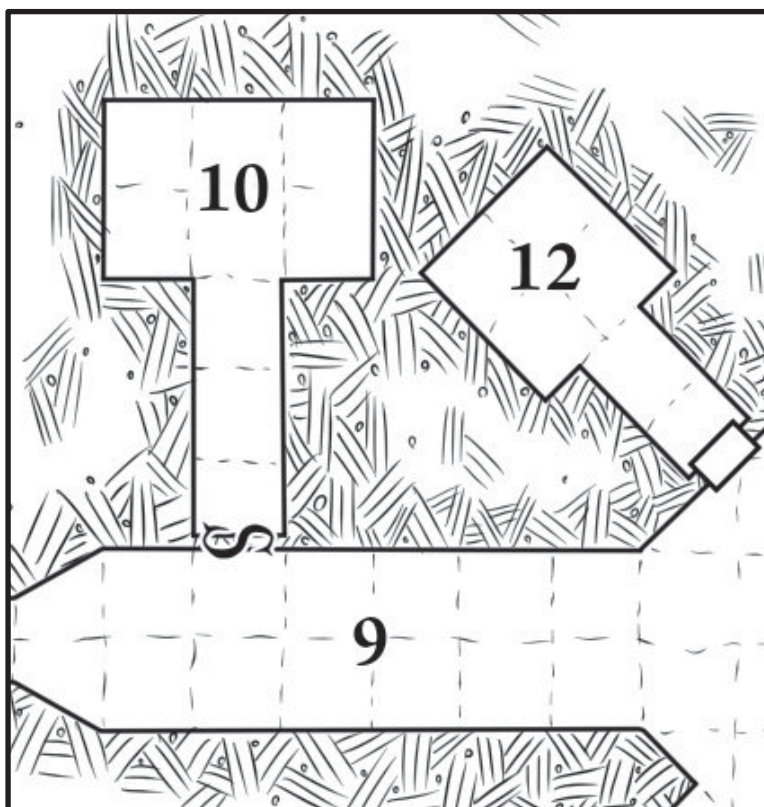
Lessons: there are *hidden monsters*. Some monsters also *inflict diseases*. It is very hard to hit a monster clinging to your friend's throat.

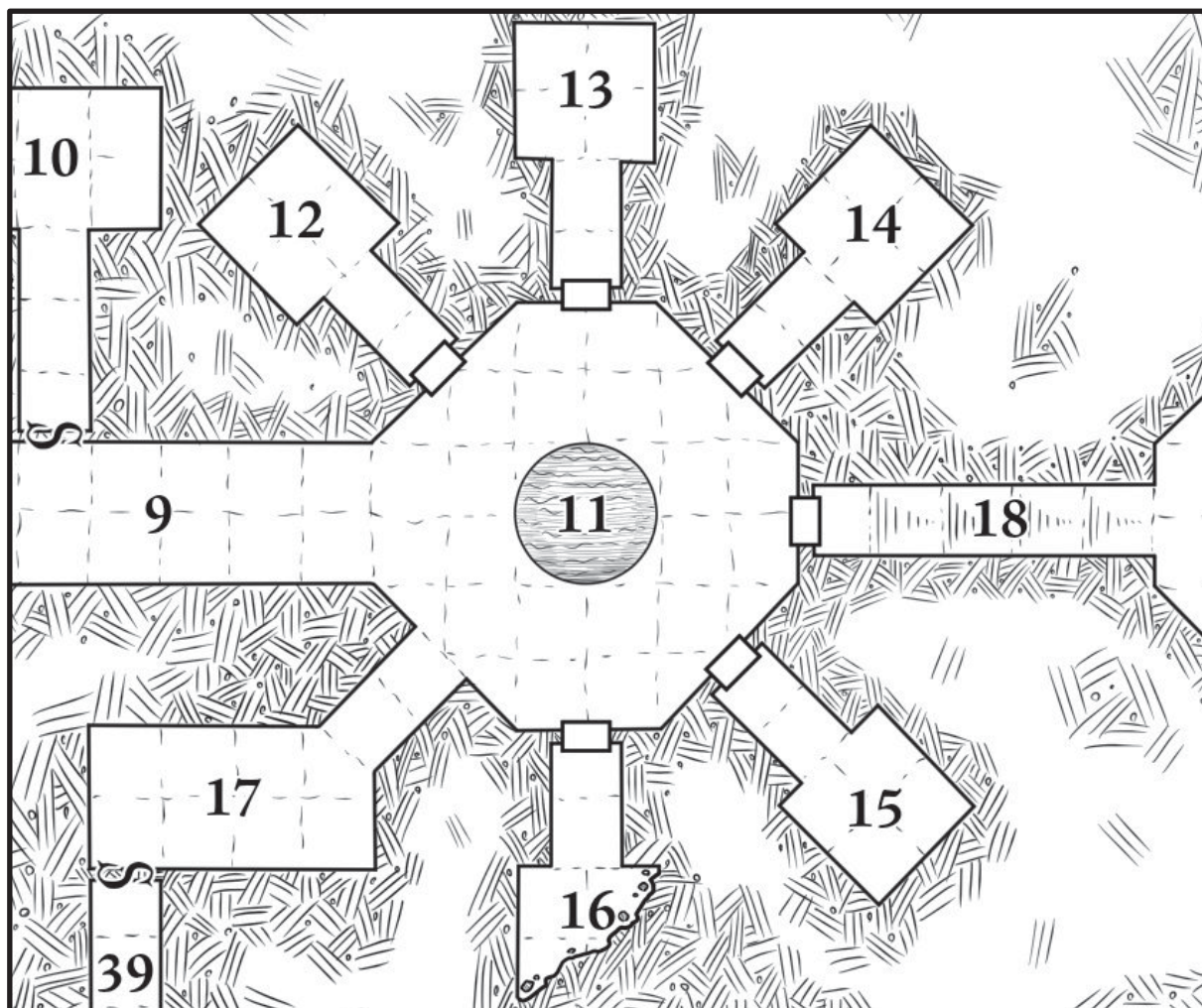
Drinking the water or rubbing it into open wounds inflicts Mummy Rot, but touching it does not. If the party kills or disables both mummy claws and attempt to dredge or search the pool, it contains:

1. a very angry and completely insane mummy's head
2. a heavy gold chain worth 35gp
3. a magic silver ring
4. a magic utility item of the GMs choice, or a randomly rolled magic item, or 2d10gp in jewelry

The silver ring is a *ring of eyesight*. While wearing it, one of the user's eyes pops out and becomes hard as glass. The eye still sees normally.

Lessons: look for treasure at the bottom of pits and pools. Magic items can solve problems.





12: TOMB OF XISOR THE GREEN

The passage into this tomb contains a pressure plate that triggers a *lightning bolt* spell, aimed straight down the hallway. It deals 4d6 damage (Save for half) and only activates once. The electrom disc it fires from is worth 10gp. It is embedded in the wall at the end of the tomb's entrance, and may be visible in torchlight when the PCs open the door. Xisor's stone coffin is empty.

Lessons: sometimes floors are *trapped*. Traps are often *deadly*. Treat unknown rooms with caution.

13: TOMB OF SPARAMUNTAR

The passage to this tomb has collapsed. The blocks of the ceiling caved in. The PCs will hear Sparamuntar, a snake-man **Skeleton** (*HD 3, MORALE 12, ATK 1d8 [Greataxe]*), lurching and thumping on the other side of the blocked passage. He is not very subtle, and will try and strike the moment he can see the head of a living creature. His funeral trinkets are worth 10gp.

Lessons: *listen at doors*. You can *hear* some monsters before you *see* them. Some rooms are *best left alone*.

14: TOMB OF FRANBINZAR

This room is more primitive than the others. It contains one stone coffin with the badly mummified remains of Franbinzar, last ruler of the fortress. The mummification did not go well. He counts as a **Black Pudding** (*HD 5, MORALE 12, ATK 1d6 [Slam] or 3d6 [Prolonged Contact]*) and will lurch to attack anyone who opens the coffin.

His grave goods are clay copies, but he has 2gp worth of rings embedded in him. If killed, he will regenerate in 1d20 hours unless burned. If he is free, add him to the **Wandering Monster Table** (p.10), replacing one of the Omen results.

Lessons: *oozes* live in dungeons. They are difficult to bludgeon, just as the skeletons were difficult to slash. You can *use the environment to your advantage* (by circling the pit in 11: **TOMB ATRIUM**, by closing the stone doors on the ooze, by luring the ooze upstairs and hitting it with the hammer trap, etc.)

15: PRIEST ROOM

This room was used by the priests of the upper tomb. It contains three beds, some rotten shelves, and a silver-and-emerald snake-god icon worth 20gp. The scrolls scattered around the room record the ravings of trapped mummies in a forgotten language. One of them contains the true name (Baltoplat) of the succubus in 32: **SUMMONING ROOM**.

Lessons: *valuables* sometimes take *unconventional forms*. The ravings might be valuable if translated or sold to the credulous.

16: UNFINISHED TOMB

This room is empty, except for some discarded carving tools rusting on the floor. It might make a nice bolthole in an emergency, or a place to stash supplies.

Lessons: some rooms are *empty*.

17: CLAY WARRIORS ROOM

A group of eighteen clay statues of life-sized snake-men warriors, in three rows of six. Their swords are rusted to uselessness. Each statue is hollow, but contains nothing. The statue in the far south corner of the room sits on the trap door **39: SECRET PASSAGE** to **38: BASILISK HALL**.

Lessons: some rooms *look more threatening than they are*. Look under statues for secret passages.

18: STAIRS

This hallway is protected by a very ornate door, carved with images of snakes raining from the sky. Stairs descend downwards into darkness. A faint cold wind blows up the stairs.

The third stair from the top is slightly loose and has left very faint scratches on the walls. If any weight is put on it, the stairs tip to become a smooth stone ramp. Spikes deploy from the floor at the bottom of the ramp when the trap is activated. A PC sliding into the spikes takes d6 damage (Save for half). The trap resets in 5 rounds.

Lessons: check the floor. Traps can *move you* and not just harm you.

19: STONE COBRA GUARDIAN ARENA

This is a large, arena-like room completely covered in shields from tribes conquered by the snake-men. Some of the shields are rotted through, but at least five are still in usable condition. If laboriously scraped and disassembled, fragments of silver wire and gold leaf in the shields are worth 2gp total.

In the very centre of the room stands the **Stone Cobra Guardian** (pg. 16). It attacks on sight. It cannot fit up the stairs.

20: CHASM AND PATH

A narrow path along a bottomless chasm. To the north, the path dead-ends. To the south, the path leads to the rest of the tomb. The path is 10' wide and slightly slippery; running or leaping will require a fairly easy Save. The chasm is 60' wide, and the opposite side isn't visible unless the PCs use flaming arrows or a very powerful light source. If the PCs anger the fungus goblins, this path will be their preferred ambush spot. The goblins are sticky and disregard the slippery stone floor.

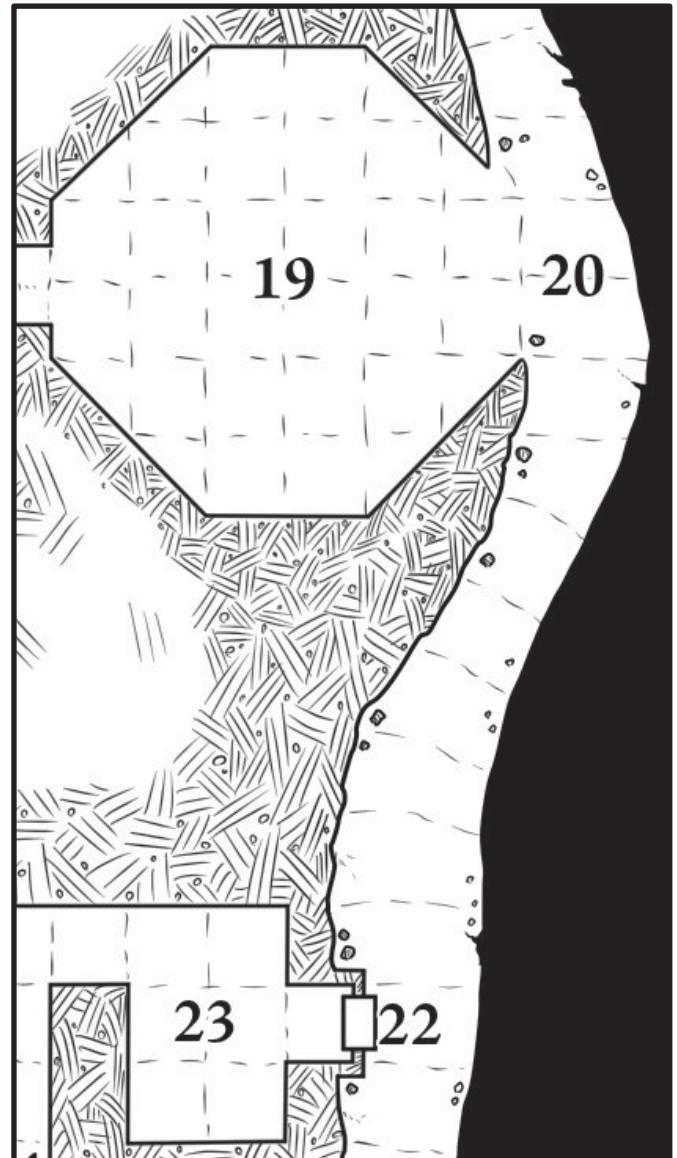
If you want to add more material to this dungeon, the chasm is an excellent place to start. You can add stairs leading down to other dungeon levels. You can add a bridge, just past **21: DUNGEON BARNACLES** to a boss fight on the other side, with **29: TREASURE ROOM** being a way to bypass the barnacles.

Lessons: *pick where you fight carefully*.

21: DUNGEON BARNACLES

The path here is filled with dungeon barnacles. These stone-covered mollusks devour any warm-blooded creatures that pass near them, reaching out with sticky, paralyzing tentacles. Characters who have spent time in tombs, caves, or tunnels will recognize and know to avoid these creatures. They are less like enemies and more like terrain. 5 hours with a hammer could clear a path, but there's a very high risk of being paralyzed and devoured.

Lessons: this path is *closed*. Think of a solution (poisoned meat, exploding frogs, etc.) and come back later.



The Lower Tomb

There are four main zones to LEVEL 3.

Outer Halls (22–26)

Dressed stone, slightly damp, mold and slime on the lower walls. The air is cold, especially close to the chasm. Some dry and dusty areas. Everything has carved or painted snakes on it.

Sacrifice Pit (27–30)

Dressed stone with ancient crumbling mosaics. The air is warm and foul, and only gets worse as you approach 30: SACRIFICE PIT.

Xiximanter's Lair (43–46)

Finely cut stone, covered in dust and cobwebs. Purple lights and bubbling alchemical flasks. The glimmer of glass, and the clatter of bones.

Goblin Warren (47–52)

Dug through collapsed tunnels and rooms, or through natural caves. Filthy. The floor is thick with guano, beetles, and rot. It is difficult for the PCs to tell if the chittering is beetles or goblins.

This level also contains **Wandering Monsters**. They are attracted to noise, light, and heat. They won't move to the upper levels of the dungeon unless the **Stone Cobra Guardian** is defeated.

Check every 30 minutes on Level 3, or whenever the PCs make a lot of noise.

1d8

Wandering Monsters

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Omen of Basilisk. The rattle and thrash of a distant chain, dragged through stone and dust. |
| 2 | Omen of Jelly. Wet squelching in the distance. |
| 3 | Omen of Goblins. Chittering, half-giggling, half grinding of teeth and licking of lips. The flit of red eyes in the distance. A waft of fungal rot. |
| 4 | Bat. Not hostile, but startling. Flaps around, flies towards the chasm. |
| 5 | Large Spider. The size of a fist. Here to eat bats, not PCs. Venomous (1d4 poison damage) but cowardly. Considered a delicacy by the goblins. |
| 6 | 1d6 Fungus Goblins. See pg. 17. In a scouting party. 1d6 other goblins lurk around the corner. |
| 7 | 1 Skeleton Jelly. See pg. 17. |
| 8 | 1d10+5 Fungus Goblins. See pg. 17. In a raiding party. 1 goblin will have a ludicrously impractical cutlery spear (d6 damage, reach). |

22: STONE DOOR

Recessed 5' into the wall and held closed by a heavy stone bar. The door is barred on the side facing the chasm. If approached from the other side, it cannot be opened without demolishing most of the door.

It contains the same type of hammer trap as 5: **DOOR/HAMMER TRAP**, but the hammer swings away from the door, rather than towards it. This makes it easier to dodge (+2 bonus to the Save) but any hit PCs must Save again or be flung into the chasm.

Lessons: traps *repeat*. Be cautious around bottomless chasms.

23: CEREMONIAL ROOM

Used by the snake-man priests to prepare and meditate. Contains several low benches, ancient wall hangings, and a dry fountain. Goblins pried a gold statue from the fountain and hid it in 49: **GOBLIN THRONE ROOM**. A few scraps of gold leaf worth 1gp and a primitive tool marks are all that remain.

Lessons: some rooms are *safe*. Look for what may be *missing*.

24: HALLWAY

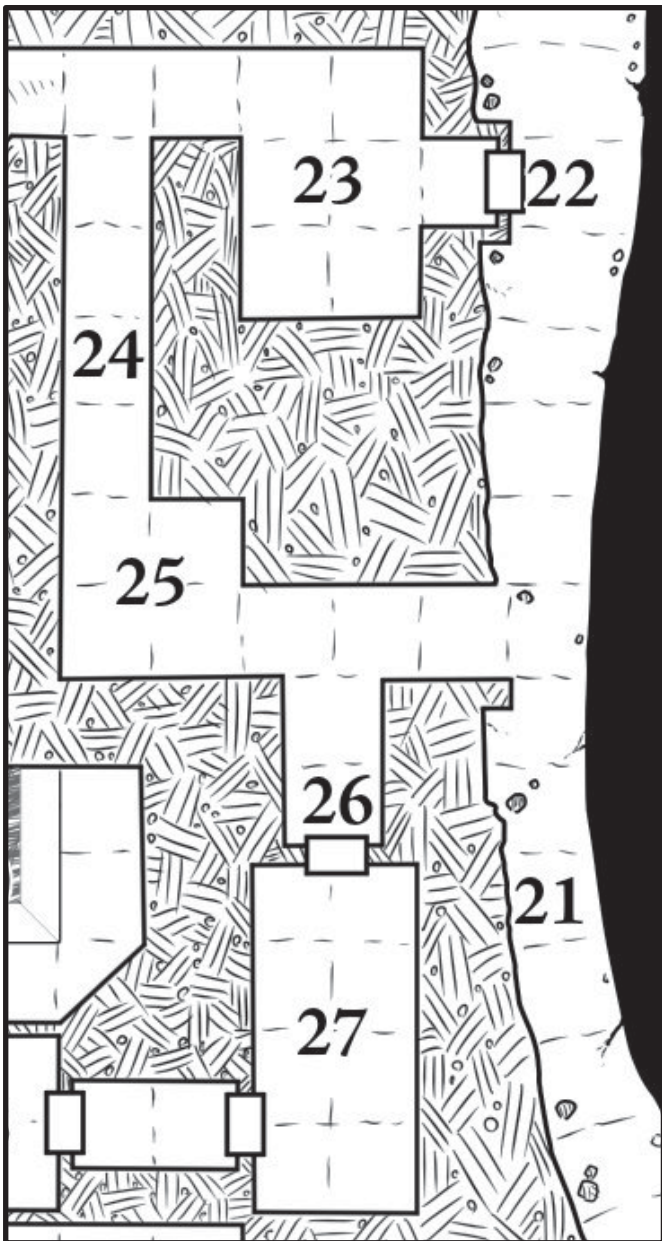
A long, narrow hallway slopes downwards to the south. Contains 1 **Skeleton Jelly** (*HD 2, MORALE 12, ATK 1d4 [Slam]*) that will move towards noise.

25: PIT TRAP

This room has a false floor made of thin stone tiles. A 1' wide ring around the walls is safe, but all other tiles are held up by sticks and thin metal bars. Any PC stepping into the center of the room must Save to Dodge or take 1d6 damage from the fall, and Save again or take a further 1d6 from the spikes at the bottom. The false tiles are easy to spot: one is even missing.

The pit contains several mundane human skeletons and a gold ring worth 2gp. The goblins use the pit to catch food, replacing the lost tiles every day.

Lessons: *check the floor*.



26: HALLWAY

A small passage branching off from the main hallway, leading to a locked door. The lock is incredibly rusted with age and the door opens easily.

27: SLAVE ROOM

The air here is foul and warm, and there is a distinct hissing sound coming from the southwest door. This room was once used to keep slaves, and a pair of iron manacles still lie on the floor. The manacles are enchanted to lock around the legs of anyone who approaches within 1', but the rusted metal is weak and can be pried free with an easy Strength test.

Lessons: *not all traps are deadly. Beware of wandering monsters and delays.*

28: DOMED HALL

An elaborately carved domed hall with a locked iron door in the south wall. The key to the door is around the Basilisk's neck. The door isn't magical, but it would take a team of people hours or days to pry it open or crack its hinges. There is a broken stone door to the west. To the north are the flickering orange light of 30: THE SACRIFICE PIT and the hiss of the eternal flame.

29: TREASURE ROOM

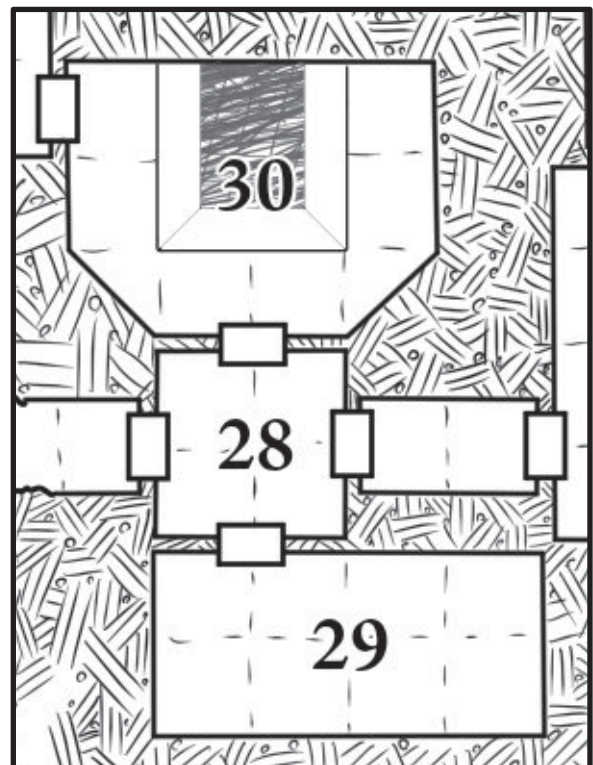
This room contains... whatever it is you want to put in the bottom of your dungeon: a boss fight, a rare item, piles of gold, plot hooks, stairs to more dungeon levels. At the least, it should contain 200gp of assorted treasure.

30: SACRIFICE PIT

An eternal flame burns in the center of a carved, 15' deep pit with sloped sides. The flame is fueled by natural gases, piped from a deep and ancient mine. There is a 2' wide walkway around the pit. Carbonized bones coat the bottom. While the air here is foul, it isn't dangerous to anything outside the pit. Creatures inside the pit must Save each round or take 1d6 temporary Constitution damage. Unconscious PCs slide down to the flame and take 2d6 fire damage per round.

There are runny streaks of gold around the flame, and a few carbon-coated gemstones (worth 50gp total) glitter in the orange light. Not all the sacrifices were poor.

Lesson: *some hazards are invisible.*



31: GUARDED HALL

Two incredibly life-like snake-man statues stand in the bottom corners of this elaborately carved hall. The statues are much finer than any other carving in the tomb. They are, in fact, petrified snake-men, placed here as punishment. If de-petrified, they will fly into a murderous rage for 10 minutes, then slowly give in to despair. The statues are worth 50gp each if sold in a major city, or 10x more to a wizard who recognizes their nature.

Lessons: look for *explanations* for things that are *out of place*.

32: SUMMONING ROOM

A long, narrow room with a huge pile of junk (broken shields, bent swords, candlesticks, branches) piled at the entrance. Clearing the pile takes thirty minutes, and makes a terrific racket. This room was once a summoning chamber. It contains a bound **Succubus** (pg. 17) summoned by the snake-men to answer questions about the lower hells. She appears as a young botanist in an ankle shackle, of the same race as the first PC she sees, and of an amenable gender. She will claim to have been captured by the goblins. The shackle around her ankle is an illusion. All she needs is for someone to step across the (dust-covered and mostly obscured) circle binding her.

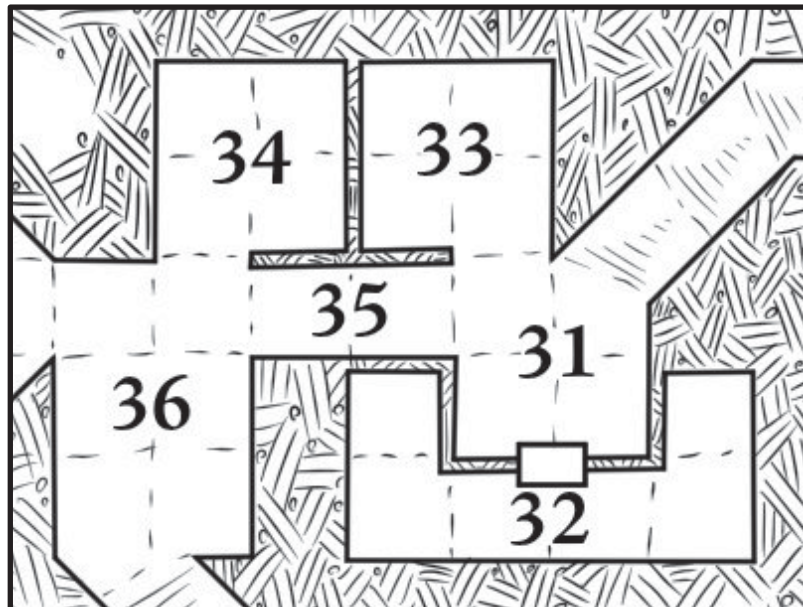
The room also contains a small altar, 2 gold bowls worth 15gp each, a +1 magic dagger, and a wavy stone snake that detects as magical. The snake is used to open the door to **46: THRONE ROOM**. The succubus isn't hostile to the PCs, but she will try to isolate and kiss one of them (Save vs Death, 1d6 permanent HP and Con damage if survived, age 1d10 years. +10 to Save if she likes you) so she can refuel and fly away. Her true name (Baltoplat) is written on a scroll in **15: PRIEST ROOM**. The goblins fear her. Xiximanter knows her true nature, but assumes the party knows as well. She's immune to petrification and very, very good at dodging. She will immediately flee from any conflict. If made to bargain, she can detect poison, reveal ancient secrets, or agree to kill any one mortal the PCs can name. She is patient and cunning, but true to her word.

Lessons: some monsters have *hidden agendas*. There are *illusions*. Don't let yourself be *isolated*. Don't make noise.

33: SHRINE ALCOVE

An alcove containing a shrine to one of the many cobra-headed gods of the snake-men. The statue has two holes in the base large enough to fit a human arm. The statue can't be lifted, but it rattles and it can be turned easily. Almost any effort, inspection, or action will turn it slightly. Turning it counter-clockwise 90° will release poison gas (d6 damage in a 30' cloud). Turning it clockwise 90° will cause a lot of gold (2d100+10gp) to spill out, rolling onto the floor. Some pieces will roll into **35: BLADE TRAP HALLWAY**.

Lessons: treasure is *hidden* behind statues. Some traps follow a *pattern*.



34: PRIEST REST AREA

Used by the snake-men priests to rest and meditate. The door rotted away centuries ago. It contains five blood-stained silk pillows, rotten and shredded, and three stone eggs. The eggs are magical. If coated in fresh mammalian blood, the eggs grow comfortably warm to the touch, and can be used as hot water bottles. A single coating keeps an egg warm for 8 hours. They can be wiped clean after the first application.

Lessons: magical items may have a *mundane purpose*.

35: BLADE TRAP HALLWAY

This hallway is trapped. The ceiling is ridged like the gullet of a snake: bands of tiles wind across two 10' squares. Stepping on any of the raised tiles will activate four swinging blades that slice down from the ceiling. PCs must Save to Dodge or take 1d6 damage. Any movement through the two 10' squares requires another Save to Dodge for three rounds after the trap activates. PCs who stand still don't take any damage. If a PC fails their Save, they take 1d6 damage and don't move that round. On the fourth round, the entire trap comes crashing down in a tangle of stone, blades, and springs, dealing 2d6 damage to anyone in the two 10' squares.

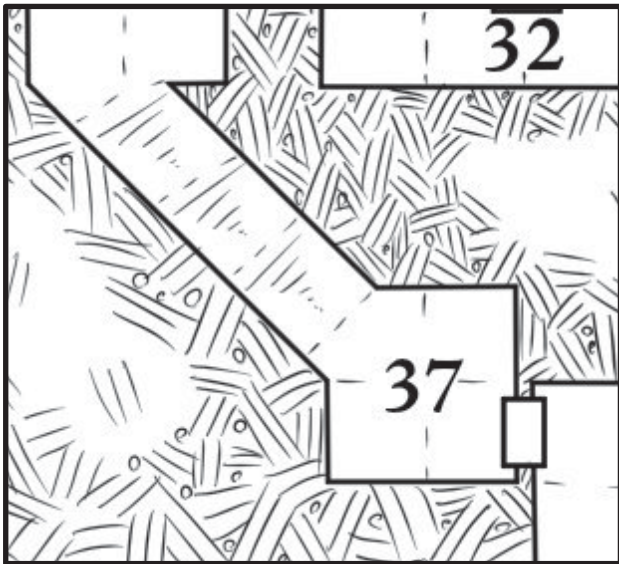
Lessons: traps are not always *reliable*. Move quickly out of danger. Check the floor.

36: VESTIBULE

Partially rotted wall hangings lie on the floor, which is carved into geometric stonework patterns. Anyone pressed against the west wall cannot be seen by the Basilisk. A hallway slopes down to **37: PIT TRAP**.

37: PIT TRAP

A pit trap identical to **25: PIT TRAP**. The snake-men really didn't want their sacrifices escaping into the rest of the tomb. This pit contains nothing of value.



38: BASILISK HALL

A huge stone chamber filled with broken pillars (eight total, in two rows along each side of the hall). The ceiling is lost in darkness. Bats roost up there. The floor is littered with broken statue pieces, including incredibly lifelike carved stone bats, spiders, and goblins.

The Basilisk (pp. 19–20) lurks in the darkness. A thick iron chain links it to the ceiling. It cannot leave the hall.

Lessons: some monsters have *unconventional attacks*. Use *teamwork* to defeat a creature or avoid it completely. *Listen* for threats.

39: SECRET PASSAGE

A secret passage leading from the statue room on LEVEL 2 to the Basilisk Hall. The door on the hall side would have been unnoticeable as originally built, but time has worn the mosaics away, revealing the door's outline.

Lessons: dungeons have *loops* and *shortcuts*.

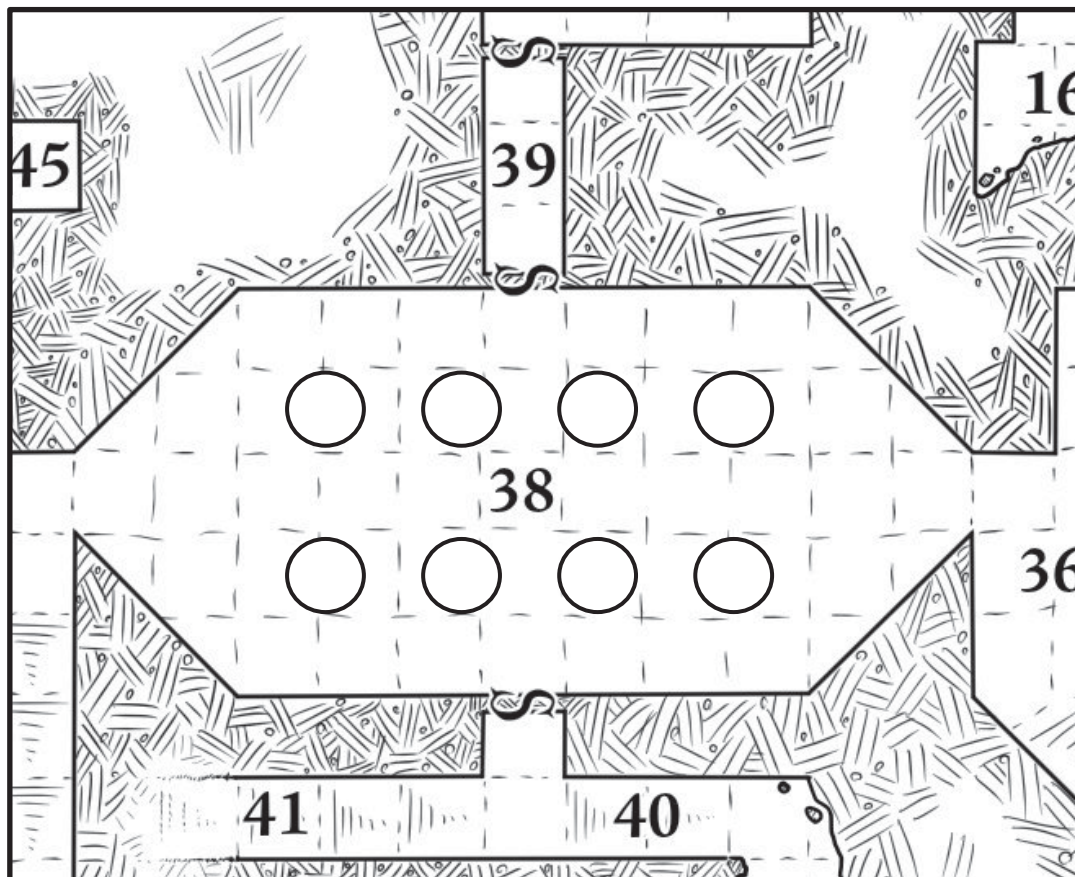
40: SECRET PASSAGE

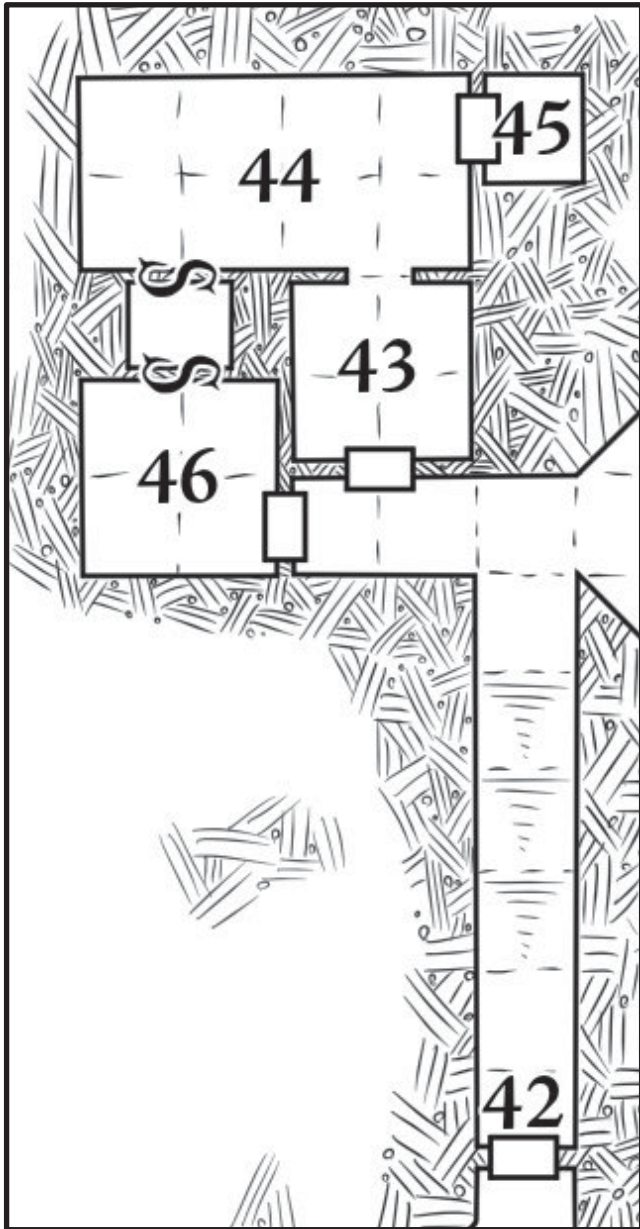
This passage is hidden behind another secret door, but this one is intact and difficult to find. It's on the exact opposite side of the Basilisk Hall from 39: SECRET PASSAGE, and in the same style, so clever players will locate it quickly. Though the walls are smooth and well-made, the floor is thick with goblin detritus and the air stinks.

41: STAIRCASE TO THE SURFACE

A dirt-encrusted staircase to the surface. It opens under the roots of tree. Human-sized creatures can crawl through, but a larger passage requires axes and time. The goblins use this route to raid the surface on moonless nights.

Lessons: dungeons have *loops* and *shortcuts*. Monsters have *ecologies*.





42: CYLINDER DOOR

A rotating cylinder of stone with a carved chunk big enough for two people (imagine a dented barrel). Rotates in both directions if pushed. Turn it counter-clockwise to activate a stabbing spear trap (1d6 damage/person/round until rotated to safety). Turn it clockwise to reveal a stone idol with two golden bowls worth 10gp each. Turn 180° to reach 47: GOBLIN WARRENS.

Lessons: some traps have *patterns*. Scout ahead.

43: XIXIMANTER'S ENTRANCE HALL

A finely carved stone hall; ribbed like the inside of a creature's gullet and lit by magic purple lights set into the walls. **Xiximanter** (pg. 18) is an ancient snake-man wizard, twisted but immortal. He looks like a dried human corpse (with fangs) fused to a snake tail at the waist. He wears tattered robes, and his eyes are red pinpricks. He is not unreasonable, and will greet the party with "Hello, bipeds," as they enter his lair.

Xiximanter desires living creatures—preferably intelligent, ideally wizards. He distills them to make his potions. While utterly amoral, he is neither rude nor murderous. He firmly believes that he is close to a breakthrough. He also believes that the snake-man empire still sits above him, that the tomb is full of priests, and that the party must be barbarian visitors on a tour. If shown evidence to the contrary, he will become enraged.

PCs will not be allowed past the Entrance Hall unless they agree to be Xiximanter's apprentices (or victims). His most powerful potions take decades to brew. He will trade potions for living creatures, spells, rare ingredients, and apprentices. He will not accept coins or treasure. If the party is openly carrying looted items from the tomb, he will become suspicious and try to poison, capture, or manipulate them.

44: INGREDIENT STORAGE ROOM

Barrels of ancient herbs and powders sit next to kegs of acid and stale water. One flask contains powdered saffron (200gp worth), while a tiny bottle contains 1d10 seeds of a now-extinct plant (worth 30gp each to a collector or ambitious farmer). Xiximanter will not trade these unless he can get even more rare or valuable ingredients from the party. Nothing they find in the tomb is likely to pique his interest. This is also where Xiximanter keeps his victims. Six stone oubliettes with brass lids, like wine vats sunk into the ground, are scattered around the room. The pits currently contain 1d10 miserable **Fungus Goblins** (1 HP, MORALE 7, ATK 1d6 [*Sword or Teeth*]) crammed into the same pit.

There is a secret passage here, behind a stack of empty crates. It leads to 46: THRONE ROOM.

45: POTION BREWING ROOM

Alchemical flasks, dusty instruments, and gleaming shelves full of beautiful flasks line the walls. Aside from an assortment of random potions (10+1d10 potions), his shelves always include:

1. 2 potions of *spell mutation*
2. 1 potion of *moderate immortality* (extra 20+1d100 years of natural life)
3. 1 potion of *undetectable poison* (tastes like a random potion but kills, no Save, in 1 minute)
4. 2 healing potions

Lessons: use *diplomacy*. Some enemies can be *reasoned with*. You can *trade* within a dungeon. You can *betray your friends* for power.

46: THRONE ROOM

The giant door at the end of the Basilisk Hall is made of intertwined stone snakes. One snake is missing. It can be found in **32: SUMMONING ROOM**. If replaced, the door will slither open, revealing a room made of red stone, gold, and mirrors. The eight palm-sized mirrors on wooden stands are worth 10gp each if sold in a major city. The throne is worth 250gp, but requires at least three people to lift. Anyone sitting in it must Save vs Mind Control or desire lordship and conquest.

Xiximanter has a secret passage from the throne room to his lair, but he hasn't used it in centuries. The throne room entrance is hidden behind a rotted wall hanging. The passage is thick with dust. If the PCs use it, he will be surprised, and possibly enraged unless they think of a plausible excuse.

Lessons: not all secret passages are safe. Rooms in dungeons are *linked*. There is a *ton of treasure*.

47: GOBLIN WARREN

This room is part of the Goblin Warren. It is a low cave (5' high). It's clear that the rooms here collapsed centuries ago and were hollowed out by the goblins. They use this room to store feathers, rags, and bowls of grease. A thorough search of the muck and detritus on the floor coats a PC to the neck in guano and beetle shells and reveals 2d6 silver knives (worth 1sp each) and a dented brass bracelet (worthless).

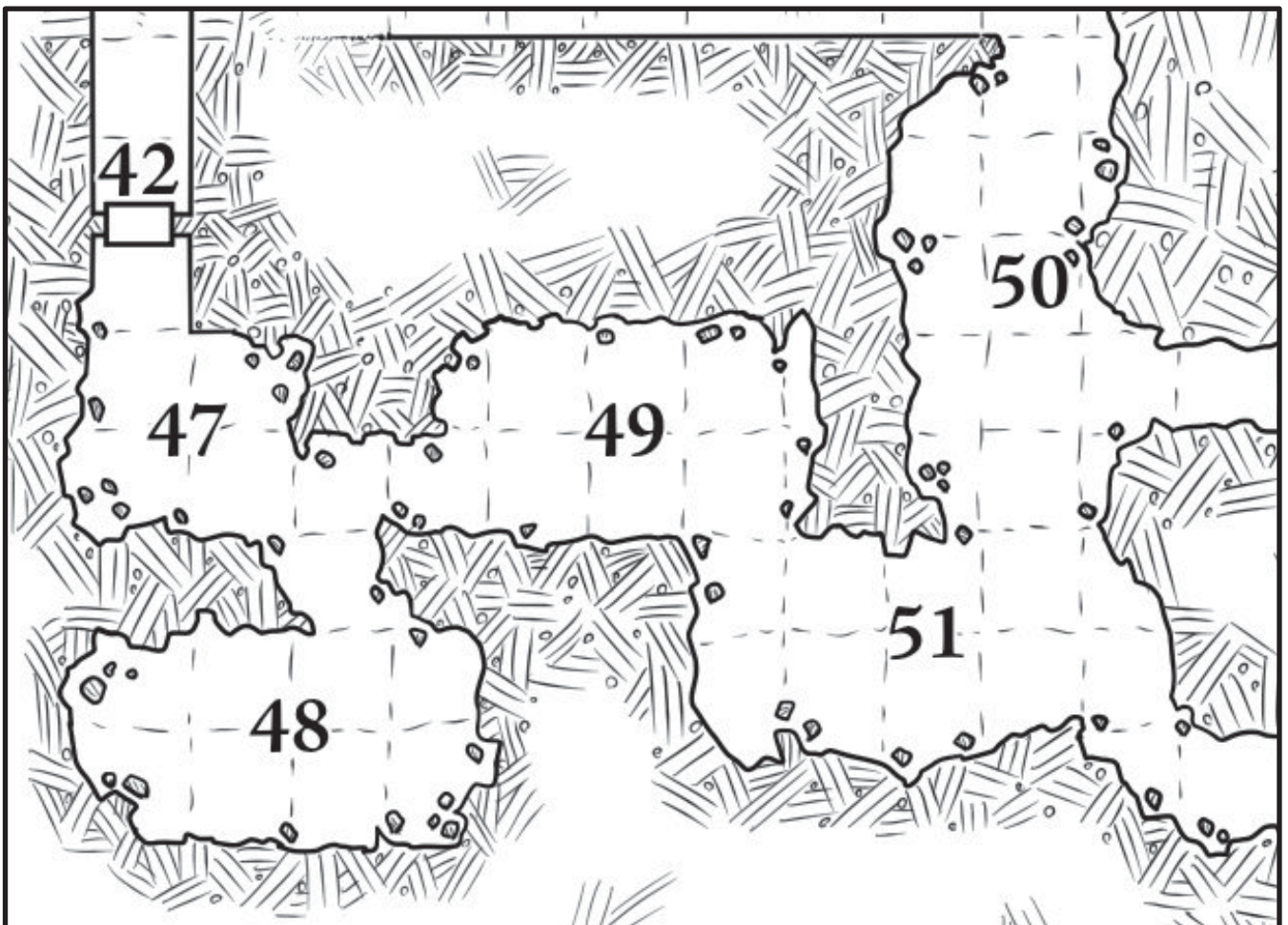
48: GOBLIN SPAWNING PIT

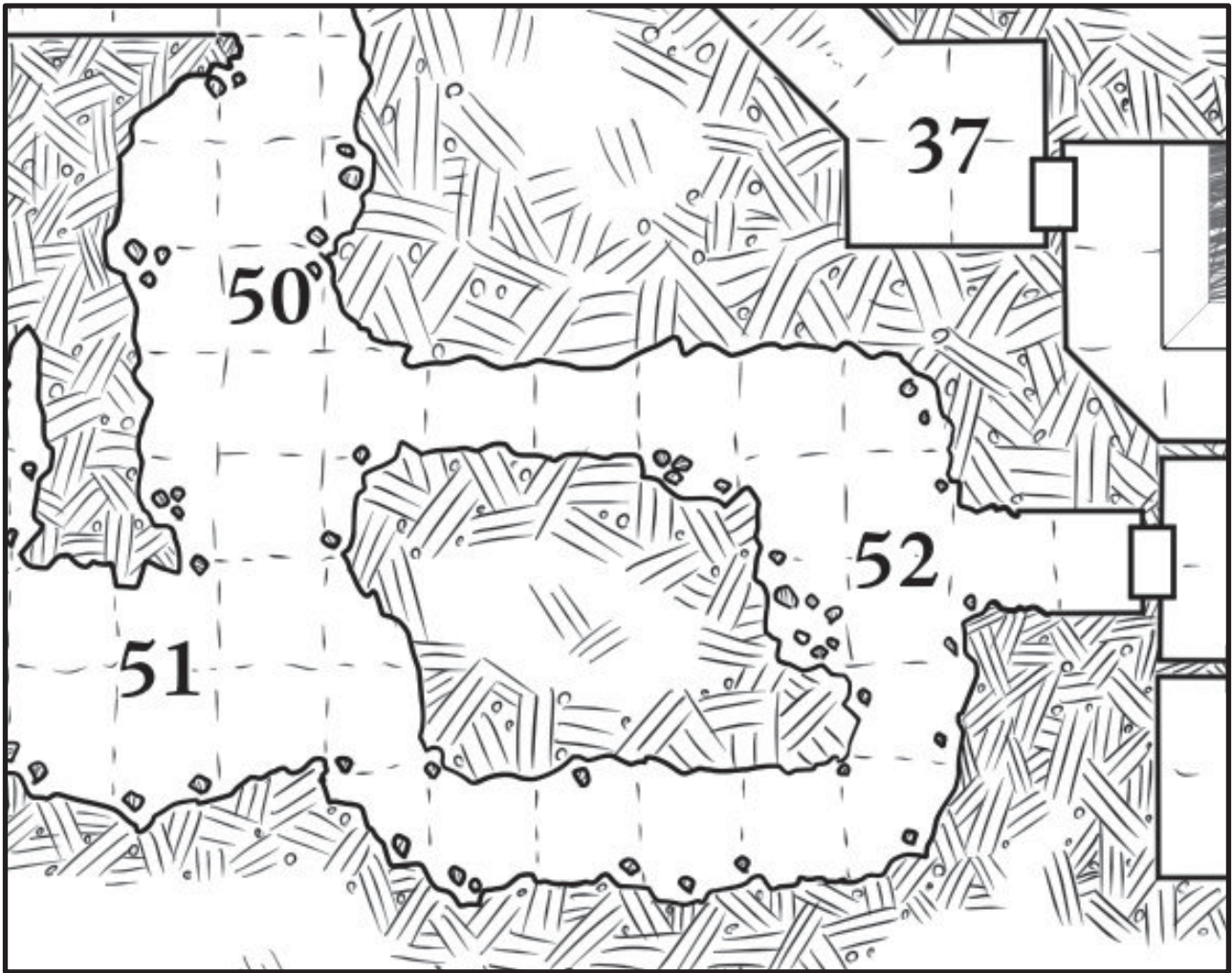
The passage to this low and sunken room is only 2' high. It contains the goblin spawning pit: a hideous mash of fungus, dead animals, and bloated sacks of fluid. PCs must Save vs Nausea or flee in disgust. The pit reincarnates the souls of dead fungus goblins and is one of Xiximanter's failed experiments in immortality. There is no treasure here, but unless this room is burned, the number of goblins in the dungeon will always be "too many goblins."

Lessons: it's *difficult to clear* a dungeon completely. *Fire is useful*.

49: GOBLIN THRONE ROOM

A goblin throne room. Most of the time, this room contains 1d6x1d6 **Fungus Goblins** eating bats, fighting, or worshipping their current king. If they haven't recently found a living creature to crown, they'll make an idol out of sticks and mud. The goblin crown is made of bent cutlery and sticks. They used to have a real crown but they lost it. The golden idol from **23: CEREMONIAL ROOM** is being used as a back-scratcher. It is worth 50gp.





50: GOBLIN FARMS

The goblins plant anything to see if it grows. Sickly plants rot in darkness, accompanied by buried fingers, weapons, mushrooms, and gold. Dredging this room reveals 2d10gp, a ruby worth 30gp, and the *Crown of the Serpent Kings*. The crown is worth 300gp for the materials and gems alone: it is made of eight tiny entwined serpents of gold and platinum, with emerald eyes and diamond teeth. The crown is also magical. Anyone wearing it who is not a snake-man must Save vs Fear. If they fail, they spend the next hour gibbering and hooting in terror. If three consecutive hours are spent in this state, the effects are permanent. The crown can be removed by another person. If they Save, there is no effect.

Seasoned poisoners or wizards might recognize the blue mushrooms here as dungeon cucumbers, capable of curing petrification if sliced and rubbed on the skin. The person will recover in 1d6 days.

Lessons: *sneak* past your enemies. The dungeon *changes* during the day or night.

51: GOBLIN RUMPUS ROOM

This room serves no particular purpose to the goblins, but at any given time, 1d6 (exploding on a 6) fungus goblins (pg 17) will be present during the night and 3d6+10 (exploding on a 6) present during the day. The goblins will be asleep in either case, but will wake up two rounds after the PCs make significant noise in any adjacent room. They are almost invisible in the debris.

52: GOBLIN GUARD ROOM

A mostly-collapsed room used by the goblins to store weapons. It contains 2 pitchforks, a pile of silver cutlery (worth 20sp) and dozens of sharpened sticks. One goblin is on sentry duty. He wields a large broom, which he uses to push away the skeleton jellies. If the players enter from 28: **DOMED HALL** by opening a half-broken stone door, he pushes them back with the broom while protesting. If they enter from 51: **GOBLIN RUMPUS ROOM**, he runs away screaming.

Lessons: enemies might use *odd weapons* for a reason. Chasing goblins in the dark is *no fun*.

Monsters

BLACK PUDDING

Found In: 14: TOMB OF FRANBINZAR
Stats: as a black pudding
Appearance: 200lbs of black slime, thick as treacle
Wants: food, cornered food, fears fire
Armour: leather
Hit Dice: 5
Move: ¼ normal
Morale: 12
Damage: 1d6. If prolonged contact (cornered or absorbed), 3d6

Takes no damage from bludgeoning weapons.

The black pudding can target any number of PCs adjacent to it each round, making a normal attack roll for each. If it corners a PC, it begins to absorb them, dealing 3d6 damage per round. Metal or wooden weapons striking it have a 10% chance to dissolve.

MUMMY FRAGMENTS

Found In: 11: TOMB ATRIUM
Stats: as crawling claws
Appearance: decayed black arms with clawed fingers
Wants: strangle things, crush the living
Armour: as leather
Hit Dice: 2
Move: ½ normal
Morale: 12
Damage: 1d4 if bludgeoning, 1d6 if strangling

They flop, climb your body, and try to strangle you.



THE STONE COBRA GUARDIAN

Found In: 19: STONE COBRA GUARDIAN ARENA
Stats: As an ogre in heavy armor
Appearance: a stone cobra-headed knight clad in carved armour. It wields a huge dented sword in one hand. Its other hand is empty when combat begins.
Wants: to protect the rest of the Tomb of the Serpent Kings and kill any interlopers
Armor: as plate
Hit Dice: 6
Move: normal
Morale: 12
Damage: see Attacks below

The Stone Cobra Guardian cannot fit up the 18: STAIRS.

Attacks: Each round, the Stone Cobra Guardian can perform one of three attack patterns:

Shield Draw. The Guardian calls to a shield attached to the wall of the arena. The shield deals d6 damage (Save to Dodge negates) to any creatures between it and the Guardian. The Guardian holds the shield in its empty hand, granting it +1 Defense. The shield can be sundered as normal (reducing incoming damage by 1d12 and destroying the shield).

Leap and Slam. The Guardian leaps into the air and slams down 5'-20' away from its starting position. It will not land directly on creatures, but any adjacent creatures take 1d4 damage. Save negates. Creatures that take damage are knocked prone.

Twin Slash. The Guardian swipes at two targets with its sword. The targets must be on the same facing (front, left side, right side, or rear) and must be adjacent to the Guardian. The Guardian rolls a normal attack against both targets separately, dealing 1d8+Strength bonus damage on a hit.

The room is designed for the players to flank the Guardian, flee, push it into the chasm, or flee past it and hope it doesn't follow them (it will, but only until it can no longer see or hear them). The shields on the walls can be used by PCs as well.

SUCCUBUS (BALTOPLAT)

Found In: 33: SHRINE ALCOVE
Stats: as a succubus
Appearance: a young botanist in an ankle shackle, of the same race as the first PC she sees, and of an amenable gender.
Wants: see pg. 11
Armour: as Plate+Shield
Hit Dice: 8
Move: Normal, can teleport 10' once per round

Will flee combat (doesn't want to risk it) and not return.

SKELETONS

Found In: 6: FALSE KING'S TOMB and 13: TOMB OF SPARAMANTUR
Stats: as a skeleton
Appearance: Fanged human skeleton wrapped in bangles, with a rusted metal weapon
Wants: to protect the rest of the Tomb of the Serpent Kings and kill any interlopers
Hit Dice: 2 (or 3 if Sparamantur)
Move: normal
Morale: 12
Damage: 1d6, via fangs or swords (1d8 if greataxe)

Takes half damage from slashing or piercing weapons. They clatter and rattle, murderous and implacable.

SKELETON JELLIES

Found In: 24: HALLWAY, as a Wandering Monster
Stats: as a weak skeleton that is completely invulnerable
Appearance: A skeleton covered in orange ooze. Immortal and nearly indestructible. Any attack that would normally deal 4 or more damage just knock them back 5'.
Wants: to squish heads and make more skeleton jellies
Armor: as leather
Hit Dice: 2, but infinite HP. You cannot reduce their HP by damage, magic, fire, acid, prayer, cruel insults, or the touch of the grim reaper himself. They are too dumb to live and too stupid to die.
Move: ½ standard, but up walls too, if they get stuck
Morale: 12
Damage: 1d4, usually by grappling your head.
Solutions: run away, get the basilisk to petrify them, throw them into the chasm, tie them up, lock them in a room, or trap them in 25: PIT TRAP or 37: PIT TRAP.

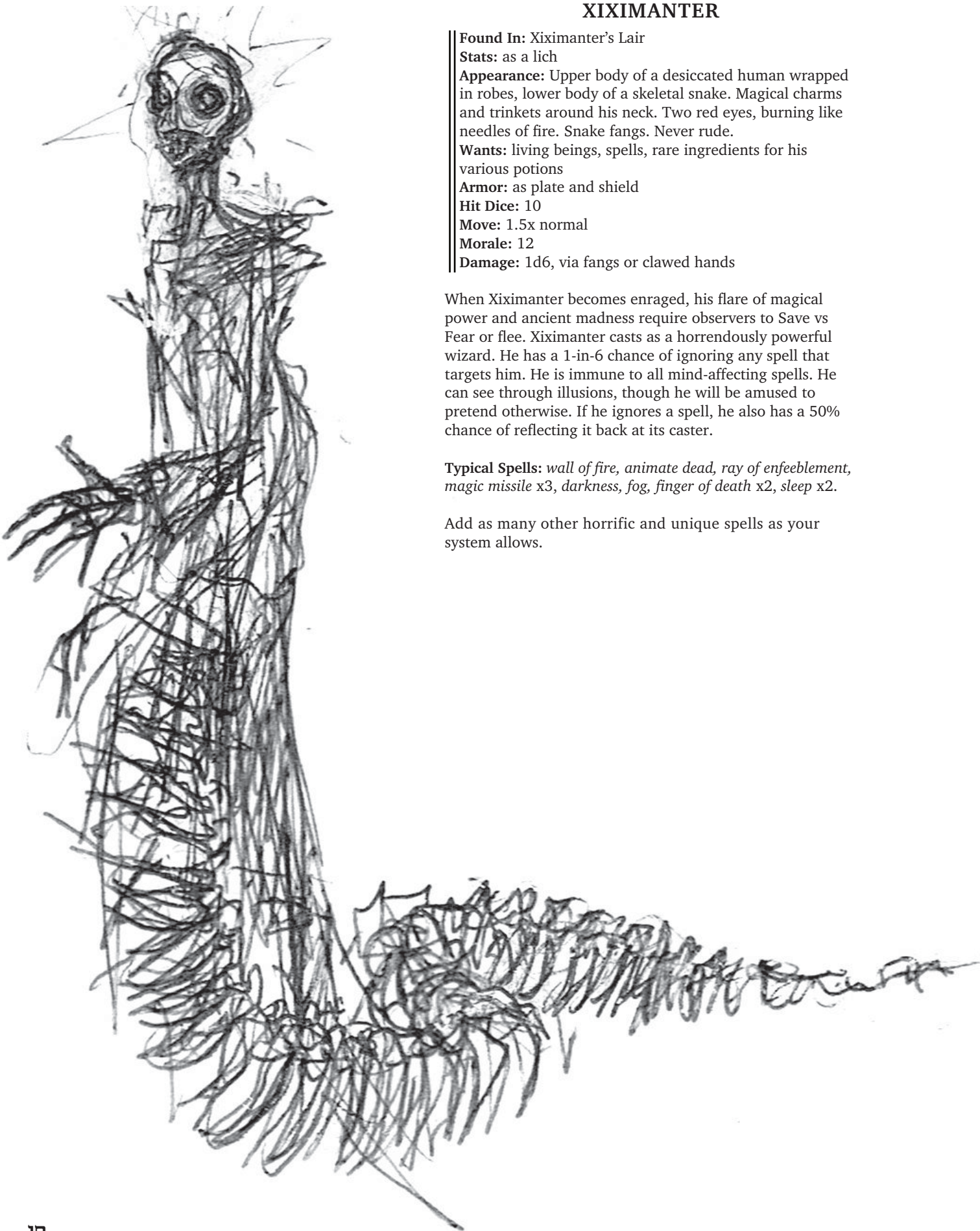
There are 4 skeleton jellies in the dungeon. If the party manages to completely immobilize all 4 of them, remove them from the Wandering Monster Table (pg. 9). They will eventually crawl free from pit traps or rope bundles. Any living creature killed by a skeleton jelly rises as a new skeleton jelly in 10 minutes (fungus goblins are immune to this).

FUNGUS GOBLINS

Found In: Goblin Warrens, as a Wandering Monster
Stats: as goblins, but sticky
Appearance: Pale, stunted creatures with huge oval heads full of teeth and two tiny red eyes way too close together. Texture like baked potato mixed with white glue. They wear cutlery and desire food.
Wants: a king, food, shiny objects, more food
Armor: none
Hit Dice: 0 (1 HP)
Move: normal, climb at normal speed
Morale: 7
Damage: 1d6, via sword or teeth or claws or cutlery

The goblins aren't hostile at first, and will try to crown someone as the Goblin King. They will follow their King loyally until the next full moon, and then swarm, drag the King to an altar on a hill, and gut them. They speak a chattering and limited goblin dialect, and are easily bribed. They will warn the party about the Basilisk, but do not know about 39: SECRET PASSAGE or anything about the upper levels of the dungeon. The Stone Cobra Guardian kept them out. The goblins use 41: STAIRCASE TO SURFACE to sneak to the surface at night. If the party kills any of them or act in a hostile way, they flee, and begin preparing the first of many ambushes.

They are cunning and patient. They can (slowly) climb the walls and ambush the party from above. They'll use buckets of water to extinguish torches, ropes to entangle, and the dungeon's existing traps to maim and isolate the party. They will also harass their camp at night, bite the legs off their horses, and steal shiny objects. Unless their brood at 48: GOBLIN SPAWNING PIT are burned, the number of goblins in the dungeon will always be "too many goblins." The fungus goblins are escaped experiments. While Xiximanter doesn't mind having them returned, they aren't much use to him.



XIXIMANTER

Found In: Xiximanter's Lair

Stats: as a lich

Appearance: Upper body of a desiccated human wrapped in robes, lower body of a skeletal snake. Magical charms and trinkets around his neck. Two red eyes, burning like needles of fire. Snake fangs. Never rude.

Wants: living beings, spells, rare ingredients for his various potions

Armor: as plate and shield

Hit Dice: 10

Move: 1.5x normal

Morale: 12

Damage: 1d6, via fangs or clawed hands

When Xiximanter becomes enraged, his flare of magical power and ancient madness require observers to Save vs Fear or flee. Xiximanter casts as a horrendously powerful wizard. He has a 1-in-6 chance of ignoring any spell that targets him. He is immune to all mind-affecting spells. He can see through illusions, though he will be amused to pretend otherwise. If he ignores a spell, he also has a 50% chance of reflecting it back at its caster.

Typical Spells: *wall of fire, animate dead, ray of enfeeblement, magic missile x3, darkness, fog, finger of death x2, sleep x2.*

Add as many other horrific and unique spells as your system allows.

BASILISK

Found In: 38: BASILISK HALL

Stats: as a wyrm or dinosaur

Appearance: a giant, gray, eight-legged lizard with a flat crocodile head full of teeth. It has a visor made of brass bolted to its head, and a collar around its neck, just in front of the first set of legs.

Wants: food, warmth, to be free of the chain.

Armor: as plate

Hit Dice: 7

Move: 1.5x normal

Morale: 8

Damage: see Attacks, right

The basilisk is chained to the ceiling of 38: BASILISK HALL. It can move around freely within the room but can't leave it. There are 8 mostly broken pillars in the hall: they provide cover and can slow the basilisk down if its chain gets wrapped around them. The basilisk can only see straight ahead but it can smell very, very well. When the PCs first enter the hall it will wait, sniffing the air, and try to circle in the dark to get close to them. When it spots an isolated target it will stare at them for one round, and then charge.

Basilisk Stare (Passive)

If the basilisk just glances at a creature, the only effect is a slight sensation of pressure. If it focuses on a creature for one round, the target's limbs become heavy, slow, and grey. Their thoughts move like treacle. They can Save vs. Petrification to restore movement. If they fail, they are rooted in place, and take a -4 penalty to Defense. This effect ends immediately if the basilisk looks away. If the basilisk stares at a target for a second round, they must Save vs Petrification or turn to stone. If they pass, they are still rooted in place (as above). The basilisk can only stare at targets directly in front of it unless its visor is removed. The effect has a 20' range. More than one target can be affected, but they must be very close together. Test at the start of each round, before initiative order is determined. The effect is not reflected by mirrors.

Unique Death Conditions

Unless the basilisk is completely burned, dissolved in acid, or separated from stone, a random stone larger than a fist touching some part of the basilisk's corpse has a 1-in-6 chance per year of becoming a basilisk egg and hatching in 1d6 years. Only one egg will be created in this way. The reincarnated basilisk grows to its original size +20% in a year, if well fed, and remembers its previous lives. Almost no one knows about this, but some wise old wizard, hearing the party's tale many years later, might lurch to his feet to warn them.

Attacks

Each round, the basilisk can perform one of three attack patterns:

Charge. The basilisk will try to charge partially petrified targets first, but if blinded or annoyed, it will charge almost anything. It moves twice its usual speed straight ahead, ignoring fallen pillars, and snaps at the target. It can maintain its Basilisk Stare during the charge. This is a normal attack with a normal attack roll. If hit, the target shatters and is devoured (if made of stone). If made of flesh, it takes 1d8+2 damage and is knocked prone. If the target was not aware the basilisk was in the room they must Save vs Fear.

Lizard Frenzy. If surrounded or threatened, the basilisk thrashes wildly. All creatures within 5' take 1d6 damage and must Save to Dodge or be knocked prone. The basilisk can't stare at a target this round.

Tail Strike. The basilisk does not like being flanked. While pretending to focus elsewhere, it whips its tail at a target. This is a normal attack and requires a normal attack roll with a -2 penalty. If hit, the target takes 1d8+2 damage and is flung 10' in a random direction. On a miss, the target still takes 1 damage. It can maintain its Basilisk Stare at a different target during this attack.



Basilisk Behavior

Hungry (default): Moving slowly in the dark, sniffing the air, trying to spot an isolated target. It will be alert and ready to strike if the party set off the trap at **35: BLADE TRAP HALLWAY** or if they access **39: SECRET PASSAGE**.

Digesting (if satiated): curled up in a corner, back to the wall, head up and ready to uncoil. 3-in-6 chance of being asleep.

Curious (if satiated): Sniffing the air, moving its head side to side to avoid petrifying something by accident. It can recognize people who have fed it by smell. It was a domesticated lizard, after all. It knows not to bite the hand that feeds it.

Happy (if satiated): Will only behave this way if it knows where all the people in the room are, either by sight or smell, none of them have ever harmed it, at least one of them has fed it, and no one moves quickly. Will approach one target and reveal neck and collar, bumping neck into target to demand scratches. Will shiver and stamp feet if scratched.

Rage (if startled or suddenly wounded): leaps backwards 10', raises tail, and charges a target in the same round. Target must Save vs Fear.

Other Information

The basilisk is satiated for a month after devouring 30 travel rations, 2 normal humans, 1 horse, or 6 fungus goblins. It will hunt creatures in the Basilisk Hall on a 1-in-6.

Otherwise, it will rest in a corner, though it will still try and petrify anyone passing within 20'. The brass visor on the basilisk's head can be shut fully if anyone is brave enough to climb onto the lizard's back and adjust the gears. The basilisk will still hunt by smell.

The key to **29: TREASURE ROOM** is wedged under the basilisk's collar. Xiximanter put it there and forgot about it completely. The basilisk appreciates anyone who can scratch the worn and chipped scales under its collar. If slain, the basilisk's throat glands contain 2 equivalents of a Stone to Flesh potion. The creature doesn't actually eat stone. The petrification is just a way to preventing food from fleeing and storing it for later consumption.

The basilisk's eyes are valuable to wizards and alchemists (30gp each). The stony skeleton fetches 100gp on the open market, or 30gp for the head alone. If captured alive, the basilisk is worth as much as 1,000gp to a menagerie keeper. If tamed, it could easily be worth twice that. Any dishonorable army (all of them) would love to have a tame basilisk to use against their enemies.

Fighting the Basilisk

Lessons this boss fight is designed to teach:

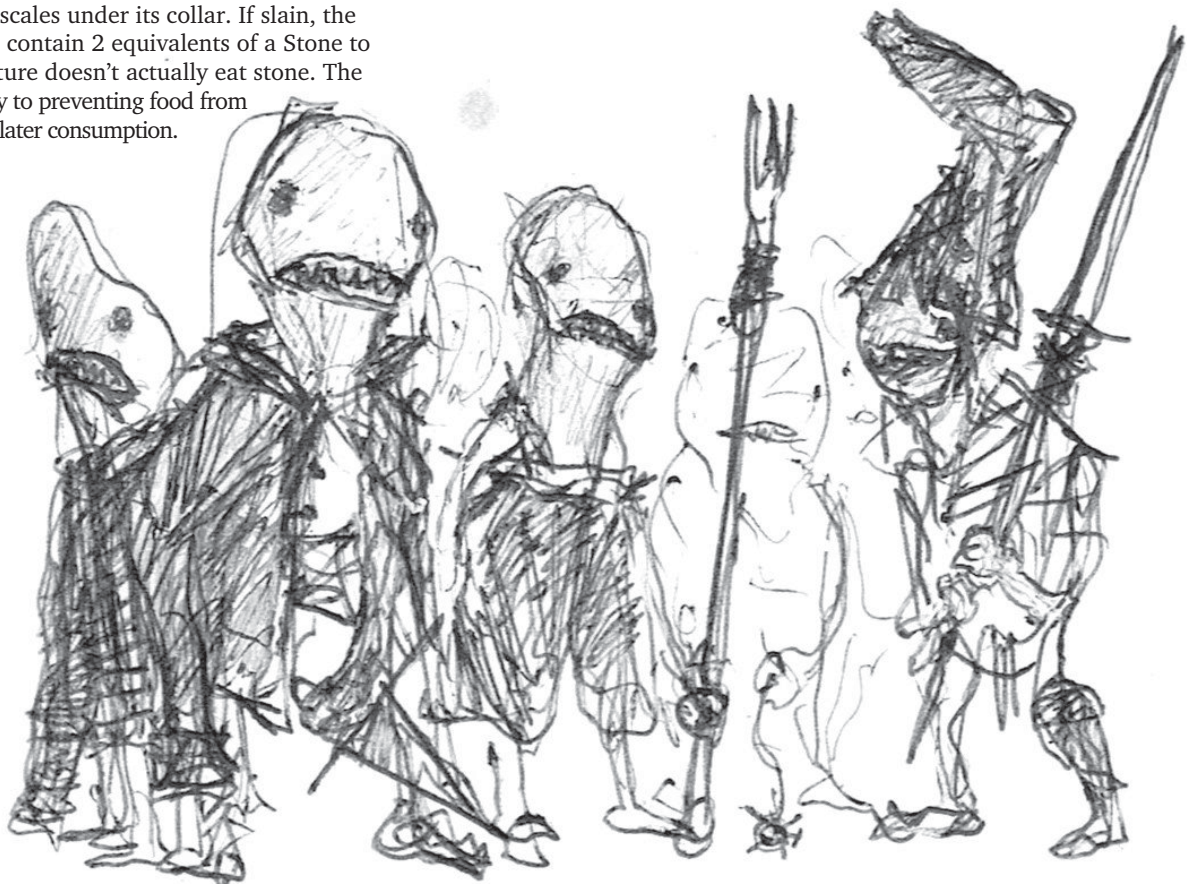
First, be smart. There's a giant room with a chain clinking quietly in the darkness. This isn't the Tea-House of the Serpent Kings. Something is up. Give the party clues and see how they react. If they stick to the walls and move quickly and quietly they might avoid the basilisk altogether.

Second, work as a team. If the basilisk stares at a target, hit it, and it might be distracted and chase you instead, giving your ally a chance to escape. It will isolate and petrify a team one by one if the team doesn't coordinate.

Third, run away. There's no treasure here, just a giant hungry lizard. You don't have to fight it.

Fourth, figure out what the lizard wants. It's not a video game boss. You can negotiate, more or less. Bring a horse down and feed it. Lure some goblins in. The basilisk doesn't have any treasure—it is treasure. Reward the party for thinking about ecologies and realism, not damage per round.

Fifth, use stealth. Sneak past it. Creep up and tie its mouth shut with a rope.



1: Entrance Hall
12x1 – 120'x10'x10'
Sunlight reaches the far end
Smells like dust. Colder than outside
Small roots in ceiling, crude stonework

2: Guard Tombs
1x1 – 10'x10'x8'
Smells like dust, old wood, very faint acid
Crude stone, murals of entwined snakes
1 wood coffin painted with battle scenes
Statue – gold amulet [1gp], poison gas trap

3: Scholar Tomb
2x1 – 20'x10'x8'
Smells like dust, rotted fabric
Crude stone, paintings of leaping snakes
1 wood coffin painted with abstract scene.
Statue – gold amulet [1gp], poison gas

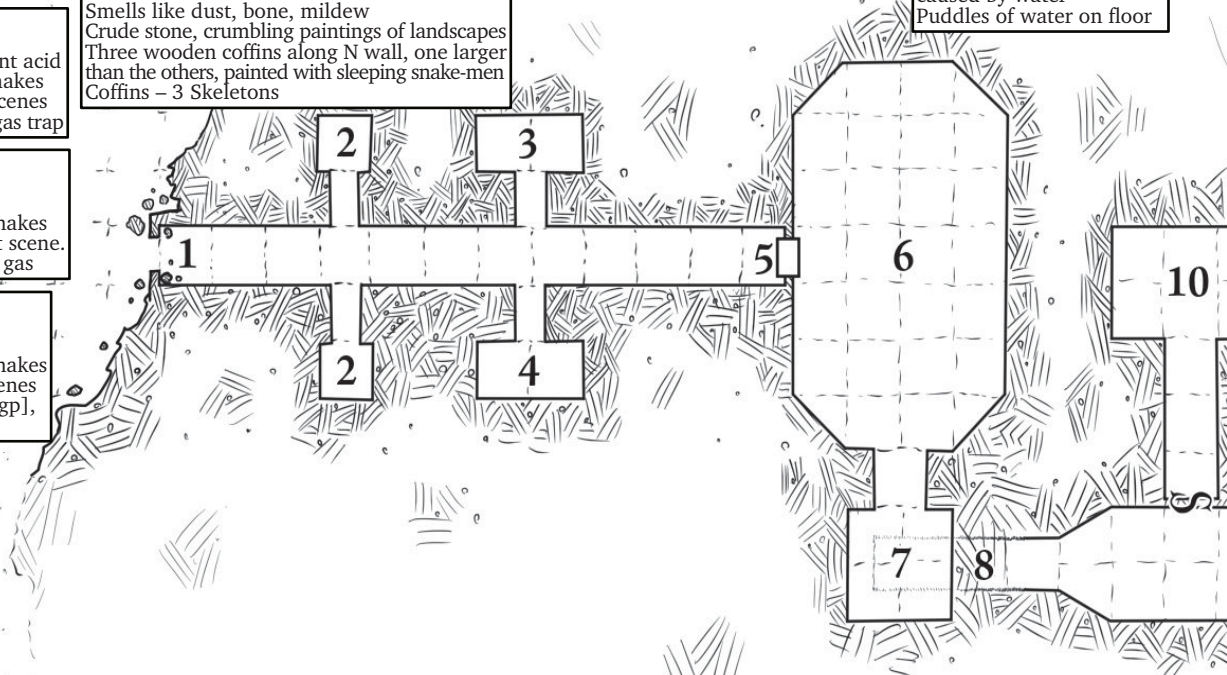
4: Sorcerer Tomb
2x1 – 20'x10'x8'
Smells like dust, rotted fabric
Crude stone, paintings of leaping snakes
1 wood coffin painted with dark scenes
Statue – [treasure], gold amulet [1gp],
poison gas

5: Door/Hammer Trap
Stone door, opens inwards, barred.
Lifting bar activates hammer trap

6: False King's Tomb
4x7 – 40'x70'x10'
Smells like dust, bone, mildew
Crude stone, crumbling paintings of landscapes
Three wooden coffins along N wall, one larger
than the others, painted with sleeping snake-men
Coffins – 3 Skeletons

7: False Temple
2x2 – 20'x20'x10'
Smells strongly of mildew
Trickle of water down wall
Ugly stone idol – visible secret passage

8: Secret Passage
3x1 – 30'x10'x6'
Smells strongly of mildew,
slime, wet stone
Neat stonework, with gaps
caused by water
Puddles of water on floor



50: Goblin Farms
2x4 – 20'x40'x5'
Rotting plants, manure stink,
fungus in bloom
Muck is knee deep. Floor uneven.
Buried fingers, weapons, gold.
Mushrooms growing everywhere
Muck – [treasure, 2d10+330gp]

51: Goblin Rumpus Room
5x2 – 50'x20'x5'
Slime, fungal rot, chittering in
the darkness
Crude statues made of mud
and sticks
Night – 1d6 E Fungus Goblins
Day – 10+3d6 E Fungus
Goblins invisible in the debris

52: Goblin Guard Room
2x2 – 20'x20'x5'
Drying rot, mixing with the
bad air from
30: Sacrifice Pit
1 Fungus Goblin on sentry
duty, with broom

49: Goblin Throne Room
3x2 – 30'x20'x6'
Chittering, crunch of beetles
Throne, crown, current king, filth
1d6 E Fungus Goblins

48: Goblin Spawning Pit
4x2 – 40'x20'x5'
Fungal reek, rotting animals, half-grown goblins
Passage is only 2' high. Save vs Nausea.
Truly disgusting scene

47: Goblin Warren
2x2 – 20'x20'x5'
Reeks of grease, mushrooms, rot, and damp.
Chittering. Beetles underfoot.
Muck – 2d6 silver knives [1sp each]

46: Throne Room
2x2 – 20'x20'x20'
Smells of dust and metal flakes
Door is made of entwined snakes. One is missing.
Red stone, mirrors, and dust.
Beautiful carved walls, like scales. 8 mirrors
[10gp each], throne [250gp]. Secret passage

TOMB of the SERPENT KINGS

45: Potion Brewing Room
1x1 – 10'x10'x10'
Purple magic lights, bubbling, steam, flame, cobwebs,
and the glitter of potion flasks
Lockable iron door. Barely room for Xiximanter to work

44: Ingredient Storage Room
4x2 – 40'x20'x15'
Purple magic lights, spices, dried fruit
Barrels, crates, caskets, flasks, bundles of
herbs. Six pits, 1 with 1d10 Fungus Goblins.
Secret passage behind crates

42: Cylinder Door
At the end of a 10'x60' hallway,
sloping down
Fits 2 people, rotates.
Counterclockwise – spear trap
Clockwise – shrine with 2 gold bowls
[10gp each]
180 degrees – 47: Goblin Warren

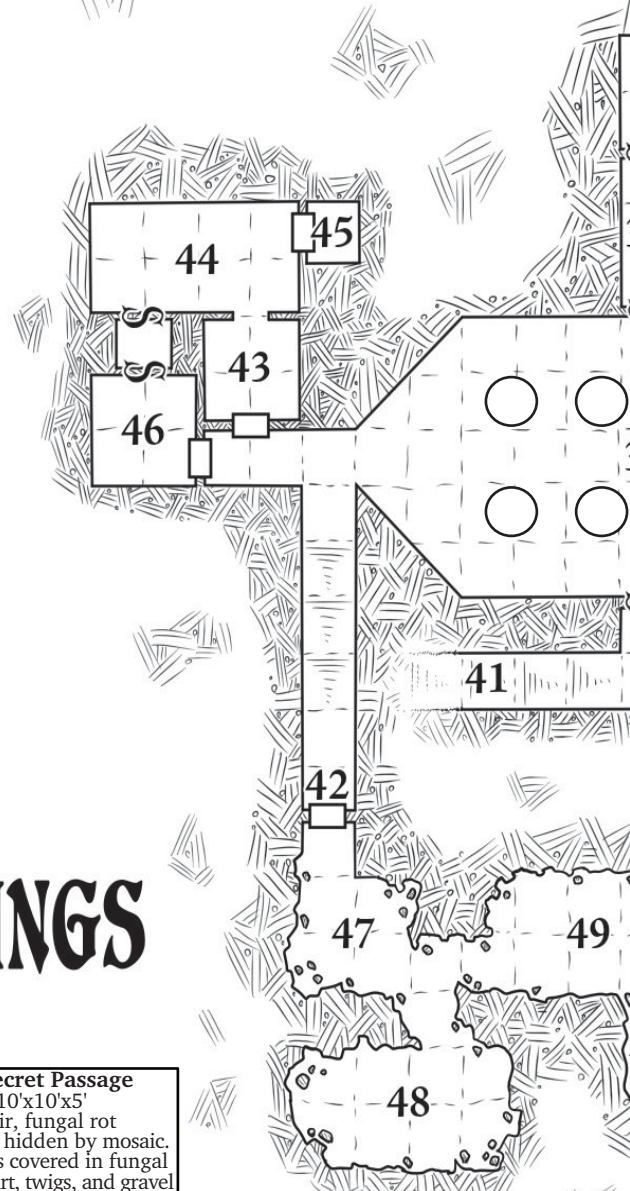
40: Secret Passage
1x1 – 10'x10'x5'
Sour air, fungal rot
Intact, hidden by mosaic.
Floor is covered in fungal
filth, dirt, twigs, and gravel

43: Xiximanter's Entrance Hall
2x2 – 20'x20'x15'
Purple magic lights, acrid stink,
strange fumes and old rotten flesh
Black stone carvings. A thousand
smells. The slither of Xiximanter

**41: Staircase to
Surface**
10x1 – 8' high most of
the way up
Earthy, damp. Emerges
under roots of tree

39: Secret Passage
1x4 – 10'x40'x5'
Stale air, clouds of dust
Door would be
invisible, but mosaic is
smashed. Leads to 17:
Clay Warriors Room

38: Basilisk Hall
11x5 – 110'x55'x50'
Still air, clink of chain, very faint breathing
Basilisk, 8 giant stone pillars, stone statues
(spiders, goblins, bats) smashed and lying
around the hall. Cracked mosaics of
triumphant snake-men on walls



9: Statue Hall
7x2 - 70'x20'x15'
Smells of mildew, wet stone. Small trickle of water going east
Six statues. End of hall is in darkness
1st statue on north side - secret passage

10: Secret Guardroom
3x2 - 30'x10'x10'
At the end of a 30'x10' hallway
Smells of rotting rags, rotting wood
2x hooked polearms, silver icon [5gp]

11: Tomb Atrium
6x6 - 60'x60'x15', octagonal
Smells of liquorice and decay
2x2 - 20'x20'x10' deep pool of dark water in centre
Pool - mummy fragments (pg. 6), [treasure]

12: Tomb of Xisor the Green
2x2 - 20'x20'x10', NW side
Stone door, lightning trap at entrance
Smell of funeral spice and ozone
3 stone coffins - 2 corpses, [treasure, 10gp]

13: Tomb of Sparamantar
2x2 - 20'x20'x10', N side
Stone door, passage completely full of rubble
Smells of bone dust. Can hear thumping
Clear rubble - 1 Skeleton, [10gp]

14: Tomb of Franbinzar
2x2 - 20'x20'x10', NE side
Smells of tar and decay
Stone door, crude carvings inside
One stone coffin - 1 Black Pudding, [2gp]

15: Priest Room
2x2 - 20'x20'x10', SE side
Smells of rotting wood, clouds of dust
Full of scrolls, gold and emerald icon [20gp]

16: Unfinished Tomb
2x1 - 20'x10'x8', S side
Tools on floor, room half-carved

17: Clay Warriors Room
4x2 - 40'x20'x10', SW side
Old clay, rust, cold air. Ominous stares
Eighteen inanimate clay statues, three rows of six
Under SW statue - secret passage

18: Stairs
5x1 - 50'x10'x10', E side
Cold air and total silence
Ornate stone door - Descends downwards
Third stair is trapped

19: Stone Cobra Guardian Arena
6x6 - 60'x60'x30', octagonal
Cold, walls covered in shields
Stone Cobra Guardian in centre of room

20: Chasm and Path
1x7, fading to rock N, 1x17 to barnacles S
Cold, dark, and terrifying. Slippery path
Bat guano and strange winds

21: Dungeon Barnacles
Obstacle. Smells like acid and rotting meat

22: Stone Door
Located 80' S of 19: Stone Cobra Guardian Arena
Same trap as 5: Door/Hammer
Trap, swings outwards

23: Ceremonial Room
2x3 - 20'x30'x10'
Smells of dried mushrooms and dust
Benches, wall hangings, dry fountain, fine carvings
Floor - gold scraps [1gp]

24: Hallway
1x4 - 10'x40'x10'
Smells faintly of acid
Wet slapping noises. Slopes gently downward S
Hallway - 1 Skeleton Jelly

25: Pit Trap
2x2 - 20'x20'x10'
Cold air, chipped tiles on floor, some broken pit trap. Outer 1' of room's edge is safe
Pit - mundane skeletons, ring [2gp]

26: Hallway
1x2 - 10'x20'x10'
Locked stone door.
Lock corroded into rust

27: Slave Room
2x4 - 20'x40'x10'
Warm, foul air. Constant hiss to SE
Manacle trap on floor.
Rusted manacles along walls
Bloodstains and chipped stone

28: Domed Hall
2x2 - 20'x20'x20'
Warm, foul air. Constant hiss to N
Frescoes of proud snake-men on ceiling
Doors on all walls. Elaborate locked iron door to S
Broken stone door to E
Half-open stone door to N

29: Treasure Room
4x2 - 40'x20'x20' (may vary)
Locked iron door. Key around basilisk's neck
Contains whatever the GM wants to put at the bottom of the dungeon [200gp?]

30: Sacrifice Pit
4x3 - 40'x30'x20'
Foul air, flickering flame, splutter of gas
Central is 20'x20' pit with a flame and bad air at the bottom - gems [50gp]

31: Guarded Hall
2x2 - 20'x20'x10'
Dusty smell, faint clink of chain in distance
Fine stonework.
2 (petrified) snake-men statues in S corners - could be [treasure]

32: Summoning Room
4x2 - 40'x20'x10', U-shaped
Smells of ancient wine, burnt paper, and fungal rot
Huge pile of trash in door. 30 minutes to clear, noisy
Succubus, altar - 2 gold bowls [15gp each], +1 magic dagger, stone snake (key to 46: Throne Room)

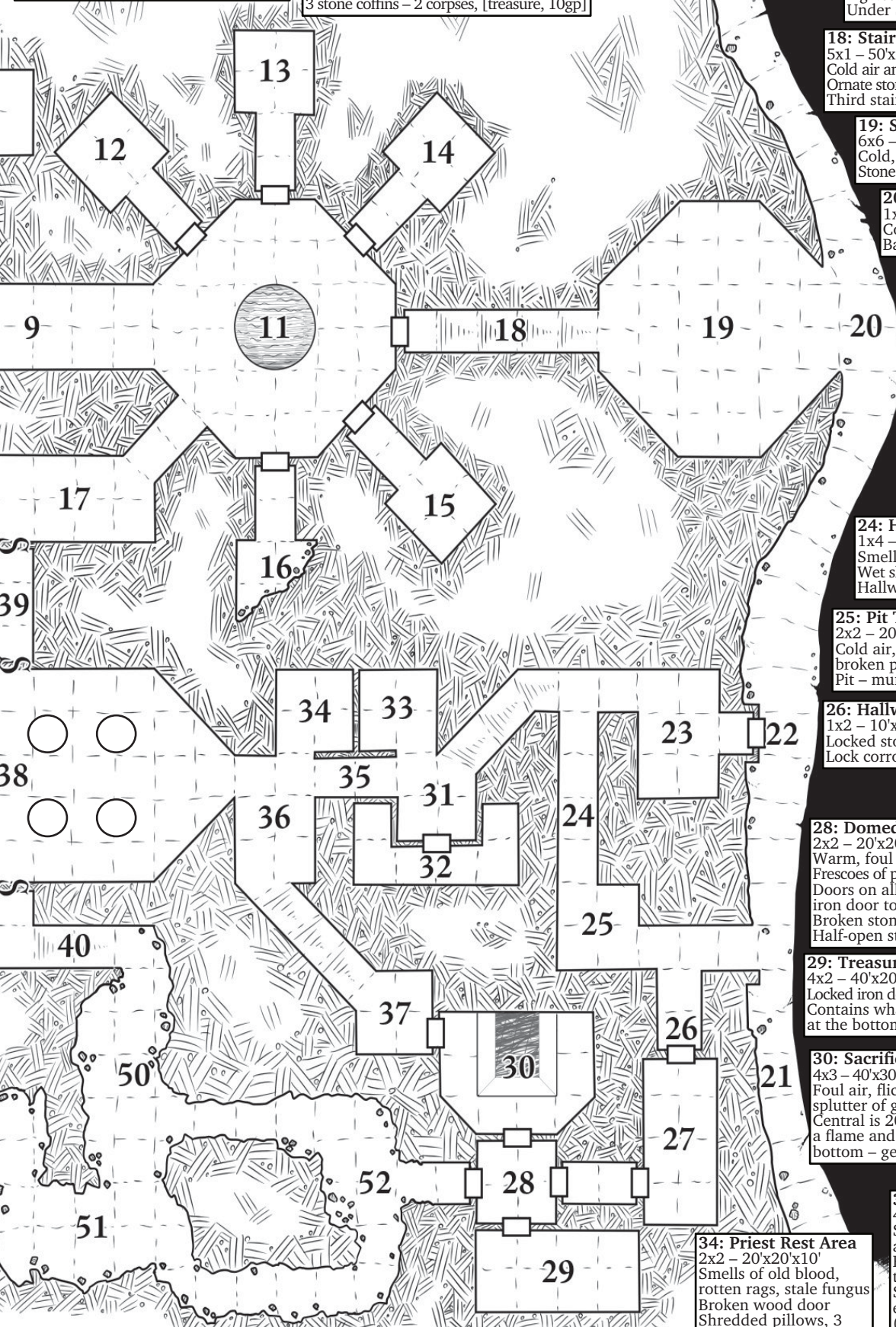
33: Shrine Alcove
2x2 - 20'x20'x10'
Smells faintly of acid
Giant cobra-headed statue, can be turned
Counterclockwise - poison gas trap
Clockwise - [2d100+10gp]

34: Priest Rest Area
2x2 - 20'x20'x10'
Smells of old blood, rotten rags, stale fungus
Broken wood door
Shredded pillows, 3 magic stone eggs

35: Blade Trap Hallway
2x1 - 20'x20'x10'
Smells of dust
Winding stone tiles on floor, grooves in ceiling like the gullet of a snake. Raised tiles activate swinging blade trap. Trap collapses in 4 rounds

36: Vestibule
2x3 - 20'x30'x15'
Smells of rotting fabric. Faint clink of chain to W
Wall hangings, geometric stone tile patterns on floor. Press against W wall to hide from basilisk

37: Pit Trap
2x2 - 20'x20'x10'
Warm air, loose tiles on floor, some broken pit trap.
Outer 1' of room's edge is safe
Pit - nothing



Tomb of the Serpent Kings

VERSION 4.0

THE CONSISTENTLY INCONSISTENT UPDATE

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A “LEARNING” MODULE IN AN OLD SCHOOL STYLE, designed to help new players and GMs learn the basic elements of classic dungeon crawling and tomb robbing.

“Hey, this actually seems like it would accomplish its goal of being a teaching dungeon. I like it.”

Arnold K., *Goblin Punch*

“*Tomb of the Serpent Kings* does that thing introductory dungeon crawls should do, but usually don’t: put the fear of God, the wonder of the unknown, and the feeling of well-earned accomplishment into the players’ hearts. It feels like descending into a dark and odd place where a lot of things will try to kill you if you are not careful, but you will be rich and powerful if you pull it off.”

Gabor Lux, *Beyond Fomalhaut*

