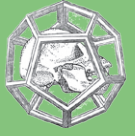


SKULL MOUNTAIN

FM005LL



by Jeff "Bighara" Sparks



Labyrinth Lord
Compatible Product

AN ADVENTURE

FOR 4-6 CHARACTERS OF 4TH to 6TH LEVEL

FOR USE WITH LABYRINTH LORD™ AND SIMILAR GAMES
INCLUDING THE ADVANCED EDITION COMPANION™

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Cover art by Andy "ATOM" Taylor 🐵 Additional art by Steve Zieser

Editor: Shelley Harlan ✂ Layout and collaboration: Joel Sparks

Dedicated to the late great Dr. J.E. Holmes

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Introduction

A worried seneschal recruits the party to rescue his lord's son. A cult long thought dead abducted the 14-year-old boy and took him to their underground lair behind an eerie skull-shaped rock formation. As the heroes delve deeper, they grow closer to the forces that manipulate the fanatics from behind the scenes and the sinister origin of the cult itself.

Descriptions and Illustrations

The first few sentences of each area's text give a general description. However, the complex inside the mountain is a dynamic place. Intelligent monsters, like the lizardfolk, react to events. Circumstances might dictate that a normally empty room could currently be filled with foes. Likewise, tactics described in the text are generally suggestions.

At the end of the module are five illustrations, to be shown to players at certain times indicated in the text.

Scaling the Challenge

While not quite a "megacrawl," this adventure is large. The party will rest many times and should probably return to the surface before continuing on to the deeper levels. The rescue of the hostage on Level 3 is a logical point for the PCs to head back to town. The LL may want to encourage the players to do so. Wolford offers ample provisions for sale and potential hirelings, as well as the extraordinary healing services of Father Dobrun's congregation (p5).

Even higher-level characters may find some parts very challenging. The dragon is an extremely difficult encounter; defeating the Avatar is a noteworthy triumph. If necessary the LL can scale the challenge:

- ✂ Change the number of cultists encountered in the upper levels.
- ✂ Change the number of lizardfolk encountered in the lower levels.
- ✂ Replace the bone golem on Level 4 with skeletons.
- ✂ Remove the spider encounter from Level 5.
- ✂ Remove the salamander from Level 6.
- ✂ Change the dragon's HD.
- ✂ Take away the dragon's spells.



Background

A Millennium Ago

Many centuries ago, a young black dragon calling itself Razemeth found its way to a dormant volcano, its slope adorned with a curious rock formation resembling a human skull. The wyrm crept its way downward, through honeycombed caverns and lava tunnels, to a subterranean lake, far below the surface. Making its lair on a rocky islet, it grew strong feeding upon giant cavefish.

Fish bones, however, make a poor hoard. From time to time, the dragon ascended to the surface via the old lava shaft to hunt for treasure, but the monster loathed exposing itself to such unnecessary danger. After acquiring a *wand of polymorph self*, Razemeth hit upon a scheme to trick humans into serving its needs.

Two Hundred Years Ago

When the dragon espied a gang of bandits camped on the mountainside, it transformed itself and appeared before them as a large winged humanoid of terrible aspect. It told the terrified men that it came from the dark god of the mountain, and unless they appeased the god with tribute and sacrifices at each new moon, its vengeance would be terrible. The men were utterly cowed and hurried to obey the divine commands.

Over time, a cult known as the Obsidian Heart formed around the practice. Much of its doctrine centered on the "dark heart" of the mountain, the harshness of the earth's anger, stone and lava and the dark places beneath the surface. The cult instructed its members on the importance of material wealth, acquired by any means. Religious bandit gangs raided and stole throughout the valley. The members tithed livestock and a portion of the treasure they stole for sacrifices. In the moon's dark, the members held rituals in front of the stone skull, leaving treasure and slaughtering livestock or those who dared to cross the cult. On those nights, Razemeth would fly high above the slopes, watching and waiting. When the men left, the wyrm descended and took the tribute and food back to its lair. The cult prospered, and in time the leaders even gained clerical powers, fueled by the belief of the laity.

After several years of this, the dragon decided it no longer wished to journey to the surface to retrieve its due. It appeared to the cult leaders again in winged humanoid form and instructed them to create a temple within the



caves behind the stone skull. By this time, the cult had become a well-organized ring of thieves and bandits, and the leaders were more than happy to set up a fortified base of operations away from prying eyes. They carved and fashioned the rock formation to appear more skull-like and dug behind it into the mountain's many tunnels and caves. Per the dragon's instruction, they constructed an inner shrine from which the monster could retrieve its tribute unseen, by flying partway up the lava shaft.

Indirectly advised by the dragon over the years, the cult developed a secretive hierarchy, a system of methodical skill training, and a network of black market contacts to maximize their profits.

A Century Ago

Eventually the depredations of the cult drew the attention of some heroic adventurers. The heroes broke the power of the Obsidian Heart and the heroes' cleric, a Priest of the Good Earth, cast an *earthquake* spell that collapsed several parts of the temple. The tremors also awoke the volcano and it erupted. The cult's leaders either suffered death or fled, and the cult lost its grip on power. While the dragon's underground lake was far enough from the eruption to be safe, the rising lava cut off access to the surface and the ability to add to its hoard.

Fortunately for the dragon, the temblors opened a new passage into the lake cavern from farther below the surface, and before long, it brought visitors to the wyrm's domain. A tribe of lizardfolk found the lake cavern and thought the bounty of cavefish and fresh water made it ideal for settlement. At first, the dragon observed the lizardfolk without revealing itself. Then it appeared before them as an avatar, in much the same gambit as with the humans. The lizardfolk fell to worshipping the dragon as a symbol of their own underground gods. They even built a temple over the dragon's lair, on the island in the middle of the lake. While the lizardfolk realm spread far beyond the lake, the domed temple remained a holy site to them and became a place of pilgrimage.

With centuries of cunning at its disposal, Razemeth guided the lizardfolk's tactics and strategies so that they grew strong enough to raid other subterranean territories. Soon prisoners and plunder flowed to the dragon in its role as "the Avatar." Using precious charges from its *polymorph self* wand, the dragon even introduced a draconic strain into a lizardfolk bloodline. These "Darklings," larger and smarter than the norm with dragonlike horns and darker scales, became the lizardfolk ruling caste.

After decades of intermittent tremors, the lava levels in the main shaft recently receded enough to make the upper caves accessible from the lake. The Avatar sent lizardfolk patrols out to investigate the areas closer to the surface. The lizardfolk explored the caves, blazing trails and setting up a fortified guard post in an enormous cavern, one of several opened by the century-old eruptions. Ultimately the caves connected to the intact tunnels and chambers of the old temple.

Rise of the Haberdashers

Meanwhile, on the surface, the destruction of the Obsidian Heart left the laity to carry on without religious leadership. The old ways fell into disuse, but many cultists kept up their criminal habits to make a living, becoming a kind of thieves' guild. In time, the name Obsidian Heart degraded in organization's cant and they took to referring to themselves as the "Obscuring Hat" or just the "Old Hat." Members received thief training and swore to keep the secrets of the guild. Today the "Haberdashers" are all business: an organized crime syndicate with influence in several towns in and around the valley.

Recent Events

Just a few years ago, a senior member named Cooper unsuccessfully attempted to seize control of the Haberdashers guild. His punishment was the traditional traitor's death: "Fed to the mountain." This half-remembered ritual involved throwing the victim alive into the volcano.

When Cooper plummeted out of sight into the smoke and fumes of the shaft, the guild believed him finished. Luckily for Cooper, he fell only a few dozen yards onto a narrow ledge. Hurt, but very much alive, the condemned man worked loose his bonds and took stock of his situation. Seeing a tunnel lead back from the ledge into the rock, he decided to explore a bit before sneaking back up to the surface. In the course of his wanderings, he encountered a lizardfolk patrol. He was quickly subdued and taken below. From him, the Darklings learned of the surface cult's current state. Cooper was given the mission of reviving the Obsidian Heart, with him at its head.

Returning to the surface, Cooper gathered those loyal to him and successfully usurped control of the guild, preaching the return of the old ways. The lizardfolk cleared the Skull entrance and the tunnels below, allowing the cult to shift



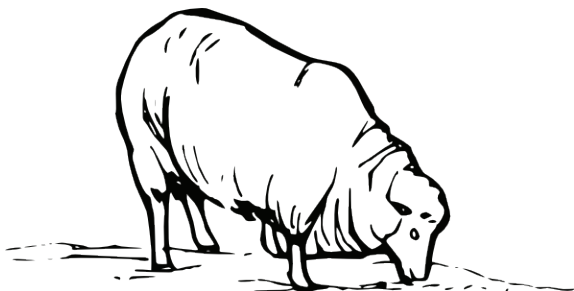
its base of operations there. Guild members who resisted Cooper's changes were killed or forced to flee. Some of these Haberdashers are now hiding in the hills, living as brigands under the leadership of Bars Tolvik.

The revived Obsidian Heart cult embarked upon a campaign of plunder and terror. Thefts and raids increased, as did kidnapping. The members also left cult signs at the scenes of their crimes to inspire fear. In the past, the Haberdashers had taken hostages only occasionally, from among the wealthy, and then returned victims unharmed once the ransom was met. Now the cult began abducting peasants and using them as sacrifices.

The cult also recruited new members among those who felt they had been wronged and wished ill fortune upon their perceived antagonists. These recruits' feelings of resentment were channeled into a sense of superiority at belonging to the secret organization. Soon, the cult grew strong.

Now

Wolford is the seat of government for the valley. Sir Taris, the local lord, seldom occupies his manse, spending months away at court. Grüber, his seneschal, oversees most of the day-to-day tasks. He long ago came to an "arrangement" with the Obscuring Hat, agreeing to look the other way in exchange for modest bribes and the understanding that crimes would be kept within certain limits. The cult is very different matter, however, and current events have gone beyond the pale. Grüber ordered the watch and militia to step up patrols and enforcement. In retaliation, the cult abducted Sir Taris's teenaged son, Aidan, and is currently holding him hostage to stay the seneschal's hand. Knowing that cult spies watch him, Grüber fears to order direct action by town forces, but desperately wants to arrange the lad's safe return before word of the crime reaches Sir Taris at the capital. Toward this end, he discreetly hires the party to rescue Aidan and—if possible—determine the reason for the cult's resurgence and put an end to it.



Town of Wolford

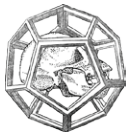
With a population of over 4,000, Wolford is the largest settlement in the valley. In addition to the town itself, there is a textile mill on the river, various outlying farmsteads, and many pastures extending up the mountainsides. The town's main industry is wool. Raw and dyed textiles are made here and shipped all over. As a result, there is a brisk merchant traffic in and out of the valley.

Places of interest:

- ✂ The Manor: Sir Taris's residence when he is not away. A stately mansion in the center of town.
- ✂ Alderhall: The meeting place of the town council. It is also where most of the government offices are located.
- ✂ Mercat Square: The main market and shopping district for the town.
- ✂ The Shrine of Garth: A lawful temple dedicated to the Good Earth, named for the cleric who broke the cult's power over a century ago. See below.
- ✂ The Rat and Pig: A pleasant inn, popular with travelers.
- ✂ The Pikeman: A less savory tavern, frequented by caravan guards and shady sorts.

Major NPCs:

- ✂ Master Gint Grüber: Sir Taris's seneschal. A portly, middle-aged man. He makes most of the day-to-day decisions for administering the knight's holdings. He is shrewd and efficient.
- ✂ Father Dobrun: Lawful (good) Priest of the Good Earth, an elderly but vigorous man with a commanding presence. Serk and Oliver, two Acolytes, assist him (1st-level clerics). See below.
- ✂ Kar Pinebred: A 6th-level, neutral (evil), half-elven assassin. Small and lean, he is Cooper's eyes and ears in town. He is an effective spy and a master of disguise.
- ✂ Rosco Blathers: The owner of the Rat and Pig. He hears a great deal of what is said in his bar, but he keeps his teeth together.
- ✂ Lukas Green: The owner of the Pikeman. He doesn't say much, but if approached cautiously, he can be a useful contact with some of Wolford's shadier elements (including Tolvik).



Shrine of Saint Garth of the Good Earth

Led by Father Elias Dobrun, the populace of Wolford mostly follow the faith of the Good Earth. Their religion emphasizes the blessings of fertile soil, fresh water, bountiful crops, and especially the annual return of rich pasturage for the town's many herds of sheep. Saint Garth, the patron of the Wolford temple, was the mighty cleric hero who cast down the Obsidian Heart many years ago.

Once a week, about three hundred of the most devout Wolforders gather in the Shrine to praise the Good Earth. At these events, should Father Dobrun so desire, he can lead the congregation in lengthy prayers and exercise the spell powers of a 9th-level cleric. His abilities include the power to turn undead but no combat skill, hit dice, or other benefits of the full cleric class. The powers last only while he and the congregation remain in the temple hall, and no longer than sundown. Should the PCs suffer grievous harm in the pursuit of Grüber's request, he will ask Dobrun to help them on the next holy day with whatever healing magic they might require, including *raise dead*.

Tolvik and the Haberdashers

Bars Tolvik was a member of the Haberdashers who resisted Cooper's takeover. Tolvik is a 4th-level neutral thief with *leather armor +1*, a long sword, and a *potion of invisibility*. He and a few other men now hide in the wilderness, living as brigands. They also spy on the cult when they can. He has his men keep careful watch on the movements of the cultists to and from the Skull, awaiting his chance at revenge. They also make periodic raids on farms for food, but dare not try for bigger scores lest they draw the attentions of their enemies. Tolvik knows that if he can't make some definite progress towards taking back control of the guild's turf from the cult, his men will begin to desert him and seek more profitable ventures.

Tolvik has informants in town as well. He soon learns of the PCs and their mission and is intensely interested in how they progress. He and his men observe them as they approach the Skull and encounter the cultists. If the PCs enjoy some measure of success, then Tolvik seeks to make contact with them when they next travel to or from the Skull. He will pick a place to peaceably approach the party that's away from his campsite, under the cover of the trees and hills. He will make sure not to unduly alarm the PCs.

Tolvik will admit that he and his men enjoyed a certain living from criminal activity in the past, but they condemn the recent atrocities that the cult has perpetrated. They wish

to see the Obsidian Heart destroyed. Toward that end, if the party is willing to listen, Tolvik can tell them what he knows of recent events, such as:

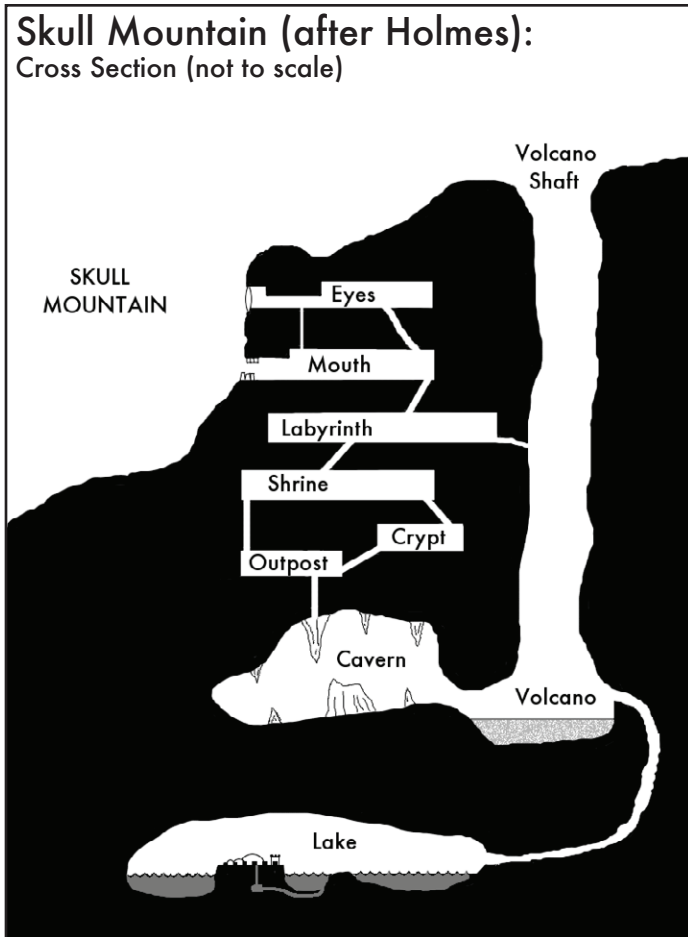
- ✂ The guild has ties to the mountain that go far back into history, the details largely forgotten.
- ✂ Cooper was convicted of guild treason and supposedly executed on the mountaintop.
- ✂ Cooper returned and claimed to speak for the "gods of the mountain," and demanded a return to the "old ways."
- ✂ Grüber used to be in the guild's pocket, but he won't do business with Cooper.
- ✂ The cult has new members all over the valley, not just former guild members.
- ✂ Cooper has spies in town.

It might be possible to persuade Tolvik to lend men to the party, but he would be reluctant to send all of them or to go himself. He would want assurances of their good treatment and shares of any treasure found. Currently, he has nine men in his gang (BRIGANDS, LL87), armed with leather armor, shortbows (20 arrows each), daggers, and short swords. If the party wishes to ask for help, have the bargaining character make a hiring roll (LL46). A successful result means that Tolvik sends 1d6 brigands with the PCs to help fight the cult.

Skull Mountain

Skull Mountain overlooks the valley from the east. Forests of pine and spruce grow on the lower slopes. The top third rises above the tree line, covered in loose rock. A long-dormant volcano, the mountain last erupted when Garth and his cohorts fought the Obsidian Heart over a century ago. Now the mountain has quieted somewhat. The crater issues smoke and steam, but no lava has flowed from the mountain in years.





Approaching the Skull

A hundred yards of steep, rocky ground with little cover lies between the tree line and the Skull. Movement over the loose stones is halved. Running requires a DEX roll every round to avoid falling prone. Characters who fall lose their action for the round.

The carven Skull itself, originally just a rock formation, faces west from a clifflike part of the slope about 100' below the peak.

At the Mountaintop

The crater on the summit is over 100' across, with a shaft going straight down 300' to the lava lake (Level 6). Warm air rises from the broad caldera, with occasional clouds of sulfurous smoke belching forth. Far below appears a dim orange glow. The shaft walls run steeply vertical, but do offer a few handholds and ledges. Each successful Climb Walls check covers 100' (up or down), taking one turn. A failure means no progress that turn; failure by 25% means a fall after 1d10 x 10' progress.

Characters without climbing skill must use a rope to climb up or down, making STR checks to progress. A thief using a rope can proceed without any roll needed.

The player can roll 1d10 for a falling character. On a 1, he hits a solid ledge 1d10 x 10' down, taking appropriate falling damage. If the distance rolled would reach the lava, the character strikes the lizardfolks' bridge on Level 6. On a 2 through 10, the character plunges into the lake of lava and probably suffers instant destruction (p19).

The ledge and tunnel leading from Area 2–3 is 60' down from the crater lip.

Shaft and Crater Wandering Monsters (1 in 6 chance, every 2 turns)

d6	Encounter
1–2	1d10 SUBTERRANEAN LOCUSTS (LL85)
3–4	1 GIANT GECKO (LL84)
5–6	1d10 GIANT BATS (LL64)

Ritual of the Obsidian Heart

The first time PCs approach the Skull by night, a cult ritual is in full swing on a cleared space about 30' x 30' in front of the Skull. One Acolyte and 2d6+6 cultists attend a large bonfire. Flashing, colored fires illuminate the insides of the Skull's eye sockets, and booming sounds echo from the cavernous mouth.

The lay cultists drink freely from an open barrel. The spiced wine contains a mild hallucinogen that makes the light and sounds from the Skull seem more impressive. It also renders the drinker highly suggestible. Drugged cultists fight completely without fear, as BERSERKERS (LL87), never checking Morale. They are unarmored and armed with daggers or firewood clubs. The drug wears off 1d4 hours after the last drink with no major side effects. The Acolyte does not drink.

Acolyte: 1st-level cleric. AL: Chaotic (evil); HD: 1 (6 hp); AC: 8 (leather armor under robes); Mace (1d6); unholy symbol (heart-shaped obsidian pendant), large iron key (fits doors in Area 1B–3).

Spell: *remove (cause) fear*.



Level 1: Behind the Skull

Area 1A-1: Fire in the Eyes

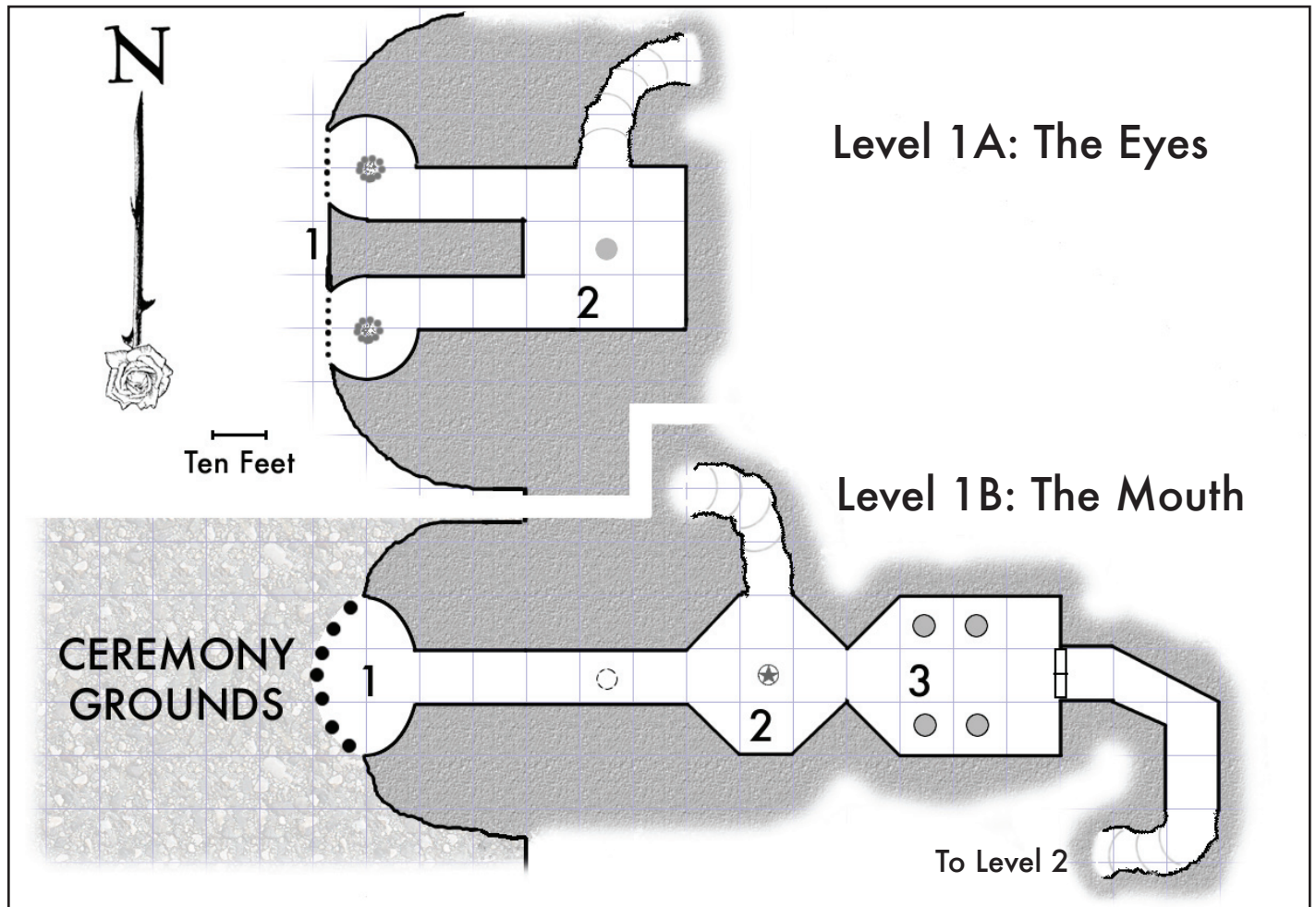
The two eye sockets are caves, 20' above the ground and 8' in diameter. Bars cover the openings, far enough apart to keep watch or shoot, but too narrow to climb through. Inside, large iron fire baskets make the eyes glow. Two Initiates in each eye feed the flames and keep watch during the rituals. At other times there is only one sentry per eye. In each socket, a stack of firewood and a bucket full of green powder stands against one wall. Initiates toss a handful of the powder onto the flames to make them momentarily flare in different colors at various points of the rituals. A tunnel leads from each eye back into the mountain.

The Initiates wear leather armor and carry daggers, longbows, and 20 arrows each. They attack and save as normal men. The eyes' elevated vantage gives the sentries +1 to hit and -2 AC for cover vs. foes on the ground below. Due to the brightness of the fires, it is hard for the initiates to spot someone approaching during ritual nights, despite

the excellent view from the eyes. Characters trying to sneak up on a ritual can make DEX checks with a bonus of +1 to get within 50' of the bonfire (closer than that is within the firelight). Characters with the Hide in Shadows skill can try both Hide in Shadows and a DEX check at a +2 bonus, with either success sufficing. Metal armor negates the bonuses. Silence is hardly required as the drums cover all but the loudest noises.

Area 1A-2: Murder Hole

Two tunnels lead out of this small chamber towards the eyes, and one winds downward towards Area 1B-2. A two-foot diameter hole in the middle of the floor here is the opening of a six-foot shaft, exiting through the ceiling of Area 1B-1. A small burning lamp hangs over the hole from a chain in the ceiling, with a bucket of extra lamp oil hung on a wall hook. If intruders try to enter the Skull through the mouth, one of the sentries will come to this room and ready the bucket, pouring its contents on whoever passes beneath the hole and dousing him with oil. The sentry then





tugs a cord to drop the lamp on the target, who may save vs. breath attacks to avoid being ignited. The oil burns for two rounds and deals 1d8 damage per round. The oil also covers a wide section of the hallway under the hole, blocking the way farther into the tunnel while it burns for one turn.

Area 1B-1: Mouth

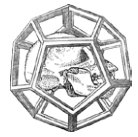
The mouth opening is 30' wide and 10' tall. The “teeth” are five squat, waist-high boulders set into the ground about three feet apart. The opening narrows into a tunnel going straight back. There is a 2'-wide hole in the ceiling halfway down the passage. This is the murder hole from Area 1A-2. It is difficult to spot the hole among the rough stone unless proceeding cautiously.

Area 1B-2: Statue Chamber

A large black stone carving stands in the middle of this round chamber. It looks like a cloaked man with horns and a bestial snout. The figure is over eight feet tall and carved of incredibly hard basalt. It looks crude at first, but someone knowledgeable in stonework or art who spends some time examining it can make an INT roll to see that it was subtly crafted to leave many details intentionally vague. The overall effect of the statue is one of brooding menace. The statue is a representation of the Avatar as it appeared to the founders of the cult. Besides the tunnel from the main entrance, there are two others here: one leads straight back to Area 1B-3, the other goes up to Level 1A.

Area 1B-3: Drums in the Deep

This wide hallway has two large kettle drums along each side of it. There is a pair of stone double doors at the far end. These drums are how the booming sounds are made that echo from the mouth during the rituals. If the PCs have interrupted a ritual, then there is a 50% chance that a drummer is hiding behind each of the instruments with drumsticks in his hands. If the party enters the chamber the drummers will jump out and attack, surprising on a 1-3. The drumsticks act as clubs (1d4 damage). The drummers wield both at once (AEC142), but due to the larger size of the clubs, they receive a -5 with their off hand attacks (-2/-5). The double doors are locked. The Acolyte at the bonfire has a key.



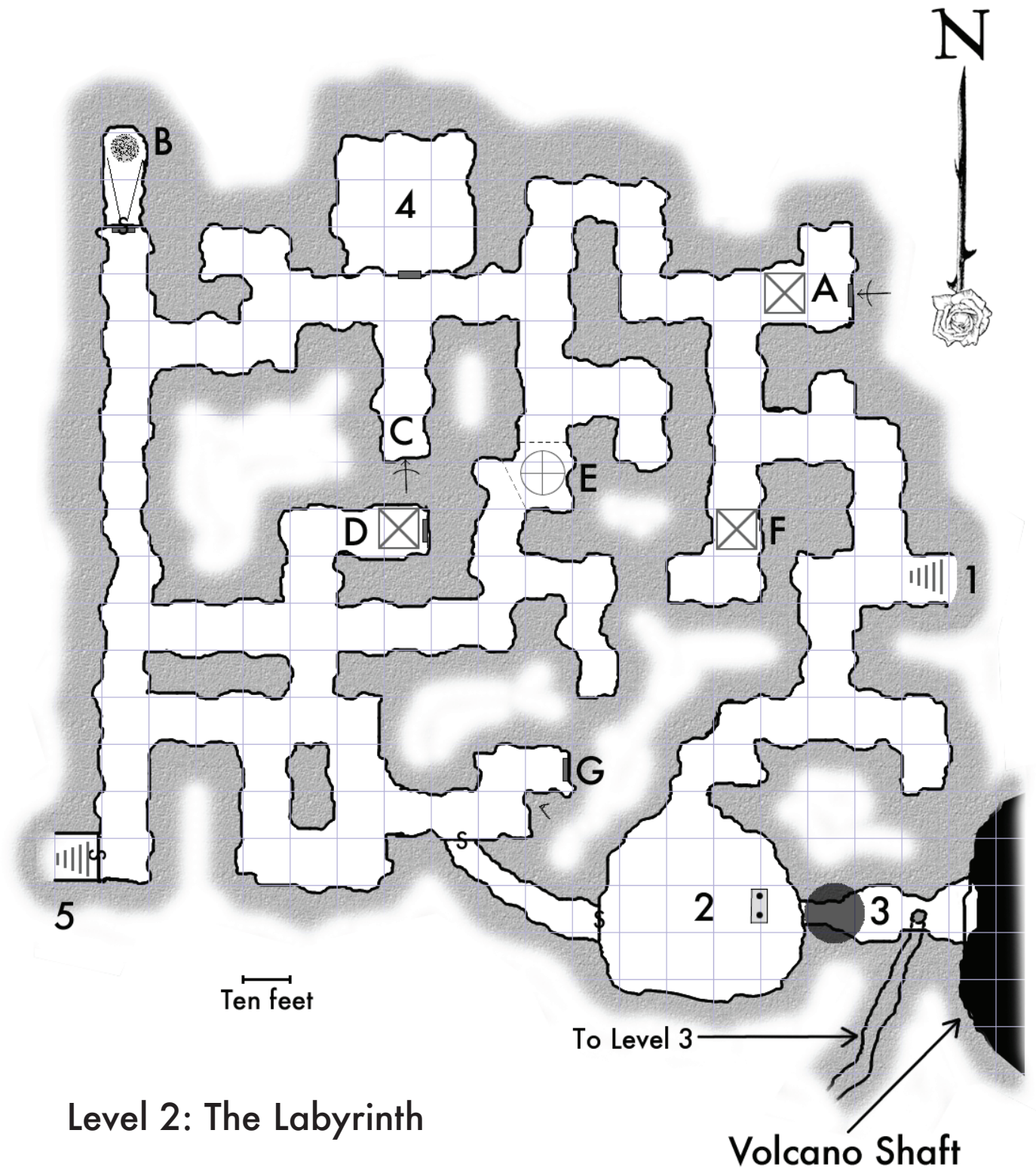
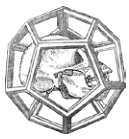
Level 2: The Labyrinth

Long ago, the cult expanded this series of lava tubes and turned them into a maze. The twisting passages help to keep the unwelcome from finding their way to the lower levels. The maze is also heavily booby-trapped. The traps are kept in good working order and activate on a roll of 1-4 on a d6. Those inducted into the cult's inner circles are taught the ways through the maze and how to avoid the traps. If they detect intruders, the four Initiates split into two pairs and track them through the maze, springing hit-and-run ambushes, luring pursuers into trapped areas, and throwing down caltrops (New Items, p34) or oil on the ground at intersections. Caltrops do 1d3-1 damage to the victims' feet and slow movement to half speed (no running) until the damage is healed. Each Initiate carries a lit torch; throwing one into oil as their foes step into the puddle inflicts 1d8 damage for two rounds.

Initiates (4): AL: Chaotic (evil); HD 1 (5 hp); AC: 8 (leather armor); Saves: F0; Attacks: 1; Damage: short sword (1d6) or short bow (1d6, 50'/100'/150'); Morale: 9; XP: 10. Each carries 10 arrows, a flint & steel, 3 torches, 2 pints oil, and a sack of caltrops.

Traps:

- A. A 20' pit at the intersection (2d6 falling damage). Beyond the pit is a false door with a crossbow bolt trap (attacks as a 1st-level fighter, 1d8 damage).
- B. The entire westernmost corridor slopes gently up toward the north end (dwarfs and gnomes have a chance to notice) ending at a poorly-disguised secret door in the end of the hall (4 in 6 chance of finding). Opening the door releases the boulder, which rolls the length of the hall (2d6 damage, save vs. petrify negates).
- C. A poisoned arrow trap that fires at anyone trying to open the door to Area 2-4 without using the secret catch. (Attacks as a 1st-level fighter. 1d6 damage, save vs. poison or die in 1 turn.)
- D. A 20' spiked pit (fall on 1d4 spikes, dealing 1d6 damage each in addition to 2d6 falling damage) with a false door behind it.
- E. A deadfall trap (bricks from the ceiling). Trip lines run above the floor on either side. (2d6 damage in a 10' x 10' area, save vs. petrify halves.)
- F. A 20' pit (2d6 falling damage).
- G. A false door with a scything blade trap (1d8, save vs. petrify negates).



Level 2: The Labyrinth



Area 2-1: Stairs

The passage from Area 1B-3 winds around and ends in a stairway down to the second level. The corridors are unfinished stone cut out of the mountain.

Area 2-2: Dark Chapel

The room's walls are covered in carvings and murals showing scenes of plunder and murder. Skull Mountain is featured heavily in the backgrounds. One wall is blank except for the carving of a large, sinister face. Its brow is horned and its eyes are large black crystals: **Illustration 1**. The mouth gapes wide on impenetrable darkness. A long altar of obsidian stands in front of the face, reddish light pulsing deep within the black rock.

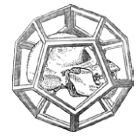
The altar is the exposed tip of an obsidian vein which angles down to the lava lake. The light from the lava shines dimly up through the stone from far below. The surface is slightly warm to the touch.

Anyone touching the altar is immediately *cursed*. He experiences "the weight of the mountain," halving his STR and slowing his movement rate by one encumbrance level (LL44). If his movement is slowed to below 10', he can only stagger (5' per round, no running) and must make a STR check (at the reduced score) every turn or collapse. The effect is permanent unless the victim receives a *remove curse* (LL25), or uses the secret of the altar.

The altar weakens sacrifices so they will be easier to manage. It is also used in initiation rituals. The new member places his hands on the altar and feels "the power of the god" weighing him down. The Priest leads the Initiate through the oaths. Once this is complete, the Priest cuts a V-shaped design onto the new Initiate's arm. When the blood touches the altar, the *curse* is lifted. The only necessary part is for at least a drop of fresh blood from the *cursed* person to touch the stone.

Area 2-3: In the Idol's Mouth

The throat of the idol is a tunnel roughly 4 feet in diameter that slopes sharply downwards for 10' before leveling out in a wide chamber. The chamber has *continual darkness* and *silence 15' radius* permanently cast on it. The far side of the chamber opens onto a ledge overlooking the lava shaft, 60' below the crater lip.



In the past, the dragon would fly up to take sacrifices and treasure from here. Now the Priests retrieve them via a secret tunnel from Area 3-1 after the ceremony is over, and take them below for delivery to the lizardfolk.

Area 2-4: Briefing Room

If the party has come this far without raising an alarm, the four human Initiates are here, studying the wall map. Several stools are in here, each with a slate and chalk lying on it. There is a large map on one wall showing the valley and immediate surrounds. Several points along the roads are marked in red (prime ambush spots). An open crate holds 16 torches, 8 pints of oil, and 4 sacks of caltrops.

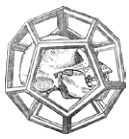
This room is where the Priests of the Obsidian Heart give their minions assignments. Sometimes these missions can be simple thefts or raids; others might be intelligence-gathering or espionage. Initiates are expected to write out their orders and show them to the Priests to insure there is no confusion; then they erase the slates. One of the slates is not fully erased and some writing is still visible. The words are a type of thieves' cant based on Common, but spelled phonetically in a strange alphabet (lizardfolk). Read languages checks (LL14) are at -25%. The *read languages* spell (LL38) works automatically, but doesn't recover the erased portions of the text.

Translated, the full text was:

**TAKE TEAM EAST
PREPARE FOR SIR T'S
RETURN. SLAY THEM ALL
BRING HIS FIRESWORD
FOR THE AVATAR.**

What remains is shown below and in **Illustration 2**.

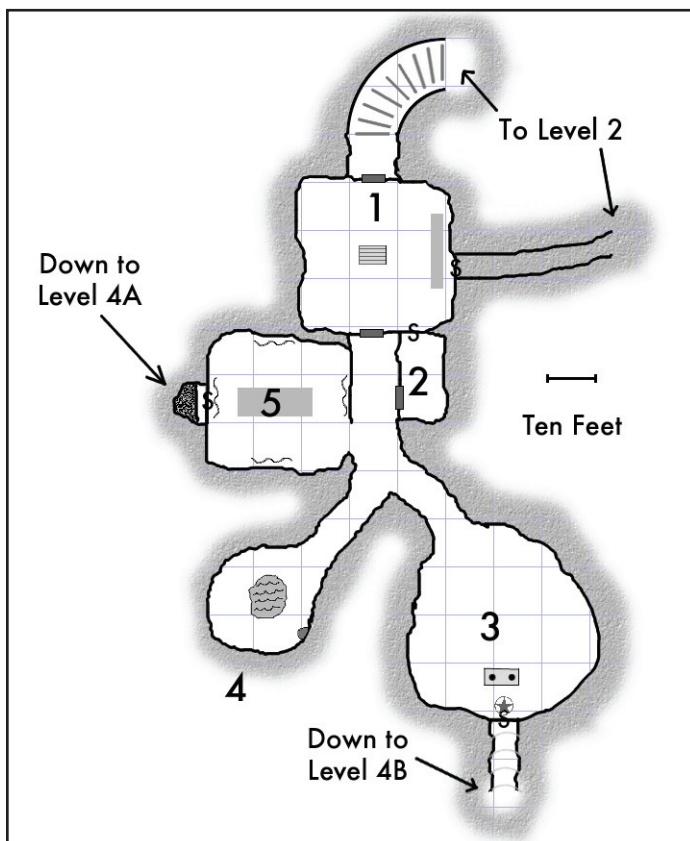
**EAM EA
E FOR SIR
SLAY TH
FIRESW
VATAR.**



Area 2–5: Stairs Down

There is a secret door in the southwest corner of the westernmost corridor. The stairs behind it wind down to Level 3. The door is not locked or trapped, but there is an alarm cord attached to the inside of the door that rings a bell in Area 3–1, alerting anyone there that the door has been opened. Only thieves have any chance to find or disarm this alarm, and they are at a –20% penalty for both.

Level 3: The Shrine



Area 3–1: Counting Room

A brightly glowing, egg-shaped stone, sitting on the corner of the central desk, lights this room clearly. A long workbench runs along one wall. There are five large holes in a row cut through the surface of the bench, with a bucket sitting underneath each. A set of brass scales stands atop. Three empty sets of manacles hang from the opposite wall. In the center of the room is a stool and the writing desk, with paper, quills, and ink vials on it. There is a stone door directly opposite the stairs.

This is where the treasure is tallied before being sent below or distributed among the cultists. Prisoners are locked in manacles as they await being delivered. Each of the holes in the bench has letters (in Common) painted next to the opening: PP, GP, EP, SP, and CP, respectively. This is how the Priests sort the coins for counting. The stone has *continual light* cast on it. There is a scroll case in the desk drawer. Inside it is some sort of list, written in the same strange symbols as the slate in Area 2–4. Characters who successfully translated the slate incur no penalty for a Read Language check of this writing. As shown in **Illustration 3**, the translated list reads:

- ✂ 1,148 gold pieces
- ✂ 3,813 silver pieces
- ✂ 522 electrum pieces
- ✂ 4 (four) loose gemstones (opals)
- ✂ 1 (one) silver tiara with 3 diamonds
- ✂ 1 (one) long sword with snake hilt and black scabbard. Dweomer
- ✂ 1 (one) short staff of black wood, unadorned. Dweomer
- ✂ 6 (six) vials containing various liquids. Dweomers

There are two secret doors in this room. One leads to Area 3–2 and is trapped with a poison needle (save vs. poison or die in 1d3 turns). The other is behind a section of the workbench and enters a tunnel which leads to Area 2–3. This is how the Priests retrieve sacrifices and treasure from behind the idol's mouth.

Area 3–2: Vault

This is a narrow room lined with shelves. A door stands in the southwest corner. Treasure is stored here after sorting until it is sent below or paid out among the cultists. The shelves are currently almost empty. On one shelf is a large velvet pouch and a carved wooden coffer with two drawers on the front and a lid. The pouch contains 110 pp and a small, flawless ruby (500 gp). The coffer is locked but not trapped; it is of good quality and worth 200 gp with the key, which Cooper holds. The single lock releases the lid and both drawers. Opening the lid reveals a shallow tray filled with 1,000 sp. The drawers are velvet-lined. The top one holds two glass vials of liquid: a *potion of extra-healing* and a *potion of super-heroism*. The bottom drawer holds a strand of pearls (500 gp), a silver brooch (100 gp), and a platinum



signet ring (1,000 gp) bearing the device of Sir Taris: a griffon rampant before a quartered shield. The ring is Aidan's. Anyone from the valley can identify the device, and PCs may recall seeing it on flags in Wolford.



Area 3-3: Burial Chamber

COOPER is in this room with three LIZARDFOLK WARRIORS (Monsters & Foes, p32). He has just returned from delivering treasure below to collect Aidan and keep him prisoner in the Dome of the Priests (Level 7). If Cooper is alerted to the PCs' presence before they arrive in this room, he drinks an *invisibility* potion and Moves Silently to investigate (skill 58%). The lizardfolk wait for his signal or any sounds of trouble. If Cooper sees any spellcasters among the party, he casts *silence 15' radius*. Cooper targets a point near them to avoid dispelling his invisibility (not a direct "attack"). He then tries to backstab whoever he thinks is the greatest threat. Once he becomes visible, he uses the *mask of terror* (New Items, p34) to try to scare off some PCs, preferably towards the lizardfolk. Failing that, he will take an action to throw a knife down the hall, out of the *silence* effect, to alert the lizardfolk that the fight has started.

Carvings of skulls cover the walls of this domed chamber. There is a plain stone altar in the center of the room flanked by iron braziers. Behind the altar, a huge statue protrudes halfway from the wall, surrounded by an archway. The figure is of a massive lizard-man, caught mid-stride walking out of the smooth stone wall within the arch. One taloned hand is held out slightly, palm up.

This room is where the rites of the dead are performed for deceased Priests and senior members of the cult. There is secret door in the archway, but there is no mechanism visible. Attempts to open the door incorrectly awaken the ENTRANCE GUARDIAN (p33). The statue will not pursue targets beyond the chamber. If no enemies are present, it will return to its spot in the archway.

The statue is programmed to open the doorway if there is at least a portion of a human corpse on the altar and someone pushes the stone hand downwards. One of the skulls on the wall is actually real, not a carving. It rests in a niche. A successful search finds the skull. Cooper uses this as a "key" if no cadaver is present. The doorway reveals the passage to the Crypts (Level 4B).



Area 3-4: Scrying Pool

The walls of this small natural chamber are covered in sigils and runes, painted in a riot of colors. The floor of the cavern is red obsidian. In its center is a circular pool, about three feet across and full of a dark liquid. A small niche carved in one wall holds two stoppered clay bottles. One is black, the other a chalky white.

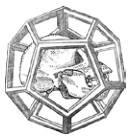
Long ago, the dragon instructed the Priests of the cult in the rituals needed to create a scrying pool. It functions for any cleric much as a crystal ball (LL117) does for magic-users and elves. The Priests use it for spying on enemies and seeking new targets. Unbeknownst to the Priests, the dragon included an enchantment in the pool's creation, which allows it to also see whatever the Priests are scrying. The liquid is non-potable water, made dark from the minerals in it. The pool is eight feet deep and formed entirely of red obsidian, radiating magic.

To activate the pool, the Priests put a drop of the sacred oil from the black flask into the water. This turns the water clear and activates the powers for one turn. The white flask contains a small quantity of whitish powder. If any is put in the water, it reacts with the minerals there and releases a cloud of poisonous gas, filling the chamber. Anyone caught in the cloud must save vs. poison or die choking in 1d4 rounds. The cloud dissipates in one turn.

Area 3-5: Meeting Room

Tapestries hang over most of the walls in this rectangular room. A large stone table dominates the center of the floor, surrounded by high backed chairs. A silver candelabrum stands in the center of it and glows with magical light. Here is where the Priests of the cult meet. The eleven tapestries are worth 100 gp each but each weighs 80 pounds. They are patterned with complex spiraling designs. The candelabrum is worth 100 gp and has *continual light* cast on it.

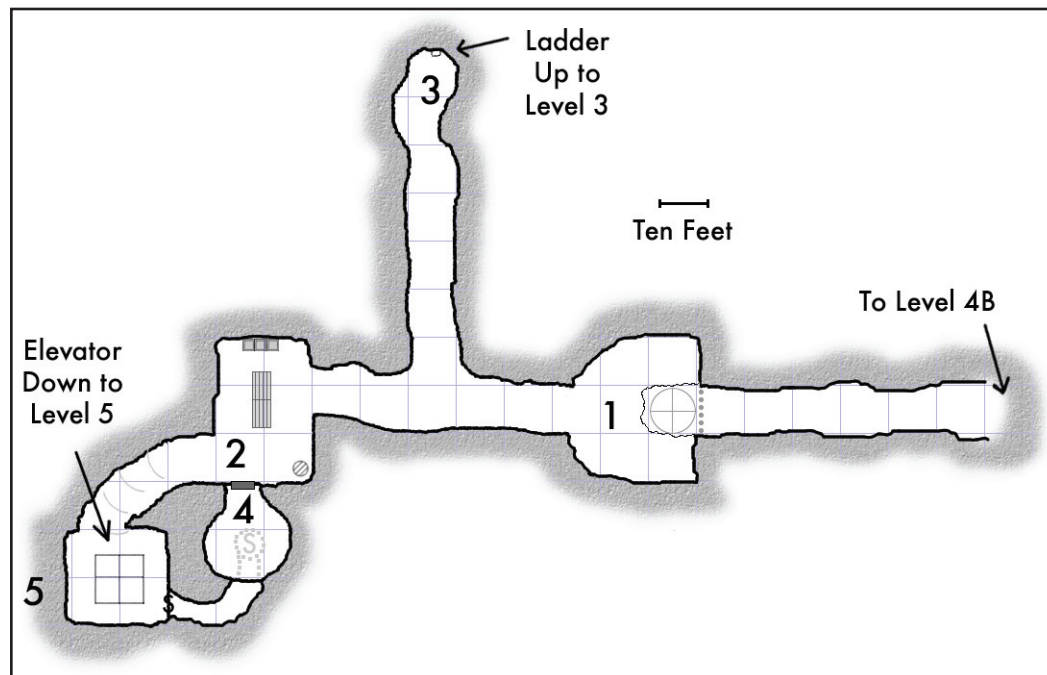
Aidan is chained to a seat here. In addition to being manacled, he is drugged and blindfolded. He is not unconscious, but very sluggish: Move 20', cannot run or fight. The drug will wear off normally in 1d4 hours. He is still in the nightgown he was wearing when abducted, and somewhat disheveled, but otherwise unharmed. **Aidan:** F0, AC 9, 4 hp; age 14.



A lizardfolk warrior keeps watch on Aidan through a peephole from the ledge in Area 4A-3. A secret door behind one of the tapestries opens to the ledge. The lizardfolk keep this place hidden from the Priests, so they can spy on them. If the PCs try to free Aidan, or the sentry hears trouble in the halls, he alerts the other guards below. In 1d6 rounds, he and three other lizardfolk warriors come through the secret door.

Out of sight from the pit, a tunnel leads to the rest of the level. Two levers—one red, one black—are on the wall next to the tunnel and a ladder lies on the floor under them. A weapon rack holds six javelins and six long spears. The lizardfolk stay out of sight and call out in their language, asking for the password. Cooper is the only non-lizardfolk that knows it (“Avatar” in the lizardfolk language). If the correct password is given, the lizardfolk will assume whoever is in the pit is from Cooper and question them about why they’ve come.

Level 4A: The Outpost



Failure to respond correctly, or attempting to leave the pit without permission, results in attack. The lizardfolk pull the red lever, which drops several large clay jars of oil suspended in a net over the pit (2d6 damage, save vs. petrify halves). The jars break, covering the inside of the pit with oil. One lizardfolk begins to light a torch while the others throw javelins into the pit or use the spears to keep anyone from climbing out. On the third round, they throw in the torch. The oil burns for 10 rounds, dealing 1d8 damage per round to anyone inside the pit. The black lever opens the portcullis again and resets the pressure plate.

Area 4A-1: Pit Chamber

The tunnel from Area 4B-4 comes out here inside a pit, surrounded by a 15'-high ledge on three sides. The walls are very smooth. Climbing checks are at -20%. Characters without the climbing skill cannot try to scale the walls without something like a grappling line or a ladder. Anyone outside the pit gains a +1 to hit and -1 AC for cover vs. anyone inside the pit.

The floor of the pit contains a pressure plate that causes a portcullis to fall, blocking the way back to the stairs. This rings a gong that alerts the lizardfolk in Area 4A-2 that someone has entered the pit; 1d4 of them arrive within 1d6 rounds.

Area 4A-2: Canteen

This is where the lizardfolk take their meals and relax when not on duty. A crude stone block in the middle of the room serves as a table, and a large urn full of fish-smelling water stands in one corner. Small wicker cages are stacked against one wall. They are full of live rats, crawling over one another in their prisons.

In addition to those who investigate Area 4A-1, there are 1d6+2 lizardfolk eating and drinking in here: half warriors, half archers. If the Captain is in Area 4A-4 (50%), he gets a Hear Noise check each round of combat or shouting to realize there is trouble. There are a dozen rat cages stacked together. Four are empty; the other eight hold three ordinary rats (LL92) each. The lizardfolk eat the live rats. They also flavor their water with dead fish; it is drinkable by humans, but it smells awful. If released,



the rats make a monster reaction roll to see whether they attack (LL52). Anything other than a “hostile” result means they flee, heading toward Level 5. However, if there are any lizardfolk alive here when the rats are loosed, they automatically swarm to attack them! The door in this room leads to Area 4A–4.

Area 4A–3: Chute and Ladder

A rope ladder hangs in this vertical shaft, secured 40' above behind the secret door to Area 3–5. From the four-foot ledge, a lizardfolk warrior spies on the Priests’ meeting room through a peephole. The secret door is visible from this side and kept bolted. It opens inward, but there is room for someone to stand to one side on the ledge as it swings.

Area 4A–4: Darkling’s Room

Half the time, the DARKLING CAPTAIN (p33) is in this domed chamber and the door is bolted from inside. The rest of the time, he is down in the Outpost on Level 5. There is a low table and a stool here, but nothing of value. A secret trapdoor under the table reveals a tunnel that leads to Area 4A–5. If the Captain hears trouble elsewhere in the level and suspects his troops are being overpowered, he escapes to Area 4A–5 and then takes the elevator to Level 5, striking the alarm gong at Area 5–1.

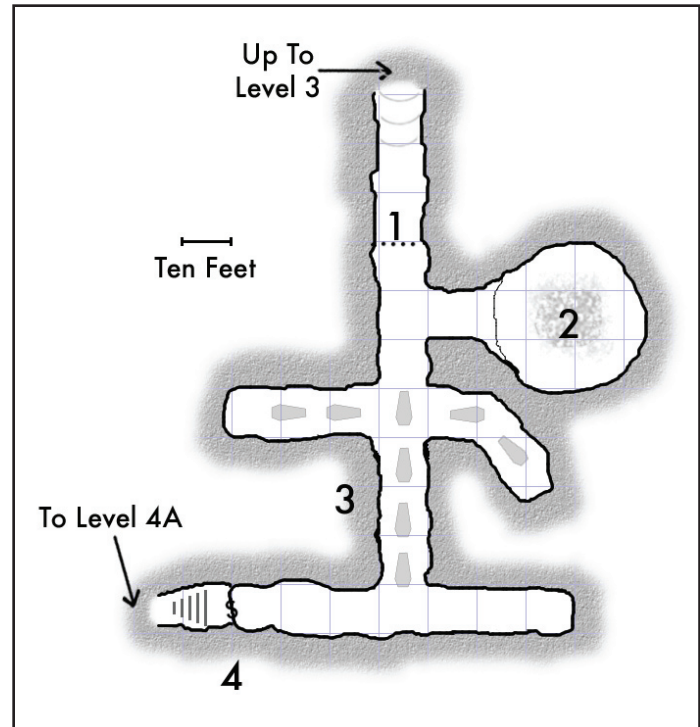
Area 4A–5: Elevator

Most of this room is taken up with a shaft going down through the floor and a large winch and pulley device next to it. A wooden platform hangs by ropes in the shaft, almost 10' on a side, with only a few inches of space between it and the sides of the shaft. If the Darkling Captain has taken the elevator, the ropes go into the shaft and the platform hangs out of sight far below. Otherwise it is level with the floor.

This obvious elevator is easily operated by a counterweight system. One person can pull the ropes to move up to five human-sized passengers and their equipment up or down at 10' per round. The shaft is 60' deep and ends in Area 5–1. The device is perfectly secure if it isn’t tampered with. The tunnel exit from Area 4A–4 comes out behind the winch device. A large person can just squeeze in and out from behind the mechanism.



Level 4B: The Crypts

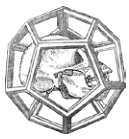


Area 4B–1: Entrance

The earthquake and eruptions collapsed portions of these catacombs. The cult has cleared much of it, but signs of the damage can still be seen. The iron gate that barred this end of the tunnel was battered and destroyed. It lies twisted in some rubble and has been replaced with a new one that is locked tight. Cooper has the key to the lock.

Area 4B–2: Lime Pit

A shovel leans against the wall next to the entrance and a 5'-high conical pile of lime rises from the middle of the floor. In the glory days of the Obsidian Heart cult, lesser priests and initiates were buried under the lime here until their bones were dry enough to wrap and be placed into niches along the catacomb walls. Currently, the remains of three new Acolytes are in the pile. They have been dead about a month. In a few more weeks, they will be properly laid to rest. The bodies are not visible from outside the pile.



Area 4B-3: Catacombs

The tunnels are rough, but a fairly uniform 6' in width. Shelf-like niches carved into the walls hold skeletal remains wrapped in linens. Every few yards, there is a polished gray rectangular slab set into the floor. Each has a set of initials carved on it. The floor slabs mark the graves of the cult's past High Priests. Most are worn so smooth as to be illegible, but the first four are more elaborately carved and the letters were chiseled deeper into the rock. They read: GG, DA, TM, and JH.

If any High Priest's grave is disturbed, the four sets of bones nearest the entrance animate and combine into a BONE GOLEM (LL79). It is armed with four femur bones that it wields as clubs (1d4+1 each). It will attack anyone in the catacombs without hesitation, but will not pursue off this sublevel.

Area 4B-4: Secret Stairs

In both directions, the tunnel appears to come to an end. At the end of the western tunnel is a carving of a face. It is three feet across and crudely fashioned, looking almost like a natural formation that was accentuated with hammer and chisel. The face is where Cooper gets instructions from below. It also conceals a secret door, opened by simultaneously pressing the catches inside each eye and pushing the door inward. Beyond is a spiral stairway carved out of the rock. It winds downward 50' before reaching the tunnel into Area 4A-1.

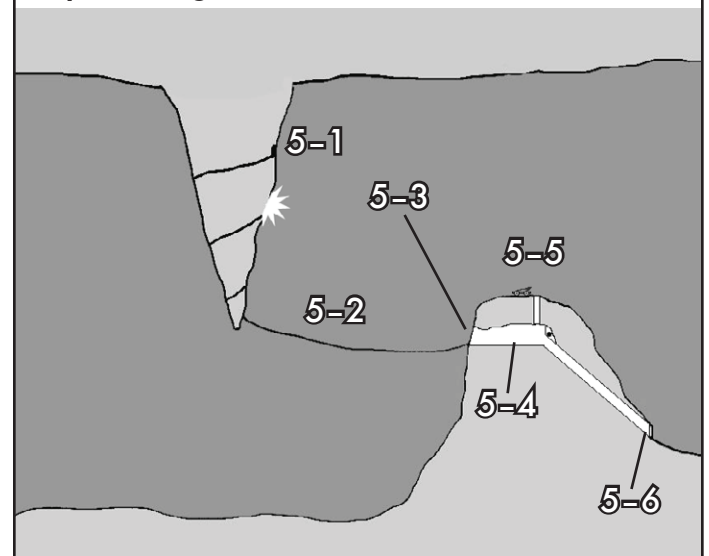
Level 5: The Cavern

Maps: Important areas of Level 5 appear on individual maps below. On each, one square equals ten feet.

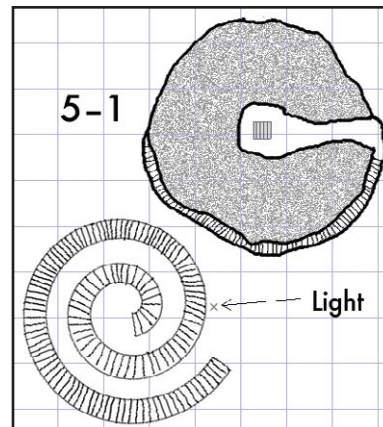
Level 5 Wandering Monsters (1 in 6 chance, every 2 turns)

d8	Encounter
1	1d6 CARNIVOROUS BEETLES (LL65)
2	GRAY WORM (LL80)
3-4	1d3 RHADOGESSAS (LL92)
5-6	1d10 SUBTERRANEAN LOCUSTS (LL85)
7	2d4 LIZARDFOLK WARRIORS (p33)
8	GIANT TUATARA (LL84)

Cross Section: The Winding Stair, Rope Bridge, and Guard Post



Area 5-1: The Winding Stair



The elevator from Area 4A-5 descends to small chamber with a single exit. The tunnel comes out onto a narrow cliffside ledge, sloping out and up. Blackness is all around. A metal disc, about a foot across, hangs loosely on the wall next to the tunnel's mouth. To the right, a staircase carved from the

rock descends, curving back out of sight: **Illustration 4.**

The ledge and stairs are on the side of an enormous stalactite, hanging in a gigantic cavern. The stalactite is over 50' in diameter at its widest and 150' long, base to tip. The steps spiral around and down toward the tip. The stairway is 4' wide and 250' long. There is no railing, but the rock wall is rough enough to provide handholds.

The disc is a signal gong. Descending lizardfolk strike it three times with a weapon hilt or similar, pausing between each note. The ringing alerts the sentries below that they are coming. If there is trouble on the stairs, any lizardfolk who gets the chance strikes the gong rapidly several times, sounding the alarm to the Outpost (Areas 5-3 through 5-6).

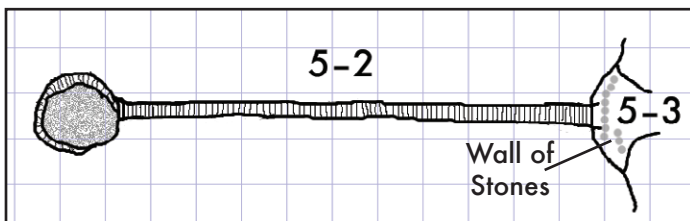
Despite its precarious appearance, the stair is perfectly safe, provided one can see where he's putting his feet and



simply walks up or down the steps. Combat, running, or other difficult maneuvers may require a DEX check. A failure means the action is aborted as the character must spend the round steadying himself. The LL might require those failing their check badly to save vs. petrify or fall! It is 200' from the top of the stair to the cavern floor below and 100' from the tip of the stalactite to the floor.

Halfway down the stairs, a glowing iron spike has been driven into the wall about 4' above the steps. The *continual light* illuminates about 40' of the stairs before they curve out of the light on either end. This portion of the stair faces the lizardfolk outpost (Area 5-3) and the sentries have a 3 in 6 chance of spotting anyone crossing this lit section; 4 in 6 if the climbers are making much noise or carrying their own light source; 5 in 6 if both. A formidable-looking group may come under catapult fire from Area 5-5.

Area 5-2: Rope Bridge

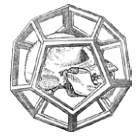


The stairs end near the tip of the cone. Two fencepost-sized spikes are driven into the rock and a rope bridge extends from them into blackness.

The bridge leads to Area 5-3. It is 3' wide, 100' long, and 100' above the cavern floor. The bridge can safely hold the weight of ten human-sized people. Each additional man-weight adds a 1 in 20 chance per round of the ropes breaking or the posts pulling loose. Fighting, firing missiles, spellcasting, or running while on the bridge requires a DEX check each round, or the character must stop and steady himself instead of acting.

Area 5-3: Guard Post Entrance

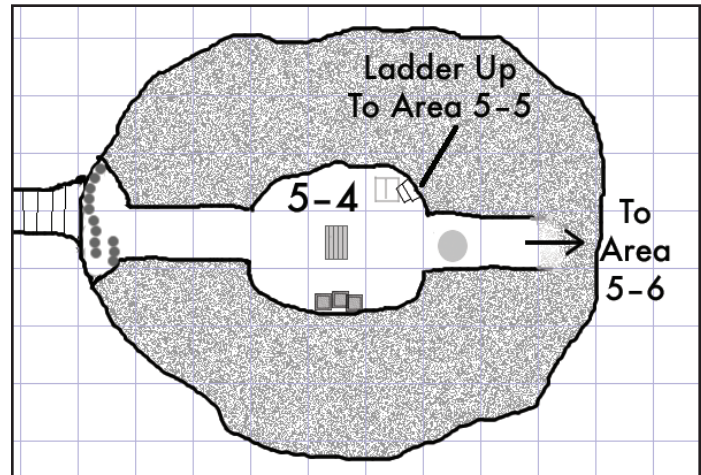
The bridge ends at a ledge on a sheer cliff, 100' above the cavern floor. Large stones are piled into a crude breastwork on the ledge, guarding a cave mouth. Above, the cliff slopes back into a hill, with the top (Area 5-5) about 15' above. Two lizardfolk archers keep station here, with a -2 AC bonus from behind the wall of stones. The cave leads to a tunnel that goes 30' straight back, ending in Area 5-4.



If there is trouble on the stairs, the sentries alert four off-duty warriors within the outpost. These reinforcements will be ready in 1d6 rounds. Their tactics are to cross the bridge, then ascend the stairs to engage the intruders. They are armed with spiked clubs and three javelins each.

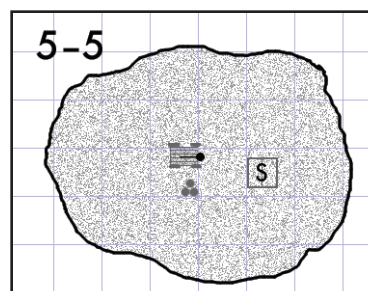
The lizardfolk keep a battle axe handy, and can use it to sever the bridge ropes in two rounds if necessary. In case anyone tries climbing up from the cavern floor, they have three buckets of fish oil handy to pour on climbers and ignite. The oil does 1d8 damage per round for two rounds unless extinguished. A rope will burn through in one round.

Area 5-4: Main Guard Room

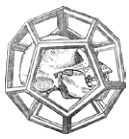


This is a long, rectangular room with a stone table, a fire pit, a clay urn, and several wooden cages full of rats. A wooden ladder stands in one corner. There are 1d6+2 lizardfolk here, half of which are archers. If the Darkling Captain is not on Level 4A, he is found here. The ladder ends at a trap door, opening on Area 5-5 on the "roof" of the hill. Another tunnel leaves the room, descending in a sharply sloping ramp. There are a total of 30 normal rats in the cages and the urn is full of fishy water.

Area 5-5: Roof



The top of the hill is a relatively flat space overlooking a vast underground cavern. Everything is dark except the pool of light high up on the stalactite stairs (Area 5-1). Other than a



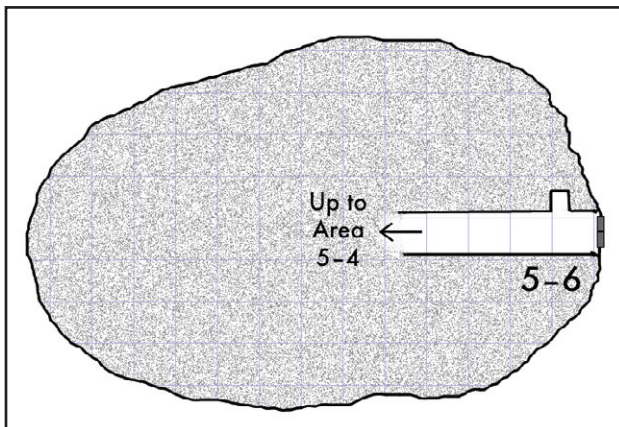
large boulder and a stack of smaller rocks, there is little to see up here.

The “boulder” is actually a well-camouflaged tarp covering a catapult (LL58). The 20 stacked, pumpkin-sized boulders are the ammunition (3d6 damage). The catapult is on wheels and can be turned in any direction, and can be arced to hit the rope bridge or the facing side of the winding stair. There are also five three-gallon, rag-stoppered jugs of oil and a tinder box under the tarp. The jugs are for fire shots: with the rags lit before launch, a jug shatters on impact, splashing a 15' radius with burning oil for one turn.

If necessary, four lizardfolk warriors come up here to operate the siege weapon. They are hesitant to aim the catapult too close to the bridge, but will if necessary. There is a secret trap door, disguised as a flat rock, which leads down to the ladder in Area 5–4.

The back of the hill is a gentler grade than the front and can be traversed without climbing rolls. There is a set of heavy stone double doors set into the bottom of the hill (Area 5–6).

Area 5–6: Rear Gate



Within the stony hill, a steeply-sloped passage leads down to a set of stone double doors, the passage leveling just before them. There is a small alcove to one side, about five feet before the doors. Normally there are two lizardfolk on guard duty here: one warrior and one archer. There is an arrow slit in the wall next to the doors, looking out on the cavern. It grants a –4 AC bonus to those inside.

There is a large boulder concealed above the top of the ramp (just outside Area 5–4) and a trigger lever in the alcove near the doors. If things look desperate for the outpost, the guards can step into the alcove and pull the lever, releasing the boulder. It rolls down the ramp. Everyone in its path takes 3d6 damage (save vs. petrify halves). Anyone in the

alcove, up to two normal-sized people, is safe from the trap. The boulder stops when it crashes into the doors, wedging them firmly shut (cannot be forced open with less than giant strength or 1d4 hours digging). The boulder can also be released at the top of the ramp by cutting the ropes from beneath. Doing so requires a DEX check to jump out of the way before the rock falls.

On the outside, several broad steps lead up to the door. A path leads away from the steps out into the cavern, but it quickly becomes indistinguishable from the rest of the rocky ground. The floor of the cave is riddled with loose stones, stalagmites, columns, and boulders. The outside of each door is carved with the same symbol. It looks like a backward “S” with hash marks near either end: **Illustration 5**. This is the symbol the lizardfolk use to blaze trails and mark their territories in the caves. There are similar blazes every 100 yards or so, painted on boulders with a faintly glowing dye made from luminescent fungus. A total of six markers form a route across the wide cavern floor, past Area 5–7, and finally to the cavern’s wall and the entrance to Area 5–8. Characters can make INT checks every other turn to see if they spot the next marker. Rangers or others with the tracking skill (AEC19) can find the whole trail with one successful skill roll.

Area 5–7: Spider Sword

Between the 4th and 5th trail markers, a GIANT BLACK WIDOW SPIDER (LL97) recently ambushed a lone lizardfolk messenger, snatching him up into the air and carrying him towards its web between two stalactites. The lizardfolk managed to wound the spider with his sword, but the creature’s poison took hold and the blade dropped from his lifeless hand, embedding itself point first in the gravel below. The lizardfolk warrior’s desiccated body hangs in a giant web, 40' above the sword. There is nothing of interest or value on the body.

The sword is visible, sticking out of the ground, from 50' away. It is an obsidian blade (p33). The spider hides 40' above the ground, behind a nearby stalactite, waiting for its next meal. It is still hurt from the sword wound (roll d6 instead of d8 for its HD). It surprises on a 1–4, due to concealment, unless a character is deliberately watching the ceiling. It waits until at least one person is within 10' of the sword, then drops a web on as many targets as possible (as *web* spell, LL41). The spider then drops down on a web line to poison as many victims as possible. The sword is still in usable condition, with some sort of sticky fluid clinging to the blade (spider blood).



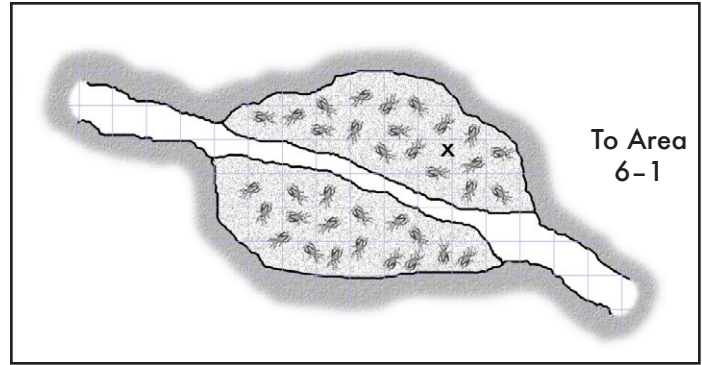
Area 5-8: Locust Swarm

The trail markers finally lead to the wall of the enormous cavern. There is a marker next to an opening in the wall. The tunnel goes back a short ways before a humming, rustling sound becomes audible. The tunnel then opens into a bowl-shaped chamber, faintly lit with patches of luminescent fungus. The path lies along a narrow berm, about 4' off the floor, crossing the center of the cave. The rest of the chamber is alive with movement. Hundreds of insects, each of them 2-3' long, crawl all over the walls and floor, munching on the fungus. They look like enormous crickets. Every so often, one of them emits a plaintive whistling sound and flies across the room in a clumsy arc.

The bugs are subterranean locusts (LL85). Normally the creatures don't appear in such numbers, but this is an especially rich feeding patch. They are busily eating, clambering over one another, and generally being giant bugs. The fungus gives off enough light to see by, but does not spoil infravision.

Any light brighter than the fungus, or any loud noise (i.e., raised voices, clanking armor), agitates the insects. Those closest to the source start to whine and shift uneasily. If the source of irritation continues, some of the locusts try to flee the "threat" by clumsily flying around the cave. Once this starts to happen, a chain reaction occurs as follows.

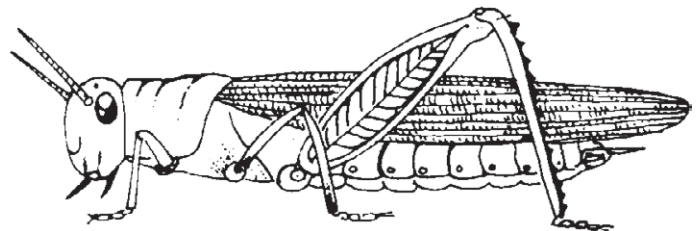
- Round 1:** Locusts within 10' of disturbance start to whine.
- Round 2:** The nearby locusts try to fly away. 1d4 careen toward the PCs, "attacking" them by buffeting collisions. There is a 20% chance of the noise attracting a wandering monster this round.
- Round 3:** More locusts take flight, startled by the other ones landing on or near them. 2d4 fly toward PCs. The whining sound is louder. Chance of wandering monster: 30%.
- Round 4:** The room is now a maelstrom of clumsy giant bugs. 3d4 fly randomly at the PCs. Chance of wandering monster: 60%.
- Round 5+:** 4d4 bugs fly toward party. Chance of wandering monster: 80%.

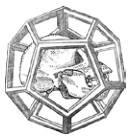


Any attacks against a locust cause it (if it survives) to spit at the attacking PC. If anyone jumps or is knocked into the lower floor of the room, he is instantly surrounded by the panicking bugs and is the target of 1d4 spit attacks and 1d4 slam attacks. It takes a full round to walk (or crawl) back out of the bowl, but by then the chain reaction is triggered, if it wasn't already!

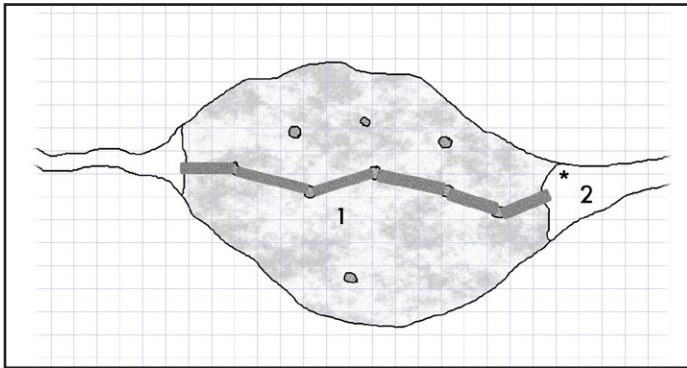
A lizardfolk fell off the path once and was buffeted to death by the creatures. His body, marked X on the map, lies 5 yards to the north of the berm. There is an unused *potion of healing* (one dose) in his hand. If a magic-user or elf casts *detect magic* (LL30) in the room, the potion glows, disturbing the locusts.

The best way to deal with this hazard, and the one that the lizardfolk use, is to simply move quickly and quietly through the room using no light sources. The fungal glow is sufficient for walking along the pathway at up to encounter speed. Characters without the Move Silently skill can make DEX checks to walk quietly enough to avoid agitating bugs. A passage on the far side of the chamber leads to Area 6-1.





Level 6: Volcano



Area 6-1: Lava Lake

The air gets warmer as the tunnel descends rapidly from Area 5-8. A sooty red glow becomes visible before the tunnel opens onto a narrow ledge overlooking a wide, bubbling pool of lava. The lava glows brightly enough to see by; that, plus the heat, ruin any infravision. The walls curve upward and then disappear into a huge opening that takes up most of the ceiling. A large rectangular slab of stone lies with one end on the ledge, the other on the top of a pillar of rock that sticks out of the lava about 15' away. Another slab extends from that one at a slight angle to another rock, and so forth. The slabs zig-zag across the chamber over the magma to a tunnel on the opposite side, about 100' away.

This is the bottom of the volcano shaft. When the lava receded enough to allow the tunnel to be re-opened, the lizardfolk managed to build this bridge over the fiery lake. The bridge averages 20' above the lava. It is perfectly safe; each of the slabs is 5' wide and weighs over a ton. It would take giant strength to move one without heavy equipment.

The air in the cavern is very hot, but not lethally so (110° F). Characters in metal armor take 1 hp of burn damage for every turn after the first they stay in the chamber. All characters that spend more than three turns in the room or exert themselves beyond walking will need to drink at least a quart of water to rehydrate afterward or suffer -1 to all rolls (as if not rested) until they do. Magical fire resistance avoids these effects.

Two lizardfolk warriors and two archers patrol the tunnel between the bridge and the lake below (Level 7). There is a 1 in 12 chance per round that they appear at the far entrance (Area 6-2). They easily spot anyone on the bridge. Unless the party can quickly convince them not to attack, the archers shoot at the PCs while one of the warriors attempts to summon the Guardian of Lava Lake: a wicked SALAMANDER (LL94) that lives in the lava.

The salamander delights in killing, but has come to an accord with the lizardfolk. They let it live unmolested in the lava under the bridge and alert it to any trespassers that it may have as victims. The lizardfolk call the salamander with a special horn that hangs on a hook near the lower tunnel entrance (marked * on the map). Then horn is carved from a single piece of obsidian and bound with iron bands. It is not magical, but worth up to 500 gp to the right collector. The note from the horn is not especially loud, but it makes the hairs on the backs of people's necks stand on end, and sends ripples across the lava like a shockwave.

The salamander reaches the surface of the lava after 1d3 rounds. It can climb the bridge supports or swim in the lava. Its favored tactic is to pull its victims off the bridge and into the lava (see below for rules). If it hits with at least one claw or bite, the victim must make a STR or DEX check (player's choice) or be pulled over the side.

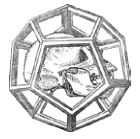
In the Lava

A character falling into the lava is in real trouble. There is a slim chance of survival: a character has a 25% chance of landing on a thick section of partially cooled crust. The character still takes falling damage (2d6), and the intense heat causes 1d3 damage per round so long as the character is within 10' of the lava. Falling into the lava itself kills a character instantly and destroys all he carries. Magical fire resistance can negate the heat damage, but a character can still drown unless he can get himself out. Throwing a rope to someone on or in the lava is useless, as the rope ignites when it gets close to the lava.

If someone falls into the lava before the salamander has been summoned, there is a 50% chance that the disturbance attracts it within 1d3 rounds.

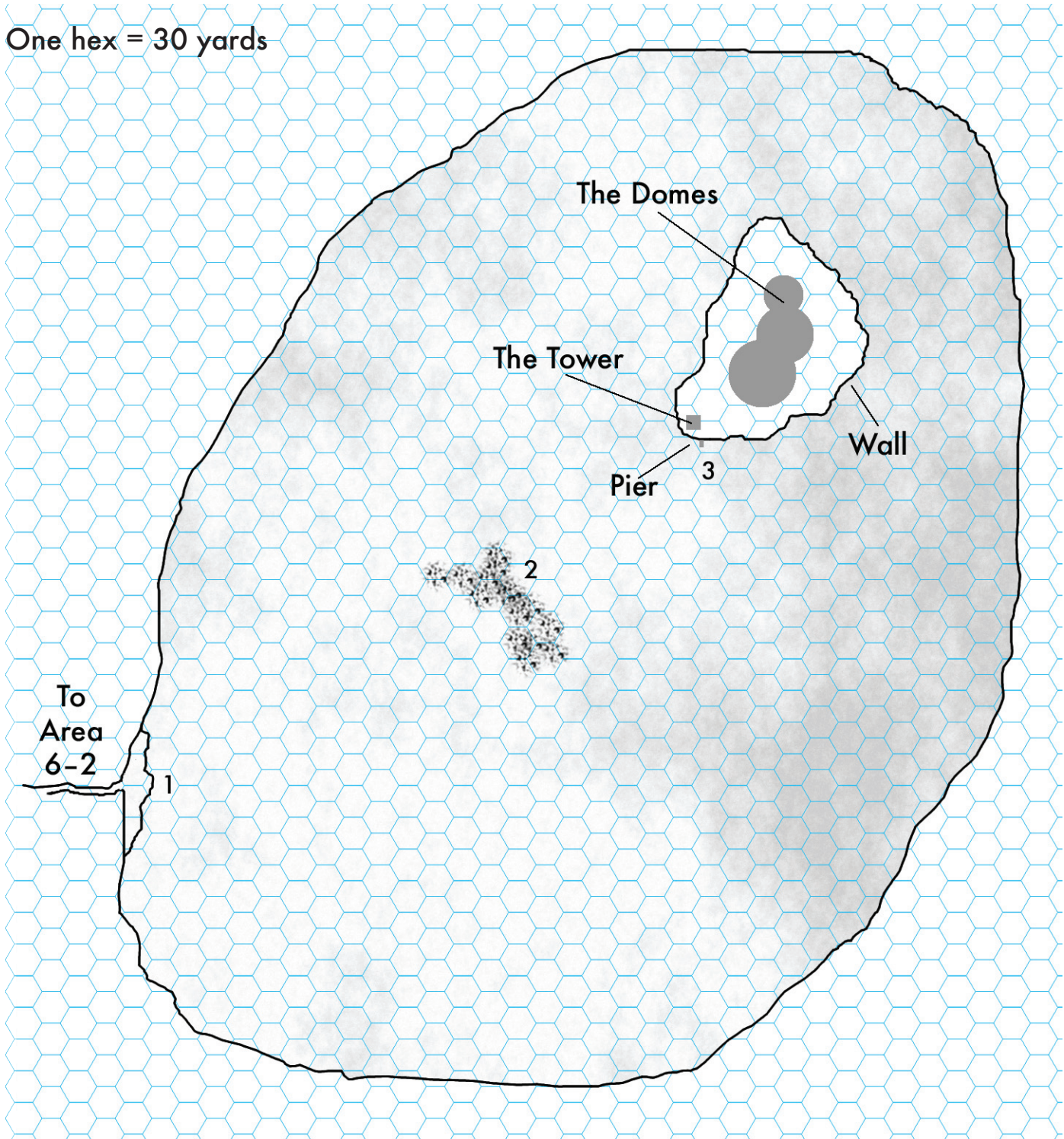
Area 6-2: Lake Tunnel

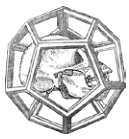
The tunnel goes back a bit before sloping downward. The air grows cooler again as the lava chamber is left behind. The passage winds around and then opens up onto Area 7-1.



Level 7: The Lake

One hex = 30 yards

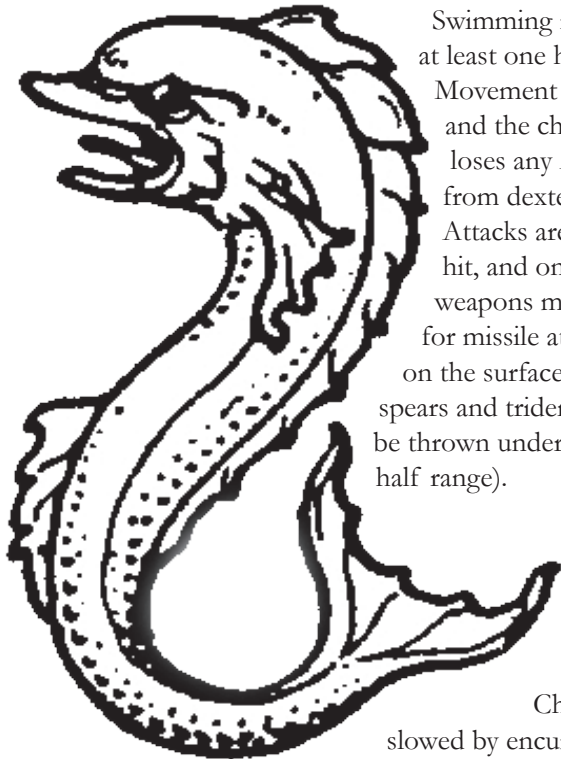




Lake Wandering Monsters
(1 in 6 chance, every 2 turns)

d6	Encounter
1	LIZARDFOLK Patrol Boat (1d4+4 warriors)
2-3	GIANT STURGEON (LL75)
4-5	GIANT CRAB (LL68)
6	1d4 GIANT FROGS (AEC126)

In the Water



Swimming requires at least one hand free. Movement is halved and the character loses any AC bonus from dexterity. Attacks are at -4 to hit, and only thrown weapons may be used for missile attacks on the surface. Only spears and tridents may be thrown underwater (for half range).

Characters slowed by encumbrance and those wearing metal armor cannot swim at all and will sink.

Characters can hold their breath underwater one round for each point of their CON. If a character takes damage while underwater, he must make a saving throw vs. petrify or lose 1d6 rounds worth of air. Once a PC is out of air, he will drown in 1d6 rounds. A rescuer can resuscitate a drowned PC if it's within five minutes. He must be heaved out of the water, laid flat, and have the water pressed out of his lungs, which takes 1d6 rounds. A resuscitated character must make a Survive Resurrection roll (AEC5) to revive. If successful, he comes back to life with one hit point.

Area L-1: Shore

The lake tunnel from Area 6-2 ends at a small, rocky beach of rounded black stones at the edge of a vast underground lake. A few lights can be seen out over the water, winking in the distance, but the scale is hard to judge in the darkness. A large, flat-bottomed boat with heavy oars is pulled up on the shore, essentially a mastless lifeboat (LL57) with two sets of oars and a tiller. The boat is transportation for the lizardfolk patrols. It can hold up to ten human-sized passengers. It moves at 30' per round with two rowers, 15' per round with one.

The lake's water is only three feet deep close to the shore, but drops off suddenly about 20' out to a depth of 60'. The water is fresh and drinkable, but quite cold. The lights out on the lake are from the island known as the Isle of the Darkling Pool among the lizardfolk. It is over 600 yards from the shoreline straight to the island, but the lizardfolk take an indirect route, avoiding the rocks and patrolling more of the cavern. Rowing to the island requires at least one Wandering Monster check. Following the straight line takes 10 minutes with two rowers or 20 minutes with one and passes through Crab Rocks (Area L-2). A curved route around the rocks takes half again as long.

There is a heavy crossbow on the boat with 10 bolts. Three of the bolts are wrapped with pitch-soaked rags and used to send up signal flares or ignite other boats. The boat also has two 100' hemp ropes with grappling hooks, a shuttered lantern, flint and steel, and six flasks of oil. The patrol occasionally sweeps the water in front of the boat with the lantern light, then looks again with infravision.

Their normal tactic against another boat is to close and try to board, using grappling hooks if possible. All lizardfolk can swim very well, holding their breath for up to a turn, but they generally avoid going into the water because of the monsters in the lake.

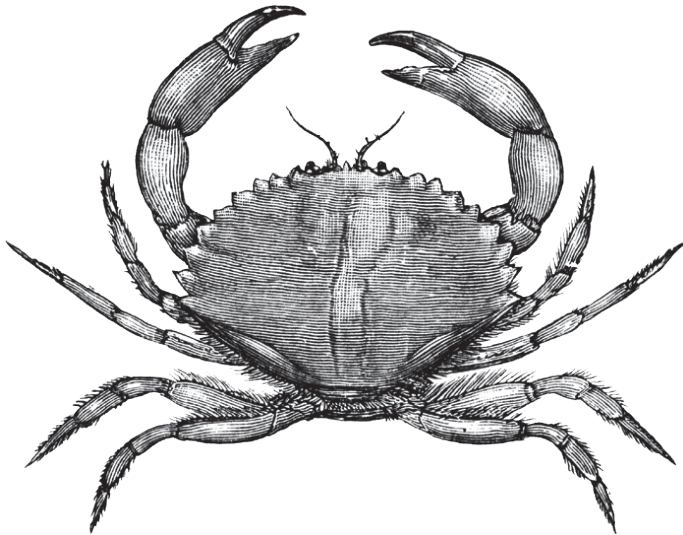
Area L-2: Crab Rocks

Several jagged rocks lie in this part of the lake. Some are only a few inches beneath the surface; others stick out slightly above the water. They are not visible by infravision, as they are the same temperature as the water. Slowing the boat to 10' and using a light to look out for the rocks gives the pilot an INT check to pass through into clear water without striking any rocks. Moving faster or without a light causes a 1 in 3 chance each round of striking a rock. Rowing through quickly and without light makes it 2 in 3 per round.



Striking a rock causes 1d6 structural hit points to the boat and runs it aground. It will take three successful STR checks to free the boat, either by pushing off with oars or climbing onto rocks and shoving the boat. Each STR check takes one minute but multiple characters may add their successes together. While the boat is stuck, a GIANT CRAB (LL68) that lives among the rocks attacks. It is a standard example of its breed and only interested in a meal. There are more crabs in the lake, but only one is nearby at present. The crabs live off young sturgeon and whatever the Avatar leaves behind when it hunts.

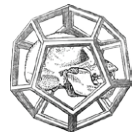
The Avatar has a secret tunnel leading from its lair to the deep water beneath these rocks. It uses it to come and go unobserved by the lizardfolk.



Area L-3: Approaching the Island

The island rises 20' out of the water with steep, rocky edges. The banks are easily climbable with a DEX check; characters with the Climb Walls ability don't even need to roll unless they are climbing in a hurry or under stressful conditions like combat. A failure results in a fall. Landing in the 30' deep water does no damage, but encumbered characters will not easily be able to swim. See "In the Water," above.

A four-foot high stone wall surrounds the island. The wall is smooth and comes right to the edge, so characters may have a hard time just scrambling over. There are stone bowls set along the wall every 40'. A few of them glow with low-burning fires, providing a modicum of light.



On the Island: The Tower and the Domes

Island Wandering Monsters
(including within the Tower and the Domes)
(1 in 6 chance, every 2 turns)

d6	Encounter
1-3	Lizard Patrol (1d4+2)
4-5	Lone Lizardfolk
6	Lone Darkling Warrior

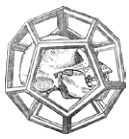
The Tower

At the southwest end of the island, a flat stone pier projects from the rocky shore. Steps lead up from the pier to an opening in the wall, with torches burning on either side; from within the wall, a squat tower overlooks the scene, arrow slits punctuating the walls.

Normally there is one spare boat at the pier (three total). One patrols the lake and the other is used to ferry the tunnel patrols back and forth. There are four lizardfolk sentries on the tower roof (Area T-8), but they are not terribly vigilant. There is only a 1 in 4 chance that they will take any notice of a boat out on the lake if it is more than 50' out from the island, and then only if there is light or noise to attract their attention. They are more likely to assume it is the patrol boat, making its rounds. If the sentries become suspicious, they alert the guards in the tower below and fire a flaming crossbow bolt in the air to signal the patrol boat. Then two warriors and two archers head for the pier. The tower also has a signal gong, in case they think it necessary to alert the rest of the island.

If there is combat out on the lake and the tower guard can distinguish which boat contains invaders, they attack with flaming oil jugs and rocks from their rooftop catapult.

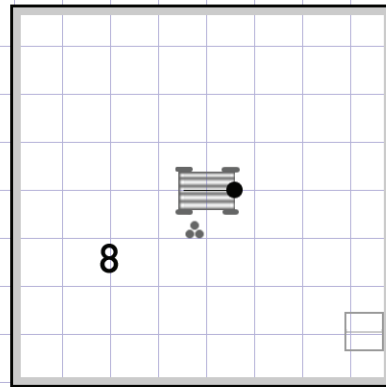
The tower door is plain wood, usually unlocked, and has arrow slits on either side (-4 AC cover bonus). If the rooftop sentries have sounded an alarm, two archers man the arrow slits and the door is locked.



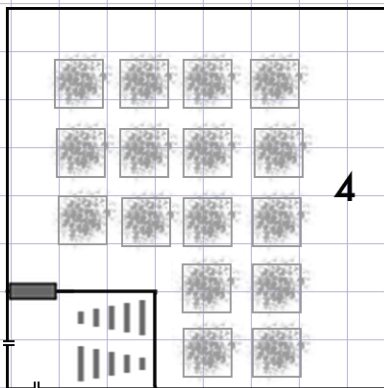
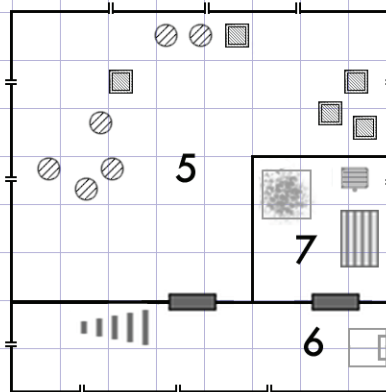
The Tower



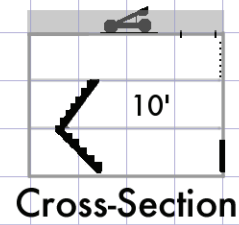
Roof



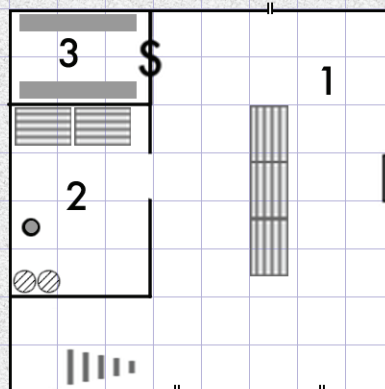
Second Floor Up



First Floor Up



Ground Floor



Five Feet

Arrow Slits



Area T-1: Tower Entrance

Inside is the tower's common room, with a long table and benches occupied by 2d4 lizardfolk warriors. The open doorway leads to the kitchen (Area T-2). A secret door in the northwest corner leads to the Armory (Area T-3). In the southwest corner, a stairway leads up.

Area T-2: Kitchen

This is a cramped room with a cauldron hanging over small fire pit. A scarred wooden counter against one wall is littered with fish scales and dirty clay bowls. The whole room stinks of fish.

Area T-3: Armory

This room behind the hidden panel is little more than a closet with weapons racks on both walls, holding:

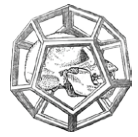
- ✦ 12 obsidian short swords
- ✦ 50 javelins
- ✦ 12 spiked clubs
- ✦ 12 shields
- ✦ 6 light crossbows
- ✦ 6 quivers with 10 bolts each

Area T-4: Barracks

One floor up from the common room, this chamber holds a dozen low wood frames in rows, filled with nesting material (shredded giant frog skins and strips of fungus). There are torch rings and arrow slits on the walls. 1d6 warriors are normally resting here. They are unarmed, but can attack with their claws.

Area T-5: Storage

This room is crowded with barrels, sacks, and boxes, all stacked in disarray. The door is normally locked (the Darkling sergeant has the key). The containers hold mostly dried fish, lamp oil, torches, and other general supplies. A small brass box containing 11 pp is hidden in one sack.



Area T-6: Upper Hall

At the end of the hall, rungs set in the wall go up to a trap door in the ceiling. The ladder leads to the roof (Area T-8). The sentries above keep the hatch bolted, only opening for the correct password (currently "fishbait" in the Lizardfolk language). Attempts to force this door open are at a -1. The roof sentries can trigger a trap that makes the rungs fall out of the wall.

Area T-7: Darkling Quarters

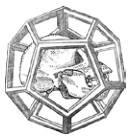
This small room holds only a wooden frame with hides and bedding, a low table, and a small chest. There is a 50% chance the sergeant, a DARKLING WARRIOR (p33), is in his quarters; otherwise, he is on the roof (Area T-8). He is armed with a *spear* +1. The chest is locked and the Darkling has the key. It contains a robe made from some sort of dark, silvery hide. Under the robe are a vial, a small velvet pouch, and a silver dagger etched with runes and a blue gem (topaz) on its pommel (150 gp). Gnomish runes on the dagger's blade spell the word "Gemfarer," a clan name. The vial contains one dose of *giant strength* potion. The pouch holds three 50 gp black pearls.

Area T-8: Rooftop

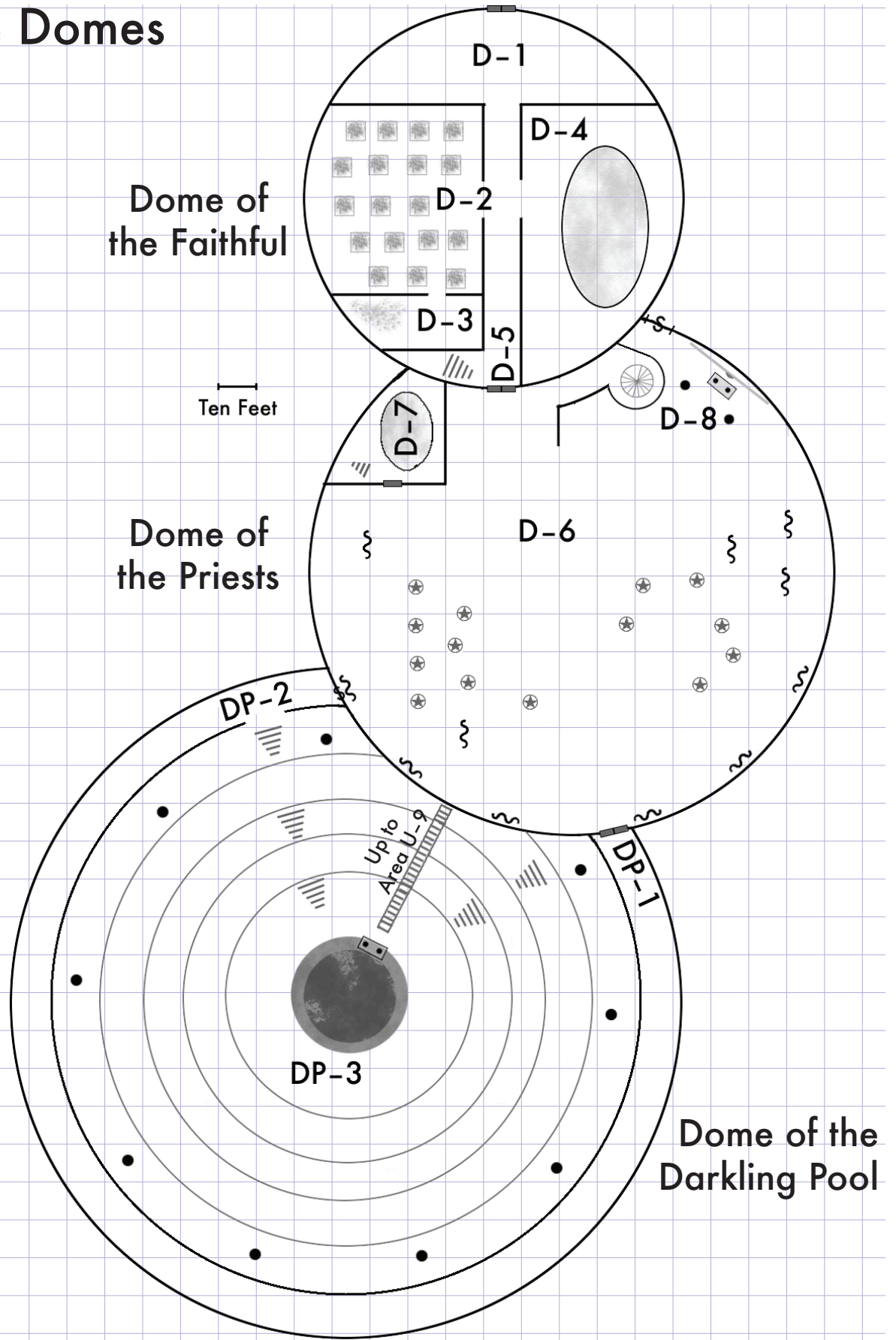
The tower roof is flat and surrounded by a four-foot crenellated wall. The trapdoor in the corner is bolted from up here; next to it, an iron handle can be yanked from the ground to loose the rungs in Area T-6.

In the middle of the roof is a wheeled catapult (LL58) and a stack of ten large, round stones. The catapult can be turned in any direction. Four lizardfolk archers are on duty here.

The tower is 35' tall. The sentries receive a -4 AC bonus versus attacks from the ground or water below. The walls of the tower are rough enough for a character with Climb Walls to try scaling without ropes. Other characters must have grappling lines or the like to even attempt climbing it.



The Domes





The Domes

Past the wall and tower stands a large structure of three partially nested domes. These buildings are smooth and without windows or other features. The only visible entrance is a massive set of bronze double doors set in the north side of the smallest dome (Area D-1).

The three domes overlap slightly. The smallest of them is known as the Dome of the Faithful (Areas D-1 through D-5 and U-1 through U-5). It is here that the regular lizardfolk guards and the pilgrims from deeper within the underworld eat and sleep.

The middle dome is called the Dome of the Priests (Areas D-6 through D-8 and U-6 through U-13). It is home to the Darklings. The last and largest dome is the Dome of the Darkling Pool (Areas DP-1 through DP-3), where the priests drop ritual sacrifices and offerings into the black pool above the Avatar's lair.

Area D-1: Foyer

Massive twin bronze doors are set into the side of the smallest dome. Each is over ten feet high and five feet wide. Carved figures of spear-wielding lizardfolk mirror one another on each door. These doors are normally kept half open, and flickering torchlight can be seen within. Despite their size, they swing easily on their hinges. One person can move a door without a STR check. If the alarm has been raised, the doors are shut and barred inside with bronze-bound timbers. They cannot be forced without a ram or at least ogre strength, and then at a -2 penalty.

Inside the doors, the outer wall of the room follows the curve of the dome around to a flat wall opposite the doors, with an open archway set in its center. There is a 20'-high balcony running along the far wall above the archway (see Area U-5).

The walls of the room are covered in murals done in garish colors. The paintings are of lizardfolk in various martial poses, often slaying other races such as dwarfs and goblins.



Area D-2: Dormitory

This room is filled with piles of hides and bedding, stacked in rows. Some of the piles are contained in wooden frames; others lie directly on the floor. The place smells of rotting plants and fish. Here is where the rank-and-file warriors and any pilgrims from beyond the lake sleep. There are 1d6+2 lizardfolk guards sleeping in here. Their weapons (spiked clubs) lie close to hand.

There is also one pilgrim currently on the island. If there is a fight, he will try to hide in his nest. His name is R'stok and he has come to make an offering to the Avatar. He speaks some Common, as well as his native Lizardfolk. He is unarmed, but has a sack containing 110 gp and a *potion of healing* in his bedding (his offerings).

R'stok is pragmatic and, if captured, tries not to antagonize the party. He answers most questions if he thinks it will keep him alive, but he won't hesitate to betray the party if he believes he can do so and keep his scaly hide intact.

What R'stok knows:

- ✂ The names and functions of the domes.
- ✂ The bigger, darker lizardfolk are the leader caste, known as Darklings.
- ✂ This temple was built to honor "the Avatar," a messenger of the lizardfolk gods.
- ✂ R'stok has never seen the Avatar, but he has heard it is an entity of living darkness.
- ✂ Pilgrims bring offerings here, seeking the favor of the gods. Around certain holidays, the island is said to be teeming with the faithful.
- ✂ The lizardfolk realm extends far underground. This lake and the island are a holy site, but only one part of their world.

Area D-3: Closet

This small room resembles a hayloft. Bins full of dried, fragrant surface grasses line the wall. Unless called away, there is a DARKLING ACOLYTE (p33) here, filling a large basket with bedding to take to a Priest's chambers. He is using a pitchfork, which functions as a trident in combat. If there is any disturbance in the dormitory, he investigates.



Area D-4: Baths

This room holds a large pool of steaming water. A row of grey robes on pegs hangs along one wall. Here is where the lizardfolk perform their ablutions before attending any rituals. After washing, they don the ceremonial robes. The water is four feet deep and uncomfortably hot for humans, heated by a hot spring that feeds into the pool.

Area D-5: Entrance to Dome of the Priests

The hall ends in a pair of double doors. A narrow, curving staircase ascends to the right of the doors. The doors lead to Area D-6 and are rigged so a gong on the other side chimes when they are opened. The stairs lead to Area U-1.

Area D-6: Trophy Hall

Past the doors, a corridor curves off to the left; ahead there is a large, open area. A gallery-like balcony encircles the upper part of the dome. The room has a bizarre assortment of items scattered about. There are statues, mostly of lizardfolk; various suits of armor; and banners hanging from the ceiling, many quite old or war-torn.

There is pair of black double doors on the far wall, guarded by two lizardfolk warriors. They wear ceremonial armor and helms (treat as plate mail) and carry spears. The armor is inlaid with gold and each set is worth 1,000 gp, but fitting it for non-lizardfolk requires an armorer.

The balcony is 20 feet above the hall. The railing is 3 feet high and open. In a fight, those above gain a +1 to hit.

This is where trophies from past victories are displayed. None of them have meaning or value for people other than this lizardfolk clan. The short, curving hall leads to a set of stone stair that spiral upward. The double doors lead into the Dome of the Darkling Pool, in the Outer Circle (Area DP-1). A secret door behind one banner leads into the Dome of the Darkling Pool near the stairs (Area DP-3).

Area D-7: Sauna

This room is full of hot steam, so much so that the far wall is hardly visible. There are narrow stone steps next to the door going up out of the room. A bubbling pool takes up most of the floor. This room is where the Darklings perform their ablutions. The pool is 10 feet deep, heated by the same hot spring that warms the water in Area D-4, but the water is hotter here, almost scalding. The steps lead up to the balcony near Area U-6.

Unless he has been called away for some reason, one of the DARKLING CAPTAINS (p33) is currently submerged in the pool. His *long sword +1* leans against the stairs, out of his reach. The air in here is hot enough to spoil infravision. The captain will surface three rounds after the PCs enter the room. If he doesn't notice the party (he will unless they are being very still and quiet), he will swim over to his sword and climb out of the water, buckling on his weapon. If he does see the party, he will attempt to surprise them from the water, ideally dragging a heavily armored individual into the water before grabbing for his sword and raising the alarm.

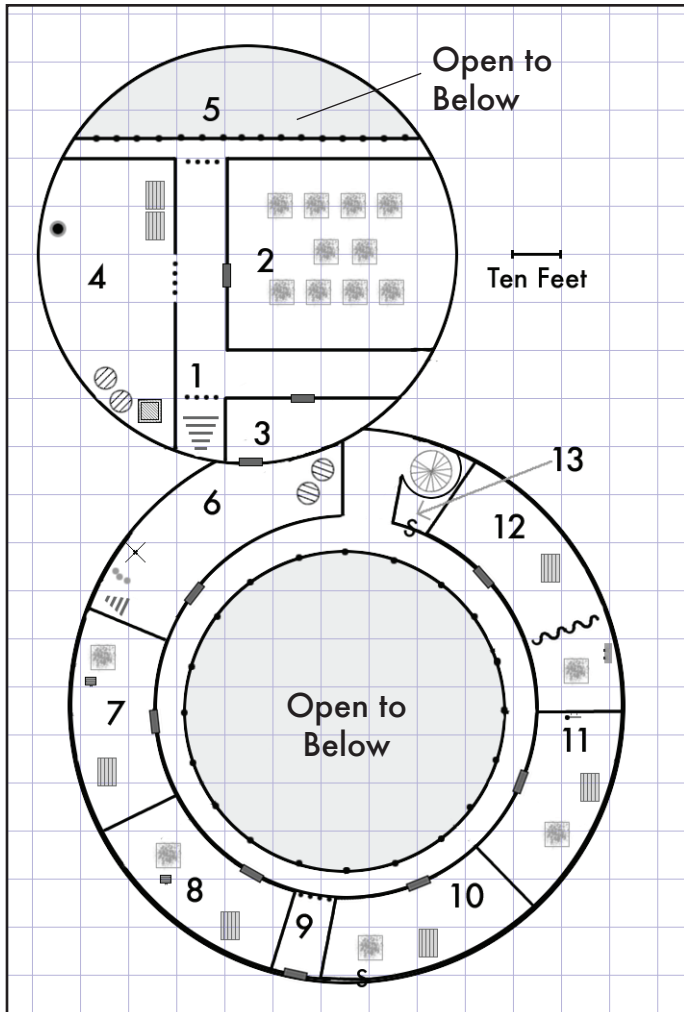
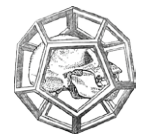
Area D-8: Nave

This open area contains a pair of polished white pillars in its center and a low altar against a freestanding wall. The altar is draped with a wine-red cloth and a golden disc with a scale-like pattern hangs on the wall above it. There is an oil lamp hanging between the pillars, its light playing across the scales on the disc.

Unless circumstance have called him away, one of the DARKLING PRIESTS (p34) is here, making ritual prayers. He is armed with a staff and will immediately alert the guards if he sees the party.

This nave is a shrine to Tchar, a great lizardfolk hero. The disc is called the Shield of Tchar and it is said that it was made from his golden scales. It is a *shield +1* and makes its bearer immune to fear. The shield is sacred to the lizardfolk. If they see a character carrying it, they attack fanatically (+1 to hit and damage, never check morale, and +2 on saves vs. fear or other effects that might force a retreat).

The secret door in the alcove is an emergency escape route known only to the Priests.



Area U-3: Prisoners

The door to this room is locked and made of stone (-1 to Open Doors checks). Inside is a filthy room with straw and dirty blankets on the floor. There are manacles set into the wall and another door across the room. This room is used to hold prisoners. Sometimes the prisoners are made to work as slaves, but they end up fed to the Avatar before long. Currently there are three prisoners here: two humans and one gnome; all male. The humans are Karl and Theo, former hirelings of an adventuring party that was killed by the lizardfolk in another region of the underworld. The torchbearer and porter were captured and brought here as sacrifices. Gatto the gnome is of the Gemfarer clan (it is his dagger in Area T-7). He was captured by a lizardfolk raiding party who was trying to steal some gems. The Gemfarer gnomes' mine is several miles north of Wolford, near dwarf territory.

The prisoners are chained to the walls, but otherwise able-bodied. None of them are exactly sure how long they have been there, but Gatto thinks it's been less than a week. They can tell the PCs that another prisoner was here until earlier that day. An elf named Greenstar was brought in only a day or so ago, but was taken away before any of the others. Gatto speaks Lizardfolk and heard the Acolytes say something about the Avatar "liking elf-flesh." The three of them haven't seen any other prisoners while they have been here. Greenstar was taken through the rear door of the cell and that's the last anyone saw of him. That was also the only time any of the prisoners had seen the rear door opened.

Gatto is a 2nd-level gnome fighter: lawful (good), 14 hp. Karl and Theo are normal men (neutral). All of them are willing to fight to get free of this place, but Karl and Theo will take some serious persuading to press farther on into the temple instead of simply fleeing toward the surface (hiring roll at a +2 penalty). Gatto believes that an effort should be made to rescue Greenstar. If the hirelings can't be convinced to come with the party, they will ask at least to be given weapons and rations so they can try to find their own way out.

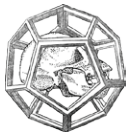
Upper Dome Levels

Area U-1: Upstairs Entrance

There is a small landing at the top of the stairs. A locked gate blocks the corridor beyond. Trying to force it allows Hear Noise checks for the Acolytes in Area U-2.

Area U-2: Acolytes' Quarters

This room is very plain. It has ten of the grass "nests" and little else. There are two Darkling Acolytes resting here. Each of them has a spiked club lying nearby and a ceremonial robe hanging on a wall. If the party has gotten this far without making too much noise, there is a 50% chance each of them is asleep. Three keys on a ring hang from a hook by the door. One is for the gates in Area U-1, U-4, and U-5; one is for the doors to Area U-3; and the other is for the prisoners' manacles.



Area U-4: Kitchen

A gate blocks access to this good-sized kitchen. There is a cauldron hanging over a bed of coals in a fireplace, counters are set along the walls with various crockery on them, and several casks, boxes, barrels, and sacks are stacked in the corners. Most of the foodstuff is dried fish, various fungi, and some kelp-like plants. There is nothing of particular value or interest here.

The lizardfolk sometimes make the slaves work in the kitchens and lock them in. When there aren't any prisoners, the Acolytes prepare food for the Priests.

Area U-5: Balcony

This 5'-wide balcony overlooks Area D-1. It is 20' above the room below. There is a 3'-high open railing that runs the length of it and a barred gate between it and the rest of the upper floor.

Anyone attacking targets in Area D-1 below gains +1 to hit with ranged attacks and -1 AC for elevation and cover.

Area U-6: Spice Rack

A large X-frame with manacles is mounted by one wall of this room. Mist and heat curl up the stairs from below. Various jars and urns sit on the floor.

Prisoners to be sacrificed are brought into this room. They are drugged, stripped, washed with urns of hot water from Area D-7, and "seasoned" with the various herbs and oils in the jars to make them more appetizing to the Avatar.

The drug is a bitter powder dissolved in a large clay jug of wine. Nearby is a clay cup, used to measure doses. One dose makes a human-sized victim complacent and easy to handle for 1d4 hours. The victim cannot do things like fight, cast spells, or run. He can only walk at 10' per round and is largely unaware of his surroundings. *Neutralize poison* cures the effects. The jug holds four more doses.

Area U-7: Captain's Quarters

This room has a wooden frame with bedding and a chest. There is also a low table in the corner. This is the living quarters for one of the Darkling Captains (p33) that are assigned to the temple. There is a 25% chance that he is in here. The chest is locked. It contains: a silvery black robe, an obsidian dagger, and a leather pouch with five yellow diamonds (100 gp each).

Area U-8: Captain's Quarters

This room has a wooden frame with bedding and a chest. There is also a low table in the corner. This is the living quarters for one of the Darkling Captains assigned to the temple. There is a 25% chance that he is in here. The chest is locked. It contains: a silvery black robe, a dwarven-made hand axe (Gatto's), and an *elven cloak* (Greenstar's).

Area U-9: Priestly Entrance

A locked portcullis blocks this short corridor. (One of the acolytes in Area DP-3 has the key.) A heavy door is set at the opposite end: the Priestly entrance to the Dome of the Darkling Pool. This corridor also serves as the "waiting room" for prisoners about to be sacrificed. If the PCs enter this room before exploring the Dome of the Darkling Pool, Greenstar the elf is lying here, drugged with the wine from Area U-6, and the High Priest is still leading preliminary ceremonies in Area DP-3.

Area U-10: Priest's Quarters

This room has a large bedding frame and a round table. Rolls of parchment, a small bowl of ink, and a bone stylus sit on the table, everything lit by a larger bowl with a glowing crystal inside it.

These quarters belong to the Priest from Area D-8. The crystal is simple quartz with *continual light* cast upon it. There is a secret panel behind the bed. Inside it are two vials (one dose of *healing potion* each), dark red robes, and a cleric scroll of *dispel magic*.



Area U-11: Priest's Quarters

This room has a large bedding frame and a round table. A large morningstar hangs on one wall. These quarters are for one of the Darkling Priests. When in this room only, the morningstar is magically animated to attack anyone who enters without using a sacred command word. It activates 1d4 rounds after the door is opened and is similar to a *dancing sword* (AEC103). It can move 30' per round and attacks as a 2nd-level fighter. It will not leave the room and fights for 2d4 rounds before falling to the floor, its enchantment spent.

A sack hidden under the bedding contains a ten-pound lump of gold ore (worth 100 gp) and a small steel vial of blood: the dragon's.

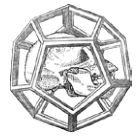
Area U-12: High Priest's Quarters

The sides of this room are covered with hanging tapestries. A richly carved table sits before the door. One portion of the room is curtained off; behind the curtain is a large bed frame filled with grasses and furs. A dark wood cabinet is against the wall near the bed. KALRAK, the High Priest (p34), is at the pool, preparing for the ritual. There is a 25% chance that an Acolyte with fresh bedding will be here when the party arrives.

The papers on the table are written in Lizardfolk and deal with day-to-day administration. One of the sheets is a copy of the list in Area 3-1 in draconic runes (see **Illustration 3** for translation), sent from the cultists along with the treasure. The cabinet is locked and the High Priest keeps a pet PIT VIPER (LL96) inside that will bite anyone else who opens the doors. Inside the cabinet are two sets of dark red robes with black trim and a small silver coffer containing eight lustrous green pearls (100 gp each), and twenty fire opals (50 gp each).

Area U-13: Hidden Chamber

This space serves a dual purpose. First, it acts as a "panic room." Inside are two light crossbows, two quivers with 20 bolts each, six spears, three shields, six obsidian daggers, two flasks of *healing potion* with two doses each, two skins of fish-tainted water, and a string of dried fish (three days' rations).



Second, it houses a large lever that, when pulled, collapses the spiral stairs. Anyone caught on the stairs falls and takes 3d6 damage. A successful save vs. petrify halves the damage.

Dome of the Darkling Pool

Area DP-1: Outer Circle

The doors from Area D-6 open onto a wide hallway that curves away in the distance. Separate from the central chamber, this hall encircles the dome, following the outer wall. The total length of the corridor is almost 450'.

Area DP-2: Laity Entrance

There is an open archway on the inner wall just before the Outer Circle ends. Stairs lead down from the opening into the great shadowed inner circle of the temple and the Darkling Pool. There is a secret door at the end of the hall that leads to Area D-6, behind a banner.

Area DP-3: Darkling Pool

A few torches burn in sconces on the many pillars, which reach up toward the ceiling somewhere among the shadows. The chamber is a series of terraced rings descending to a pool of dark water in the center of the room. Each terrace is five feet below the next. The steps are staggered so that a person cannot descend or ascend in a straight line without jumping or climbing, but must walk around each terrace to the next stair.

One long staircase descends from the wall where the middle dome intersects this chamber, all the way to the bottom level of the room. This is the main ceremonial access from Area U-9. The staircase effectively creates a wall across each terrace. At the bottom, the stairs lead to a large block of stone sitting just inside the pool's edge: the sacrificial altar.



Confrontation at the Ceremony

Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, the party arrives during the ceremony that culminates in the sacrifice of Greenstar the elf. Several robed figures scattered around the room hiss and sway. A red-robed figure stands near the altar, its feet in the water.

The treasure has already been dropped into the water. The dragon is currently carrying the loot to its hoard and will return to the pool to receive its meal. The pool is 25' across and has a lip around the edge, three feet wide and two feet deep in the water. The altar stone is in this shallow area, its far edge overhanging the drop-off in the center, which goes down 40' deep.

If the ritual is not interrupted, two Darkling Acolytes lead Greenstar down from Area U-9. He is then stretched out on the altar, and the High Priest ritually slices the victim's throat before tumbling him into the water. The dragon grabs the victim from below and takes him back to its lair for feeding.

There are 1d6 normal lizardfolk (including R'sstok), four normal Darklings, two Captains, two Acolytes, and the High Priest here for the ceremony. They all wear ceremonial robes and are armed (except R'sstok). The lizardfolk will not willingly stop the ritual, even if it means proceeding while they fight the party.

The High Priest's tactic is to let the other lizardfolk engage the characters while he attempts to complete the sacrifice. Once that is done (or impossible), he will use his *fear* and *hold person* spells first, trying to avoid direct combat. He may also slice open his own hand (1 hp damage) and thrust it in the water in order to alert the Avatar (see below).

The water is dark enough that the drop-off is not easily visible. Anyone moving in the shallow part of the pool must make a DEX check or fall into the deep water, attracting the Avatar's attention. If any blood falls in the water at all, the dragon will smell it and investigate. In either instance, it appears within 1d4 rounds.

Razemeth the Avatar

Before emerging, the dragon attacks anyone in the pool from below, using his claws and teeth. Then he may stick only the top of his head out and use *ventriloquism* to fool those outside the water into paying attention to the door from Area U-9. The dragon can attack, use its breath weapon, and cast spells underwater. It also can breathe underwater. If it emerges, it will try to use its breath weapon as soon as it can catch more than one target with it. It doesn't care if it hits any lizardfolk. It will fly up out of the water and stay airborne. If it closes to melee, it may use *shocking grasp* with its claws. It also may try to use *sleep* and *charm person* to its advantage.

If the fight goes against it, it will cast *darkness* over the pool and attempt to flee back into the water. If it thinks it is being followed there and cannot win, it will use its escape tunnel out into the lake and hide among the rocks (Area L-2). If not too badly wounded, the dragon may try to ambush the party later as they try to cross the lake.

Combat statistics for Razemeth appear on p34.





Dragon Lair

The dragon sleeps in a submerged lagoon, down at the bottom of the pool in Area DP-3 and through a short, water-filled tunnel. There is a pocket of air here and a small, mesa-like rock sticks out of the water. The dragon's hoard is piled atop the rock to prevent anything from getting waterlogged. Normally the dragon sleeps in the water, curled around the rock. A narrow underwater tunnel winds away from the sleeping chamber to the rocks in Area L-2.

Except as the Labyrinth Lord prefers to change it, the dragon's hoard contains the following.

Coins:

- ✦ 22,487 cp
- ✦ 82,097 sp
- ✦ 25,749 ep
- ✦ 30,608 gp
- ✦ 3,409 pp

50 gems:

- ✦ 10 x 10 gp
- ✦ 10 x 25 gp
- ✦ 4 x 50 gp (opals)
- ✦ 14 x 100 gp
- ✦ 5 x 500 gp
- ✦ 5 x 750 gp
- ✦ 1 x 1,000 gp
- ✦ 1 x 5,000 gp

20 pieces of jewelry:

- ✦ 6 x 50 gp
- ✦ 5 x 900 gp
- ✦ 1 x 1,000 gp (diamond tiara)
- ✦ 5 x 1,200 gp
- ✦ 3 x 1,500 gp

Magic items:

- ✦ *Dagger +2, +3 v. goblinoids, orcs, and kobolds*
- ✦ *Helm of comprehend languages and read magic*
- ✦ *Leather armor +2*
- ✦ *Long sword +1, +3 v. lycanthropes (snake hilt)*
- ✦ *Philter of love*
- ✦ *Potion of extra-healing*
- ✦ *Potion of giant strength*
- ✦ *Potion of healing*
- ✦ *Potion of invisibility*
- ✦ *Potion of undead control*

- ✦ *Ring of invisibility*
- ✦ *Ring of protection +2*
- ✦ *Rod of striking (AEC89), 8 charges (black wood)*
- ✦ *Scroll of ward v. lycanthropes*
- ✦ *Scroll with two magic-user/elf spells: locate object and magic jar*
- ✦ *Wand of polymorph self, 3 charges*

Potions have one dose each. They are too small to work on the dragon.

Monsters & Foes

Cooper

After surviving his execution and returning to the surface, Cooper quickly established himself as the new head of the guild and head priest of the revived cult. He instructed the guild in the "old ways" of the cult and explained how they would gain greater riches and power by renewing their allegiance to the Dark God of the Mountain. On his visits to the caves, a Darkling Priest instructed him in the proper methods of worship. After generations of dormancy, the Obscuring Hat became again the Obsidian Heart. Beyond simple theft and banditry, the thieves extended into abductions for sacrifices and leaving cult markers at the scenes of their crimes.

The cult also appealed to those who felt they had been wronged by others and wished ill fortune upon their perceived oppressors and enemies. Cooper channeled their resentment into a feeling of power and superiority that came from being part of a great secret. Soon, the cult's numbers grew strong.

Cooper is not yet a very high level cleric, despite being the head priest. He is an accomplished thief, however, and still a formidable single opponent. He also has a magical item that was given to him by the darklings: the *mask of terror* (New Items, p34). He wears an obsidian medallion as his unholy symbol (worth 50 gp as jewelry). It carries a minor enchantment that allows the darklings to let him know they wish to speak to him. When amulet grows icy cold, he goes the mouth in the crypt (Area 4B-4) to receive instructions or information.



Terko Cooper

Human male 3rd-level cleric and 7th-level thief (30 hp); AL C; AC 2; +2 init (DEX 16); Attacks: mace (d6+1); Saves C7+2; Morale 11; XP 3,100

Leather armor +2

Ring of protection +2

Mace +1, +2 v. dragons

Mask of terror

Potion of extra-healing

Potion of invisibility, 2 doses

Holy symbol (see text)

Key to coffer in Area 3-2

Saves (including *ring of protection*): Breath Attacks 14, Poison/Death 9, Petrify/Paralyze 11, Wands 10, Spells 12

Thief skills (including DEX bonus, AEC4): Pick Locks 60%, Find/Remove Traps 58%, Pick Pockets 58%, Move Silently 58%, Climb Walls 98%, Hide in Shadows 52%, Hear Noise 4 in 6.

Spells:

✠ *cure (cause) light wounds*

✠ *light (darkness)*

✠ *silence 15' radius*

Entrance Guardian

Move: 60' (20'); AC: 4; HD: 5 (38 hp); Attack: 1; Damage: lava (2d6) or fist (1d8); Save: F5; Morale: 12; XP: 500

Similar to an animated stone statue (LL98), but it shoots lava from its mouth, like a breath weapon, instead of from its fingers. It can use this attack five times before its reservoir is depleted. A successful save vs. breath attacks halves the damage. The statue regenerates at a rate of 3 hp per round while resting in the archway. This also replenishes its lava at a rate of one "breath" per five rounds.

Lizardfolk

The lizardfolk are standard examples of the breed (LL84). There is a 50% chance that any given lizardfolk is wearing a crude armband made of gold (100 gp).

Obsidian weapons grant a +1 bonus to damage, but shatter on a to-hit roll of a natural one when used against metal armor, shields, or rock-hard targets.

Lizardfolk Warrior: Move: 60' (20'), Swim 120' (40'); AC: 5; HD: 2+1 (11 hp); Attack: 1; Damage: spear (d6+1), can throw to 20'/40'/60') or claws (1d6+1); Save: F2; Morale: 12; XP: 47. Each carries two spears.

Lizardfolk Archer: As above, but armed with spiked club (1d4+1), light crossbow (1d6, 80'/160'/240'), 10 quarrels.

Darklings

Members of the Darkling Brood are the leaders of the lizardfolk. Their draconic blood makes them smarter and tougher than normal lizardfolk. They also have short, curved horns on the sides of their heads and darker, nearly black scales. All Darklings have gold armbands (100 gp).

Darkling Warrior: AL N; Move: 60' (20'), Swim 120' (40'); AC: 3; HD: 4 (22 hp); Attack: 1; Damage: obsidian sword (1d6+3), spear (d6+2, can throw to 20'/40'/60'), or claws (1d6+2); Save: F4; Morale: 12; XP: 135

Darkling Captain: AL N; Move: 60' (20'), Swim 120' (40'); AC: 2; HD: 4+1 (26 hp); Attack: 1; Damage: *long sword* +1 (1d8+3) or claws (1d6+2); Save: F4; Morale: 12; XP: 215

Darkling Acolyte: AL N; Move: 60' (20'), Swim 120' (40'); AC: 3; HD: 4 (20 hp); Attack: 1; Damage: spiked club (1d4+2) or claws (1d6+2); Save: F4; Morale: 12; XP: 190

One clerical spell prepared at random: *remove (cause) fear* or *cure (cause) light wounds*.



Darkling Priest

AL N; Move: 60' (20'), Swim 120' (40'); AC: 2; HD: 4+1 (24 hp); Attack: 1; Damage: obsidian dagger (1d4+3) or claws (1d6+2); Save: C4; Morale: 12; XP: 290

Spells prepared:

- ✞ *remove (cause) fear*
- ✞ *cure (cause) light wounds*
- ✞ *bles (curse)*

Kalrak, Darkling High Priest

AL N; Move: 60' (20'), Swim 120' (40'); AC: 0; HD: 5 (35 hp); Attack: 1; Damage: obsidian dagger +1 (1d4+4) or claws (1d6+2); Save: C4+2; Morale: 12; XP: 650

Obsidian dagger +1 (won't shatter)

Ring of protection +2

Spells prepared:

- ✞ *remove (cause) fear*
- ✞ *cure (cause) light wounds*
- ✞ *bles (curse)*
- ✞ *hold person*

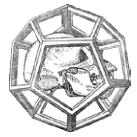
Razemeth the Avatar, Ancient Black Dragon

AL: Chaotic (evil); Move: 90' (30'), Fly 240' (80'), Swim 180' (60'); AC: 2; HD: 9 (70 hp); Attacks: 3 (2 claws + bite, 1d4+1/1d4+1/2d10) or 1 (Acid breath attack; does current hp in damage, 5'W x 60'L linear, 3/day); Save: C9; Morale: 8; XP: 3,800

Speaks: Common, Draconic, Lizardfolk, and Elvish

Spells prepared:

- ✞ *ventriloquism*
- ✞ *charm person*
- ✞ *light (darkness)*
- ✞ *shocking grasp*
- ✞ *sleep*



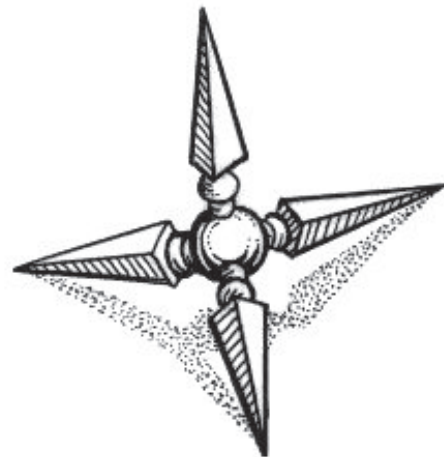
New Items

The Mask of Terror

This helmet-like mask of strange, dark metal encloses the entire head (AC 2) in the hideous likeness of a horned, reptilian fiend, including slavering fangs and glittering red eyes. The *mask* radiates magic and evil. As disturbing as its normal appearance is, it also carries an enchantment: Once a day, the wearer can cause the *mask's* face to become magically, utterly terrifying. Creatures within 30' who see the *mask* must save vs. spell. A failure means they flee in panic for 2d6 rounds, or cower in fear if flight is impossible. Any attack on a panicked creature ends the effect. Mindless monsters and those immune to gaze attacks are unaffected by the *mask*.

Caltrops

These nasty little objects are generally available in larger settlements, especially where horses are common. A five-pound bag of caltrops costs 5 gp and contains approximately 100 of the spiked metal balls. When scattered on the ground, they slow or discourage pursuit over a 10' x 10' area. Anyone walking through must slow to 5' per round or make a DEX check to avoid stepping on them. Caltrops do 1d3-1 damage to the victims' feet and slow movement to half speed (no running) until the damage is healed.



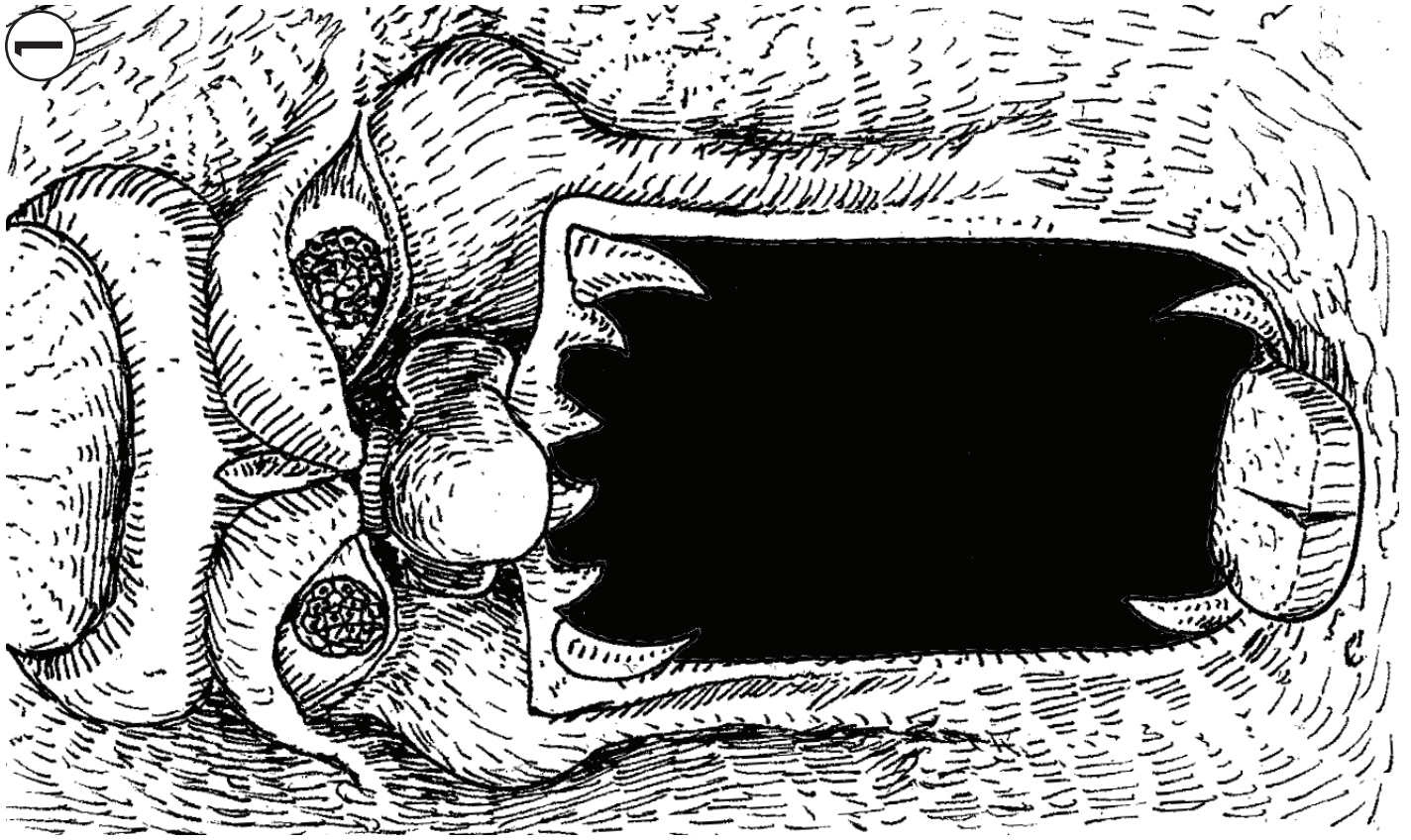
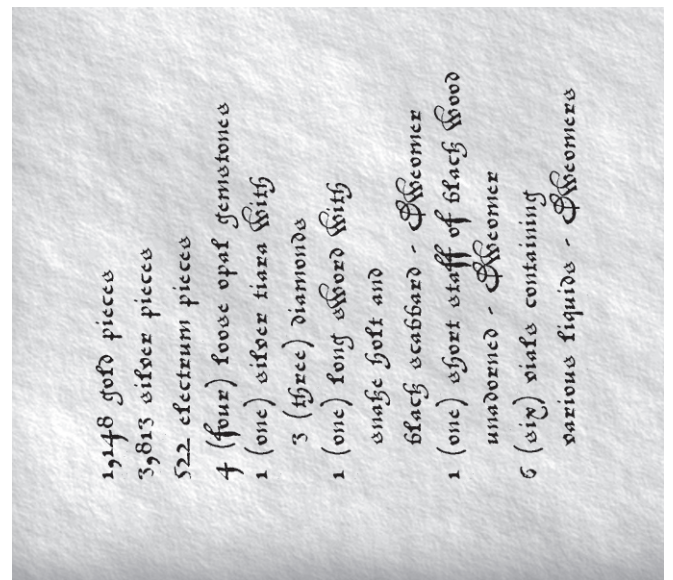
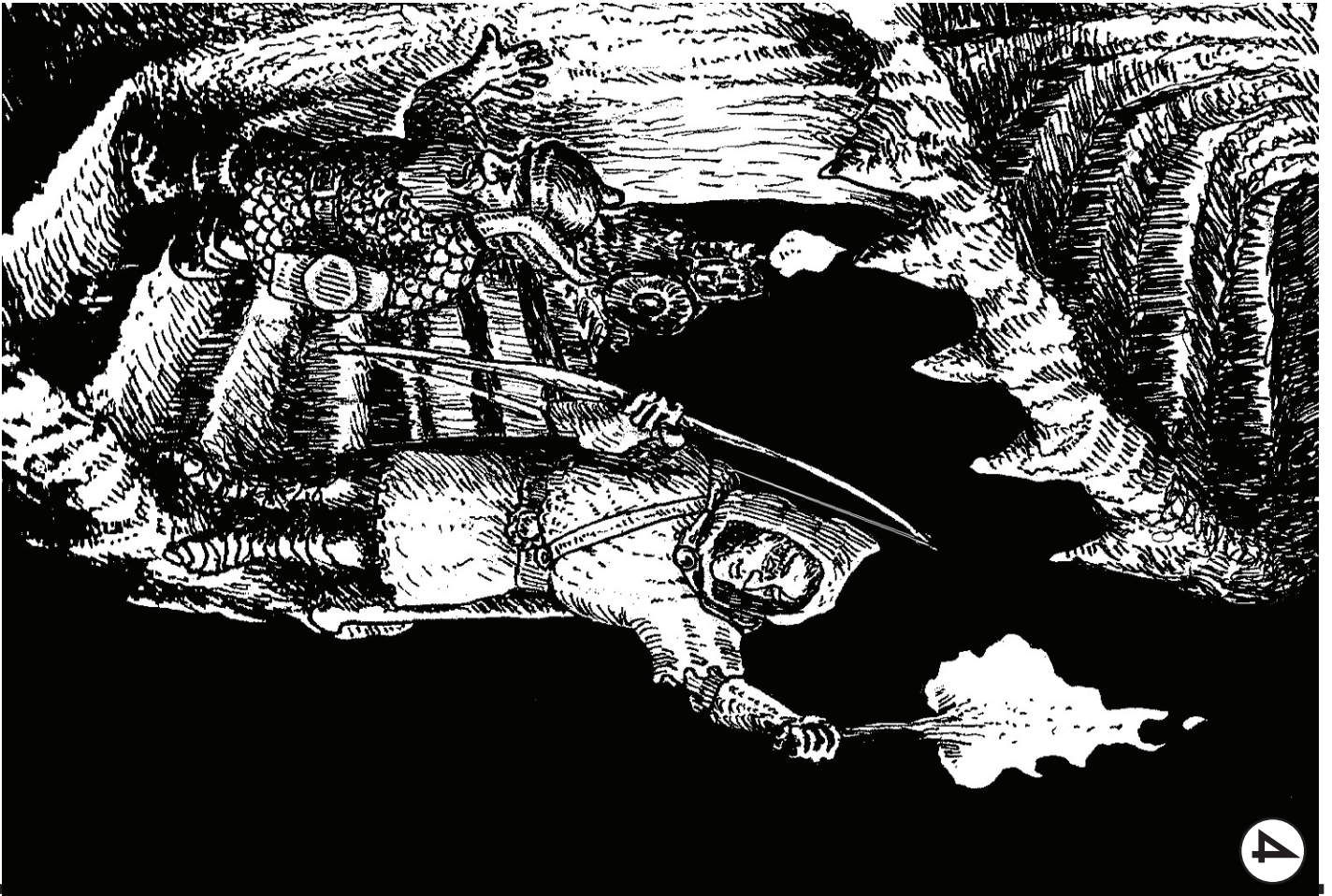


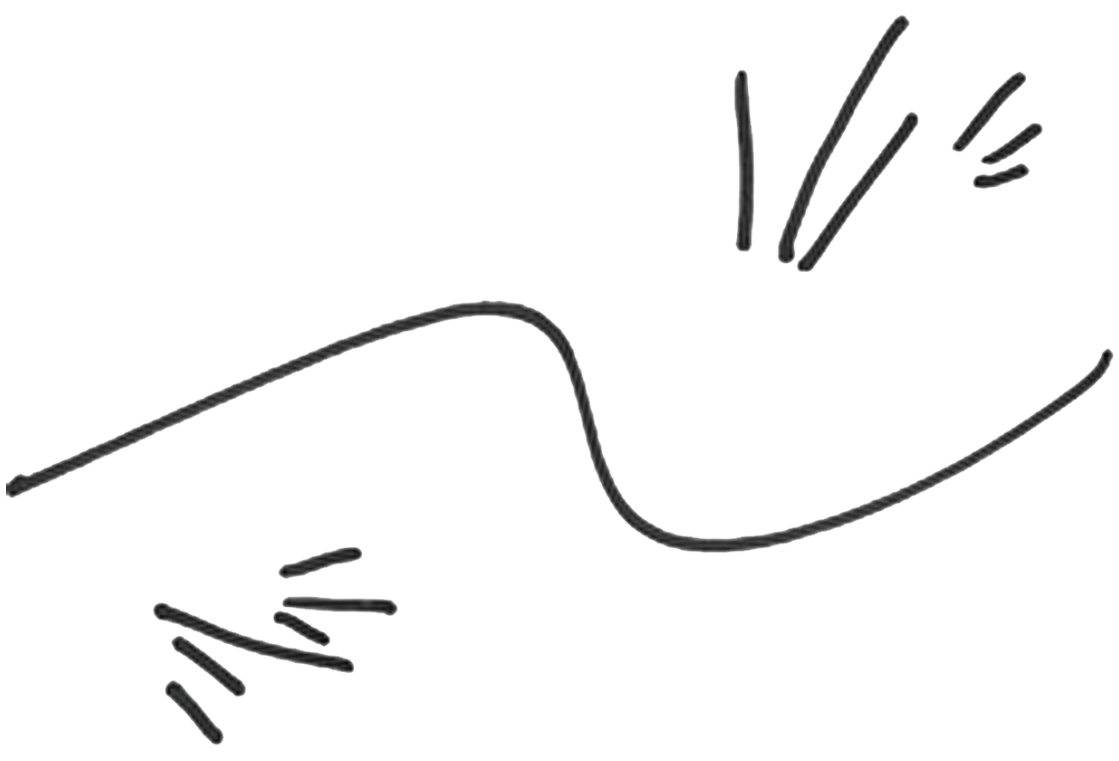
Illustration by Steve Zieser





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Illustration by Steve Zieser



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