

# PYRAMID OF THE DRAGON



**A Labyrinth Lord adventure designed for  
4-6 characters of 5th-7th level**



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## Credits

<b>Written by</b>	Peter C. Spahn
<b>Cover Art</b>	Miguel Santos
<b>Maps</b>	JP Quinn, Milton
<b>Production</b>	Small Niche Games
<b>Special Thanks</b>	Keith Kilburn, Derek Thornton, Jimmy and Susan Bramble, Harold Bates, Seth Walker, Owen Barron, Christopher Sigmund, Jeff "Bighara" Sparks, Benoist Poire, Stuart Marshall


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# Pyramid of the Dragon

Pyramid of the Dragon is a **Labyrinth Lord™** adventure for 4-6 characters of 5th-7th level. This adventure is a quick romp in and around a swamp known as the Blood Marsh that involves both wilderness and dungeon exploration. Challenges include a mixture of problem solving, combat, and roleplaying, including several potentially lethal encounters with a red dragon and various other denizens of the Blood Marsh, so characters who rely solely on the might of their sword arms may be in for a rude surprise.

## Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins with the characters traveling through the forested Border Hills along a well-beaten path or road. Why the characters are in the area is left for the Labyrinth Lord to decide. They may be on their way to or returning from an adventure, or they may be traveling to the frontier village of Holden that is located nearby.

## Managing the Adventure

Pyramid of the Dragon begins “in media res” with the characters witnessing an aerial battle between two dragons. When one of the dragons is mortally wounded and falls from the sky, the characters have the option to investigate the dragon’s carcass or continue on their journey. Several chance encounters scattered throughout the adventure should eventually lead the characters to the fallen dragon’s lair in the Blood Marsh where they can discover the ruins of an ancient city, save an unfortunate young man from a terrible curse, and thwart the plans of an evil red dragon.

The adventure contains two distinct hooks that are designed to draw the characters in. The first hook (**Dragon Fight!**) encourages the characters to get involved on their own by investigating the death of a black dragon. The second hook (**Meeting the Gold: Part I**) is a

more traditional hook that involves a request by a Lawful heroine in need of help. If the characters ignore both hooks, they miss the swamp and ruin exploration portion of the adventure, but the Labyrinth Lord may reintroduce the events in later parts of the scenario with **Meeting the Gold: Part 2**.

## Major Locations

This adventure centers around the following locations.

### Border Hills

The Border Hills is a land of rolling green hills and meandering streams that lies on the western edge of the Blood Marsh. The Border Hills act as a natural buffer for some of the swamp’s more vicious denizens. Its peaceful appearance belies its danger, as the Border Hills are home to blood bats (a flock of hungry stirges) and swamp monsters that occasionally pass through the hills to raid the village of Holden and other outlying settlements.

### Holden

Holden is a small frontier village located in a quiet valley in the Border Hills. The village serves as a way station for adventurers, and is remarkable only for its proximity to the Blood Marsh. Notable NPCs include the hermit sage “Old Man” Hetch, the former thief Regin Morel who runs a small tavern and inn named the Green Duck, and the retired soldier Karl Hanover who owns and operates a small trading post, offering most of the normal goods and services listed in the **Equipment** section of the **Labyrinth Lord™** core rules.

Holden is capable of fielding a militia of about 30-40 volunteers under Hanover’s guidance—just enough to ward off raiding lizardfolk or froggles (see **New Monsters** on pg. 26), but not enough to deal with any serious threats. The Labyrinth Lord may substitute any frontier

town from his own campaign for the village of Holden.

## **Blood Marsh**

The Blood Marsh is a large, dangerous swamp that has claimed the lives of so many adventurers over the years it is said the waters run red with blood. (The waters are in fact red in some places, but this is due to the mineral content of the soil.) The Blood Marsh is home to a variety of swamp dwelling monsters (see the **Blood Marsh Random Encounters** table on pg. 6 for ideas). The Labyrinth Lord may substitute any large swampland from his own campaign for the Blood Marsh.

## **Frog Hollow**

Frog Hollow is a dense red water bog that lies deep within the borders of the Blood Marsh. It is home to the black dragon Narratch and the vicious Black Dragons froggle tribe that serves him.

## **Hisshal City Ruins**

These ancient ruins lie at the heart of Frog Hollow. The Hisshal City Ruins are described in more detail on pg. 10.

## **Adventure Background**

Long ago, in the time before man, this portion of the known world was ruled by a race of ophidian (snakelike) creatures known as the hissha. The hissha were despotic, self-indulgent rulers who enslaved the lesser reptilian races and founded an empire that spanned much of the globe. The long-lived hissha were sorcerers who specialized in astrological, elemental, and blood magic. In time, they elevated themselves to godhood and demanded to be worshipped. Great temple pyramids were built in their name and countless living sacrifices were offered up to slake their hunger.

Then, the first of the great cataclysms descended upon the world. The earth shook, storms raged, volcanoes erupted, and massive tidal waves swamped the coasts. As the land was reshaped and the climate irrevocably changed, the hissha found their hold over their empire dwindle. Famine, pestilence, and finally a series of slave uprisings further weakened their power until the hissha were finally

overthrown and the last of the great pyramids was lost to time.

A decade ago, a greedy black dragon named Narratch discovered one of the hisshal pyramids in the heart of the Blood Marsh. Narratch quickly moved into the pyramid and enslaved a tribe of froggles living nearby, forcing them to guard the pyramid and bring him regular tribute of food and treasure.

Narratch was not content to lay idle in his lair. Among his kind, he was known as a thief and a deceiver who was responsible for the death of three other dragons—one by combat, one by poison, and one by revealing his rival's lair to the King's Army in exchange for a share of the treasure.

Not long ago, Narratch learned of an artifact named the Blood Gem of Mir that was possessed by a powerful red dragon named Xash the Bloody. After lengthy planning, Narratch stole the Blood Gem while the red dragon was away, but Xash eventually tracked Narratch to his pyramid lair in Frog Hollow. When Narratch tried to escape, Xash gave chase. . .

## **Sunny With a Chance**

At some time in the afternoon, the characters hear muffled booms and see strange flashes of light coming from a bank of white clouds in a sky that is otherwise clear and blue.

## **Dragon!**

A black dragon suddenly streaks out of the clouds, heading in the characters' direction. Seconds later, a much larger red dragon flies out of the clouds, lets out a roar, and gives chase.

## **Dragon Fight**

The dragons engage in a titanic battle that rages back and forth in the skies above the characters. The two fight with claw, tooth, spell, and breath weapon, but the black is severely outmatched by the larger and older red. The Labyrinth Lord can describe the fight in as much detail as he wishes as the characters feel the heat of the red's fiery breath and get spattered with droplets of acid and dragon blood.

Any character familiar with the area or any character who makes a successful Intelligence check at -2 knows that a black dragon named Narratch is said to live in the Blood Marsh. A dwarf character or any character who makes a successful Intelligence check recognizes the infamous red dragon Xash the Bloody by the distinctive bloody wound along the right side of his scaly cheek.

Xash plans to kill Narratch and wants no interference from the characters or anyone else. If the characters attack either Xash or Narratch, skip to **Insolent Vermin**.

**Note I:** If Narratch is killed by the characters' attack, Xash gives him one last fiery breath as described in **The Fall of Black Narratch** before strafing the characters as described in **Insolent Vermin**.

**Note II:** If Xash is killed by the characters' attack, an uninjured Skrain Smoke-Eater flies out of the clouds and takes Xash's place for the remainder of the adventure, beginning with the **Insolent Vermin** encounter.

**Xash the Bloody (Red Dragon):** AL C; MV 90' (30'), fly 240' (80'); AC -1 (natural); HD 10; hp 72 (currently 58); #AT 3 or 1 (claw/claw/bite or fire breath attack); Dmg 1d8/1d8/4d8 or fire breath attack equal to current hp; SV F10; SA fire breath attack, spell; ML 10; XP 3,100.

Spells (current): 1<sup>st</sup>: *light, magic missile, sleep*, 2<sup>nd</sup>: *detect invisible, web*, 3<sup>rd</sup>: *fireball, protection from normal missiles*.

**Black Narratch (Black Dragon):** AL C; MV 90' (30'), fly 240' (80'); AC 2 (natural); HD 7; hp 32 (currently 14); #AT 3 or 1 (claw/claw/bite or acid breath attack); Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/1d10 or acid breath attack equal to current hp; SV F7; SA acid breath attack, spell; ML 7; XP 1,490.

Spells (current): 1<sup>st</sup> *detect magic, read magic*.

**Skrain Smoke-Eater:** see pg. 22 for statistics.

## The Fall of Black Narratch

Burned and bloody, the desperate black tries to flee, but the red dragon is relentless. As the

two fly away, the red lets loose a devastating fiery breath attack. The black screams as it catches fire and plummets to the earth like a streaking comet, crashing landing in the hills several miles away. The red dragon roars in victory, circles once over its fallen enemy (providing a clue to the black's location), and then flies off to heal its wounds.

## Insolent Vermin

If the characters attack either dragon, have the characters roll normally to-hit and damage. If Xash the Bloody survives the attack, he furiously strafes the party with his fiery breath, requiring each character to make a saving throw vs. breath attacks. The Labyrinth Lord should then skip back to **The Fall of Black Narratch**.

## Aftermath

A dead dragon should be enough to entice most adventuring parties to investigate. If the characters try to locate the black, skip to **Into the Hills**. If the characters continue on their way, they eventually run into a wagon train led by the trader Karl Hanover who is on his way to plunder the dragon's carcass. Hanover attempts to hire the characters as guards as detailed in the **Trader** encounter, below. If the characters decide not to accompany Hanover, skip to **Meeting the Gold: Part 1**.

## Mill House

If the characters go in search of the black dragon, the trip through the hills is uneventful until they come across the former miller's son Detric washing blood from his clothes in a stream next to an abandoned mill. The mill once serviced a small settlement named Milner that was wiped out by a froggle raiding party. Detric had come to explore the ruined mill when he witnessed the dragon fight.

The wide-eyed Detric is unhurt, but spattered with dried dragon blood. He says that the battle between the two dragons happened right over his head and points in the direction he saw the black fall. Detric is too fearful of the dragon to accompany the characters.

If the characters proceed in that direction, a short time later, they come across signs of the

burning dragon's passing—dried blood, scorched brush, and flattened trees. Just before dark, they discover the remains of Black Narratch.

**Detric:** see pg. 21 for statistics.

## Labyrinth Lord Encounter: Unlucky Find

During the battle, the Blood Gem of Mir fell through a gash in Narratch's gullet pouch. A short time after meeting the characters, Detric comes across the Blood Gem and falls under its curse. Detric wanders off into the wilderness as madness descends upon him, but the characters may encounter him later in the adventure (see **Mandragon**, pg. 18).

## Black Death

The black dragon Narratch was gravely injured, but not quite dead when it crashed to earth. As night began to fall, a flock of stirges settled onto the dying dragon's body and started feeding on its blood. The stirges feed until morning. If disturbed by excessive light or sound, they take to the air and attack. If the characters kill the stirges, skip to **Spoils of War**.

**Stirge (12):** AL N; MV 30' (10'), fly 180' (60'); AC 7 (natural); HD 1; hp 5; #AT 1 (proboscis); Dmg 1d3; SV F1; SA blood sucking 1d3 hp/round; ML 9; XP 16.

## Spoils of War

As night falls, the characters are free to plunder the dragon's carcass for trophies or rare spell ingredients. If the characters think to slice open the dragon's gullet, skip to **Gullet Hoard**. The Labyrinth Lord may run the **Trader** encounter any time after dark.

## Trader

A short time after dark, the characters hear the sound of several horse-drawn wagons approaching by torchlight. The ever-practical trader Karl Hanover witnessed the dragon fight from Holden and knows that dragon parts fetch top prices in the larger cities—dragon hide can be fashioned into armor and shields, dragon blood and meat can be sold to innkeepers, dragon teeth, claws, and horns can be turned

into works of art or kept as trophies, and magic-users can find a use for almost anything else.

After watching the black dragon fall from the sky, Hanover wasted little time loading up four wagons with jars, buckets, butcher paper, and cutting tools, and hiring a few local farm boys to help him locate, skin, and process the dragon. The boys are eager for the adventure, but Hanover knows how dangerous the wilds can be, especially at night. Upon meeting the characters, Hanover offers to pay them 75 gp each to guard his party for three days (or 25 gp per day) while they butcher the dragon.

**Karl Hanover:** see pg. 21 for statistics.

**Turpin, Cress, Julian, and Erik:** see pg. 21 for statistics.

## Slaughter Camp

Hanover and his helpers set up camp by a stream a short distance away from the dragon's carcass. In the morning, they begin the long, grisly process of skinning the dragon's hide, gathering up fallen scales, bottling its acid and blood, removing its claws and teeth, and smoking as much meat as they can before it spoils. The process takes about three days, during which time the characters can learn more from Hanover and his team about the village of Holden, the black dragon Narratch, and the other denizens of the Blood Marsh. The stirges have slain every large creature in the area, so the characters are in no danger from wandering monsters unless the Labyrinth Lord wishes to drop in a random encounter from the **Blood Marsh Random Encounters Table** (pg. 6) to spice things up.

## Gullet Hoard

When Narratch realized Xash had tracked him to his lair, he scooped the Blood Gem of Mir and several other choice magic items into his gullet pouch and attempted to flee. Unfortunately, Narratch's acid sacs ruptured during his battle with Xash, destroying most of the pouch's contents and a gash along the side of his neck scattered several items (including the Blood Gem) across the countryside. Narratch's gullet pouch now contains a corroded mace, four broken potion bottles, the tattered remains of a magical cloak, a scarred and pitted

ring (formerly a *ring of command plant*), a *wand of fireballs* with 4 charges left, and a charred scroll tube containing a *scroll of spells* (1<sup>st</sup> *burning hands*, *comprehend languages*\* x 2, *light*; 2<sup>nd</sup> *knock*, *levitate*; 3<sup>rd</sup> *hold person*).

\*see **New Magic-User Spells** on pg. 25

If the characters have not already discovered the hoard, the tavernkeeper's son Erik cuts the gullet pouch open, spilling its contents onto the grass. Hanover has the boys rinse off the items and lay them out for inspection. He suspects they are magical, but does not know for sure. Hanover plans to take the treasure to the Wizard's Guild and include the profits from their sale as part of the overall share. If the characters express interest in acquiring the items, skip to **Opportunity Knocks**.

## Opportunity Knocks

At some point during the course of the slaughter, Hanover tells the characters that the lair of the black dragon Narratch was in Frog Hollow, deep within the borders of the Blood Marsh. He suggests that Narratch's treasure hoard might be left unguarded except for the vicious Black Dragon froggle tribe who once served the beast.

Hanover can give the characters only a vague hint to Frog Hollow's location—"follow the rising sun east until you reach the ancient ruins." These were the directions once told to him by the last surviving member of an adventuring party who staggered out of the swamp before dying of fever. Hanover can draw a crude map and direct them to the cottage of a hermit named Old Man Hetch (see below) if they want more information about the swamp or the ruins.

If asked about Xash the Bloody, he admits that he is worried that the dragon might want to move into Narratch's old lair, but he suggests that the wounded red dragon might be easily slain by a stalwart party of brave adventurers. To sweeten the pot, Hanover offers to give the characters the contents of the gullet pouch (assuming they didn't discover it on their own) and/or a full share of the profits from the sale of the dragon parts if they agree to just scout the swamp and report back on whether or not the red dragon is now living in Frog Hollow.

If the characters agree to Hanover's offer, skip ahead to **Into the Swamps**. If the characters refuse, they may accompany Hanover and his team back to Holden. In this case, skip to **Meeting the Gold: Part 1**.

## Hetch's Cottage

Old Man Hetch lives on a small island in a dilapidated cottage surrounded by swampy water. A rickety bridge that dips dangerously close to the sixteen alligators knifing through the water and sunning themselves on shore provides the only access to the island. The alligators are normally docile, but Hetch feeds them regularly and they respond aggressively to any commotion on or around the island. See **NPCs and Factions of Note** on pg. 21 for details on what information Hetch can provide.

**Old Man Hetch:** see pg. 21 for statistics.

**Alligator (16):** AL N; MV 60' (20'), swim 90' (30); AC 6 (natural); HD 2; hp 14, 11, 10 x 2, 9; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 1d6; SV F1; SA surprise on a 1-3 on 1d6; ML 7; XP 20.

## Meeting the Gold: Part 1

This encounter can be dropped in anywhere (in the wilderness, in Holden, etc.) and is designed to try to nudge characters back into the adventure.

The gold dragon Kylen of Ru is seeking aid in her search for the Blood Gem of Mir. She believes the Blood Gem is hidden in Narratch's former lair and tries to convince the characters to retrieve it for her. Kylen is desperate to find the Blood Gem before Xash and his retainers. She appears in her female human form first, but is willing to reveal her true self to Lawful characters.

Kylen tells the characters that the Blood Gem is a powerful artifact that can be used against red dragons. She explains that she cannot take a more active role in retrieving the gem because doing so would spark an all-out war between gold dragons and red. Kylen offers to pay the characters with a magical item from her own hoard if they agree to retrieve the Blood Gem for her. The Labyrinth Lord may choose any magic item the party would find useful.

**Kylen of Ru:** see pg. 24 for statistics.

# Into the Swamps

The freshwater swamps of the Blood Marsh alternate between wide-open marshlands and close, cramped bogs dotted with lily ponds and pools of stagnant, leech-filled water. Cedar, oak, weeping willows, and cypress trees and stumps are common throughout the murky red waters that give the swamp its name. The humid air is rank with the smell of rotting vegetation and thick with hordes of mosquitoes, horseflies, and gnats.

It takes a day of slogging through the Blood Marsh to reach the dense bog of Frog Hollow and another half day to reach the Hisshal City Ruins. During this time, the characters are often forced to wade through knee- and waist-deep water where the footing is unsure and horses must be led. The Labyrinth Lord should be sure to describe the hardships of traveling through the swamp as sweat soaks clothing, boots get stuck in mud, and biting insects make tempers flare.

## Blood Marsh Random Encounters

The Labyrinth Lord should roll 1d6 every eight hours the characters spend in the swamp. A roll of 1 indicates the characters have encountered a wandering monster. The Labyrinth Lord may either roll randomly or choose an encounter from the **Blood Marsh Random Encounters Table**.

**Note:** Monsters noted below with an asterisk (\*) are described in the **New Monsters** section on pg. 26.

## Blood Marsh Random Encounters

1. Always a Bigger Fish
2. Bloodsuckers
3. Bloodsuckers II
4. Canoes
5. Cemetery Mound
6. Croaking Pond
7. Dangerous Crossing
8. Froggle Hunting Party
9. Lurking Charak
10. Mosquito Swarm
11. Muck
12. Rot Grubs
13. R.O.U.S.
14. Ruined Statue
15. Scouting Party
16. Sinkhole
17. Snap Crackle
18. Slimy Death
19. Snake Nest!
20. Willow Weeping

## Always a Bigger Fish

The characters hear cries for help and hear the sounds of a struggle from a nearby pond. If they investigate, they arrive just in time to see a woodsman named Wendell of Holden disappear beneath the murky red water (Wendell is already dead, and being dragged beneath the water by a giant catfish, but the characters have no way of knowing this). Characters who enter the pond are attacked by a second giant catfish.

Wendell had come to this pond hoping to snare a giant catfish, but seriously misjudged the creature's size. Wendell's fishing gear is scattered on the shore and his pack pony is tethered nearby. The pony is outfitted with standard camping gear and six days worth of food and water. Wendell's name is burned into



the pony's saddle, for characters who wish to return his belongings, his remains, or news of his death to his wife Carline.

**Giant Catfish (2):** AL N; MV swim 90' (30'); AC 4 (natural); HD 8+3; hp 49; #AT 5 (bite/feeler/feeler/feeler/feeler); Dmg 2d8/1d4/1d4/1d4/1d4; SV F4; ML 8; XP 460.

## Bloodsuckers

The characters are forced to wade through stagnant water. 2d12 leeches attach themselves to each character causing 1 hit point of damage each turn until peeled off which causes another 1 hit point of damage.

## Bloodsuckers II

The characters see the glint of gold from the bottom of a pool of stagnant red water. Characters who enter the water are attacked by three giant leeches. A small gold disc depicting a stepped pyramid lies in the bottom of the pool. This remnant of hisshal rule is worth 150 gp (or more to a collector).

**Giant Leech (3):** AL N; MV 120' (40'); AC 7 (natural); HD 6; hp 28, 26, 19; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 1d6; SV F3; SA blood drain 1d6 hp/round; ML 10; XP 570.

## Canoes

The characters come to a wide stretch of watery swamp that must be traversed if the party is to continue on their current path. Several crudely built dugout canoes lie upon the shore, partially hidden by brush. An alligator attacks the characters as they enter the water (whether they use the canoes or not). The alligator attacks with surprise on a roll of 1-3 on 1d6. Four more alligators join the fight 1d3 rounds later. The alligators retreat if reduced to half their hit points or less.

**\*Alligators (5):** AL N; MV 60' (20'), swim 90' (30); AC 6 (natural); HD 2; hp 14, 11, 10 x 2, 9; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 1d6; SV F1; SA surprise on a 1-3 on 1d6; ML 7; XP 20.

## Cemetery Mound

The characters spot several weathered headstones poking out from beneath a light blanket of mist and realize they are walking through the remains of a small cemetery. This cemetery belonged to the family of a wizard

who lived in this swamp over a century ago. The writing on the headstones has long since worn off, unless the Labyrinth Lord wishes to tie the family to his campaign world or perhaps foreshadow a future adventure. A shambling mound guards this cemetery. If the characters disturb the graves, the shambling mound attacks.

**\*Shambling Mound:** AL N; MV 60' (20'); AC 0 (natural); HD 9; hp 62; #AT 2 (fist/fist); Dmg 2d8/2d8; SV F9; SA smother, +1 HD from electrical attacks, immune to fire-based attacks, ½ dmg from cold-based attacks (none if save made), ½ dmg from weapons; ML 12; XP 1,820.

## Croaking Pond

Sixteen giant frogs dwell in a pool of stagnant water covered by green pond scum. The frogs attack any character who passes by the pond, achieving surprise on a roll of 1-4 on 1d6.

**\*2' Giant Frog (12):** AL N; MV 30' (10'), swim 90' (30'); AC 7 (natural); HD 1; hp 6 x 2, 5 x 2, 4 x 4, 3 x 4; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 1d3; SV F1; SA surprise on a 1-4 on 1d6, leap 180' (60') and attack same round, tongue attack +4, swallow attack; ML 7; XP 13.

**\*4' Giant Frog (3):** AL N; MV 30' (10'), swim 90' (30'); AC 7 (natural); HD 2; hp 9, 8, 7; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 1d6; SV F2; SA surprise on a 1-4 on 1d6, leap 180' (60') and attack same round, tongue attack +4, swallow attack; ML 7; XP 29.

**\*6' Giant Frog (1):** AL N; MV 30' (10'), swim 90' (30'); AC 7 (natural); HD 3; hp 20; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 2d4; SV F3; SA surprise on a 1-4 on 1d6, leap 180' (60') and attack same round, tongue attack +4, swallow attack; ML 7; XP 65.

## Dangerous Crossing

A log has been placed to form a crude bridge across a narrow creek. Anyone attempting to cross the creek (whether they use the log or not) is attacked by 1d4 giant crayfish. The crayfish attack with surprise on a roll of 1-3 on 1d6. Any remaining crayfish join the battle 1d4 rounds later.

**\*Giant Crayfish (4):** AL N; MV 60' (20'), swim 120' (40'); AC 4 (natural); HD 4+4; hp 22, 19, 19, 17; #AT 2 (claw/claw); Dmg 2d6/2d6; SV F4; SA surprise on a 1-3 on 1d6; ML 9; XP 140.

### Froggle Hunting Party

This band of froggles is a hunting party for the Black Dragon froggle tribe. If the characters appear weak, the froggles attack on sight. If the characters appear powerful, the froggles try to threaten the party into leaving the swamp or ambush the party (if surprise is achieved). News of the encounter and any captured characters are taken back to the Black Dragon chief.

**\*Froggle Warrior (7):** AL C; MV 30' (10'), swim 150' (50'); AC 6 (natural); HD 1; hp 5; #AT 1 (by weapon); Dmg 1d6 (spear); SV F1; SA hop, camouflage; ML 7; XP 16.

### Lurking Charak

The characters are attacked by a charak as they wade through a watery portion of the swamp. The charak attacks with its tentacles, trying to drag its victims underwater. The charak fights until reduced to 20 hp or less, after which time it retreats to a deeper part of the swamp.

**\*Charak:** AL N; MV 30' (10'), swim 90' (30'); AC 7 (natural); HD 8; hp 55; #AT 8 or 1 (tentacles or bite); Dmg 1d3 (tentacle) or 1d6 (bite); SV F4; SA constriction; ML 7; XP 2,060.

### Mosquito Swarm

A swarm of normal mosquitoes descends upon the characters delivering 1 hit point of damage per turn. The swarm stays with the characters as they move through the swamp, but can be dispersed by smoke or fire.

### Muck

The characters are forced to wade knee deep in muck. One character chosen at random loses a boot. If the character searches for the boot, a saving throw vs. petrify must be made. Failure means the character has been bitten by a snapping turtle for 1d3 points of damage.

### Rot Grubs

The characters smell fresh carrion. If they choose to investigate, they come across the blackened carcass of a troll lying atop the rotting body of a man in muddy red robes. The man was an evil magic-user named Pelligrane Yates who had come to the swamp to strike a deal with Black Narratch. A troll picked up the wizard's scent soon after he entered the swamp and the two killed each other in battle.

Yates's spellbook is ruined, but his belt pouch contains three emeralds worth 250 gp each, 52 gp in coins, and a sealed scroll tube in his pack containing a *scroll of spells* (1<sup>st</sup>: *magic missile*, 2<sup>nd</sup>: *web*, 3<sup>rd</sup>: *lightning bolt*). Characters who disturb either body are attacked by 1d6 rot grubs.

**Rot Grub (16):** AL N; MV 10' (2'); AC 9 (natural); HD 1 hit point; hp 1; #AT 1 (burrow); Dmg (special); SV 0-level human; SA burrow into flesh; ML N/A; XP 5.

### R.O.U.S.

The characters stop to rest (or sleep for the night) next to the underground lair of several giant rats. The characters see several rodents of normal size scurry into holes at their approach. 1d4 rounds later, 1d4 giant rats emerge from their holes and attack. The rats receive a +1 to-hit to their first attack as they pop out of hiding. 1d4 giant rats join the fight every other round. The rats retreat back into their holes if eight or more of their number are killed. Characters who take the time to dig up their lair discover a garnet worth 20 gp and 17 gp, 22 sp, and 30 cp in coins.

**Giant Rat (12):** AL N; MV 120' (40'), swim 60' (20'); AC 7 (natural); HD 1d4 hit points; hp 3; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 1d3; SV F1; SA disease; ML 8; XP 6.

### Ruined Statue

The characters come across the ruins of an ancient stone building. The small building is partially collapsed and is overgrown with vegetation. A toppled 10' tall stone statue lying beneath the vegetation depicts a hissha coiled around a segmented stone column. There is nothing else of interest inside, but the ruins

may be used as shelter by characters preparing to spend the night in the swamps.

### Scouting Party

A band of lizardfolk from a small tribe named the Maneaters is scouting the swamp. The Maneaters were once the dominant tribe in the Blood Marsh, but attacks by Narratch and the Black Dragon froggles have decimated their ranks. This scouting party was sent to confirm rumors of the black dragon's death.

The Maneaters prefer to ambush their prey. Any humans captured or killed are butchered and eaten raw by the surviving lizardfolk. The Maneaters retreat if half or more of their number are killed.

**Lizardfolk (9):** AL N; MV 60' (20'), swim 120' (40'); AC 5 (natural); HD 2+1; hp 14, 12, 10 x 3, 9 x 4; #AT 1 (by weapon); Dmg 1d6+1(spear + Str) or 1d6+1 (hand axe + Str); SV F2; SA +1 dmg; ML 10; XP 47.

### Sinkhole

One character chosen at random steps into a sinkhole. The character must make a saving throw vs. petrify or be sucked into the hole. The character sustains 1d4 hit points of damage each round from lack of air. The character cannot escape the sinkhole on his own, but may be rescued by someone willing to stick their arm into the hole and pull him out. The Labyrinth Lord may wish to allow an even more dramatic rescue if, for example, another character wishes to grab a vine and dive into the hole.

### Snap Crackle

The characters hear a popping sound from the soil beneath their feet seconds before a pocket of natural gas spontaneously combusts. The brief flame causes 1d8 hit points of damage to one character chosen at random (saving throw vs. breath attacks for half damage). If the character fails the saving throw, his clothing catches fire, delivering an additional 1d4 hit points of damage each round until the flames are extinguished.

### Slimy Death

The characters are forced to climb over several large cut stone blocks that are overgrown by vines and other swamp vegetation. These remnants of the great hisshal empire are adorned with ancient carvings depicting reptilian creatures gathered beneath a great stepped pyramid.

A giant slug is sleeping the day away amidst the rocks and vines. One character chosen at random discovers the slug by accident—the slug begins moving as the character walks along its rubbery back. It takes the slug four rounds to extricate itself from the blocks and get in position to attack the characters, giving them plenty of time to escape, if they so desire.

**\*Giant Slug:** AL N; MV 60' (20'); AC 8 (natural); HD 12; hp 78; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 1d12; SV F12; SA acid spittle 60' range dmg 5d8, only harmed by sharp weapons or magical blunt weapons; ML 10; XP 2,000.

### Snake Nest!

One character chosen at random dislodges a rotted cypress stump, exposing a nest of young water moccasins. The character must make a saving throw vs. petrify to avoid being bitten by several young snakes. If bitten, the character takes 1 hit point of damage and must make a saving throw vs. poison each round for the next five rounds or take an additional 1d6 points of damage each round. If the character makes a successful saving throw during this time, no further saves are needed.

### Willow Weeping

The characters see a pile of weapons and armor strewn about beneath a cluster of four willow trees. The trees are actually swamp willows. The willows attack any character who wanders within reach of their branches. The weapons and armor are rusted and unusable, however, 65 gp, 112 sp, and 165 cp are scattered throughout the pile.

**\*Swamp Willow (4):** AL N; MV 3' (1'); AC 6 (natural); HD 4; hp 28, 24, 19; #AT 1 (branch); Dmg Special; SV F4; SA constriction; ML N/A; XP 135.

# Hisshal City Ruins

This ancient hisshal city was built around a great pyramidal temple. The city has fallen into ruin and very little of it remains—the roads have been reclaimed by swamp and most of the buildings have been reduced to their foundations. Only a few structures remain intact.

## Central Plaza

In ancient times, this central plaza was used by hisshal slaves to gather and worship their snakelike masters. Most of the plaza stones have sunken into the marsh while the rest are overgrown with swamp vegetation or broken up by pools of stagnant water.

## Domes

These four domes were dedicated to the four elements. Three have collapsed into ruins. The fourth has become the lair of the Black Dragon froggle tribe.

## Froggle Dome

Although the domed ceiling collapsed long ago, the walls of this structure are still intact. The Black Dragon froggles have made their lair here, building mud huts amidst the rubble, a breeding pond in the center, and using the walls for defense. The tribe's treasure (2 tiger eye gems worth 20 gp each, and 57 gp, 32 sp, and 110 cp in coins) is buried in the muck beneath the central tad pool.

If the characters arrive at the ruins during the **Impatient Red** scenario (see below), the froggle females and young cower in the dome while the warriors tend the red dragon Xash at the pyramid. If the characters enter the ruins during the **Froggles Await** scenario (see below), six froggle warriors man crude guard posts atop the walls, awaiting the arrival of Xash's agents.

## Hisshal Temple

This 100' tall stepped pyramid dominates the central plaza. See pg. 12 for a detailed description of the Hisshal Temple and its interior layout.

## Character Arrival

There are two possible scenarios awaiting the characters as they arrive at the **Hisshal City Ruins**. The first occurs while the red dragon Xash the Bloody is dealing with the Black Dragon froggle tribe. The second occurs after the dragon has departed. The Labyrinth Lord may either choose one of these scenarios or roll randomly on the following table to determine which one is taking place when the characters arrive.

Roll	Scenario
1-3	Impatient Red
4-6	Froggles Await

## Scenario #1: Impatient Red

The red dragon Xash the Bloody believes the Blood Gem of Mir is hidden in Narratch's lair. As soon as his wounds healed, he flew to the hisshal pyramid, but could not enter the main shaft because of his great size.

After scorching the **Froggle Dome** with his fiery breath, Xash rounded up the terrified froggles and ordered the froggle chieftain to send warriors into the pyramid to retrieve the Blood Gem. Groups of froggle warriors began entering the pyramid early in the morning, but quickly succumbed to the temple's various traps and guardians. The red dragon is quickly losing patience with the Black Dragon froggle tribe.

## Enter the Characters

The characters arrive at the **Hisshal City Ruins** around noon to find Xash crouched on the eastern side of the pyramid and a group of froggles gathered in the shrine at the top of the pyramid. War parties consisting of three froggles climb in and out of the pyramid's central shaft, occasionally hopping down the side of the pyramid to pile bits of treasure in front of the dragon. The dragon sifts through each offering as if searching for something specific, but seems to get more irritated as time passes. The pile of treasure consists of two *potions of healing*, a *potion of flying*, a *ring of weakness*, a *wand of magic missile* (7 charges), a *dagger +1*, and 73 gp, 86 sp, and 103 cp in coins.

**Xash the Bloody (Red Dragon):** AL C; MV 90' (30'), fly 240' (80'); AC -1 (natural); HD 10; hp 72; #AT 3 or 1 (claw/claw/bite or fire breath attack); Dmg 1d8/1d8/4d8 or fire breath attack equal to current hp; SV F10; SA fire breath attack, spell; ML 10; XP 3,100.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>: *light*, *magic missile* x 2, *sleep*, 2<sup>nd</sup>: *detect invisible*, *mirror image*, *web* x 2, 3<sup>rd</sup>: *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *protection from normal missiles*.

**Hok Hrogget (Froggle Chief):** AL C; MV 30' (10'), swim 150' (50'); AC 6 (natural); HD 2; hp 15; #AT 1 (by weapon); Dmg 1d6+1 (spear + Str); SV F1; SA hop, camouflage; ML 7; XP 47.

**Progk the Bone Thrower (Froggle Witch-Doctor):** AL C; MV 30' (10'), swim 150' (50'); AC 6 (natural); HD 3; hp 8; #AT 1 (by weapon); Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SV MU1; SA hop, camouflage, spell; ML 7; XP 95.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>: *protection from good*, *shield*, 2<sup>nd</sup>: *continual light*.

**Froggle Warrior (12):** AL C; MV 30' (10'), swim 150' (50'); AC 6 (natural); HD 1; hp 5; #AT 1 (by weapon); Dmg 1d6 (spear); SV F1; SA hop, camouflage; ML 7; XP 16.

## Recon

The characters are free to scout out the ruins and perhaps find an alternate way into the temple (see the **Elemental Beacons** on pg. 12, the **Water Caves** on pg. 14, and the **Skeleton**

**Cave** on pg. 16). As the characters explore the ruined city, they occasionally hear a muffled thunderclap (see the **Chamber of Pipes** on pg. 14) or see smoke drifting out of the western side of the pyramid (see **Skeleton Cave** on pg. 16).

The Labyrinth Lord should roll 1d6 for every hour the characters spend exploring. A roll of 1 means the Labyrinth Lord should roll on the **Blood Marsh Random Encounters** table (pg. 6). 2d4 froggle warriors hop over to investigate any loud disturbance and attack intruders on sight. If the fight lasts more than three rounds, the froggle chief, the froggle witch-doctor, 3d6 froggle warriors, and 1d4 giant frogs enter the fray in 1d4 rounds. The red dragon fights only if attacked and is content to observe how the characters fare against the froggles. If the characters defeat the froggles, skip to **Parley**.

**Froggle Warrior:** AL C; MV 30' (10'), swim 150' (50'); AC 6 (natural); HD 1; hp 5; #AT 1 (by weapon); Dmg 1d6 (spear); SV F1; SA hop, camouflage; ML 7; XP 16.

**\*4' Giant Frog (1d4):** AL N; MV 30' (10'), swim 90' (30'); AC 7 (natural); HD 2; hp 9, 8, 7; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 1d6; SV F2; SA surprise on a 1-4 on 1d6, leap 180' (60') and attack same round, tongue attack +4, swallow attack; ML 7; XP 29.

## Never Argue With a Dragon

A short time after the characters arrive, the dragon orders the froggle chief and witch-doctor down from the pyramid. In the common tongue, Xash berates the froggles for their incompetence, stating that all he asked them to do was find one thing, a red gem the size of a man's fist, and they couldn't even do that. When the witch-doctor protests, stating that the pyramid is full of monsters and traps, Xash promptly eats him.

After this, Xash stands up, gathers the meager treasure into his gullet pouch, and tells the froggle chief not to let anyone into or out of the pyramid until his agents—a group of adventurers—arrive. Xash then spreads his wings and flies off.

If the froggles discover the characters after this, skip to **Scenario #2: Froggles Await**.

## Parley

If Xash becomes aware of the characters, he offers to let them keep the treasure the froggles have recovered from Narratch's lair as well as any other treasure they find inside the pyramid if they agree to retrieve the stolen Blood Gem of Mir for him. The dragon refuses to talk about the Blood Gem other than to describe it. If the characters agree, they may enter the pyramid, although Xash indicates it would be unwise for the characters to fail him or try to alter their agreement. The Blood Gem is not there of course, as it was hidden inside Narratch's gullet pouch and eventually ended up in the hands of Detric of Milner. If the characters return to Xash having failed to retrieve the Blood Gem, the furious red dragon attacks.

## Scenario #2: Froggles Await

After Xash leaves, the froggles post guards throughout the ruins and send scouts into the swamp to watch for the dragon's agents. The Labyrinth Lord should roll 1d6 as the characters explore the ruins. On a roll of 1-3, the characters encounter a group of 6 froggle warriors.

**Froggle Warrior (6):** AL C; MV 30' (10'), swim 150' (50'); AC 6 (natural); HD 1; hp 5; #AT 1 (by weapon); Dmg 1d6 (spear); SV F1; SA hop, camouflage; ML 7; XP 16.

### Deception

If the froggles encounter the party, they initially mistake the characters for the dragons' agents. The froggles lay down their weapons and welcome the characters in a broken version of the common tongue. If the characters attack anyway, the entire tribe attempts to flee, believing the red dragon has sent his agents to kill them.

If the characters play along with the deception, the froggles do everything in their power to accommodate them, bringing them food (live insects and choice fungi), and giving them mud huts to bed down in. A detail of six froggle warriors is assigned to guard the characters day and night. These froggles accompany the characters everywhere except into the pyramid.

## Flight of the Froggles

Once the characters enter the pyramid, the froggles gather their belongings and flee into the swamps. The froggle chief wants nothing more to do with dragons or adventurers, even going so far as to change the tribe's name to the Bog Striders in the hopes of avoiding the wrath of Xash the Bloody.

## Hisshal Temple

The Hisshal Temple is an ancient 100' tall stepped pyramid where the hisshal god-kings once reigned. The pyramid is made of cracked, weathered stone and covered with creeper vines and other vegetation. A stone staircase climbs each side of the pyramid until it reaches the shrine at the top.

Entrance to the temple is gained through a central shaft inside the shrine. The temple interior is riddled with damp stone passageways that are cylindrical in shape. The walls of these passages and chambers are coated with algae, mold, and fungi.

This temple was dedicated to the four elements—earth, air, water, and fire—and each side of the pyramid was enchanted to help the hissha explore the mysteries of a particular element. Some of these enchantments have become damaged over the centuries, however, and now pose a danger to would-be explorers.

### Elemental Beacons

These four squat 25' tall stone archways surround the pyramid at each compass point. The archways are hollow; a secret door in the upper portion of each arch leads to the elemental chamber below it. Each arch is inscribed with arcane runes representing its representative element. During holy days, summoned elementals were sent from their respective chambers below to the top of each arch to demonstrate the hisshal's mastery over the four elements.

### The Shrine

The shrine atop the pyramid consists of a stone roof supported by five thick stone columns. These columns rise up out of a shaft that descends into the **Central Chamber**. On minor holy days, sacrifices were lowered down

into the shaft. On major holy days, the four elemental beacons were lit and one or more hissha would slither up the central column to accept sacrifices and instill fear into worshippers.

### 1. Central Chamber

The central chamber lies at the bottom of a wide shaft. Five segmented stone columns rise up from the center of the chamber to support the roof of the shrine at the top of the pyramid. The central column is thicker than the others and was used by the hissha to enter and exit the pyramid. The other four narrower stone columns are cut with handholds for use by hisshal slaves.

The central chamber served as the living quarters of the snakelike hissha. Here they slept and lounged intertwined to be tended by reptilian slaves who rubbed them with oils, scraped filth from their scales, and served as a ready food supply when the hissha were hungry. The domed ceiling is coated with lichen and slime. Scraping or burning the slime from the ceiling and walls reveals an artful mosaic depicting a collage of images from the time of hisshal rule.

## Northern Wing

The northern temple complex is dedicated to the element of Earth.

### 2. Rock Garden Chamber

The floor of this chamber is covered with small, oval-shaped black and white stones. When seeking guidance, a wayward hissha would slither around the room once or twice and then interpret his fortunes from the serpentine pattern of his passing.

Any magic-user, elf, or cleric who enters this room immediately understands the nature of the enchantment. If a magic-user, elf, or cleric walks around the room and then examines his own footprints, he receives the benefit of a *commune* spell (may ask three "yes or no" questions). This effect may be used once per month, however, the divine Powers of Earth do not look kindly upon those who call upon them for trivial matters and expect some sort of sacrifice (usually in the form of precious metals or jewels) if contacted repeatedly. If the

characters fail to pay proper homage in the future, an earth elemental may be sent to show the characters the error of their ways.

### 3. Chamber of Visions

This room is empty except for the bloated, poisoned corpses of four froggles. The froggles died with terrified looks upon their faces. Their hands are shredded and blood is smeared upon the walls as if they had tried to claw their way out of the room.

1d4 rounds after the characters enter the chamber, a stone slab slams shut across the doorway. Anyone close to the doorway must make a saving throw vs. petrify to avoid being trapped inside. The slab may be opened with a *knock* spell or slid aside by two or more successful force door rolls (by any character).

Two rounds after the room is sealed, rivers of sand begin magically pouring into the chamber from holes in the ceiling. The sand quickly fills the chamber, restricting movement and imposing a cumulative -1 to-hit each round until the characters are rendered immobile. The sand only stops if the slab is moved (by the characters or by its own reset).

Three rounds after the sand begins pouring in, 2d4 large scorpions arrive with the sand. These 3' long scorpions are very aggressive, seeking out and stinging any living creature in the room. If stung, the victim must make a saving throw vs. poison or suffer an additional 1d3 points of damage for the next 2d4 rounds as the poison courses through his body. During this time, the character suffers a -2 to-hit.

The chamber completely fills with sand in ten rounds. Any characters trapped inside at this time are rendered incapable of movement and die of suffocation within six rounds.

In ancient times, the hissha used this chamber to receive elemental visions—the sand conveyed a sense of weightlessness while the scorpions' poison produced a hallucinogenic effect on the hisshas' reptilian metabolism.

**Large Scorpion (2d4):** AL N; MV 60' (20'); AC 7 (natural); HD 1+1; hp 5; #AT 3 (claw/claw/stinger); Dmg 1d2/1d2/1 + poison; SV F1; SA poison, +2 to-hit with stinger if claw hits; ML 8; XP 33.

## 4. Chamber of Earth

This chamber contains a pit full of muddy earth surrounded by a stone summoning circle. Disturbing the earth summons an earth elemental which manifests as a blocky humanoid made of moist earth, lichen, moss, and roots. The elemental immediately blocks the doorway and tries to prevent the characters from leaving the chamber. If the characters can communicate with it in its own language (perhaps via a *comprehend languages* spell), the elemental demands they deface the summoning circle so it can return to its home plane. If the characters refuse, or if they are unable to communicate with it, the elemental attacks.

The elemental returns to the pit after a week and becomes dormant unless disturbed. If the elemental is destroyed, the characters find seven sapphires (100 gp each) amidst its muddy remains. An ancient Earth rune above the door prevents the elemental from leaving the chamber. A shaft in the ceiling leads up to the elemental beacon above.

**Earth Elemental:** AL N; MV 60' (20'); AC 2 (natural); HD 8; hp 64; #AT 1 (fist); Dmg 1d8 + special; SV F8; SA +1d8 dmg against opponents standing on ground, unable to move though wide bodies of water; ML 10; XP 1,570.

## Southern Wing

The southern temple complex is dedicated to the element of Air.

### 5. Chamber of Tranquility

A number of large decorative wind chimes made of wood, metal, and glass hang throughout this chamber. 1d4 rounds after the characters enter the room, a light wind begins magically circulating throughout the chamber, setting off the chimes. The sound of the chimes produces a disorienting effect. The characters must make a saving throw vs. spells or suffer effects similar to that of a *confusion* spell. If a result of "attack caster's group" is rolled, the character flees the chamber as if affected by a *cause fear* spell. The chimes grow silent 2d4 rounds after the characters leave the room.

The sounds from the chimes once produced a pleasurable effect upon the scales of the hissha,

which helped to induce a state of peaceful meditation.

### 6. Chamber of Pipes

A set of stone organ pipes is carved into each wall of this chamber. 1d4 rounds after the characters enter the room, the pipes begin issuing a low note that slowly rises in intensity until it reverberates throughout the entire pyramid. The pipes once produced a steady note that helped stimulate a vibrant state of meditation, however, the enchantment has been damaged over time. After three rounds, the pipes produce a sound like a thunderclap and a buffeting wind issues from the pipes. Any characters inside the room must make a saving throw vs. breath attacks or be knocked into area **6a.** of the **Water Caves.** The wind dies down 2d4 rounds after the characters leave the room.

#### 6a. and 6b. Water Caves

These muddy underground caves are filled with murky red water, aquatic swamp life, and thick vegetation. The caves are four to five feet deep with only a few inches of air above water level (just enough for the characters to stick their mouths out to breathe). Cave **6a.** contains the bloodless corpses of three froggles that were killed by the giant leeches lurking in the bottom of the pool. Four leeches attack any characters who enter the cave.

Cave **6b.** contains a narrow twisting passage that leads to a murky pool of water on the eastern side of the temple. This passage may be detected from the outside as if it was a concealed door. Only unarmored characters may fit through this passage. Two more giant leeches reside in the passage, automatically hitting any character who attempts to swim through.

**Giant Leech (6):** AL N; MV 120' (40'); AC 7 (natural); HD 6; hp 26; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 1d6; SV F3; SA blood drain +1d6/round; ML 10; XP 570.

### 7. Chamber of Air

This chamber contains a summoning circle on the floor in the center of the room. A sheet of gossamer silk dangles from an ornate silver hanger hanging above the circle. The hanger is



decorated with serpent motifs and is worth 1,000 gp (or more to a collector of antiquities). In ancient times, palm fronds were used to fan the silk, but these have long since rotted away. The party has a cumulative 1 in 6 chance per round of disturbing the silk after entering the chamber. Disturbing the silk summons an air elemental.

The air elemental appears as a gently swirling mass of air that attempts to communicate with the characters in a voice that sounds like wind. The elemental is nonviolent unless attacked. If the characters do not attack the elemental, it tries to draw their attention to the summoning circle by swirling loose dirt and debris around it in a clockwise pattern.

If the characters find some way of communicating with the elemental, it agrees to perform one task for the characters if they deface the circle and the Air rune above the doorway. The characters have one week to set the task, after which, the elemental returns to its home plane.

If the characters do not deface the circle, the elemental dissipates after a week and becomes dormant unless disturbed. An ancient Air rune inscribed above the doorway prevents the elemental from leaving the chamber. A shaft in the ceiling leads up to the elemental beacon above.

**Air Elemental:** AL N; MV fly 360' (120'); AC 2 (natural); HD 8; hp 40; #AT 1 (wind buffet); Dmg 1d8 + special; SV F8; SA beings of 2 HD or less save vs. death or be carried away, +1d8 dmg vs. aerial creatures; ML 10; XP 1,570.

## Eastern Wing

The eastern temple complex is dedicated to the element of Water.

### 8. Pool of Healing

A shallow circular pool is sunk into the floor in the center of this chamber. Its sparkling clear waters possess healing properties that bestow the effects of a *cure disease*, *heal*, or *neutralize poison* spell on any who bathe within the pool. However, the nature of the healing magic replaces damaged skin with flaky reptilian scales. These scales are permanent until the character is treated by a *cure disease* spell.

The pool may be used six times before it dries up. It magically refills itself on the night of the new moon, however, the divine Powers of Water do not look kindly upon those who call upon them for trivial matters and expect some sort of sacrifice (usually in the form of precious jewels) if contacted repeatedly. If the characters fail to pay proper homage in the future, a water elemental may be sent to show the characters the error of their ways.

### 9. Cracked Cistern

A circular cistern covered with magical runes is located on the floor in the center of this chamber. This cistern was damaged in the ages following the fall of the hissha, producing an unending supply of water that leaks out, fills up area **6a.** and **6b.** (the **Water Caves**), and seeps out into the swamplands beyond. The water has lost whatever magical properties it once possessed.

### 10. Chamber of Water

The floor of this chamber contains a circular cistern surrounded by a summoning circle. The sopping, bug-eyed corpses of three strangled froggles lie on the floor near the cistern.

Touching the water would normally summon a water elemental, but the dead froggles have already done this, and paid for their mistake—the elemental tried unsuccessfully to communicate with the froggles and then killed them out of frustration.

When the characters enter the room, the water elemental rises up out of the cistern. The elemental first tries to communicate with the characters in its own tongue, asking them to deface the summoning circle so it can return home. If the characters refuse, or if they are unable to communicate with it, the elemental attacks.

The elemental returns to the cistern after a week and becomes dormant unless disturbed. An ancient Water rune inscribed above the doorway prevents the elemental from leaving the chamber. A shaft in the ceiling leads up to the elemental beacon above.

**Water Elemental:** AL N; MV 60' (20'), swim 180' (60'); AC 2 (natural); HD 8; hp 56; #AT 1 (water buffet); Dmg 1d8; SV F8; SA +1d8 dmg

against opponents standing in water, cannot be more than 60' from water source; ML 10; XP 1,570.

## Western Wing

The western temple complex is dedicated to the element of Fire.

### 11. Basking Chamber

The floor of this chamber is covered with large oval stones. 1d4 rounds after the characters enter the room, the stones magically begin to heat up. The heat provides a soothing effect that helps ease the pain of aching muscles and joints. Anyone who stays in the room for at least one turn heals 1d4 hit points of damage. However, the nature of the healing magic causes the healed character to begin speaking with a sibilant lisp. This effect is permanent until the character is treated by a *cure disease* spell.

The stones' healing effects can only be achieved once per day by each character. The stones begin cooling 2d4 rounds after the characters exit the room. The hissha once used this chamber to induce a state of healing and peaceful meditation.

### 12. Chamber of Smoke

An arcane rune is inscribed in the hall above this doorway. Any magic-user, elf, or cleric character who makes a successful Intelligence check recognizes it as a rune used in necromancy. The rune radiates magic. It was placed here by the black dragon Narratch to contain the hisshal skeletons in the **Skeleton Cave**.

Inside the chamber, the characters see a squat stone chimney in each corner of the room and the mangled bodies of nine froggles killed by the hisshal skeletons from the **Skeleton Cave**. 1d4 rounds after the characters enter the chamber, a stone slab slams shut across the doorway. Anyone close to the doorway must make a saving throw vs. petrify to avoid being trapped inside. The slab may be opened with a *knock* spell or slid aside by two or more successful force door rolls (by any character).

One round after the slab falls, black smoke begins pouring out of each chimney. This smoke

was once used to help induce visions, but now creates a hazard to trapped characters. The smoke quickly fills the chamber, causing fits of violent coughing that impose a cumulative -1 to-hit each round to a maximum of -8. The smoke stops issuing once the slab is moved (by the characters or by its own reset). Otherwise, it continues indefinitely as it seeps out around the stone block in the **Skeleton Cave**.

Three rounds after the slab falls, the hisshal skeletons from the **Skeleton Cave** slither into the chamber and attack.

### 12a. Skeleton Cave

This area of the pyramid has collapsed in upon itself to form a small cave. One of the larger stones in the west wall can be moved to provide a secret exit from the pyramid. This was the route Narratch used during his unsuccessful attempt to escape Xash the Bloody. Narratch failed to replace the stone properly and anyone viewing it from the outside it may spot it with a roll of 1-3 on 1d6. Moving the stone requires a successful force doors roll.

Narratch has animated the skeletons of three long-dead hissha and set them to guard the west wing of the temple. The skeletons remain in this cave unless someone enters the **Chamber of Smoke** or unless Narratch commands them to attack. The skeletons possess no treasure, but Old Man Hetch would pay highly for one of their misshapen skulls.

**Hisshal Skeleton (3):** AL N; MV 90' (30'); AC 6 (natural); HD 5; hp 27; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 1d4; SV F5; SA can be Turned, unaffected by *sleep* and *charm* spells; ML 12; XP 350.

### 13. Chamber of Fire

A cracked, defaced summoning circle is inscribed upon the stone floor. A brazier once occupied the center of the circle, but Narratch relocated it to the **Summoning Cave** (below). An ancient Fire rune inscribed above the doorway once prevented the elemental from leaving the chamber. A shaft in the ceiling leads up to the elemental beacon above.

## Dragon Caves

Until recently, these caves served as the lair of the black dragon Narratch. The caves are

filled with red water to a depth of around three feet (about waist high to most humans). The floor is littered with rubble, making the footing uneven. The caves are dark and gloomy, but the flickering light of the fire elemental in the **Summoning Cave** reflects off the red water, producing more than enough eerie light to see by.

#### 14. Slime Cave

Narratch designed this underwater chamber as a trap. A gilded long sword (25 gp), a suit of normal plate mail, a nonmagical wand tipped with a piece of clear glass, a fake pearl necklace (5 gp), three gold rings (150 gp), two glass rubies (1 gp), two glass emeralds (1 gp), and 150 gp in coins rest atop a pile of fallen rubble that lies above the water level on the western side of this cave. The water in this cave appears to be covered with green algae. It is actually an extremely large green slime. The slime attacks anyone who wades into the water. Any character who makes a Wisdom check at -2 notices the bones of a dead froggle covered with flecks of green lying on the rocky shore.

**Green Slime:** AL N; MV 3' (1'); AC NA (no roll needed); HD 10; hp 50; #AT 1 (slime); Dmg special; SV F1; SA devour clothing and armor in 6 rounds, destroyed by fire, destroyed by *cure disease*; ML 12; XP 38.

#### 15. Ledge

This ledge is where the black dragon Narratch once slept. It contains the Blood Gem Crucible as well as a dozen intact scales that may be sold for 25 gp each to a collector or magic-user.

#### 16. Summoning Cave

The stone floor of this cave contains a large brazier surrounded by a freshly carved summoning circle. The brazier is lit and the elemental is present, flitting about the cave, but is unable to leave because of the water.

When Narratch took up residence in the pyramid, he recognized the significance of the brazier and decided to bind the elemental to him. Relocating the brazier into this cave, he studiously copied one of the summoning circles onto the floor and began exploiting the elemental's knowledge of magic and history.

Narratch eventually learned of the Blood Gem of Mir and, with the elemental's help, Narratch was able to develop the Blood Gem Crucible (see **New Magic Items**, pg. 25) in order to locate and track the Blood Gem.

The elemental speaks the common tongue. When the characters enter the cave, the elemental asks if they have been sent by Narratch to torment him further. If asked, the elemental explains the nature of its service to Narratch, including its role in helping the dragon locate and acquire the Blood Gem of Mir.

The elemental asks the characters to deface the summoning circle in exchange for teaching them how to use the Blood Gem Crucible. If the characters do not deface the circle, the elemental returns to the brazier after a week and becomes dormant until the brazier is relit.

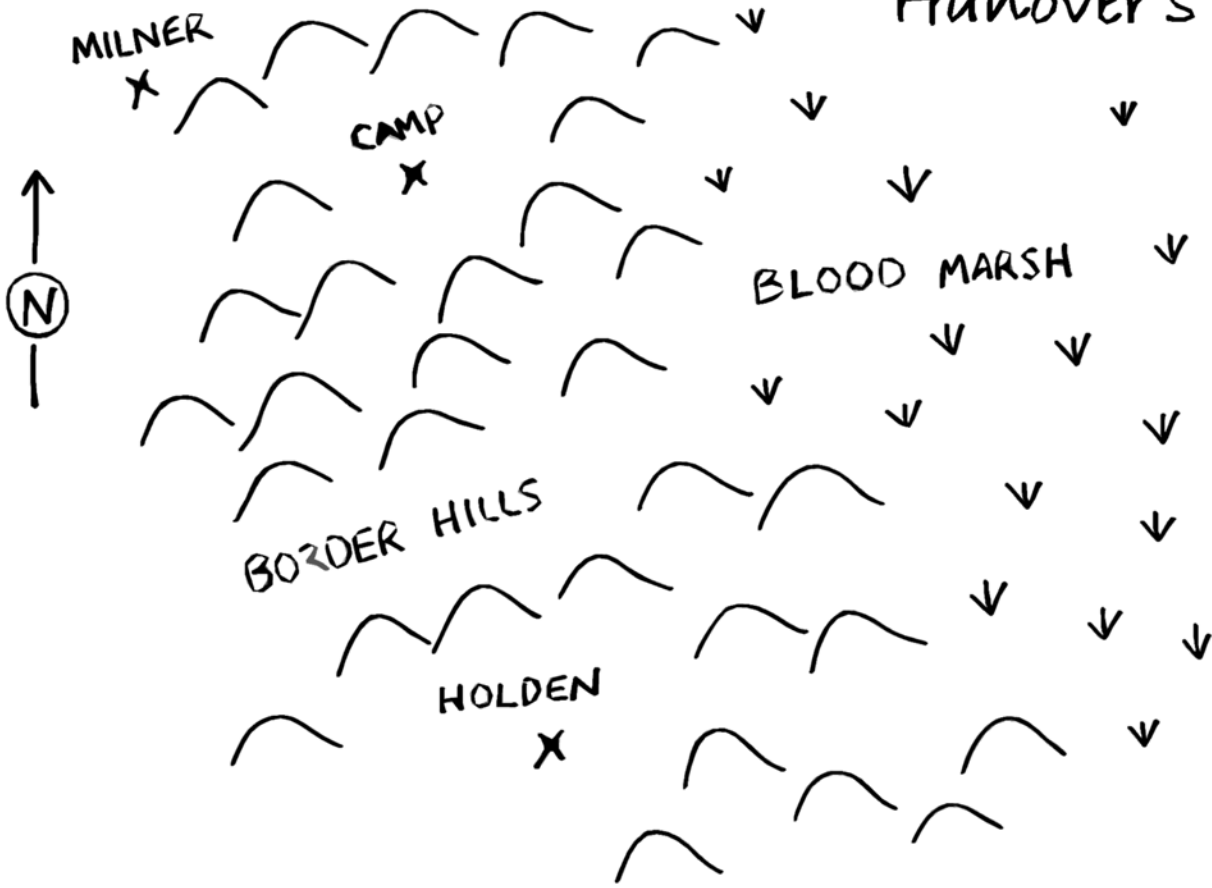
**Fire Elemental:** AL N; MV 120' (40'); AC 2 (natural); HD 8; hp 50; #AT 1 (flames); Dmg 1d8; SV F8; SA +1d8 dmg vs. creatures that use cold-based attacks, unable to move over water; ML 10; XP 1,570.

#### 17. Treasure Cave

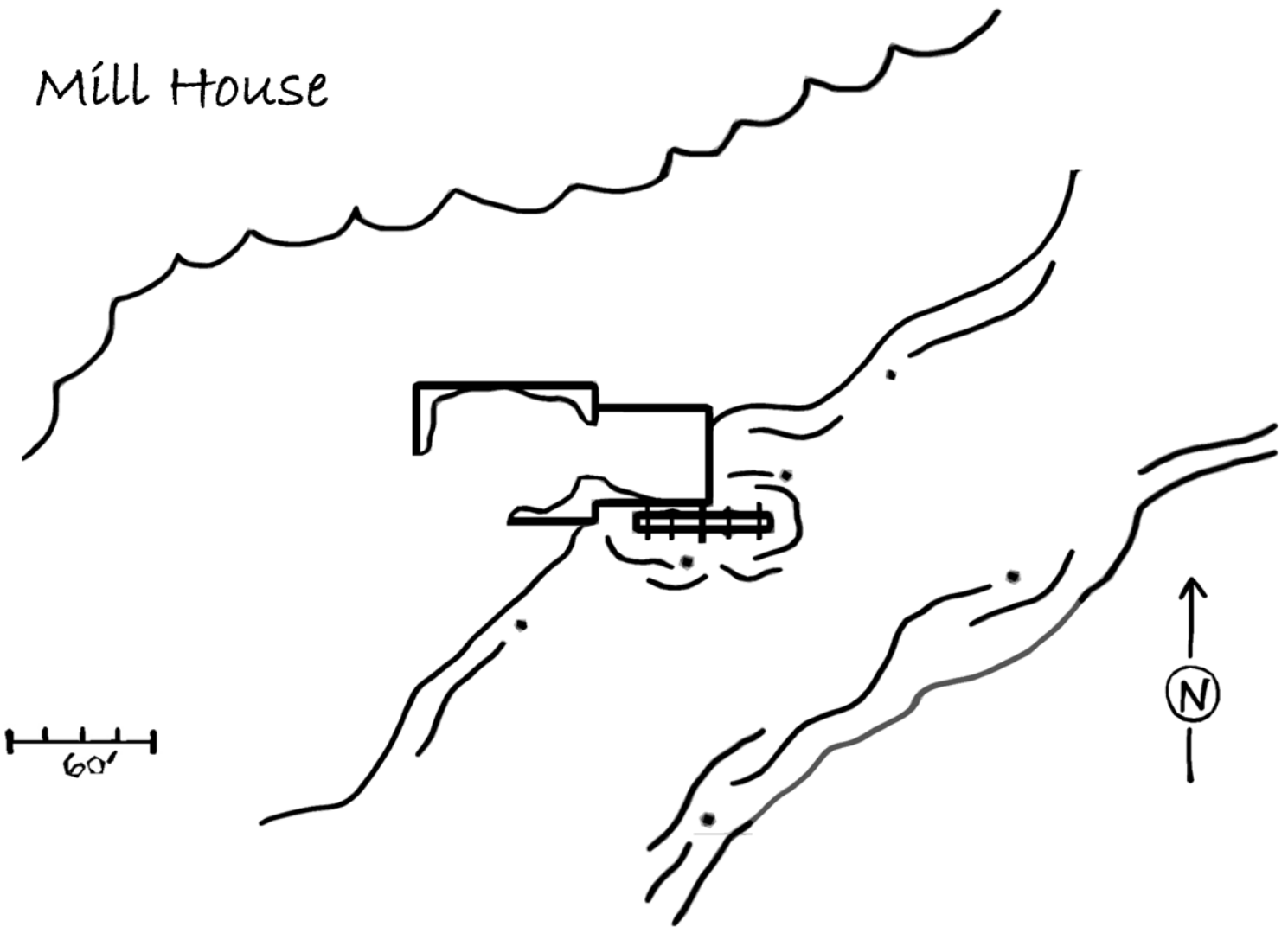
Black Narratch was smart enough to spread his treasure out between several different lairs. This cave contains the remains of this part of his hoard. The treasure is located in the bottom of a pool covered with green scum and algae. The air in this cave is rank with swamp gas. Characters who enter this area with a torch or characters who think the algae is green slime and attempt to burn it away ignite the gas, creating an explosion that causes 4d6 points of damage to everyone in the **Dragon Caves** (saving throw vs. breath attacks for 1/2 damage).

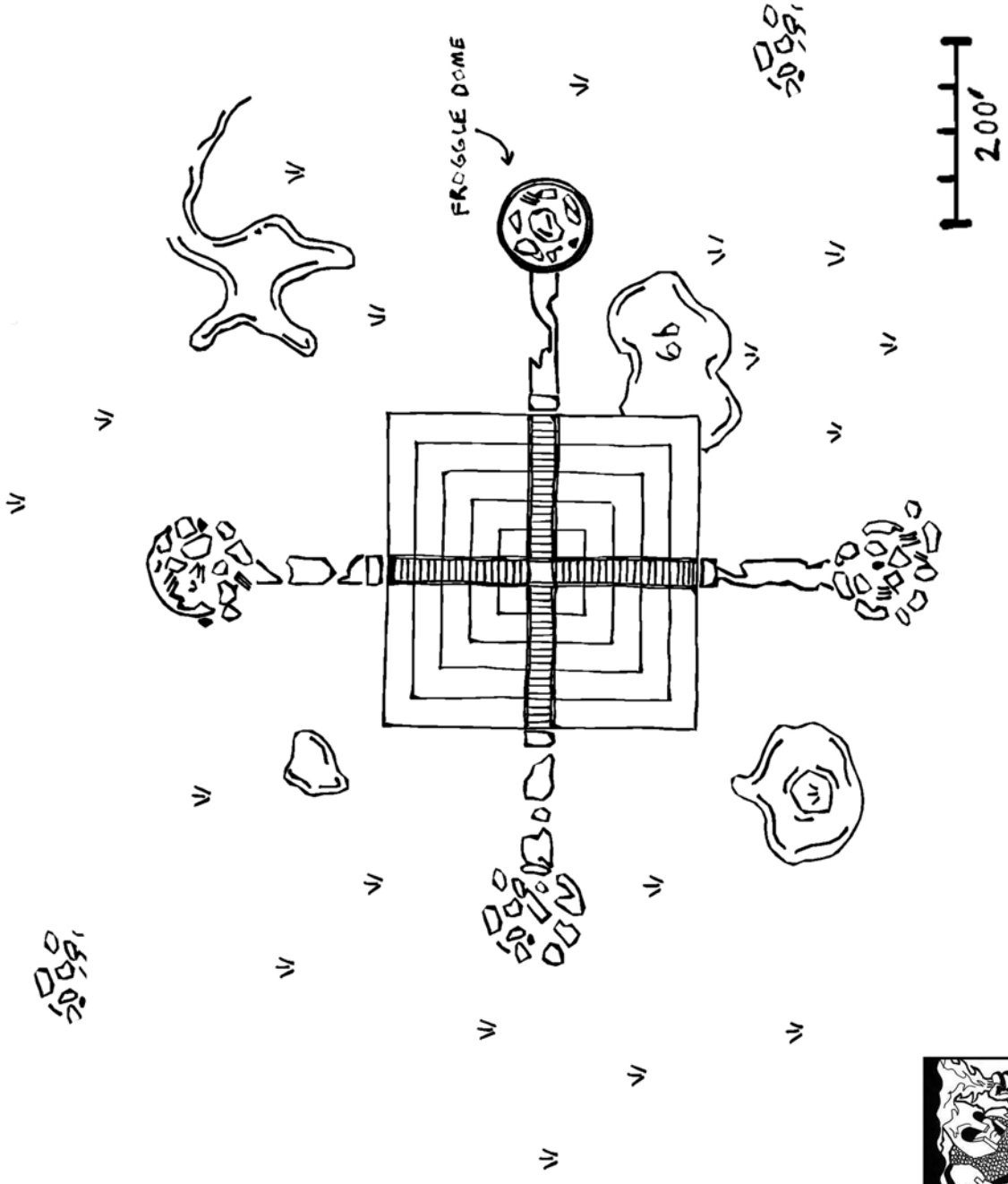
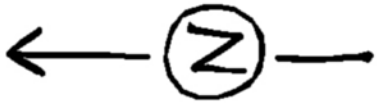
It takes several days for the gas to build up again so surviving characters may plunder the chest at their leisure. The chest was watertight, but in Narratch's haste to escape before Xash's arrival, he did not reset the seals and some of its contents have been ruined. The chest contains two ruined, waterlogged spellbooks, four *potions of healing*, and a *short sword* +1. 1,900 gp, 2,100 sp, 6,000 cp are scattered along the bottom of the pool. Also in the chest is a scroll tube containing a treasure map (the Labyrinth Lord can use this to spark another adventure of his own design).

# Hanover's Map



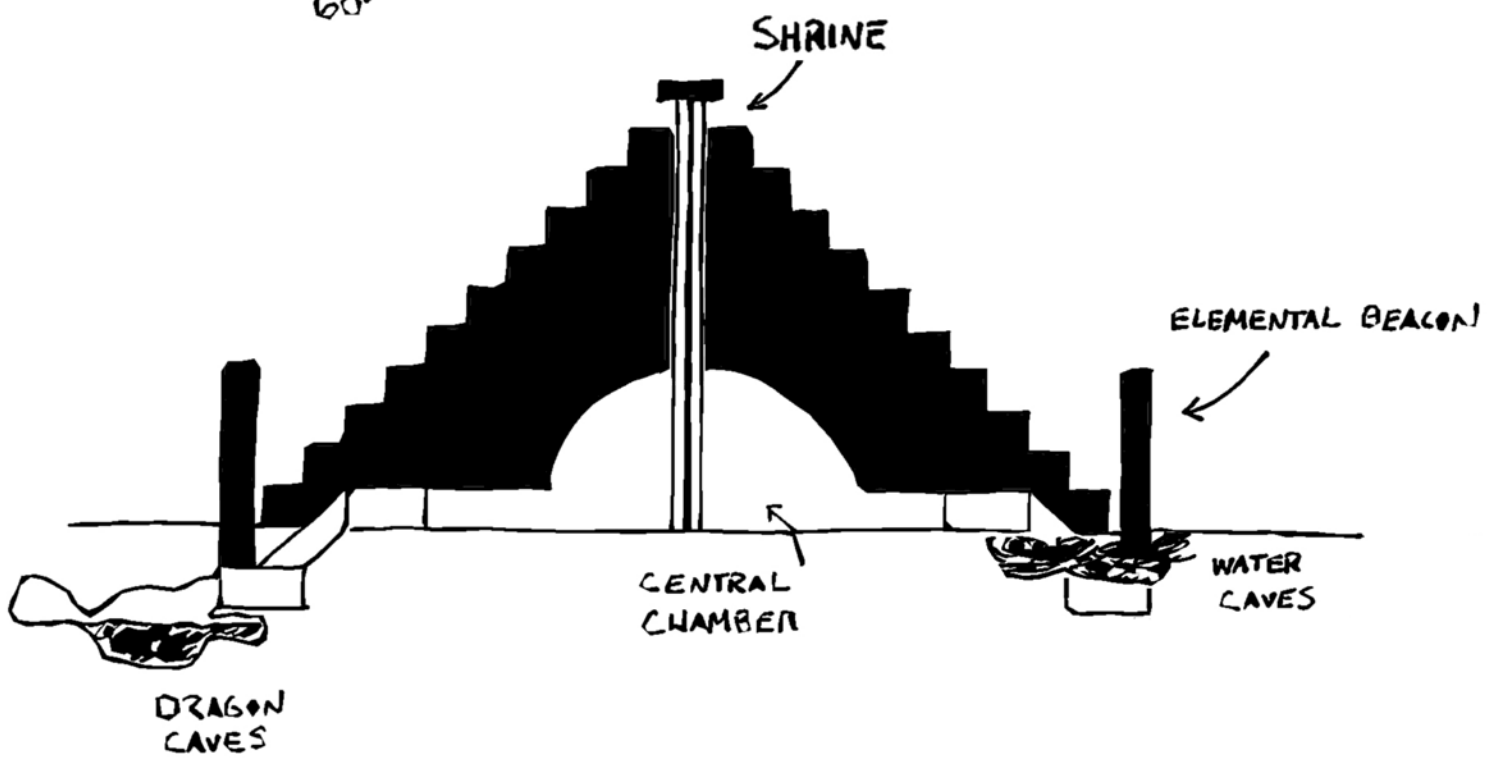
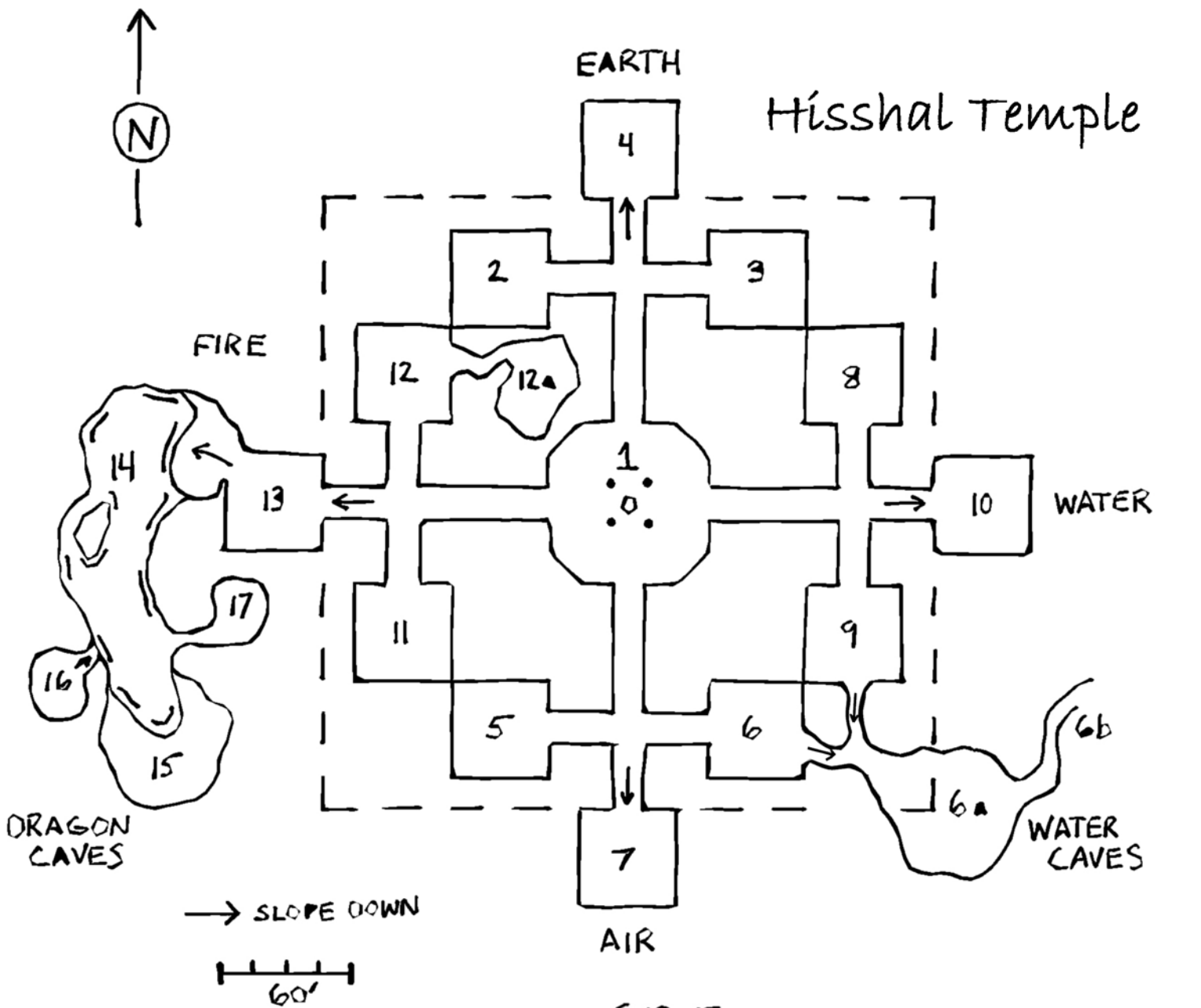
## Mill House





# Hisshal City Ruins





# The Hunt is On

The characters are free to leave the swamp at any time. With any luck, the characters now possess the Blood Gem Crucible and have decided to search for Detric and/or the Blood Gem of Mir. The characters should have no trouble using the crucible to locate Detric. Once activated, the crucible's flame depicts poor Detric in various stages of transformation. Detric has turned his father's old mill into his lair and the characters should recognize it from the **Mill House** encounter on pg. 3.

If the characters do not possess the crucible, or if they decide to return to Holden, the Labyrinth Lord should skip to **Meeting the Gold: Part 2** to get the characters headed in the right direction.

## Holden

If the characters return to Holden, the Green Duck tavern is abuzz with talk of the missing Detric as no one has seen the boy since the day of the dragon fight. A trapper named Gray Brenton claims to have glimpsed a dragon-like creature in the hills north of town and the townsfolk believe Detric may have become its first victim. There is talk of organizing a hunting party to slay the creature, but the townsfolk prefer to wait for Karl Hanover's return before undertaking such a dangerous venture.

## Meeting the Gold: Part 2

This encounter can be dropped in anywhere (in the wilderness, in Holden, etc.) and is designed to try to nudge characters towards helping the hapless Detric.

If the characters have explored the pyramid, but failed to obtain the Blood Gem Crucible, the gold dragon Kylen of Ru tries to enlist them in her search for the Blood Gem. Kylen has heard of Detric's cursed transformation and is trying to locate him. Kylen is desperate to find the

Blood Gem before Xash and his retainers. She appears first in her female human form, but is willing to reveal her true self to Lawful characters. She knows that Xash and the Brotherhood of Wrath are searching for the Blood Gem and plans to lead them away while the characters search for Detric. At the Labyrinth Lord's discretion, Kylen might suspect Dark Alianna's true identity and advise the characters they might have a friend inside the Brotherhood.

If the characters have not met Kylen before, she tells them that the Blood Gem is a powerful artifact that can be used against red dragons. She explains that she cannot take a more active role in retrieving the gem because doing so would spark a war between gold dragons and red. Kylen offers to pay the characters with a magical item from her personal hoard if the characters agree to retrieve the Blood Gem for her. The Labyrinth Lord may choose any magic item the party would find useful.

Kylen explains that Detric has fallen under the Blood Gem's curse and is being slowly transformed into a hybrid red dragon. The only way to break the curse and reverse the process is to take the Blood Gem away from him (or kill him).

**Kylen of Ru:** see pg. 24 for statistics.

## Mandragon

The miller's son Detric has been driven insane by his slow transformation into a hybrid red dragon. Detric currently has the head and forearms of a human with the torso, wings, tail, and hindquarters of a red dragon. The Blood Gem of Mir hangs from a crude leather thong around the monster's neck.

Detric has moved into his father's former millhouse in the Border Hills. There is a 50%

chance Detric is out hunting and a 50% chance he is asleep in his lair. If out hunting, Detric attacks on sight and fights until reduced to 10 hit points before attempting to fly back to his lair. If cornered in his lair, Detric fights to the death.

There are several ways the characters may attempt to separate Detric from the gem. Characters at a distance may make a to-hit roll at -4 to cut the thong with an edged ranged weapon such as a bow, crossbow, or thrown axe or dagger. Characters in melee combat may make a to-hit roll at -4 to snatch the gem off with their hands or cut the thong with an edged weapon.

A thief character who gets in position for a backstab attempt can snatch the gem from Detric's neck by making a successful to-hit roll. Alternately, a thief character may attempt a Pick Pockets roll at any time to try to snatch the gem. If the characters are lucky enough to come across Detric as he sleeps, a stealthy character may attempt to sneak into his lair and steal the gem by making a successful Dexterity check or Move Silently roll (whichever is higher), at the Labyrinth Lord's discretion.

Once the gem is removed, Detric lets out an agonized scream as he transforms back into a human, and then falls unconscious for 2d4 hours. This would be an ideal time for the characters to encounter the Brotherhood of Wrath, if they have not done so already.

**Detric (Mandragon):** AL N; MV 90' (30'), fly 240' (80'); AC 5 (natural); HD 5; hp 26; #AT 2 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg 1/1/1d2; SV F5; ML 7; XP 350.

## Agents of the Red

The Brotherhood of Wrath was on its way to the hisshal pyramid when they heard rumors of Detric's disappearance and the dragon-like monster prowling the hills. The wizard Misha Kiir recognized this as a side effect of the Blood Gem. As the Brotherhood searches the hills for Detric, she occasionally casts a *locate object* spell hoping to locate it.

The Brotherhood of Wrath may be encountered anywhere (in the wilderness, in Holden, near Detric's lair, etc.) and at any time before or after the characters retrieve the Blood

Gem. Upon meeting the characters, Red Naria attempts to open a friendly conversation with them to determine how much they know. If she suspects the characters possess the Blood Gem, she offers to trade it for her *bag of holding* and her *rope of climbing*. Naria explains that the gem is the property of a red dragon named Xash the Bloody and that whoever possesses it is in grave danger. Naria claims that the Brotherhood is actually a company of Lawful adventurers who is trying to destroy the cursed artifact.

If the characters recognize the Brotherhood, mention Kylene of Ru, or refuse to trade the Blood Gem, Naria expresses regret that the party has gotten mixed up in the dealings of dragons and wishes them well on their journey. The Brotherhood then withdraws to plan an attack at a time of their choosing. If the characters appear formidable, the elf spy Dark Alianna might try to make contact with them before the attack.

## Combating the Brotherhood

The Labyrinth Lord is free to pick the location of the attack. The Brotherhood of Wrath should be played as intelligent and dangerous foes. They are veteran fighters and ruthless killers who prefer to utilize the following tactics if possible.

Red Naria hangs back from the melee, softening up her opponents with her crossbow before closing with her sword. She attacks magic-users and elves first, then clerics, then thieves, fighters, dwarves, and halflings. If Naria is reduced to 10 hit points or less, she withdraws from the melee and attacks with her crossbow. If reduced to 5 hit points or less, she abandons her companions and tries to escape.

When combat begins, Misha Kiir casts *invisibility* upon herself, then *shield*. Kiir then casts *haste* on Trane. Afterwards, she looks for an opportunity to cast *fireball* or *magic missile* on her opponents. Kiir engages in melee combat only as a last resort. If the battle goes badly for the Brotherhood, she casts *polymorph self* to turn herself into a crow and flies away.

Trane of Garanton prefers to engage enemies head on in an attempt to impress Kiir and intimidate Naria. He attacks the largest, most heavily armed and armored fighters and clerics



first. Trane receives a +1 to-hit and +1 to damage if Misha Kiir is killed.

Foe Hammer casts *hold person* on an enemy cleric or magic-user. He then attacks that character for one round before engaging another in melee combat. If reduced to half his hit points or less, Foe Hammer casts *cure light wounds* on himself and drinks a *potion of healing* before casting *hold person* again and returning to battle. Foe Hammer fights to the death.

Melian Andoni uses his *elven cloak* to get into position to backstab his enemies if possible. If not, he hangs back and fires his short bow into the melee. Given time, Andoni anoints his weapons with his *potion of poison*. He is the first to flee if things start going bad for the Brotherhood.

When the fighting starts, Dark Alianna casts *invisibility* and *protection from normal missiles* upon herself and gets in position to observe the battle. Alianna occasionally fires an arrow close to the fighting, but takes care not to hit anyone (which would count as an attack that negates the *invisibility*). If the characters appear capable of defeating the Brotherhood, Alianna targets Red Naria with her *magic missile* spells, followed by a barrage of normal arrows.

## Meeting the Gold: Part 3

The gold dragon Kylen of Ru appears some time after the characters have retrieved the Blood Gem of Mir. After what happened to Detric, it should be obvious that the Blood Gem is a cursed artifact, and Lawful characters should be more than willing to hand it over into the gold dragon's keeping. If the characters need more incentive, Kylen offers them a magic item from her personal hoard in exchange for the gem. The Labyrinth Lord may choose any magic item the party would find useful. If the characters freely give her the Blood Gem, Kylen gives them a Golden Horn of Friendship (see **New Magic Items** on pg. 25) and instructs them on its use.

**Kylen of Ru:** see pg. 24 for statistics.

## Concluding the Adventure

If the characters save Detric, the boy is eternally grateful to the characters and may

even bond with a fighter to become a loyal retainer. The characters are regarded as local heroes and may be asked to do anything from warding off raiding lizardfolk to giving a speech at a local wedding ceremony. If the party decides to remain in the area, the frontier village of Holden may be used as a base for future expeditions into the Blood Marsh.

If the characters made a deal with Karl Hanover, their share of the processed black dragon comes to the tidy sum of 1,120 gp. Hanover is always on the lookout for this sort of exotic goods and he may attempt to hire the characters to hunt dangerous game or collect rare plants.

Old Man Hetch might seek the characters out to learn more about the hisshal city ruins. Hetch is an expert on local flora, fauna, and history, and he may become a good source of information and rumors about the area. If the characters did not travel to the ruins during the course of this adventure, he may even attempt to fund an expedition to Frog Hollow (perhaps with him in the lead).

If any of the Brotherhood of Wrath survives, they flee the region, but are eventually tracked down by Xash the Bloody. Xash learns of the characters while torturing his former agents, setting up the red dragon (and any members of the Brotherhood he allows to survive) to become a recurring villain if the Labyrinth Lord desires.

If the characters befriended Kylen of Ru, they have made a powerful ally of good. Kylen may appear again in the future, either to call upon the characters for aid or to provide assistance in times of need. Lawful characters may even become embroiled in the dragon war that is currently brewing between good and evil dragons.

If the characters are foolish enough to retain possession of the Blood Gem of Mir, they must still unlock its secrets. This requires a hunt for lost knowledge that may take them into ancient tombs, lost ruins, evil wizards' libraries, or even into the heart of the fabled Dragon's Graveyard. Meanwhile, red dragons all over the world begin plotting the party's demise. . . .

# NPCs and Factions of Note

The following NPCs may be encountered throughout the course of this adventure.

## Karl Hanover

Hanover is a veteran tracker who once served as a scout in the King's Army. Years ago, he returned to his hometown of Holden and opened a general store which caters mainly to traveling adventurers. Most adventurers tend to be very forthcoming with their hard-won gold, and Hanover has done very well for himself (the bulk of his wealth is secured in a city vault). He is a kind, practical man, who is respected by the community. Hanover tends the store along with his wife Erin, but spends much of his time at the Green Duck with his friend Regin Morel.

**Karl Hanover:** AL L; MV 120' (40'); AC 7 (leather armor + shield); F4; hp 30; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+2 (long sword + Str), 1d4+2 (dagger + Str), 1d6 (light crossbow); S 16, D 12, C 16, I 15, W 13, Ch 10; SV F4; ML 10; XP 190; 2 amethyst (100 gp each), 4 garnets (50 gp), 600 gp, 112 sp, 87 cp.

## Turpin, Cress, Julian, and Erik

These four young men were born and raised in the village of Holden. Turpin is the blacksmith's son, Cress and Julian are local farm boys, and Erik is the son of the tavernkeeper Regin Morel.

**Turpin, Cress, Julian, and Erik:** treat as Lawful 0-level human with Str 13.

## Regin Morel

Regin Morel is a former adventuring thief and the owner of the Green Duck inn and tavern. He is a barrel-chested man with a booming laugh who has many friends throughout the kingdom, including some on the wrong side of the law. The Green Duck is a family-run business tended

by Morel, his wife Kathee, his oldest daughter Treya, and his sons Erik and Rory.

**Regin Morel:** AL L; MV 120' (40'); AC 6 (leather armor + Dex); T4; hp 22; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (dagger + Str); S 13, D 16, C 16, I 12, W 13, Ch 12; SV T4; SA backstab, thief skills; ML 9; XP 355; pick locks 31%, find/remove traps 23%, pick pockets 37%, move silently 37%, climb walls 90%, hide in shadows 27%, hear noise 1-3; "lucky" gold amulet (150 gp), 119 gp, 67 sp.

## Detric of Milner

Detric is the 12-year-old son of the former miller of the settlement of Milner. Detric's father was killed years ago when Milner was wiped out by a froggle raiding party. The townsfolk of Holden took the boy in and he has been slowly earning a reputation as a competent tracker and guide. Detric plans to become an adventurer so he can better defend the settlements of the Border Hills.

**Detric of Milner:** treat as Lawful 0-level human with Dex 13 and Wis 14.

## "Old Man" Hetch

Old Man Hetch is a venerable hermit who has spent his entire life in the Border Hills area. Hetch now lives in a dilapidated cottage on the outskirts of the Blood Marsh. He is an expert on local history and over the past few decades has collected a number of artifacts from the time of hisshal rule (broken pottery, carved stonework, etc.). He believes a race of powerful snake creatures once inhabited the marsh and from the few artifacts he has recovered he feels they worshipped the four elements.

Hetch dislikes company, but agrees to speak with adventurers who seem willing to listen. Hetch has heard rumors of the ancient ruins in Frog Hollow, but is too old to survive an

expedition that deep into the dangerous Blood Marsh. He asks characters who enter the swamps to bring back whatever information or relics they find to add to his collection. Hetch offers to pay for such items with "a few bits and pieces of treasure he's picked up over the years."

Unbeknownst to anyone, Hetch has gotten rich off the bodies of slain adventurers he has discovered and buried in the swamp. All of this treasure is hidden in dozens of jars buried near his cottage. He is not aware that any of these items are magical.

**Old Man Hetch:** AL N; MV 120' (40'); AC 8 (leather armor); F1; hp 5; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6-1 (quarterstaff - Str), 1d4-1 (dagger - Str), 1d6 (short bow); S 8, D 10, C 10, I 13, W 15, Ch 9; XP 10; *ring of spell turning*, 7 gold necklaces (400 gp, 250 gp x 3, 150 gp x 2, 100 gp), 5 gold rings (150 gp, 100 gp x 3, 50 gp), 678 gp, 333 sp, 113 cp.

## Xash the Bloody

Xash the Bloody is a large, powerful red dragon who lives beneath the Great North Mountains in the former dwarf realm of Uldheim. Xash drove the dwarves from the mountains and stole their wealth over a century ago, but was seriously injured during the fighting—an axe wound to the face delivered by the great dwarf hero Marrs eth Uld has never healed completely and constantly weeps blood, giving Xash his namesake.

Xash is accustomed to being the largest and most powerful creature around. He has little patience for flattery or subtlety, admiring boldness and bravado instead. Xash is furious at the theft of the Blood Gem and does anything he can to reacquire it, even stooping to make deals with lesser creatures.

**Xash the Bloody (Red Dragon):** AL C; MV 90' (30'), fly 240' (80'); AC -1 (natural); HD 10; hp 72; #AT 3 or 1 (claw/claw/bite or fire breath attack); Dmg 1d8/1d8/4d8 or fire breath attack equal to current hp; SV F10; SA fire breath attack, spell; ML 10; XP 3,100.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>: *light*, *magic missile* x 2, *sleep*, 2<sup>nd</sup>: *detect invisible*, *mirror image*, *web* x 2, 3<sup>rd</sup>: *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *protection from normal missiles*.

## Skrain Smoke-Eater

Skrain is the large red dragon ally and sometime mate of Xash the Bloody. Skrain has long coveted the Blood Gem of Mir and was surprised to hear of its theft. She is presented here as an alternate draconic villain in case the characters slay Xash. In this case, simply substitute Xash's actions for Skrain's throughout the remainder of the text.

**Skrain Smoke-Eater (Red Dragon):** AL C; MV 90' (30'), fly 240' (80'); AC -1 (natural); HD 10; hp 59; #AT 3 or 1 (claw/claw/bite or fire breath attack); Dmg 1d8/1d8/4d8 or fire breath attack equal to current hp; SV F10; SA fire breath attack; ML 10; XP 3,100.

## Black Narratch

Black Narratch is a sly, greedy black dragon who lives in the ancient hisshal ruins in Frog Hollow. Narratch is killed by Xash the Bloody early in this adventure.

**Black Narratch (Black Dragon):** AL C; MV 90' (30'), fly 240' (80'); AC 2 (natural); HD 7; hp 32; #AT 3 or 1 (claw/claw/bite or acid breath attack); Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/1d10 or acid breath attack equal to current hp; SV F7; SA acid breath attack, spell; ML 7; XP 1,490.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>: *detect magic*, *magic missile* x 2, *read languages*, *read magic*

## Black Dragons

The Black Dragons are a tribe of froggles who serve the black dragon Narratch. The froggles dwell amidst ancient hisshal ruins in the middle of Frog Hollow. Under Narratch's rule, they have managed to become the dominant force in the swamps of the Blood Marsh. The froggles are ruled by a chieftain named Hok Hrogget who is closely advised by a witch-doctor named Progk the Bone Thrower. All tribal warriors decorate their weapons with withered bat wings to show their allegiance to Narratch.

**Hok Hrogget (Froggle Chief):** AL C; MV 30' (10'), swim 150' (50'); AC 6 (natural); HD 2; hp 15; #AT 1 (by weapon); Dmg 1d6+1 (spear + Str); SV F1; SA hop, camouflage; ML 7; XP 47.

**Progk the Bone Thrower (Froggle Witch-Doctor):** AL C; MV 30' (10'), swim 150' (50'); AC 6 (natural); HD 3; hp 8; #AT 1 (by weapon); Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SV MU1; SA hop, camouflage, spell; ML 7; XP 95.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>: *protection from good, shield*, 2<sup>nd</sup>: *continual light*.

**Froggle Warrior (12):** AL C; MV 30' (10'), swim 150' (50'); AC 6 (natural); HD 1; hp 5; #AT 1 (by weapon); Dmg 1d6 (spear); SV F1; SA hop, camouflage; ML 7; XP 16.

**Froggle Female:** treat as 0-level humans.

**Froggle Young (Tads):** the froggle tads are noncombatant.

## The Brotherhood of Wrath

The Brotherhood of Wrath is an evil adventuring company that specializes in kidnapping, extortion, assassinations, and fomenting wars. They are often hired by wealthy tradesmen, petty lords, evil wizards, and other fell beings such as the red dragon Xash the Bloody. Any Lawful or Chaotic character who makes a successful Intelligence check can identify Red Naria and the Brotherhood of Wrath.

### Red Naria

Naria is the slender, red-haired, green-eyed beauty who leads the Brotherhood. She is intelligent, charming when she wants to be. . . and utterly ruthless. Naria's light laughter and merry disposition can quickly give way to acts of cruelty and violence, so even her own company tends to tread lightly around her. The only person she considers her friend is the magic-user Misha Kiir, and she is insanely jealous of Misha's friendship. Naria adores the color red, and most of her clothing and accessories are decorated in various shades of scarlet.

**Red Naria:** AL C; MV 120' (40'); AC 2 (chain mail + shield + Dex); F7; hp 49; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (long sword + Str), 1d4+2 (*dagger+1* + Str), 1d6 (light crossbow); S 13, D 17, C 15, I 14, W 16, Ch 18; SV F7; ML 10; XP 2,540; *quarrels+1* (12), *potion of water breathing*, *bag of holding*, *rope of climbing*; red silk sash (30 gp), gold ruby ring (300 gp), old ruby brooch (150 gp), 150 gp, 44 sp.

### Misha Kiir

Kiir is an intelligent and attractive young magic-user who was her master's favorite apprentice until his untimely poisoning. Kiir is close friends with Naria, but has recently begun a secret romance with Trane of Garanton. The two have kept their romance hidden, knowing that Naria would likely kill Trane if she ever found out. Kiir is distrustful of the elf Dark Alianna, but she is not sure why.

**Misha Kiir:** AL C; MV 120' (40'); AC 5 (*ring of protection+2* + Dex); MU7; hp 23; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (quarterstaff), 1d4 (dagger); S 9, D 16, C 13, I 16, W 15, Ch 16; SV MU7; SA spell; ML 8; XP 1,550; *ring of protection+2*, *scroll of spells* (*haste, fireball*), *wand of detecting magic* (18 charges); silver cameo locket (150 gp), 66 gp, 34 sp.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>: *detect magic, floating disc, hold portal, light, magic missile\**, *protection from good\**, *read magic, shield\**, *sleep*, 2<sup>nd</sup>: *arcane lock, invisibility\**, *knock, levitate, locate object\**, 3<sup>rd</sup>: *fireball\**, *haste\**, *infravision*, 4<sup>th</sup> *polymorph self\**

\*memorized spells

### Trane of Garanton

Trane is a large, capable young fighter from the village of Garanton. He lost an eye during a tournament honoring the legendary hero St. Garan and has been bitter about it ever since. Trane left his hometown to seek adventure and eventually ended up on the wrong side of the law. Trane knows that his secret romance with Kiir could well get him killed, but the danger makes the tryst that much more exciting.

**Trane of Garanton:** AL N; MV 120' (40'); AC 3 (chain mail + shield + Dex); F5; hp 39; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+3 (*long sword+1* + Str), 1d4+2 (dagger + Str), 1d6 (light crossbow); S 16, D 15, C 16, I 11, W 13, Ch 13; F5; ML 11; XP 1,100; *potion of healing*; 98 gp, 103 sp, 22 cp.

### Foe Hammer

Foe Hammer is a Chaotic cleric who worships the gods of Chaos and Destruction. Foe Hammer is a pious man who believes acts of chaos only serve to strengthen the world as a whole. He considers himself above earthly

pleasures, making him seem haughty and aloof to those who do not understand his beliefs. Foe Hammer's chosen weapon is a two-handed war hammer known as a maul (dmg 1d8).

**Foe Hammer:** AL C; MV 90' (30'); AC 3 (plate mail); C5; hp 40; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+2 (maul + Str); S 16, D 12, C 16, I 12, W 16, Ch 14; SV C5; SA spell; ML 10; XP 1,100; *potion of healing (3)*, platinum holy symbol (250 gp), 60 gp, 82 sp, 25 cp.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>: *cure light wounds (x 2)*, *cause light wounds*, 2<sup>nd</sup>: *hold person (x 2)*, 3<sup>rd</sup>: *animate dead*.

### Melian Andoni

Andoni is a thief through and through. Abandoned at birth, he grew up on the rough streets of the city-state of Westport and became leader of a gang when he was only thirteen years old. Andoni wanted more out of life, so he hooked up with several adventuring companies until finally landing with the Brotherhood. He has no particular loyalty to any of his companions, but the arrangement has worked out satisfactorily thus far. Andoni knows of the romance between Kiir and Trane and is trying to figure out how he can best use the knowledge to his advantage.

**Melian Andoni:** AL N; MV 120' (40'); AC 5 (leather armor + Dex); T6; hp 22; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword), 1d4 (dagger), 1d6 (short bow); S 12, D 18, C 15, I 14, W 15, Ch 13; SV T6; SA backstab, thief skills; ML 7; XP 1,820; pick locks 45%, find/remove traps 43%, pick pockets 43%, move silently 43%, climb walls 92%, hide in shadows 37%, hear noise 1-4; *potion of poison*, *elven cloak*; diamond solitaire (1,200 gp), three emeralds (350 gp), platinum arm band (250 gp), gold ring (75 gp), 45 pp, 38 gp, 17 sp, 21 cp, thieves' tools.

### Dark Alianna

Alianna is an elf archer who serves as a scout and tracker for the Brotherhood of Wrath. She bears a wicked scar across her eyebrow and appears menacing despite her good looks. Alianna is actually a spy whose real name is Aliessa Saphirron. When the Brotherhood assassinated the lord of her homeland almost a year ago, she was sent to join the company and try to lead them into a trap. Alianna has

witnessed the Brotherhood perform some horrible acts, but has thankfully not had to take part in any of them.

Alianna's role as a scout allows her to roam freely and she has managed to thwart a kidnapping and an assassination attempt by secretly warning the victims ahead of time, but she believes at least one of the Brotherhood has begun to suspect her. If the characters seem capable of killing the Brotherhood, Alianna might take the opportunity to reveal her true identity and enlist their aid.

**Dark Alianna:** AL L; MV 120' (40'); AC 3 (chain mail + Dex); E5; hp 24; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (*longbow+1*), 1d6+1 (hand axe + Str), 1d4+1 (dagger + Str); S 13, D 17, C 15, I 15, W 13, Ch 13; SV E5; SA spell; ML 10; XP 1,400; *potion of healing (2)*, *amulet vs. crystal balls and ESP*.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>: *detect magic*, *hold portal*, *magic missile\** (x 2), *read magic*, 2<sup>nd</sup>: *continual light\**, *knock*, *invisibility\**, 3<sup>rd</sup>: *protection from normal missiles\**.

\*memorized spells

### Kylen of Ru

Kylen is a young gold dragon of the Mahari clan that lives in the elven lands of Ru. The Mahari learned about the Blood Gem's theft and sent Kylen to recover it, but she is under strict orders to act through intermediaries. The clan elders fear that possession of the Blood Gem would spark a war between gold dragons and red dragons, and they wish to have time to unlock the gem's secrets before that occurs.

In human form, Kylen appears as a beautiful, blonde-haired traveling minstrel. Kylen only reveals her true nature when desperate.

**Kylen of Ru:** AL L; MV 90' (30'), fly 240' (80'); AC -2 (natural); HD 8; hp 48; #AT 3 or 1 (claw/claw/bite or fire/chlorine gas breath attack); Dmg 2d4/2d4/6d6 or fire/chlorine gas breath attack equal to current hp; SV F8; SA fire/chlorine gas breath attack; ML 10; XP 3,000.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>: *light*, *magic missile*, *read magic*, 2<sup>nd</sup>: *arcane lock*, *detect evil*, 3<sup>rd</sup>: *lightning bolt*.

# Appendix

## New Magic-User Spells

The following new magic-user spells may be encountered throughout this adventure. Note that these spells also appear in the **Labyrinth Lord Advanced Edition Companion™** supplement by Goblinoid Games and are included here only for completeness.

### Comprehend Languages (reversible)

Level: 1

Duration: Touch

Range: 5 rounds per level

The caster can understand the spoken words of creatures or read otherwise incomprehensible written messages. In either case, the creature or the writing must be touched. The ability to read does not necessarily impart insight into the material, merely its literal meaning. The spell enables the caster to understand or read an unknown language, not speak or write it. Obscure languages, the opposite of comprehend languages, dispels the effects of comprehend languages, or can be used to make spoken or written language incomprehensible.

### Burning Hands

Level: 1

Duration: 1 round

Range: See below

This spell causes a 3' long cone of searing flame to shoot from the caster's fingertips. The cone shoots out in a 120 degree arc centered on the caster. Any creature in the area of the flames takes 1 point of fire damage per caster level (no saving throw). Flammable materials burn if the flames touch them.

## New Magic Items

### Blood Gem Crucible

This unique magic item appears as a lantern-like crucible with an ever-burning flame. When the command word "*charran*" is spoken, the flame shows the location of the Blood Gem of Mir and its immediate surroundings. The images may be viewed for up to 1 turn, 3 times per day. The user of the crucible is unable to communicate with those he observes, and he is unable to affect them magically or otherwise through the flame. While active, the crucible functions as a *locate object* spell with unlimited range.

### Blood Gem of Mir

The Blood Gem of Mir is a magical artifact that grants the owner power equivalent to a *charm monster* spell upon red dragons. Upon issuing the command word "*mazaruun*," the owner is able to control any one red dragon within one mile, for as long as he likes (no saving throw allowed). The Blood Gem is highly prized by magic-users and dragons of all types, however, red dragons attempt to hunt down and kill any non-red dragon in possession of the gem.

A non-magic-user or non-elf character in possession of the gem begins having dreams about being a red dragon (flying through the air, battling other dragons, slaying knights, etc.). These dreams are so vivid and disturbing that the character's health begins to suffer—the character loses 1 hit point per day and no hit points are healed by sleeping. At the end of each day, the character must make a saving throw vs. spells or begin the slow transformation into a bestial, man/red dragon hybrid. The transformation happens in four stages—wings, torso, hindquarters/tail, and

finally the forelegs. The victim's head remains the same. Once the transformation is complete, the character becomes an NPC to be played by the Labyrinth Lord unless the characters find a way to rescue their companion.

The process can be reversed before it is complete by separating the individual from the Blood Gem. Once the individual fully transforms, however, the transformation is permanent and the victim becomes a hybrid mandragon to be roleplayed by the Labyrinth Lord.

## Golden Horn of Friendship

This magical horn is made from the horn of a gold dragon. Blowing the horn summons a gold dragon in 2d4 rounds. The dragon is not under the character's control, but it recognizes the wielder of the horn as a friend and freely renders aid, including magical spells, transportation, or combat assistance. The horn may be blown three times before its power is used up.

## New Monsters

The following new monsters may be encountered throughout this adventure. Note that many of these monsters also appear in the **Labyrinth Lord Advanced Edition Companion™** supplement by Goblinoid Games and are included here only for completeness. The Batrachian appears in **OSRIC v2.1** by Stuart Marshall and is used here with permission.

### Alligator

No. Enc.: 0 (1d8)  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: 60' (20')  
Swim: 90' (30')  
Armor Class: 6  
Hit Dice: 2  
Attacks: 1  
Damage: 1d6  
Save: F1  
Morale: 7  
Hoard Class: None  
XP: 20

Alligators are aggressive reptiles, with fearsome bites. They breathe air, but are aquatic and usually remain submerged or within

shallow water. They primarily hunt in water, and are attracted by movement or blood. Large alligators, on average, grow to a length of 12'. Alligators have the ability to remain motionless and blend into their environment, gaining surprise on a 1-3 on 1d6.

### Batrachian (Froggle)

No. Enc.: 10d8  
Alignment: Chaotic  
Movement:  
Hop: 30' (10')  
Swim: 150' (50')  
Armor Class: 6  
Hit Dice: 1  
Attacks: 1  
Damage: by weapon  
Save: F1  
Morale: 7  
Hoard Class: I  
XP: 16

Batrachians, also called froggles by the humans of the Border Hills area, are a race of tribal frog-men typically armed with spear and shield. A batrachian chief has 2 HD, receives a +1 Str bonus to damage, and is worth 47 XP. Batrachians can have shamans (treat as a cleric with a maximum of 5<sup>th</sup> level) or witch-doctors (treat as a magic-user with a maximum of 5<sup>th</sup> level).

Batrachians are capable of making a hop attack with a spear. A hop counts as a charge, with an additional +1 to-hit bonus. If successful, the attack does double damage. Unless armed with a spear or other long weapon, a batrachian always loses initiative on land due to its clumsy movement.

Batrachians are well-camouflaged and can remain motionless for long periods. They are also cold-blooded and hence hard to see with infravision. As a result, they surprise opponents on a 1-3 on 1d6.

Female batrachians are normally noncombatant unless their young are threatened. Batrachian young, also known as efts or tads, resemble large tadpoles that are confined to water (usually a large central pool in the batrachian lair).

There is a 25% chance that batrachians will have 2d4 giant frogs in their lair.

## Charak

No. Enc.: 0 (1d2)  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: 30' (10')  
Swim: 90' (30')  
Armor Class: 7  
Hit Dice: 8  
Attacks: 8 (tentacles) or 1 (bite)  
Damage: 1d3 (per tentacle)/1d6  
Save: F4  
Morale: 7  
Hoard Class: None  
XP: 2,060

Charaks resemble giant amphibious octopi or squids that prefer large pools of stagnant water in deep swamps and dark jungles. Charaks are aggressive and territorial hunters that are capable of moving overland once they've exhausted their food supply. Their 10' long tentacles are studded with barbs and sharp-edged suckers. These tentacles constrict victims when they successfully attack, and deal 1d3 hit points of damage each per successive rounds. For each tentacle that is constricting a victim, the victim suffers a cumulative attack penalty of -1. For instance, if four tentacles are constricting a character, he suffers -4 to hit. A tentacle can be cut off if a total of 6 hit points or more of damage is dealt with one blow. If a charak is losing an encounter, it retreats beneath the surface of its pool.

## Crayfish, Giant

No. Enc.: 1d4 (1d4)  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: 60' (20')  
Swim: 120' (40')  
Armor Class: 4  
Hit Dice: 4 + 4  
Attacks: 2 (claws)  
Damage: 2d6/2d6  
Save: F4  
Morale: 9  
Hoard Class: None  
XP: 140

Giant crayfish are 8' long, but otherwise look and behave much like their smaller relatives. They are laborious walkers but swim very fast. They may dart out at prey, surprising an opponent on 1-3 on 1d6. They attack with their immense pinchers.

## Frog, Giant

No. Enc.: 5d8 (5d8)  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: 30' (10')  
Swim: 90' (30')  
Armor Class: 7  
Hit Dice: 1-3  
Attacks: 1 (bite)  
Damage: 1d3, 1d6, 2d4  
Save: F1-3  
Morale: 7  
Hoard Class: None  
XP: 13, 29, 65

Giant frogs inhabit swamps, rivers, lakes, ponds or other bodies of water. Three different sizes are categorized here, 2' long and 50 lbs. (1 HD), 4' long and 150 lbs (2 HD), and 6' long and 250 lbs (3 HD). Much like their giant toad cousins, giant frogs blend into their environment, surprising opponents on 1-4 on 1d6.

Giant frogs can leap 180' (60') and attack the same round. They often attack by extending their immensely long tongues that are three times as long as their bodies, to strike with +4 on the attack roll. If the victim fails to attack the tongue before the next round, he is drawn to the mouth of the frog and bitten for an amount of damage dependent on the frog's size. If the victim weighs more than the frog but not twice as much, he may attack the tongue an additional time before being dragged. Victims weighing more than twice the weight of the frog are not dragged.

In addition to these attacks, giant frogs have a swallow attack, and are able to swallow human-sized opponents or smaller. Swallowed creatures suffer 1d6 damage from digestion per round.

## Shambling Mound

No. Enc.: 1d3 (1d3)  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: 60' (20')  
Armor Class: 0  
Hit Dice: 8-11  
Attacks: 2  
Damage: 2d8/2d8  
Save: F8-11  
Morale: 12



Hoard Class: VIII, IX, XIV  
XP: 1,820

Shambling mounds, also called shamblers, appear to be heaps of rotting vegetation. They are actually intelligent, carnivorous plants. A shambler's brain and sensory organs are located in its upper body, buried deep within its slimy dense trunk.

A shambler's body has an 8' girth and is about 6' tall when the creature stands erect. These creatures batter opponents with two huge, arm-like appendages. If both hit in the same round, a victim has been grabbed and it will be smothered to death by the shambler's abundant mucus in 2d4 rounds. The victim can only get free if the shambler is killed.

Shamblers take no damage from electricity. Instead, any electricity attack used against a shambler grants it 1 HD (the creature actually grows). In addition, fire-based attacks do not harm it. Cold-based attacks do half damage, or no damage if the shambler succeeds in a saving throw. Weapons deal half damage. However, since shamblers are intelligent plant creatures they are susceptible to spells that affect plants.

## Slug, Giant

No. Enc.: 1 (1)  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: 60' (20')  
Armor Class: 8  
Hit Dice: 12  
Attacks: 1 (bite)  
Damage: 1d12  
Save: F12  
Morale: 10  
Hoard Class: None  
XP: 2,000

Giant slugs are larger, much stronger versions of normal slugs. They are pale gray in color with a dull white underbelly. They have a single pair of long, thin tentacles or antennae. The giant slug uses them to sense brightness, heat, and to smell. A typical giant slug is 20' long but can grow to twice that length. Its squishy flexible body allows it to squeeze into relatively narrow corridors, though it may be in such a way as to prevent turning. A large slime trail marks the ground as it moves.

Giant slugs are found in moist or wet environments such as swamps, marshes, rain forests, and dungeons. They are both scavengers and predators feeding on both plants and animals. Giant slugs are nocturnal creatures and spend the daylight hours away from the heat of the sun. Giant slugs may attack with a bite, but they often employ their highly dangerous acid spittle to a range of 60'. If struck, a victim suffers 5d8 hp acid damage. Giant slugs are only harmed by sharp weapons or magical blunt weapons (magical value deals damage only).

## Swamp Willow

No. Enc.: 1d4 (1d4)  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: 3' (1')  
Armor Class: 6  
Hit Dice: 2-4  
Attacks: 1  
Damage: See below  
Save: F2-4  
Morale: NA  
Hoard Class: VI  
XP: 29, 65, 135

This mass of drooping branches looks like a large weeping willow. It attacks by grappling its foe with its branches and then squeezing it. Slain creatures are then placed into its gash of a mouth located in its trunk, to be slowly digested.

The swamp willow contains 3d4 whip-like branches, each about 10' long. The swamp willow remains still until prey comes near. It then lashes out with its branches, attempting to grapple its foes. Grappled foes are squeezed until they die. Each branch has an effective STR of 4d4. A victim has a 10% chance of breaking free for each point of STR he has above that of the branch's STR. More than one branch may entangle a victim, 1 branch per round with a successful attack. Multiple branches combine STR. If the branches have more STR than the victim, the victim suffers 1 hit point crushing damage per point of STR the branches have above the victim's. Creatures caught in the branches may attack with -2 to hit.

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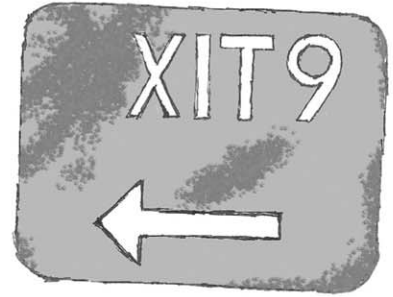
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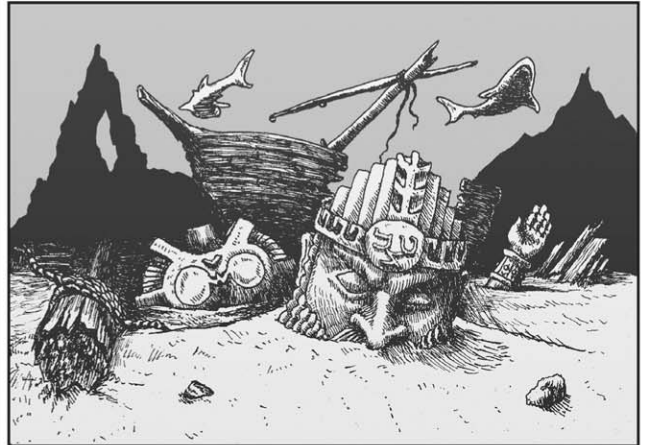
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