

OLD-SCHOOL ESSENTIALS

OFFICIAL ADVENTURE SCENARIO



HOLY MOUNTAIN SHAKER

by Luka Rejec



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Town

Old
Town



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Challenges

Every watch, while the party is in the mountain, the referee rolls 2d6 to determine the obstacles they face. While the party is at the entrances or travelling overland to an entrance, the referee rolls a d6.

2d6 (1d6) Challenge Faced This Watch

- 1 Eerie stillness:** A glowing (roll d6): (1) lynx, (2) ibex, (3) marmot, (4) boar, (5) fox, or (6) eagle watches from afar. After a while it begins to (roll d4): (1) taunt, (2) dance, (3) follow, or (4) flee. If party injures animal, roll 1d4+1 on challenge table. If party follows animal, 50% chance they find a small treasure (page 7), 50% chance they are lost.
- 2 Earthquake:** The mountain quivers like a dog shaking off fleas. The PC with the lowest CHA and any nearby PCs are threatened by a (roll d4): (1) large boulder (**save vs death** or crushed), (2) log or pillar (1d10 damage), (3) mass of gravel or rubble (**save vs paralysis** or buried, 1d6 turns to dig out), or (4) cloud of blinding dust and grit (**save vs breath** or blinded for 1 watch or until eyes washed with water).
- 3 Tremor:** Mountain rumbles. Birds flee. Shifting rubble makes path dangerous. 1 watch to navigate safely, otherwise party must pass a hidden hazard (equivalent of a room trap) (roll d4): (1) path collapses into crevasse underfoot (1d6 x 10' pit), (2) unstable overhang (1d10 damage), (3) slippery flooded sinkhole (danger of drowning), or (4) imminent rockslide (**save vs paralysis** or buried).
- 4 Unsteady rubble:** 1d6 turns making safe path or random PC must make a DEX check. Failure: rubble shifts and slides down, tumbling rear half of party into (roll d4): (1) pool (danger of drowning), (2) pit (1d4 x 10' deep), (3) side cavern (small treasure (page 7) and a regional creature), (4) open path to a new feature (1d6 damage from rubble).
- 5 Ominous portents:** A (roll d4): (1) gusting wind chokes torches, (2) metallic smell provokes coughing, (3) electric tension makes metal objects spark, (4) cloud of cave wisps (page 10) emerges from the ground.
- 6–9 Regional challenge:** Each regional challenge only occurs once. If the same result is rolled a second time, clues to another challenge or an unknown feature are found instead.
- 10 Exhaustion:** Party faces (roll d4): (1) hunger (eat rations or lose 1d4 hp), (2) thirst (drink or lose 1d4 hp), (3) weariness (rest 1 watch or suffer -1 penalty to all checks and attacks), (4) inattention (leader makes WIS check or lost).
- 11 Psychic wave:** Wash of sudden emotion rolls over party (roll d4): (1) anger (WIS check or lash out), (2) frustration (INT check or throw away carried object), (3) disgust (CHA check or nauseated), or (4) satisfaction.
- 12 Lair:** Creatures from nearest region, fortified and blocking easy passage (1 watch to bypass). If nearest region lacks creatures, the lair is abandoned. Number appearing: 1d4-1 times as many as in region. Treasure type (roll 1d4): (1) B, (2) C, (3) D, or (4) E.

Class Abilities

Some characters' class abilities may help avoid certain challenges. In such cases, the referee may allow the character to automatically succeed at required ability checks (e.g. a thief's ability to climb sheer surfaces might bypass a DEX check to climb).

Collapse

When the earthquakes stop (either at the end of day 6 or if the God Fish is appeased), the God Fish returns to the Earth's Heart Sea and the whole dungeon begins folding back into itself. The referee adds the collapse check step to the pointcrawl, encouraging a hasty retreat.

Collapse Checks

Rolling: The referee rolls on the collapse table when the party first enters a region, then every 2 turns they spend in the region. They start by rolling 1d6.

Escalation: Every watch (12 turns) they add one more d6 to the collapse check (so 1d6 becomes 2d6, then 3d6, etc.). Some results add more d6s to the check.

Local collapses: Most results of 7+ include at least one local collapse. Each region's description lists three local collapses that unfold sequentially—very dangerous events that can kill any PC.

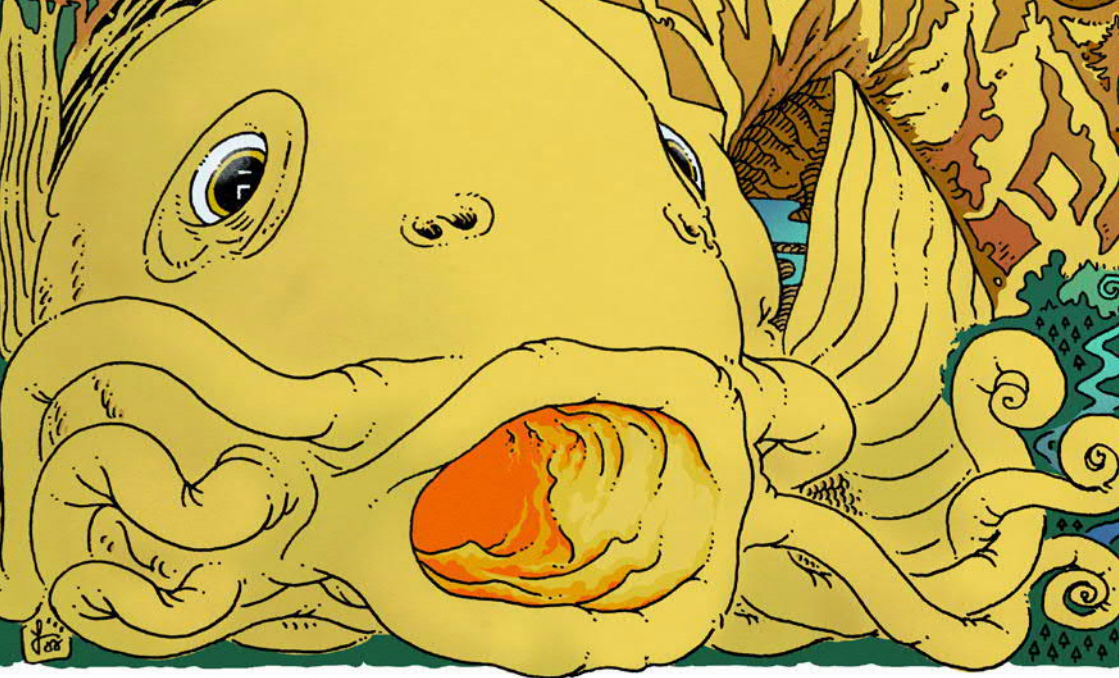
Effects: Collapse check effects apply permanently to the PCs' current region and impact all PCs.

Collapse Table

1	Ground drops sickeningly. DEX check or fall over. +d6 to collapse checks.	11	Passages close. Feature three (if present) becomes inaccessible. Local collapse.
2	Rock grinds. Ill wind blows from the depths of the earth. Candles go out.	12	Eerie stillness. Ethereal cave wisps (page 10) provide light and fog minds. All spells suffer -1 to every roll. +d6 to collapse checks.
3	Pebbles rattle and roll. Melee attacks suffer -1 penalty.	13	Massive shock. Sudden rupture. 2 local collapses.
4	Spiderweb fissures. Dust falls. Missile attacks suffer -2 penalty.	14	Local flooding. Speeds reduced by 20'. Local collapse.
5	Ground shakes with a dull groan. Listening checks suffer -2 penalty.	15	Passages fill up. Feature two becomes inaccessible. Local collapse.
6	Walls groan and creak. Splinters fly. Unarmoured characters suffer 1 damage.	16	Walls drop lower. Spaces become smaller. Local collapse.
7	Earth roars. Save vs paralysis or deafened. Local collapse.	17	Walls close in. Spaces become tighter. Speeds reduced by 20'. Local collapse.
8	Fissures yawn in ceilings. Rocks fall for 1d4-1 damage. Local collapse.	18+	Region begins slamming shut. Local collapse. +d6 to collapse checks.
9	Path breaks apart. Speeds reduced by 10'. Local collapse.		
10	Walls collapse, pillars fall, rubble accumulates. Melee attacks suffer -2 penalty. Local collapse.		

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Holy Mountain Shaker



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**NECROTIC
GNOME**



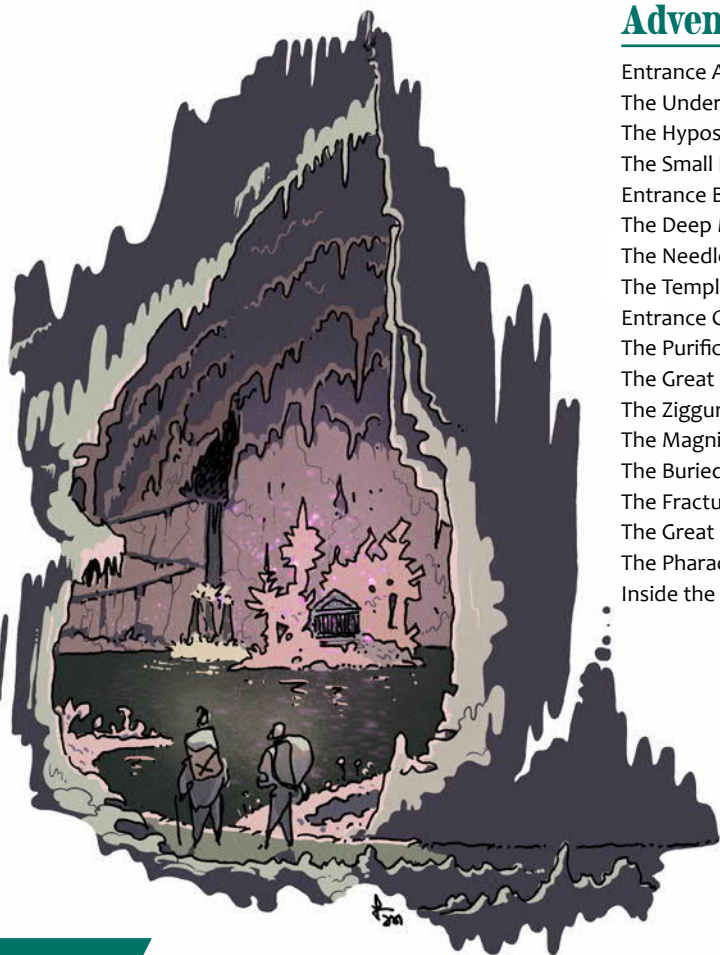
**EXALTED
FUNERAL**

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Introduction

About This Adventure

Holy Mountain Shaker (HMS) is a mid-level Old-School Essentials adventure for four-or-so players journeying into the Mythic Underworld beneath an earthquake-wracked mountain. The quakes are caused by the periodic flailing of the God Carp that dwells at the mountain's heart.

Old-School Essentials

Running this adventure, the referee requires a copy of **Old-School Essentials**. The Classic Fantasy and Advanced Fantasy flavours work equally well. Alternatively, use the classic Basic/Expert game or another derived rule set.

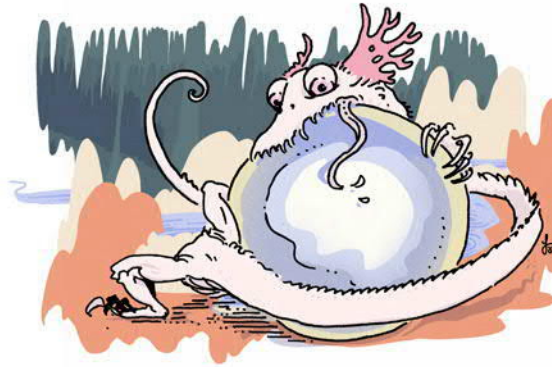
Character Levels 5-6

This adventure is suitable for 5th-6th level PCs. Note: as an “old-school” adventure, not all encounters are balanced to the PCs’ capabilities. Judicious use of stealth, parley, and trickery are to be encouraged, in place of blindly rushing into combat.

Campaign Setting

The vast realms beneath the mountain are the God Carp’s domain and function as a Mythic Underworld, normally disconnected from the mundane world. Over the aeons, different species and civilizations have worshipped the Great Old Fish, but it has never paid them much heed. As a result, few people living when the adventure takes place even believe the God Fish exists.

The referee can easily port this adventure to their own setting. All they require is a town or other settlement near a holy mountain, sacred hill, or another suitably numinous cthonic location.



There and Back Again

The adventure has two distinct parts. First, the characters venture beneath the Holy Mountain to discover the cause of earthquakes plaguing the nearby town. Next, whether or not they placated the God Carp, they must return to the surface as the Mythic Underworld collapses around them.

Ongoing Devastation

The ongoing quakes, and the threat of further devastation, work as a clock keeping the PCs moving. They must spend an extended period in the Mythic Underworld to succeed. Fair warning: the adventure will not work well with characters who can teleport or have other means of sudden escape.

Pointcrawl Background

HMS is inspired by several Slovenian legends and the montane cave system “Migovec.” These caves span over 40km and are nearly 1,000m deep.

Encompassing this scale, HMS uses a pointcrawl structure (as seen in the *Slumbering Ursine Dunes Omnibus*), rather than the common 5’ grid. In scope, the cave system pointcrawl mechanic slots between the Old-School Essentials Dungeon Adventuring and Wilderness Adventuring rules.

The Holy Mountain and the Town



There is a mountain decked with snow even in hottest summer. So tall its peak leaves folk gasping like fish. So deep its roots drink from the undersea itself. Worshipped so long the very rocks reek of divinity.

At its foundations is a bottomless lake. In this lake swims the God Fish. According to the new faith this is nonsense and superstition. According to the old faith the Fish is so old that the very pantheon it belonged to is forgotten, if there ever was such a conclave of divinities. Is it a titan? A leftover from an earlier creation?

The Fish does not say.

At the mountain's feet, like a determined barnacle, is the town of Plish. It is neither large nor prominent, but it is ancient. Its bowl of a valley is a haven on the road between two much larger lands.

When civilization's tide recedes, the terraced farms feed the hardy Plishlings. When it rises, as now, the mines reopen and thrum, drawing living metal and antic gemstones from beneath the berg.

Plish Town Factions

The town's 3 most prominent powers are:

- ▶ The town council, representing the local great families.
- ▶ The Hérmes Mining Company, the largest employer and a source of both innovation and tension.
- ▶ The new faith's priest-governor, the strongest link to the central government.

The Plishlings and the Newfolk

The town's lower classes divide loosely into Plishlings and Newfolk. The native Plishlings are mostly servants, peasants, and craftsmen. They are fond of the old faith and resistant to change. The newfolk are mostly specialists and labourers come to work in the mines. The two groups distrust one another more than their rulers.

The Cult of the God Carp

Finally, there is a surprisingly inept secret society: the Cult of the God Carp. It unites all the town's classes and factions in the secret sign of the wiggly finger moustache. It is traditionalist, superstitious, and dedicated to appeasing the mythical Pharaoh Fish—though few of its members still believe it exists.



Earthquakes

When the party first enters the town, a powerful earthquake strikes. Towers sway, roads buck, walls fall. Scores are injured. The party is affected: a random PC is struck by a falling flower pot for 1d6 damage (**save vs wands** to avoid). Rumours and accusations fly about the disaster's causes. Further quakes soon follow, raising anxieties to a fever pitch.

d8 Rumours and Events

- 1 The priest-governor destroyed the Holy Threespring, bringing the quakes upon the town (P; known by everyone; true, but not the real cause).
- 2 The miners of the Imperial Company broke into a living machine (P; known by miners and owners; true, but not the real cause).
- 3 A young hunter ascended the mountain to shoot the sacred Goldhorn (P; known to some peasants; true, but not the real cause).
- 4 A vagabond spelunker-adventurer crawled beneath the mountain to win the fabled heart of the earth (T; known to some unreliable drunkards; true, the real cause).
- 5 The waters from the mountains are magical and help with rheumatism (T; true, but irrelevant).
- 6 "Alium" bones wash out of the mountain. It's the "aliums" that did it, made the quakes (P; vivid conspiracy talk; partly true, strange bones do wash out, but aliens didn't cause the quakes).
- 7 The heights of the mountain are haunted by angels that guard the innocent wild creatures (P; general knowledge; partly true, the God Carp guards the animals).
- 8 The local oldfolk settled their valley from an underground vault (P; malicious outlander gossip; partly true, but irrelevant to the quakes).

Timeline

Time is tracked using 2 hour **watches**. The adventure lasts 6 days (72 watches) from the first earthquake to the final rumble of the God Carp's agitation.

- ▶ **Day 1 (watches 1–12):** The first earthquake strikes. The cult encourages someone (perhaps a recently arrived adventuring party?) to go into the mountain and help the Holy Fish.
- ▶ **Day 2 (watches 13–24):** A second earthquake strikes. People move their belongings into tents. The town council hires a team to go into the mountain; offering disreputable types 5gp each per day, respectable folks 500gp each, and aristocrats an expense account and the right to take whatever they want from the mountain.
- ▶ **Day 3 (watches 25–36):** Mild tremors and aftershocks. Administrator and priest-governor organize an official expedition (if the PCs haven't gone yet, this should be them). They arrange an expense account, life insurance of 1,000gp, and 50gp per day per expedition member.
- ▶ **Day 4 (watches 37–48):** Quiet day entices some people back to their homes.
- ▶ **Day 5 (watches 49–60):** If the party has not yet appeased the God Carp, the strongest earthquake strikes. Landslides rip down the Holy Mountain's flanks. The entire hillside quarter slides into the river. Hundreds lose their lives. The mine entrance (B: The Hérmes Mines) is buried.
- ▶ **Day 6 (watches 61–72):** At day's end, the God Carp recovers its composure and returns to its chthonic dreams. The deepest ways close. The mountain rests. Whether or not the party has reached the God Carp, or solved the earthquakes' actual cause, the collapse table (see rear endpapers) enters play and the PCs must escape.

Entering the Mountain

There are 3 entrances to the deep places beneath the mountain.

A: The Holy Threespring (page 12)

Three beautiful falls emerged from the rock into a crystal pool where the old faithful worshipped. A few days ago the priest-governor had them blown up. A wound now yawns into the mountains' bowels.

Suggested by: Cult of the God Carp, the Mining Company.

Distance from Plish: 1 watch.

B: The Hérmes Mines (page 20)

The Hérmes Company expanded the ancient mine. Golem excavators and elemental engines tunneled deep, seeking the intelligent metal that wizards covet.

Suggested by: New Faith, Lower Classes.

Distance from Plish: 1 watch.

C: The Goldhorn's Doom (page 28)

Hidden entrance. Beyond the Krummholz, on the rocky edge of the mountain's great cuboid peak, cunningly concealed from prying eyes. Found by the foolish young hunter seeking the Goldhorn.

Suggested by: Nobody, except some lowly peasants.

Distance from Plish: 3 watches.

Small Treasures

- 1 Ancient beverages** (2d6 fragile bottles, 50 gp each). They are (roll d4): (1) restorative (1d4 hp), (2) alcoholic, (3) acidic (disinfectant), or (4) poisonous.
- 2 Ancient vestments** (200gp). They (roll d4): (1) protect from cold, (2) protect from heat, (3) grant water-breathing for 1 watch, (4) work as leather armour +1 and grant 1d6 temporary hp each moonrise (these deplete at a rate of 1 per watch).
- 3 Beautiful weapon** (105gp). A (roll d4): (1) spelunking dagger +1, (2) pickaxe +1, (3) harpoon +1, (4) heat ray wand +1 (soundless, 6 charges, damage as crossbow).
- 4 Cache of ancient coins** (1d100gp). Roll d4: (1) electrum, (2) bronze, (3) ceramic, (4) mildly cursed (-1 penalty to saves).
- 5 Cave lotus** (100gp). Flowery mushroom with a pungent musk. It removes sickness, pain, suffering, and memories. Regular users become high-immortal.
- 6 Dungeon lamp and goggles** (200gp). Handheld wind-up lamp radiates 'dark light' visible only to the bulky companion goggles' wearer. Also *detects magic*.
- 7 Elfcakes** (50gp). Psychoactives that remove fatigue and hunger. Grant 1d4+2hp (can exceed maximum). After 1 day, eater loses 1d8hp (cannot reduce below 1hp).
- 8 Flash gem** (50gp). A high-pressure orange-glowing gem. Bright as a candle. Explodes if thrown violently: all within 60' **save vs spells** or are blinded 1d4+1 rounds.
- 9 Gold key** (100gp). A single-use mystical key that (roll d4): (1-2) opens any door, (3) and any chest (also disables traps), (4) and can reveal a nearby hidden door.
- 10 Golem heart** (500gp). A heavy metal battery storing a monoclonal copy of the philosopher's stone, powerful enough to activate any 'dead' golem.
- 11 Golem stove** (100gp). Combination brazier, samovar, and crucible. If 'fuel' in heart is accessed, creatures within 15' **save vs poison** or suffer 1d4 damage/turn for 6 turns.
- 12 Lost tome** (1d4 * 50gp). Contains (roll d4): (1) philosophy, (2) poem and random 1st level spell, (3) tale in pictures and random 2nd level spell, (4) hidden random wand.
- 13 Mage's chalk** (50gp). Ordinary chalk mixed with the essences of holy idols. Grants +2 bonus to magic circles and related spells.
- 14 Magical flowers** (roll d4): (1) blood flowers (50gp), restore 1d8+1hp or remove curse, (2) star flowers (200gp), neutralize poison or restore life to recently deceased animal, (3) glow flowers (10gp), as *light* with a 1 day duration, or (4) needle flowers (100gp), thrown, deals 2d8 damage, 30' radius.
- 15 Needle Gnome cannon** (200gp). A magical rod that fires a 60' long, 20' wide cone of metal shrapnel. Those without cover suffer 1d6 damage (unarmored: 2d6), deafens all within 60' for 1d4 rounds. 4 charges.
- 16 Pink wisp vials** (1d6 vials, 5gp each). Wisps drain magic and restore hp. If fed prepared spell, they restore 1d4 + spell's level hp.
- 17 Processed food** (2d10 tins, 10gp each). Roll d4: (1) sweet peaches, (2) savoury peaches, (3) spicy peaches, (4) pickled prawns. 5% are poisonous.
- 18 Rare metal idol** (400gp). Roll d4: (1) titanium, (2) aluminium, (3) technetium, (4) poisonous radium. Resembles a random PC.
- 19 Tool golem** (100gp). Multi-purpose, autonomous. Roll d4: (1) digs through solid rock, (2) builds masonry, (3) repairs machinery, (4) plays music and offers counselling (removes 1 curse). 1d4+1 charges.
- 20 Wall-breaker potion** (50gp). Delicate, shake and stir, detonates as *fireball* (5d6 damage, 30' radius) in 1d6 rounds.

Mechanics:

Pointcrawl Adventuring

Sequence of Play per Watch

1. **Decide action:** The players decide what to do this watch.
2. **Challenges:** The referee determines what obstacles the party faces.
3. **Description:** The referee describes the party's journey and the obstacles encountered, asking players for their actions, as required. If monsters are encountered, follow the procedure described for Encounters in Old-School Essentials.
4. **End of the watch:** The referee updates time records, with attention to exploration resources, spell durations, and the party's need to rest.
5. **Set up:** The referee describes the next region or path(s) available to the party.

The Watch

The watch is a unit of time providing the pointcrawl a suitable sense of scale. In HMS it is set at 2 hours (12 turns). Watches are used when the party:

- ▶ **Explores** a new path or region: 2 watches.
- ▶ **Traverses** an explored path or region: 1 watch.
- ▶ Discretely **bypasses** a region: 2 watches. While bypassing a region, all monsters are treated as unaware of the party. Bypassing a fully explored region takes 1 watch less.

Note: some exceptional regions or paths may take more or fewer watches.

Movement Rates, Encumbrance and the Pointcrawl

If encumbrance reduces any party member's movement rate to 60' (20') or less, each pointcrawl action takes 1 additional watch. Party members who can move faster than the standard 120' (40') do not move more quickly at the pointcrawl scale.

Parts of a Cave Pointcrawl

Region: A coherent zone of interlinked natural features, halls, and chambers.

Path: An abstraction of the passages and crawl-ways connecting two regions, including minor chambers, crevasses, branches, and dead ends. Paths use the challenge of the region the party is travelling towards.

Exploring a Region

Arrival: The party gets an initial impression of the region, immediately obvious paths, and possibly some major and obvious features.

First exploration watch: The party discovers some additional features and paths.

Second exploration watch: Reveals remaining features, paths, and hints to hidden areas (if any). The region now counts as explored for the purpose of bypassing it.

Interacting with Features

When the party explores a feature, play defaults to the Dungeon Adventuring rules (e.g., searching takes 1 turn unless otherwise specified). The referee should keep in mind that 12 turns equal one watch.

The referee may tally turns spent using a d12, advancing the adventure clock by another watch whenever the tally reaches 12.

Imprecise Distances

The pointcrawl uses time to emphasize uncertain distances between locations.

Ranges and movement rates: When the party encounters a challenge or interacts with a feature, all scales are in feet.

Challenges

Every watch the referee should roll on the Challenges table to determine encounters. This may be a [super] natural obstacle, trap, or monster.

Time and location: The referee rolls a d12 to determine when the challenge is encountered. A 1 indicates the start of a watch (turn 1), a 12 the end (turn 12). The challenge's precise position corresponds to the time spent travelling.

Distance: Challenges are encountered 4d6 x 10' away (1d6 x 10' if surprised).

Resting

Frequency of rest: PCs must rest one full watch per three watches of activity.

Penalty for not resting: Pressing on without rest imposes -1 to attack and damage rolls until resting for a full watch.

Avoiding Encounters

The party may avoid most monsters by ducking into side passages or tunnels, dousing their lights, and waiting a watch for the monster to go away.

Chance of Avoiding Monster

- ▶ **Monster unaware:** 11-in-12 (roll 2d6).
- ▶ **Saw sound or light:** 5-in-6.
- ▶ **Had trail or scent:** 3-in-6.

Alternatively, they can hastily scramble away (see Hurrying).

Hurrying

The hurrying party halves travel time, but with a 1-in-6 chance of getting lost in an explored area (4-in-6 in an unexplored area).

Escaping From a Pursuing Monster

- ▶ **Dropped distraction:** 11-in-12 (roll 2d6).
- ▶ **Territorial monster:** 5-in-6.
- ▶ **Hunting monster:** 4-in-6.

Lost

When a party is lost roll 1d6:

- 1: Party returns to starting region or path (location).
- 2-3: Spends +1 watch and returns to starting location.
- 4-5: Spends +1 watch and reaches their destination.
- 6: Spends +1 watch and reaches an unexpected adjacent location.

Additional challenges: Spending an extra watch means the party also faces one more challenge. The nearest region serves for regional challenges.

Mountain Creatures

This adventure re-skins many Old-School Essentials monsters (referenced in *italics*). Their full stat blocks are not repeated to save space. Some creatures are unique and repeat regularly. These are described here for reference.

CAVE FISH

A wide variety of alien-looking creatures sustained in the God Carp's waters. A random fish is (roll d12): (1–4) mostly harmless, (5–7) as *giant bass*, (8–9) as *piranha*, (10) as *giant sturgeon*, (11) as *giant catfish*, (12) actually a **waterwight** (page 11).

CAVE WISPS

Luminous pink cave plankton drifting in air or water, feeding on the God Fish's emanating supernatural energies.

AC No hit roll required, **HD** 1/2* (2hp), **Att** 1 x touch (feed on magic), **THACO** 19 [0], **MV** 60' (20') flying and swimming, **SV** D14 W15 P16 B17 S18 (1), **ML** 4, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 6, **NA** 1 (2d4), **TT** L.

- ▶ **Feed on magic:** Drawn to non-damaging spells and magical equipment. If allowed to rest on enchanted objects or spell-casters for a few minutes, they halve spell durations and negate magic effects for one watch.
- ▶ **Swarm:** Cave wisps cluster in clouds about 5' x 5' x 5' in volume.
- ▶ **Healing emanations:** Whenever they reduce the duration of a spell or dampen a magical effect, they restore 1 hp to any injured creatures within 5'.

GOLDHORN

Regal ibex, king of the holy animals of the high mountains.

AC 5 [14], **HD** 7 (31hp), **Att** 1 x headbutt (2d8 and thrown back 20'), **THACO** 13 [+6], **MV** 240' (80'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (4), **ML** 8, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 450, **NA** 1 (1)

- ▶ **Magic resistant:** 50% of spells fizzle.
- ▶ **Protected:** If injured, the mountain responds. Roll 1d4+1 on the challenge table.
- ▶ **Sure-footed:** Can move at full speed along sheer cliffs.
- ▶ **Undying:** If slain, its head detaches, grows a spiritual body and journeys to a glade of star flowers. After eating a star flower, it grows a new physical body. Bloodflowers blossom where its old body lay.
- ▶ **Golden horns:** Each horn is worth 150gp.
- ▶ **Healing lick:** Once per day, the Goldhorn's lick removes curses, disease, or poison. The Goldhorn is very partial to salt.

FISHY PERSON (GLAB-GLAB)

Glabrous humanoids, with slime-slick pale skin, permanently skin-covered eyes that see in the hyper-magical spectra, and seven-fingered hands and feet. Mostly extinct in the modern world, their civilization gone.

AC 6 [13], **HD** 1 (4hp), **Att** 1 x claws or weapon (1d6 or by weapon), **THACO** 19 [0], **MV** 120' (40') / 120' (40') swimming, **SV** D8 W9 P10 B13 S12 (Halfling 1), **ML** 6 (9 with leader), **AL** Lawful, **XP** 10, **NA** 1d6 (5d8), **TT** G.

- ▶ **Hyper-vision:** Can detect magic and see invisible creatures, but cannot see colours and most things appear as simple aura-wireframes.
- ▶ **Hiding:** In bodies of water, can hide with a 90% chance of success.
- ▶ **Amphibious:** Can breathe air or water.
- ▶ **Leader (brood-parent):** Every group of 6 includes a 4HD leader who protects the brood from cruel reality.



HOLY ANIMALS

Sacred animals with faint aureate nimbuses, protected by the mercurial God Fish. As mundane animals with the following abilities:

- ▶ **Magic resistant:** Spells fizzle 50% of the time.
- ▶ **Protected:** If injured, the mountain immediately responds with a tremor or angry wind. Roll 1d4+1 on the challenge table.

NEEDLE GNOMES

A fallen civilization's leftover maintenance caste. Small and swathed in long, bristly, light-absorbing fur. Glinting teeth like nails and eyes like pin-prick stars. A hunger for flesh and machinery. Not actually gnomes.

AC 8 [11], **HD** 2* (9hp), **Att** 1 x weapon (1d6 or by weapon), **THACO** 18 [+1], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2), **ML** 7, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 25, **NA** 2d4+2 (2d4 x 5), **TT** C.

- ▶ **Weapons:** Wield magical guns (treat as loud crossbows) and shortswords.
- ▶ **Eater in the dark:** After eating a surface creature's flesh, +1 bonus to attack rolls and saves for 1 day.
- ▶ **Light-absorbing:** In dark places, can hide with a 90% chance of success.
- ▶ **Swallowed by the dark:** If fleeing into darkness, 2-in-6 chance of becoming invisible to pursuers.
- ▶ **Leaders:** Each group of 6 has one 6HD leader (27hp, 500xp). They wield a Needle Gnome cannon: as magical rod, 4 charges, fires 60' long, 20' wide cone of sharp metal shrapnel for 1d6 damage, 2d6 vs unarmoured targets, deafens within 60' for 1d4 rounds.

RADIATION GHOSTS AND TERRORS

Echoes of past civilizations trapped in the God Fish's mythic gravity. As shadows, but less immediately hostile.

TATTERED CLAW

The scaled, animate remains of forgotten undead.

AC 5 [14], **HD** 1** (4hp), **Att** 1 x claws (1d6 + paralysis), **THACO** 18 [+1], **MV** 45' (15'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), **ML** 11, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 16, **NA** 1d6 (4d8), **TT** R.

- ▶ **Paralysis:** For 1 turn (**save vs paralysis**).
- ▶ **Latching:** After it hits, it latches on and squeezes, dealing damage every round. 1-in-6 chance it latches onto neck, strangling. Strangled target checks CON every round or passes out. STR check to remove strangling limb. Attacks against a squeezing claw deal damage to both the limb and its victim.
- ▶ **Undead:** Standard immunities.

WATERWIGHT

Undead corpses of various species preserved in the deep mountain's holy waters. At once soft and murderously strong.

AC 5 [14], **HD** 4+1** (19hp), **Att** 1 x touch (1d10 + drowning), **THACO** 15 [+4], **MV** 120' (40') / same swimming, **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (4), **ML** 10, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 275, **NA** 1d4 (2d8), **TT** F.

- ▶ **Paralyse with holy terror:** Anyone seeing a waterwight must **save vs paralysis** or be paralysed with terror. Paralysis is broken if the waterwight attacks or goes out of sight.
- ▶ **Drowning touch:** Anyone hit by the waterwight must **save vs breath** or feel their lungs begin filling with water (1d4 rounds to cough all the water out, PCs can't act while coughing). A creature held by a waterwight can easily drown. Creatures of fire are unaffected.
- ▶ **Damage resistance:** Takes ½ damage from fire and magic.
- ▶ **Undead:** Standard immunities.

Area Descriptions

Entrance A: The Holy Threespring

Hauntingly beautiful glade (swaying pines). **Scarred mountainside** (blasted open). **Yawning gap** (entrance into mountain). **Trickling stream** (from gap). **Crystal pool** (fed by stream, filled with rubble, dead fish, glittering offerings).

- ▶ **Search pool:** Mummified scaled limbs, red gold rings and bracelets (1d10gp).
- ▶ **Get all the gold:** 1d6 x 10gp, 1d6 turns, triggers challenge 6: animated fishy limbs.
- ▶ **Move rocks in pool:** Drowned sarcophagus, ancient scaled waterwight (page 11, sleeping) in red-gilded wrappings. Funerary offerings with symbols of the dark fish (200gp).

Initial Exploration

High Hermitarium

Old faith cottages (desecrated). **New faith graffiti** (garish colours).

- ▶ **Search cottages:** Hermit's to-do list: mentions secret **Waterdrinker's Shrine** up the 'goat stairs.'

Further Exploration

Dim Woods

Forbidding pines (dark, crowded). **Heaped pine needles** (dampen all sound).

- ▶ **Hiding cultists of the Carp:** grim but inept. As 2 *acolytes* and 4 *bandits*. Trying to catch new faith fanatics unaware. Have 2 wall-breaker potions (page 7).

Waterdrinker's Shrine (Hidden)

Squamous fountain (carved stone). **Spring** (trickling from fountain's fish mouth).

Untouched (missed by the vandals).

- ▶ **Holy water:** Enough for five flasks before drying up. Also good to drink (cures worms and boils).
- ▶ **Aged Glab-Glab altar:** Psalm to carp & dragon. Sacrifice two small treasures (page 7) or 100gp to open secret shortcut to **Hypostyle Halls** (page 16). 2 watches, tight crawl.

The Holy Threespring

Path to
Plish Town
(page 4)

Well-trodden
(1 watch).

1



Path to

The Underground River
(page 14)





God Carp Scale Shield

The Pharaoh Fish's own gleaming red-golden scale. *Shield +1*, wearer takes $\frac{1}{2}$ damage from fire and earth.

Regional Challenges

6. **Animated fishy limbs:** 1d6+3 tattered claws (page 11) crawl out to attack the living.
7. **Unsteady rubble:** Loose ground shifts. 1d6 turns to make path safe or each PC must make a DEX check (failure: fall 10').
8. **Scared bear:** 1 hungry mother bear, 2 cubs (as wolves).
9. **Waterdrinker's wrath:** The waters turn black and foul. Flies crawl out, their poisonous bite inflicts boils (1 damage per day for 1 week).

Collapse

1. Scree slope jumps, like a tongue flicking out of the mountain. Rocks fly. **Save vs breath** or 2d6 damage. +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Maelstrom of milky water. The meadow floods and a deep marsh remains where the springs were. Of the cave, no trace remains. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. Waters clear. Beautiful waterwight swims up and throws a **God Carp scale shield** onto the shore then disappears.

The Underground River

Natural passages (halls and tortured paths).

River channel (rushing, cold). **Five pools**

(high-bottomless, bright hues).

- ▶ **Plumb the pools:** Heavy carvings in antiquated styles. 1d4-1 in each pool, 1d6 turns to fish out, 1d6*50gp each, attracts random cave fish.
- ▶ **Dive into pools:** CON check to hold breath long enough to reveal **Drowned Chambers**. 50% chance of lurking cave fish (as *giant rockfish*).

Initial Exploration

Mineral Vents

Sulfurous feeder streams (colourful, pungent). **Burbling springs** (hot, fizzing). **Muddy maw** (dribbling, rank).

- ▶ **Soothing bath:** 1d4 turns. Removes 1 disease or restores 1d6hp.
- ▶ **Investigate muddy maw:** Glutinous mud, dribbling oozes (harmless), scattered coin-sized electric dragon scales (150 in total, gather 3d20 per turn, 10gp each). Reveals **Dragon's Nursery**.

Further Exploration

Drowned Chambers

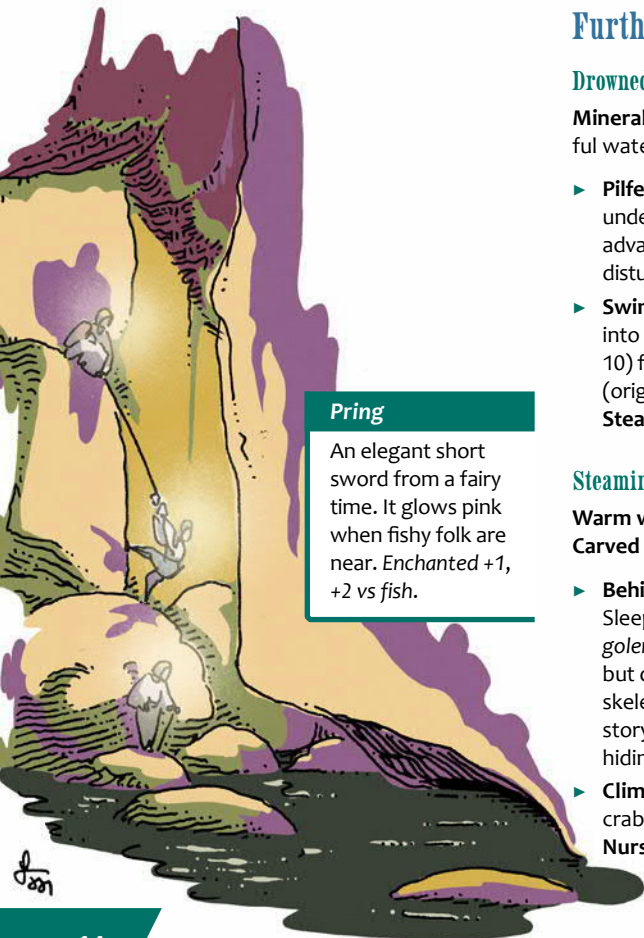
Mineralized village (Glab-Glab, deep colourful waters). **Air chamber** (wisp glitter).

- ▶ **Pilfer village:** Requires ability to breathe underwater or repeated dives. 2d4 advanced weapons and tools (100gp each), disturbs 1d4 lurking cave fish (page 10).
- ▶ **Swim to air chamber:** Forest petrified into sparkling agate. Cave wisps (page 10) flicker among ancient ruins (originally built above ground). Reveals **Steaming Waterfall**.

Steaming Waterfall (Hidden)

Warm water (spray, mineral rich, echoing). **Carved handholds** (slick, slimy).

- ▶ **Behind waterfall:** Last Glab-Glab creche. Sleeping servant machine (as 6HD *bone golem*, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved) surrounded by small skeletons. If party listens to golem's sad story (1d6+1 turns), it digs **Pring** out of its hiding spot and gifts it.
- ▶ **Climb up waterfall:** 50' climb, 1d6 bitter crabs (as *giant crab*), reveals **Dragon's Nursery**.



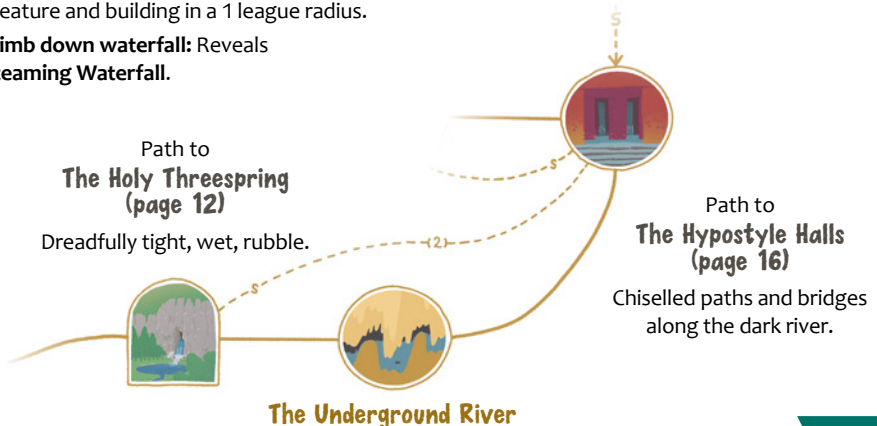
Pring

An elegant short sword from a fairy time. It glows pink when fishy folk are near. *Enchanted +1, +2 vs fish.*

Dragon's Nursery (Hidden)

Subterranean swamp (loam, travertine pans, cave flora). **Dripstone pillars** (slick, luminous spores). **Cave wisps** (blue). **Stone-encrusted dragon skeleton** (100' long). **Waterfall** (disappears into an abyss).

- ▶ **The marvelous skeleton:** Scattered dragon scales and horns (120 total, gather 3d20 per turn, 10gp each). A rivulet of holy water runs from beneath the skull (1 vial's worth per turn). Visitors who stop to examine the skeleton are *blessed* (as spell). Each turn there is a 1-in-6 chance of attracting 2d4 corrupted dragon spawn (as *giant weasel*).
- ▶ **Follow wisps or holy water:** 1d4 turns, leads to a natural stone bath filled with holy water and cave pearls.
- ▶ **In the bath:** Coin-sized cave pearls (80 total, gather 2d20 per turn, 50gp each) are food for three tiny electric-blue sky dragon hatchlings hiding within. The eyeless hatchlings cannot survive outside of holy water. It will take 25 years for the hatchlings to grow dog-sized and capable of hunting their own food and surviving outside of holy water. Till then, they must lick one cave pearl per year or starve. Without a pearl, a hatchling starves in 1d4 days. Every hatchling death summons a massive electrical storm to the land above as the sky itself mourns the death of one of its beloved little spirits. The storm wreaks devastation, destroying every tenth living creature and building in a 1 league radius.
- ▶ **Climb down waterfall:** Reveals **Steaming Waterfall**.



Regional Challenges

6. **Corrupted dragon spawn:** 1d4 10' long amphibious creatures with sucking mouths (as *giant weasel*).
7. **Flooded passage:** Unencumbered characters: CON check to swim through without drowning. Attach rope to make passable without check or 2d6 turns to find alternate route.
8. **Vertical chimney:** 50' high. DEX check to climb (attach rope to make scalable without check) or 2d6 turns to chisel steps.
9. **Walking waterwights:** 1d4 waterwights (page 11) begin silently trailing the party, waiting for an opportunity. 1-in-6 chance to notice per watch.

Collapse

1. Mud gushes from the mineral vents. All water becomes turbid. Movement slowed by 30'. +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Burbling, hot, muddy water begins to flood the way forward. PCs must cross a 60' flow or spend 2d6 turns finding an alternate route. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. Boiling waters begin filling the region. Party may safely return to the path they entered from, or (if protected from intense heat) attempt traversal; PCs must cross a 120' flow. Afterwards, the region is shut.

The Hypostyle Halls

Temple complex (abandoned, fishy). **Lesser halls** (low-ceilinged). **Echoing passages** (corbel-vaulted, gloomy).

- ▶ **Search lesser halls:** Bas-relief illustrated scenes. Suggestive glyphs.
- ▶ **Decipher glyphs:** Meaning tries to crawl into the mind, teases comprehension, promises treasure. Perhaps a little more time?
- ▶ **Keep deciphering glyphs:** Roll d6: (1–4) Just a little more time (1 turn), (5) INT check to find **Tomb of History**, (6) find **Tomb of History** and spot door curse.
- ▶ **Scout temple complex:** Warren of monastic cells. Each turn of searching:
 - 1-in-6 chance to find a stairway to the **Temple of the Earthshaker** (page 18).
 - 3-in-6 chance to find a plinth with a large glass jar holding a *mummy* wearing a glass helmet and adorned with a pectoral of beaten gold and semi-precious stones (350gp). Touch: mummy awakens in 1d4-1 rounds.
 - 5-in-6 chance to find 1d4 niches with liquid-filled glass jars (sleeping waterwights (page 11), ornate jewelry worth 50gp).

Initial Exploration

Greater Hall

Pillars (stout, hundreds). **Cave wisps** (vibrating clouds). **Shadows** (dancing). **Flooded crevasses** (glints, shadowy forms). **Rubble** (ancient). **Repairs** (shoddy, old).

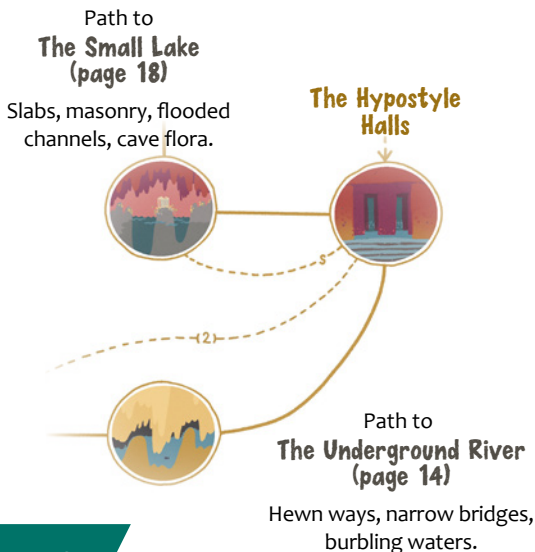
- ▶ **Examine pillars:** Intensely illustrated pre-Glab-Glab story of the God Carp swimming through the void and dreaming the world into being (1 watch to make rubbings of key passages, worth 1,000gp to a museum).
- ▶ **Explore a flooded crevasse:** Roll d4: (1) 1d6 bog mummies (not undead) in primitive finery (50gp), (2) 1d4 sleeping Glab-Glab waterwights (page 11) in precious stone tunics (100gp each, DEX check or wights wake), (3) twinkling flora, small fish, (4) deep current to the **Small Lake** (page 18, 1 watch swim, mostly submerged).
- ▶ **Examine repairs:** Sad attempt by a much reduced civilization.

Further Exploration

Tomb of History

Stone caryatids (mammoth, heroic). **Dome** (concrete rotunda). **Massive stone door** (jade, ominous glyphs, cursed).

- ▶ **Inspect caryatids:** Not quite human, too glabrous and elegant.
- ▶ **Door (to Non-Euclidean Naos):** Ominous glyphs curse all who would despoil history (reading with magic reveals password to avoid curse). Curse makes worldly treasure appear worthless (no save, lasts 3 days, reduces all apparent gp values 10-fold).
- ▶ **Mining the door:** triggers the curse, takes 1 watch, and yields 3,000gp of jade.



Non-Euclidean Naos (Hidden)

Fractal chamber (non-uniform space). **Paintings on walls** (shifting). **Massive stone door** (on far wall, jasper, holy).

- ▶ **Approaching walls / door:** 1 turn and WIS check to approach or leave a wall.
- ▶ **Paintings:** Recede into detail as one approaches. Deep histories painted in vivid colours on fragile wooden pinaxes (1d10 x 100gp each).
- ▶ **Door (to Adyton):** Mosaic of a dark fish and a light fish entwined, eating one another's tails. Vibrates with holy awe. Prayers and sacrifice, or touch triggers wave of holy terror: **save vs spells** or flee 1d6 turns (potentially get lost).
- ▶ **Harvesting the mosaic:** Worth 4,000gp. Triggers the holy awe, takes 1 watch and summons 1d4 *shadows* every turn. The shadows lie in wait until at least 20 accumulate.

Adyton (Hidden)

Altar (white stone slab). **Faceless fish statue** (white-and-black marble). **Wall niches** (thousands of fist-sized precious idols of the Fish).

- ▶ **Make offering:** Permanent +1 hp. Receive blessing (as *bless*, *remove curse*, or *cure disease*). Acquire slightly fishy aspect. Works once per PC.
- ▶ **Steal idol:** Each is worth 1d6 x 20gp. Each theft inflicts 1 hp holy damage.

Regional Challenges

6. **Pillar collapses:** Rubble buries direct route. Bypassing requires 1 watch or explosives.
7. **Crevasse yawns:** Quake shifts rock layers, creating a 10' wide, 50' deep pit, cutting the hall in half.
8. **Flooding:** Waters rise to knee height. 2d4 cave fish (as *piranhas*) swim up from below.
9. **Hungry shadows:** 1d8 *shadows* detach from friezes and follow the party.

Collapse

1. Pillars crack like gunshots. Stone shrapnel flies (**save vs breath** or 1d8 damage). +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Pillars fall like dominoes. PC bringing up the rear must **save vs paralysis** or be entombed (1d6 turns to dig out). Stone dust shrouds region. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. Dark waters flood the halls. Fish and waterwights alone now remain.



The Small Lake

Cave wisp clouds (pink and violet, dancing). **Rocky shore** (slick, luminous cave flowers). Waters (limpid). **Stalagmite island** (crystal trees). **Hexastyle temple** (marble, on island).

- ▶ **Examine waters:** Thick with gloaming plants, hidden cave fish. 30% chance per turn of attracting a random cave fish (page 10).
- ▶ **Swim to island:** 2 turns.
- ▶ **Island trees:** Delicate, beautiful. 1d100 ripe gem pomes (luminous as lit match, 10gp each, gather 2d10 per turn).
- ▶ **Temple of the Earthshaker:** Overgrown, open portico supported by piscine caryatids (1,000gp each). Painted marble tympanum frieze of the seven creator beasts (worth 10,000gp to a museum).
- ▶ **Hollow cella:** Earth floor, megalithic walls. Perfectly shaped great rock is a secret door to the hematite ophistodomos.
- ▶ **Hematite ophistodomos (hidden):** 3-tonne steel meteorite (worth 30,000gp to the old faith) on a granite plinth. Handprint melted into the meteorite holds the **Soothing Chime**.

Initial Exploration

Hanging Forest

Cliffs (festooned, verdant). **Creepers** (dimly glowing). **Heady aroma** (mildly intoxicating). **Cave flowers** (enormous).

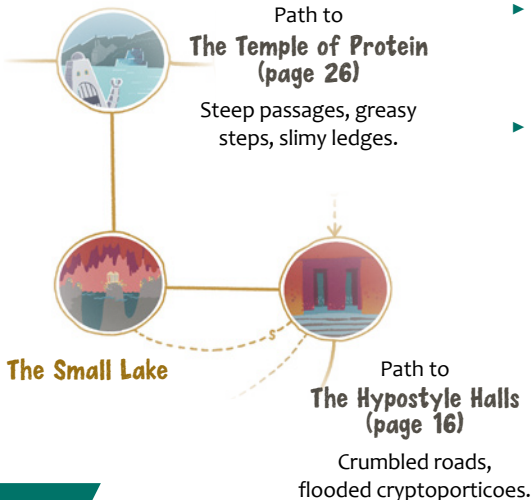
- ▶ **Intoxicating sap:** 1 turn to collect a dose. **Save vs poison**, or as *sleep*.
- ▶ **Magical flowers:** 1 turn and WIS check to find random magical flower (Small Treasures, page 7).
- ▶ **Woody raft:** 6 turns to chop stalks and creepers to create a simple raft.

Further Exploration

Waterwight Tomb

Catacombs (machine carved). **Dripstone** (encrusting coffins and walls). **30 coffins** (scuffed plastic, preservative fluids). **Injector machine** (malachite, copper).

- ▶ **Open coffin:** 2-in-3 chance of corpse in finery (100gp), 1-in-3 chance of waterwight (page 11) in armour (100gp). 50% chance disturbing it activates the security golem (as *bone golem*, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved).
- ▶ **Inspect injector:** Malachite knobs and levers worth 500gp (disables machine). INT check: it is a one-way time machine, preserving living people for later reanimation.
- ▶ **Trigger reanimation:** Coffins flushed down secret tunnel (discovered after 2nd watch of exploration) to **Underground River** (page 14). There three waterwights awaken.



Regional Challenges

- Hungry cave wisps:** Wisp bloom descends. Wait 1 watch for natural die-off, or push through (magical effects negated for a day).
- Collapsed path:** A 30' gap yawns. Brave cave *giant octopus* to swim across gap, spend 2d6 turns carefully climbing around, or build an improvised rope bridge.
- Slab fall:** Massive rock triggers large wave. Each PC must **save vs paralysis** or be swept into the lake.
- Floating coffins:** Quake breaks a natural rock dam. 2d6 waterweights (page 11) in glittery fineries (100gp each) flushed out of their tomb in a side passage.

Soothing Chime

Adamant triangle in an orichalcum circle in an electrum square. 3 charges.

- ▶ Rung when a natural disaster strikes: Delays it by 1d12 turns.
- ▶ Rung against a hostile creature: It becomes indifferent and content.

Collapse

- Lake bed cracks. Water drains out through a crevasse over 1d4 turns. PCs swimming in the lake must succeed at a STR check to avoid being sucked under and drowned. Reveals 1d4 small treasures (page 7) and 2d6 flopping cave fish (page 10).
- Ominous calm. Cave wisps wink out one by one. +2d6 to collapse checks.
- A rain of stalactites falls for 1d4 turns (once per turn, random PC must **save vs death** or be crushed). The ceiling then yawns wide and water from the Great Lake slowly floods the whole region.



Entrance B: The Hérmes Mines

Modern mineworks (golem excavators, elemental borers). **Megalithic ruins** (repurposed as warehouses). **Tailings** (luminous, toxic). **Stores** (locked).

- ▶ **Search stores:** Mining gear, ropes, helmets, picks, 5 wall-breaker potions (page 7) in sturdy flasks. Encounter 2d6 patrolling mining company mercenaries (as 2HD veterans).

Initial Exploration

Great Engines

Boilers (trapped elementals). **Pipes** (sturdy valves). **Conveyor belt** (new-fangled). **Control tower** (offices). **Machine shop** (locked).

- ▶ **Release elementals:** 1d4 hostile 8HD fire elementals released. Bad idea.

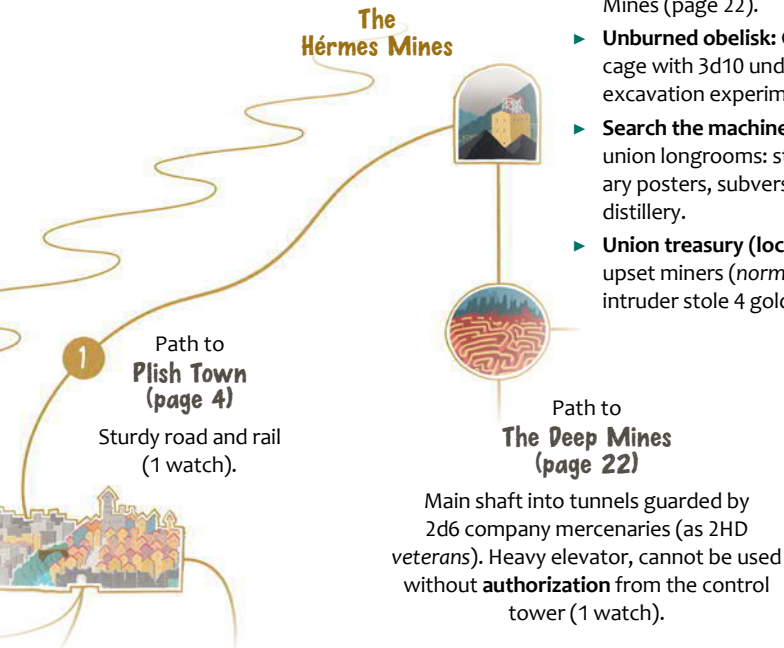
- ▶ **Visit control tower:** 2d6 harried managers (as *bandits*). Switchboard controls heavy elevator. Negotiate: televocalizer **authorizes** heavy elevator.
- ▶ **Poke around:** 3 hidden golem control cards (as scrolls of *charm person*, only affect golems). Patrols by overseer (challenge).
- ▶ **Break into machine shop (locked door):** Wood golem parts (for 2 golems). Caged wood *golem* (harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved) named Pinot Gris. Convinced it is a real boy (spell virus).

Further Exploration

Reopened Vault

Magical portal (broken down). **Obelisks** (mostly scorched). **Ancient machinery** (tinkered with).

- ▶ **Examine portal:** Side passages bypass main shaft, slow path (3 watches) to Deep Mines (page 22).
- ▶ **Unburned obelisk:** Conceals abandoned cage with 3d10 undead *giant shrews*. Failed excavation experiment.
- ▶ **Search the machinery:** Hidden gate to union longrooms: study halls, revolutionary posters, subversive golem literature, distillery.
- ▶ **Union treasury (locked, peep hole):** 1d10 upset miners (*normal humans*). An invisible intruder stole 4 golden keys.



Regional Challenges

- 6. Dumpster fire:** Tailings lit by arsonists (poisonous fumes). PCs must wait 1 watch or risk being poisoned (without masks: **save vs poison** or die).
- 7. Protesting miners:** Score of miners (*normal humans* and three 3HD leaders) demand wages lost due to mine closure. Refuse scabs entry into mine.
- 8. Angry overseer and lackeys:** Demands proper bureaucratic confirmation (in triplicate) from director to pass. As *bandit leader* and 6 *bandits*.
- 9. Company mercenaries:** 8 lazy company mercenaries (2HD veterans).

Collapse

- Guards flee. 1d8+1 terrified *wood golems* (can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved) break for freedom. Poisonous mercury fumes belch from the mine (PCs with a movement rate of 60' (20') or less must **save vs poison** or take 3d6 damage from choking). +d6 to collapse checks.
- Heavy elevator collapses. Great engines threaten to explode (INT check to find controls to douse elemental flames). Doused: mining company awards 1,000gp. Explosion: Main mine collapses, a hundred miners unemployed. +d6 to collapse checks.
- Lurid waters vomit from the mine. The deepest passages are sealed. A box floats in the middle of the toxic waters. Inside is the fabled work, *Remembrance of Things Past*, printed on plastic sheets, bound in ceramic tiles (500gp).



The Deep Mines

Fossilized city (stuffed with a more elegant age's detritus). **Mine works** (modern, drilled through ancient garbage). **Living maze** (biomechanical, slowly shifting).

- ▶ **Explore mine works:** Glowing spelunker glyphs and Needle Gnome shrapnel.
- ▶ **Examine glyphs:** Recent. Faintly magical. Signed Vic Torbin.
- ▶ **Follow trail of glyphs:** Mark path to bypass region. 2d6 mining company mercenaries (as 2HD veterans) wait at end.
- ▶ **Navigate maze:** INT check each watch.
 - Success: find another path out of the region (see Paths to...).
 - Failure: party lost. After two consecutive failures, the party discovers the **Iron Brain**.
- ▶ **Search city detritus:** Each turn, roll d6: (1–3) coin-sized ancient widget worth 1d20gp, (4) golden widget worth 1d20 x 20gp, (5) small treasure (page 7), (6) vial of living metal (200gp). 20% chance of attracting a widget golem swarm (see **Regional Challenges**).

Paths to...

Because of the shifting tunnels, the region can never be fully explored. Whenever PCs enter, only the path they used is immediately accessible.

Initial Exploration

Dumpster Strata

More mazes (dead, rusted). **Plastic cathedral** (compacted, vast).

- ▶ **Dig around:** See **search city detritus** above.
- ▶ **Enter plastic cathedral:** Compacted plasticated Purification Era corpses. Stripped of treasures.

Further Exploration

Iron Brain

Glazed tower (glassy, festooned in cables and pipes). **Portico** (blasted). **Shattered stairwell** (inside tower, pools of Needle Gnome blood, golem shards).

- ▶ **Stairs down to gate room:** Bakelite teleporter gate inscribed with alien glyphs. Inactive, operation requires a golem heart. Currently set to *Ziggurat of the Stairs* (page 34).
- ▶ **Stairs up to brain room:** Fragments of scattered giant metal brain. Hundreds of platinum logic switches (3 turns to gather, as 1d6 x 100pp). Jury-rigged repair work (searching reveals hidden backup brain room).
- ▶ **Backup brain room (hidden):** Chest-sized platinum-and-coral brain (3,000gp) linked to stained glass sarcophagus.
- ▶ **Sarcophagus:** Cryo-sleeping ancient human named Amanita. Her dreams power the brain. Disrupting backup brain shuts down the living maze, making it possible to explore the region normally. Amanita fled the oppressive, suffocating care of her servant golem in the Purification Bunkers (page 30) many aeons ago.



Path to
The Hérmes Mines
(page 20)

Shafts, trolleys, ancient tunnels, dead widgets.



The Deep Mines



Path to
The Magnificent Canyon
(page 36)

Antediluvian pipes, broken pumps, dripstone.



Path to
The Needle Gnome Outpost
(page 24)

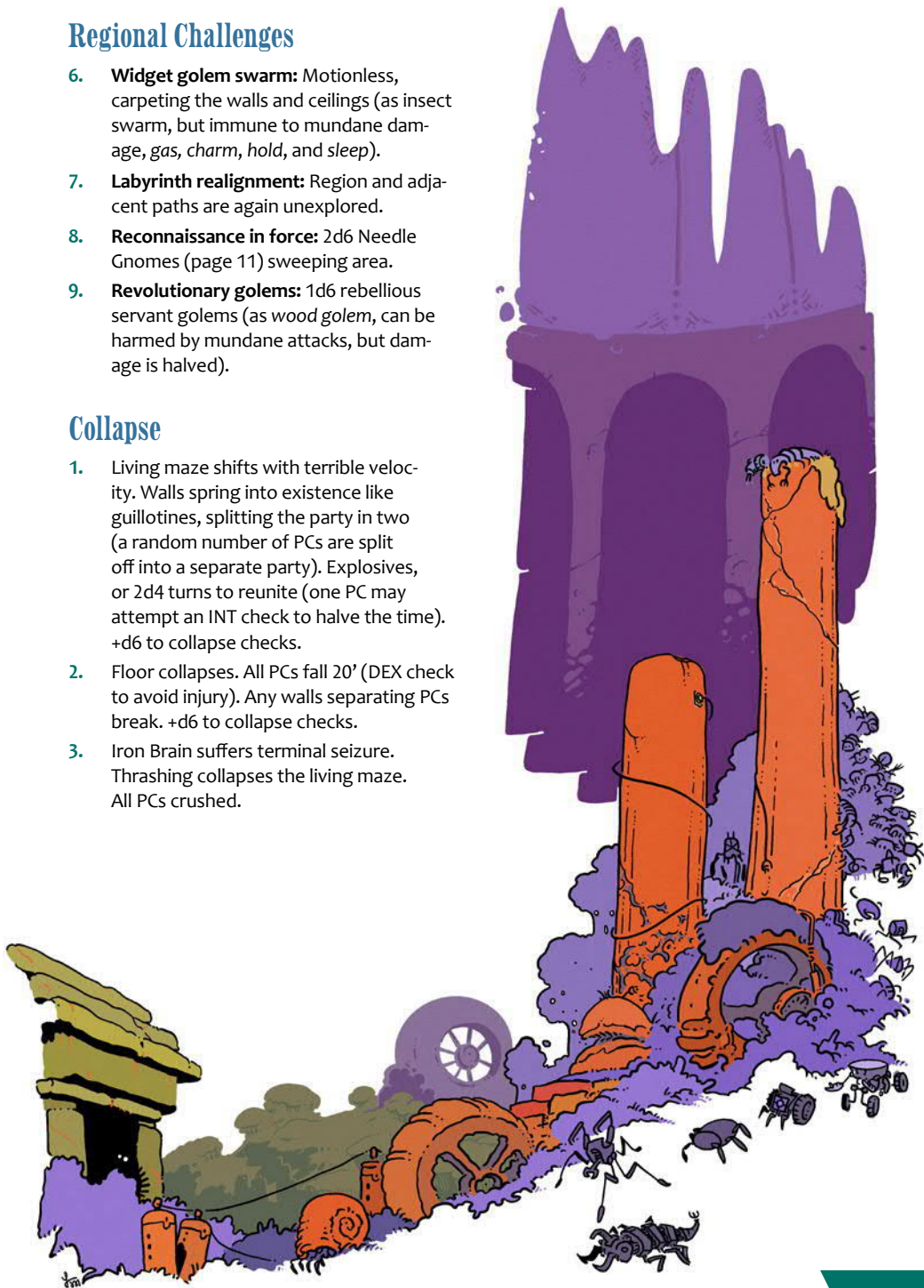
Rough veins and arteries, garbage, dead machines.

Regional Challenges

- Widget golem swarm:** Motionless, carpeting the walls and ceilings (as insect swarm, but immune to mundane damage, *gas*, *charm*, *hold*, and *sleep*).
- Labyrinth realignment:** Region and adjacent paths are again unexplored.
- Reconnaissance in force:** 2d6 Needle Gnomes (page 11) sweeping area.
- Revolutionary golems:** 1d6 rebellious servant golems (as *wood golem*, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved).

Collapse

- Living maze shifts with terrible velocity. Walls spring into existence like guillotines, splitting the party in two (a random number of PCs are split off into a separate party). Explosives, or 2d4 turns to reunite (one PC may attempt an INT check to halve the time). +d6 to collapse checks.
- Floor collapses. All PCs fall 20' (DEX check to avoid injury). Any walls separating PCs break. +d6 to collapse checks.
- Iron Brain suffers terminal seizure. Thrashing collapses the living maze. All PCs crushed.



The Needle Gnome Outpost

Grottoes (hangar-like, lacey dripstone). **Lanes** (cobblestone). **Wells** (bottomless).

- ▶ **Wander lanes:** Ghost sounds. Hooves. Carriages. Laughter. Forgotten language.
- ▶ **Follow sounds:** Metallic tripod, a one-way audio time machine. As large as a bullock. Worth 10,000gp. Needle Gnomes use it as a lure. Moving it draws a patrol (2d6 Needle Gnomes, see page 11).
- ▶ **Examine wells:** Ghostly glow. Heat from below. May lead to a kind of hell.

Initial Exploration

Abandoned Villas

Ornate decorations (cupolas, spires, walkways). **Gardens** (desiccated). **Insectile carcasses** (ancient, metal). **Park** (dead, dusty).

- ▶ **Scout villas:** 1 turn per villa. Roll d6: (1) dust and rubble, (2) full of long bones cracked for marrow, (3) ransacked, 1d10 nesting troglodytic giant pill bugs (as giant rats), (4) barricaded, desiccated mummies inside, 1d100gp in lucite jewelry, (5) broken open, concealed treasure chest (1d6 x 100gp in strange currencies), (6) untouched, pristine, with 1d4 plastic guardians (as gargoyles) guarding 1d4 small treasures (page 7).
- ▶ **Check gardens:** 1 turn per garden. Roll d6: (1–4) ornately decorative, choked with mass of dead thorny weeds, (5) 1d4 old graves (1 turn to dig up, 1d100gp per grave), (6) dormant plastic guardian awaiting instructions (as gargoyle, CHA check to command).
- ▶ **Poke carcasses:** Beasts of burden or vehicles. Unclear which. Dead now.
- ▶ **Visit park:** Oddly soothing. **Save vs spells** or spend 1 watch contemplating end of all things, regain 1hp. Baroque gazebo with a banquet table laden with 2d100 plastic fruits (worth 50gp in the modern world).

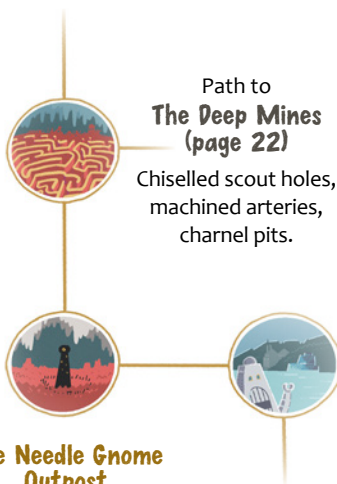


Further Exploration

Flower Fortress

Organic crystal fortifications (ramparts, walls, palisades). **Rumbling machinery** (biological, belching, working). **Axial tower** (increscent, metallic).

- ▶ **Scale fortifications:** 1d6 Needle Gnome guards (page 11). Beyond: machinery and tower.
- ▶ **Investigate machinery:** Grinding up offerings: remains of miners, mummies, and plastics. Secreting oily liquid: Needle Gnomes' organic nourishment.
- ▶ **Enter the tower:** Door opens once per watch (wait 1d12 turns). Stairway leads up to a vat chamber where a gelatinous proto-gnome (as *gelatinous cube*) swims in oily fluid inside a fortified tank, hooked up to the rumbling machinery. This is the rock-folder, who opens passages through solid matter. If attacked, it summons a Needle Gnome patrol (2d6 gnomes, see page 11, arrive in 1d4+1 rounds). If killed, the tower begins folding into itself and retracting into the ground, stopping further Needle Gnome incursions after 2 turns (all future Needle Gnome patrols encountered are changed to 1d6 confused Needle Gnome survivors).



Regional Challenges

6. **Needle Gnome patrol:** 2d6 warriors out in force. If interrogated, reveal they are drawn by the earthquakes that threaten their deep homes.
7. **Vicious trapworks:** A 40' long, 10' wide, 20' deep pit lined with flexible spikes (1d8 damage if fallen on). Circumventing takes 1 watch. Putting pressure on the spikes summons 2d6 Needle Gnomes in 1d4 turns.
8. **Oil spill:** Flammable puddles, aerosolized fuel. Open flame triggers a 3d6 *fireball*.
9. **Ancient alarm:** A very loud 3-minute wavering tone sounds from everywhere at once (actually from a forgotten past). Followed by the sound of an ear-splitting explosion (**save vs paralysis** or deafened for 1 watch, **save vs wands** or struck by falling stalactites for 1d4 damage). Finally, white noise fading to silence.

Collapse

1. A wild howling sound. Needle Gnomes flee for their elevators. Future Needle Gnome patrols are changed to 1d4 terrified Needle Gnome refugees. The axial tower grinds back into the ground. +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Grottoes rumble and shake, stalactites and villas collapse. Lowest WIS character **saves vs death** or is struck by an ox-sized stalactite (3d6 damage). +d6 to collapse checks.
3. A sudden flash of colourless light comes through the abandoned time machine. The grottoes disappear into history, along with the PCs. Again.

The Temple of Protein

Ice cavern (cold, snow drifts). **Automatic meat factory** (scuttling servant golems).

Gatehouse (insulated containers, offices). **Ice maze** (blue glow).

- ▶ **Search gatehouse:** Empty offices, missing files, multi-coloured food wrappers, locked door to central autofactory control.
- ▶ **Central control:** Devastation, ripped up panels and circuitry, ancient blood glyphs on the dead big screen (override, please, override!). Frozen corpse of the last Factory Director with slit wrists and a tatty plush rabbit in their breast pocket.
- ▶ **Ice maze:** Endless bored passages stacked with ‘protein.’ The older stacks are mostly fish fillets, but the recent stacks are much less carefully sorted, including an astonishing accidental overview of recent civilizations and visitors. Patrolling guardian (as cold-themed *bronze golem*, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved) with a corpse flash-frozen to its head like a strange hat. It is hard-linked into the autofactory core—the more it is injured, the colder the region becomes.
- ▶ **Flash-frozen corpse:** Clutches *amulet inscribed “VT.”* The name Miki is embroidered on its spelunking jacket. They were Vic Torbin’s companion.

Initial Exploration

More passages and chambers and houses stacked with frozen protein.

Further Exploration

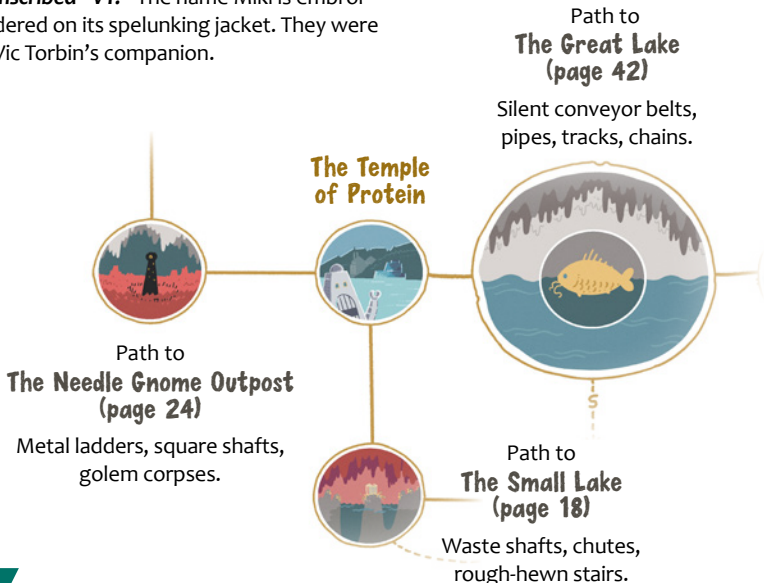
Meat Processor

Silent machines (mills, grinders, pasteurizers). **Parking lot** (empty, abruptly truncated by bedrock). **Tin hill** (buried cannery). **Fish pond** (ornamental, frozen).

- ▶ **Inspect hill:** Mound of gently vibrating canned omega-protocol oils. Digging for 1 watch reveals an engine room with 3 live golem hearts the size of small pigs.
- ▶ **Frozen pond:** Antediluvian fish, giant water reptiles, a kraken. 1d4 watches to gather 3 massive trophies (3,000gp each).

VT Amulet of Luck

Happy-looking stone. Allows bearer to reroll one save daily.





Regional Challenges

6. **Protein hunters:** 2d6 Needle Gnomes (page 11) with heavy packs and light sleds.
7. **Avalanche:** Rush of snow and tins. 50% chance it strikes party. **Save vs breath** or buried (1d6 turns to dig out). 1d6 turns to cross the avalanche terrain.
8. **Crevasses:** Quake opens up deep crevasses in the ice (5' across). 2d4 turns to bypass or STR check to leap across.
9. **Repair crew:** 2d4 metallic repair machines (as AC 5 [14] wood golem, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved), filling in ice crevasses.

Collapse

1. Ominous, terrible groaning and grinding. Stacks of protein collapse. **Save vs paralysis** or struck for 1d8 damage. +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Gurgling sounds, shifting ice, as though water is penetrating below. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. The whole region begins calving into the great lake in an avalanche of processed foods, ice, water, mud, and scattered buildings. PCs have 4 rounds to flee to the nearest exit, 80' away.

Entrance C: The Goldhorn's Doom

High slopes (krummholz, alpine tundra). **Meadow** (red flowers, megaliths). **Milling animals** (holy).

- ▶ **Canvas slopes:** Unconscious hunter, Yasi Lefabri (as level 2 Fighter). Struck down by Goldhorn's ghost after shooting the regal creature. If healed, willing to join party, convinced this will help them win their beloved.
- ▶ **Walk in meadow:** Site of butchery. Headless Goldhorn corpse (regal ibex pelt, 250gp). Triggers challenge 7: Goldhorn's ghost.

Initial Exploration

Overgrown Dolmen

Ancient krummholz (vigorous). **Dusty hollow** (very deep). **Impressive ancient dolmen** (in hollow, replica megaliths).

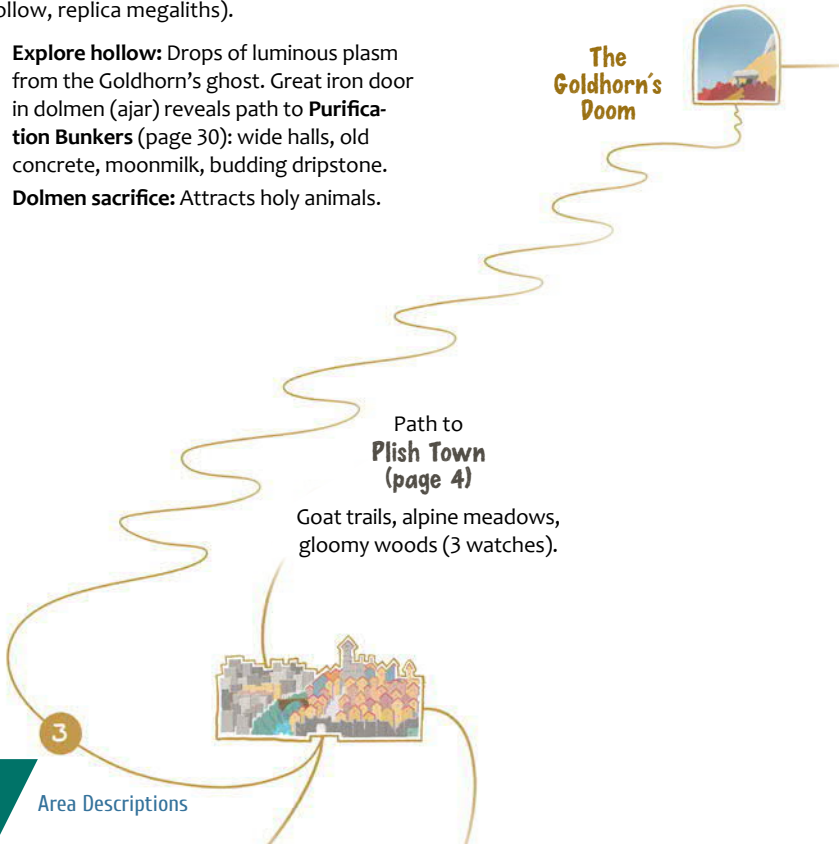
- ▶ **Explore hollow:** Drops of luminous plasm from the Goldhorn's ghost. Great iron door in dolmen (ajar) reveals path to **Purification Bunkers** (page 30): wide halls, old concrete, moonmilk, budding dripstone.
- ▶ **Dolmen sacrifice:** Attracts holy animals.

Further Exploration

Cave Bear's Cave

Entrance (worn smooth). **Smoke-stained cells** (tatty bedding). **Cultic hall** (wall paintings, brazier, bones). **Dark passage** (nigh-impenetrable to light).

- ▶ **Vision brazier:** Smoking herbs shows a random path within the mountain—which counts as explored. **Save vs spells** or bowels turn to water and legs to rubber ($\frac{1}{2}$ movement rate for 1d6 watches).
- ▶ **Explore passage:** Chthonic passage, scarred walls and floor. 25 large ossuary pots: neatly arranged skeletons holding obsidian figurines (25gp each). Mummified cave bear guardian (see challenge 9): awakens if tomb disturbed.



Parliament of Beasts

Hot spring (soothing, mineral-rich). **Strange flora** (unseasonal, faintly glowing). **Philosophical animals** (1d4 x 10 holy animals—page 11, predators and prey together in peace). **Rusted giant** (*bronze golem* cradling five star flowers worth 1,000gp each, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved).

- ▶ **Eat fruit or bathe in spring:** Restores 1 hp per watch. **Save vs spells** or spend 1d6 watches in restorative meditation.
- ▶ **Steal star flowers:** Golem awakens, disgusted with thieves. Animals angry.



Regional Challenges

6. **Nosy animals:** 2d10 holy animals (page 11) crowd close, curious and unafraid. Actions take longer if party wishes not to disturb or injure them.
7. **Goldhorn's ghost:** The ominous head of the Goldhorn taunts all who approach. If followed, it makes for the Dead Farms in the **Purification Bunkers** (page 30). The paths count as explored for movement but its glowing form alerts all creatures encountered.
8. **Dolmenslide:** A quake dislodges a dolmen. All PCs **save vs death** or suffer 3d8 damage. Reveals hidden door to **Purification Bunkers** (page 30): wide halls, old concrete, moonmilk, budding dripstone.
9. **Mummified cave bear:** Maddened by the God Fish's nightmares (as *mummy*, no disease).

Collapse

1. Great boulders tumble. Sudden emptiness as God Fish's mental influence disappears. +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Landslide blocks off Goldhorn's Doom entrance. Ground vibrates as things detonate inside the bunkers. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. The Goldhorn emerges from the mountain, reborn unscathed. Everyone witnessing immediately regains 1d6 hp. One creature, licked by the Goldhorn, is restored to life (as *raise dead*, caster level 8). Druids, elves, and other nature-beloved folk can pet it to permanently gain 1 hp.

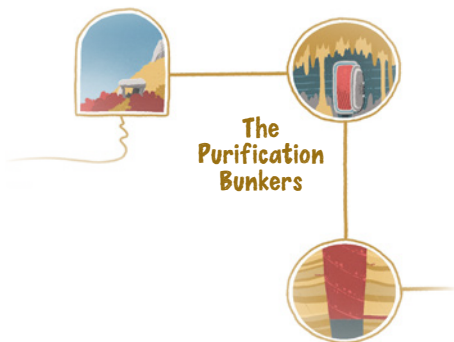
The Purification Bunkers

Brutalist bunker (advanced). **Skittish ghosts** (radiating, mostly harmless). **Residences of Tomorrow** (self-cleaning, flickering lights).

- ▶ **Search residences:** Every turn roll 1d6: (1) a small treasure (page 7), (2) 1d6 sleeping golem servants (as *wood golems*, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved), (3) malfunctioning domestic appliance, (4) clean beds and an antiseptic smell, (5) table set with plastic food, (6) 2d12gp in lucite coins.

Path to
The Goldhorn's Doom
(page 28)

False caves, crumbling doors, heavy calthemite.



Path to
The Great Funnel
(page 32)

Silent rusted stairs,
corpse niches,
dead machinery.

Initial Exploration

Farms and Factories

Dead farms (wilted trees, mouldy soil). **Humus facilities** (blocked, dismembered tractors). **Automatic factories** (beautiful fronts, grimy interiors).

- ▶ **Search humus facilities:** Processors clogged with artificial hips, corundum teeth, plastic hearts (300gp). DEX check or 1d6+1 turns to collect without alerting patrolling golem janitor (as *bone golem*, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved).
- ▶ **Janitor's charging cubicle:** Stuffed with human artefacts: books, dolls, board games, costumes. Thorough search: age-blackened bogwood **staff of Duzis Gwerhi** under a box of idols from a young adult wizarding franchise.
- ▶ **Explore automatic factories:** Potemkin boulevard of machines for reproducing a dead consumer culture with well-dressed marionettes and plastic food displays. 2d6 terrified radiation ghosts shy away from light and life (as *shadows*).

Further Exploration

Princess' Palace

Ornate halls (dusty silks, cushions, plush animals). **Greenhouse** (plastic trees, too-bright light globe).

- ▶ **Search palace:** Concerned servant golem (Gunhild, as *bone golem*, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved) pines for mistress Amanita (page 22). Offers 2,000gp in statuettes for her return (from Chamber of Strategies). Discover grand door to Chamber of Strategies (locked).
- ▶ **Break into Chamber of Strategies:** Gunhild upset. Enormous tables, dioramas, fictitious maps, theoretical manuals, and illuminated display cases of masterfully painted tiny statues (3,000gp).

Regional Challenges

- Sentry golem:** Dressed in patchwork costume (as *bone golem*, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved). More interested in order than combat.
- Collapsed boulevard:** Several collapsed floors obstruct passage. Plastic limbs twitch when exposed to light. 1 watch or explosives to bypass.
- Dead jungle:** Mad growth of now-dead monster bamboo chokes passage. 1 watch or fire to bypass.
- Ghostly throng:** Crowd of 3d10 curious radiation ghosts (as *shadows*) gathers to watch the party. Not immediately hostile but follow 1d4 watches. 1-in-3 of the ghosts attack—if threatened or injured, others flee.

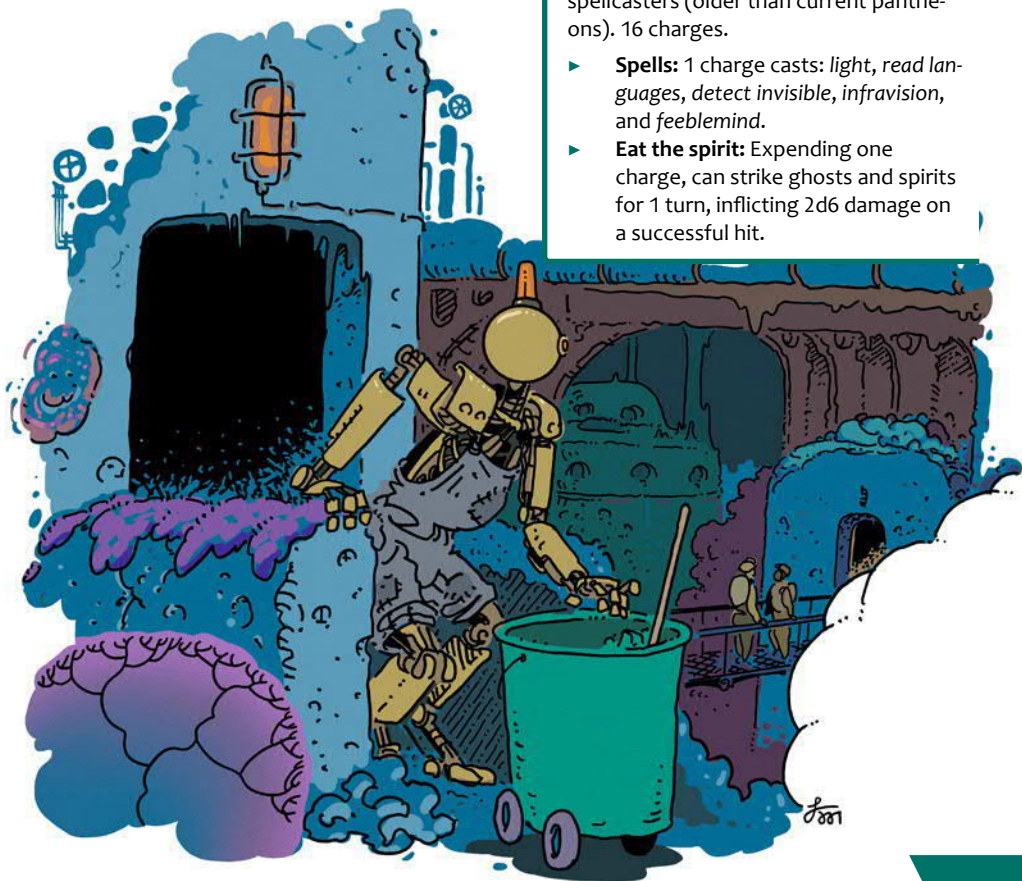
Collapse

- The smell of fuel fills the bunkers. +d6 to collapse checks.
- Chambers begin igniting, one after another. After every turn not spent fleeing the region, PCs caught in an explosion—3d6 damage (**save vs breath** for half). +d6 to collapse checks.
- The great fire engine that powered the bunker for aeons dies in a flash of cosmic light. All witnessing the flash suffer 1d8 fire damage and mummy rot.

Staff of Duzis Gwerhi

Age-blackened bogwood incised with half-remembered runes. As a *staff* +1 in melee. May be used by arcane and divine spellcasters (older than current pantheons). 16 charges.

- ▶ **Spells:** 1 charge casts: *light*, *read languages*, *detect invisible*, *infravision*, and *feblemind*.
- ▶ **Eat the spirit:** Expending one charge, can strike ghosts and spirits for 1 turn, inflicting 2d6 damage on a successful hit.

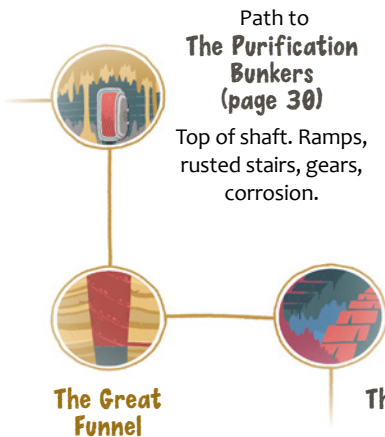


The Great Funnel

Core shaft (500' wide, 4,500' deep, echoing).

Spiral ramp (incised into walls, dunes of dust). **Dead machines** (set on plinths). **Niches** (vitrines). **Memorial sculptures** (heroic engineers).

- ▶ **Examine machines:** Hollow shells, painted. Pluck knobs, badges, and optics as gems (1d10-3 gems per turn, worth 1d6 x 25gp each).
- ▶ **Examine niches:** Yellowed vitrines with plastinated corpses of 7' engineering heroes in the armours of forgotten times (300gp each, as plate, 1d4 turns to strip). Vitrines disturbed: shrill alarm activates 1d6 guardians (as humanoid *amber golems*, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved).
- ▶ **Loot sculptures:** Triumphant bronzes (200gp per life-size sculpture, 1 turn to bring down). 1-in-6 memorials cover a niche with a gold tablet celebrating the purifiers (100gp).
- ▶ **Ascend/descend shaft:** 2 watches to reach top or bottom.



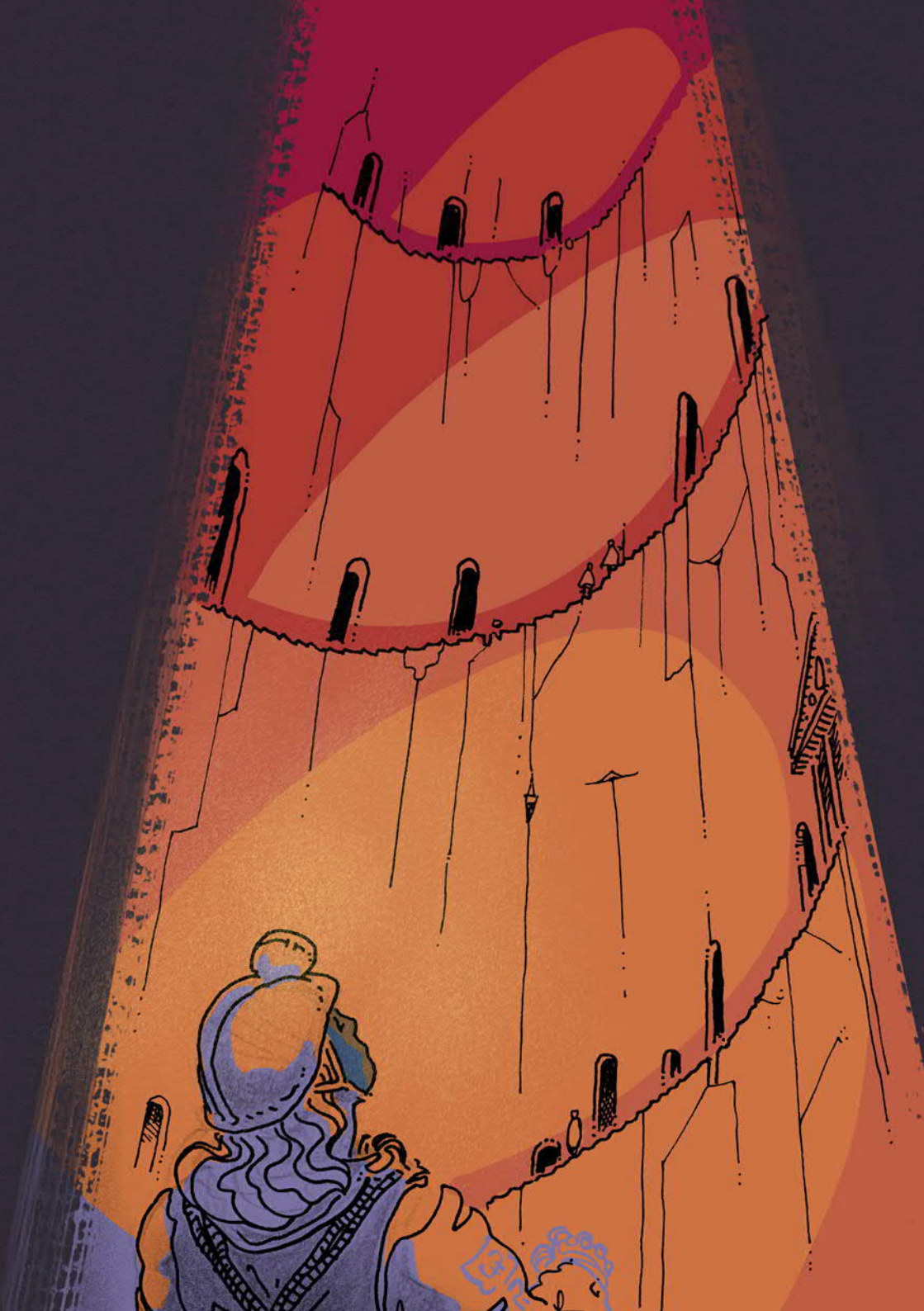
Bottom of shaft. Alien, smooth-bored tunnels. Debris.

Regional Challenges

6. **Wisp storm:** Magical tremors propel blinding cloud (save vs spells or blinded 1 watch) of cave wisps up the funnel. Magic effects doused for 1 watch.
7. **Alarming quake:** Cladding falls, siren wails, 1d3 sentry guardians (as *amber golem* but spider-like and can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved) awaken.
8. **Lip collapse:** Aged ramp lip gives way. Lowest CHA character: DEX check or swept into shaft (5-in-6 chance of being caught by a rusty mesh net spread 10' below the lip). Roped together or otherwise secured characters are safe.
9. **Tumbling bot:** An ominously rotund machine falls off its plinth and rolls towards the party. Strikes for 2d10hp damage (**save vs breath** to avoid).

Collapse

1. Machines and memorials tumble and fall. +1 watch to pass shaft. +d6 to collapse checks.
2. 1d6 guardians (as *amber golems*, but spider-like and can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved) activate and seek strenuously to prevent anyone from entering or leaving the dangerous shaft. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. Base of funnel collapses into a magma chamber below. Lava begins swiftly rising, reaching the top of the shaft in 1 watch.



The Ziggurat of the Stairs

Giant ziggurat (750' tall). **Ziggurat ledges** (glittering cyclopean stones, harder than steel). **Staircase** (carved into ledges). **Low doorways** (carved into ziggurat). **Cavern ceiling** (cut away, fresh dripstone formations).

- ▶ **Study ziggurat:** Crystallized struts pierce the stone ceiling. Dislodged stones reveal desiccated biology. The ziggurat is an improbably vast creature's exoskeleton.
- ▶ **Doorways:** Lead to a baroque array of fossilized chambers and organs.

Path to The Great Funnel (page 32)

Bored tunnels,
rubble-choked
chambers.



The Ziggurat of the Stairs



Path to The Buried City (page 38)

Worn ramps, abandoned
machines, huddled corpses.

Initial Exploration (inside Ziggurat)

Void Heart

Offices (near-vacuum, biting cold). **Gate chamber** (vacuum, ransacked). **Star gate** (diaphanous membrane).

- ▶ **Offices:** Behind pressure doors. 1 turn to enter each office. Roll d6: (1) 1d4 dehydrated corpses, (2) arcane paperwork, (3) crumbling artefacts, (4) 2 small treasures (page 7), (5) 100gp in obsidian beads, (6) 1d4 dehydrated zombies.
- ▶ **Examine star gate:** Sealed by epic magics. Mind echoes of harsh stars and void whales.

Further Exploration (inside Ziggurat)

Holy Laboratories

Exhibition wards (echoing, long). **Preserved void creatures** (behind waning force-walls, memories of torment). **Operating theatres** (chains, gurneys). **Cellars** (funereal).

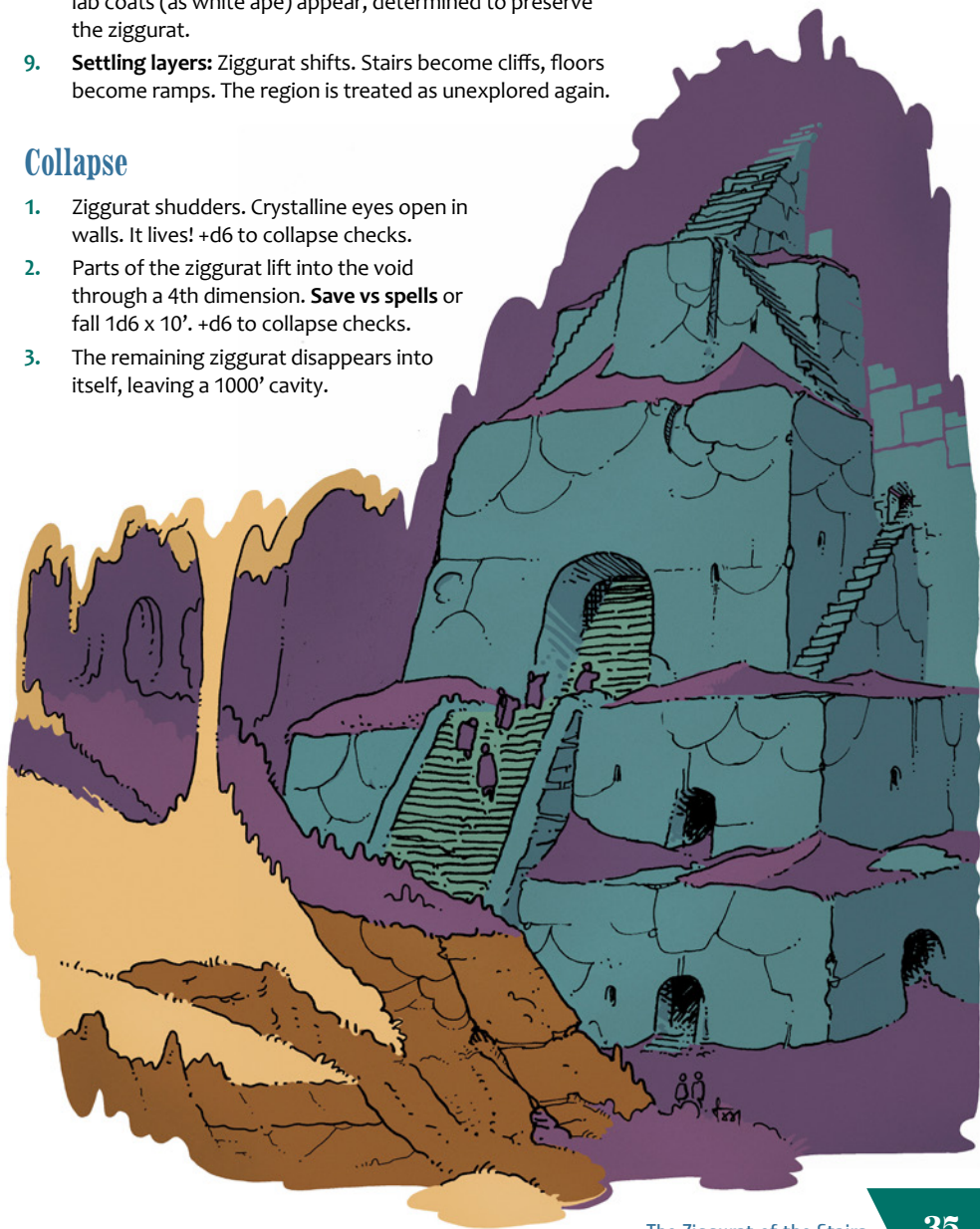
- ▶ **Access void creatures:** *Dispel magic* nullifies force-walls. Collect specimens: 1 watch, 1d6 x 1,000gp, summon 1d4+1 shadows. 10% chance specimen is undead (as *warp beast*).
- ▶ **Cellars:** Disturbing sculptures, strange glyphs, 64 corroded doors (warning glyphs).
- ▶ **Open corroded door:** 10% chance of a grey ooze. Vats, boxes, jars holding (roll d6): (1-3) acid (1,000gp, 50 flasks worth), (4) transmuted gold (5,000gp, poison to the touch), (5) lead (100gp), (6) inert grey ooze (1,000gp, 5 pressurized canisters).

Regional Challenges

6. **Packaged mummy:** Quake smashes open a sarcophagus. A mummy falls out.
7. **Grey ooze patch:** Furnishings, 1d4 small treasures (page 7), and ceiling coated in the stuff (2d4 grey oozes).
8. **Ziggurat doctors:** Time flickers, and 1d4 ape-folk in white lab coats (as white ape) appear, determined to preserve the ziggurat.
9. **Settling layers:** Ziggurat shifts. Stairs become cliffs, floors become ramps. The region is treated as unexplored again.

Collapse

1. Ziggurat shudders. Crystalline eyes open in walls. It lives! +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Parts of the ziggurat lift into the void through a 4th dimension. **Save vs spells** or fall 1d6 x 10'. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. The remaining ziggurat disappears into itself, leaving a 1000' cavity.



The Magnificent Canyon

Awesome canyon (300' deep). **Rushing river** (loud, base of canyon). **Devil's bridge** (metal lattice across canyon, fragile).

- ▶ **Canyon floor:** 1 watch to climb down safely; DEX check and 1 turn to climb down in a hurry. Dead ancient vehicle. Inside: 3 rotted waterwights tied to chairs. One clutches a chest with a small treasure (page 7), 200gp, and mission papers in a lost language (something about quakes threatening a lost city).

Initial Exploration

Pearly Chasms (Canyon Floor)

Great pool (deep, bright blue). **Glowing flow-ers** (crystalline). **Geyser** (mineral-rich).

- ▶ **Examine pool:** 1d6 cave clams with pearls (75gp each). Pack of 2d6 cave fish (as *piranhas*).
- ▶ **Examine geyser:** 3 glittering skeletons, embraced (100gp each). Water is near-boiling (2d6 damage/round). Lonely *skeleton* (Bobheart) tries to make friends by pushing travellers into the water. A search reveals Bobheart's bad poetry cache, 146gp, and a locket inscribed with the name 'Amanita' (page 22).

Further Exploration

Glabrous Refuge (Canyon Floor)

Pueblos (abandoned). **Dripstone** (smoke-stained).

- ▶ **Search pueblos:** Chtonic passage, wafting cave lotus smoke.
- ▶ **Follow passage:** 6 turns. Wisp moss forest and rude shacks of cave lotus-eating Glab-Glabs (page 10). 2d12 of the nigh-immortals remain, all memories of the past wiped away by the cave lotus mushrooms.
- ▶ **Elder's bungalow:** Sealed. Mummified in lotus position, holding last copy of *Testaments of the Ignored* (tells how God Carp ignored the Glab-Glab, 500gp).

Path to
The Buried City
(page 38)

Chasms, bridges,
spidering ropes,
cascading waters.

**The Ziggurat
of the Stairs**



Path to
The Deep Mines
(page 22)

Slippery slopes,
narrow ledges, faults,
pyrite veins.



Regional Challenges

- 6. Plunging rocks:** Rocks and boulders cascade into chasm, water sprays. Middle-most PC: **save vs paralysis** or fall 30'.
- 7. Waterside attack:** Random cave fish (page 10) lurks under floating calcite raft, waiting to attack passers-by.
- 8. Wandering fool:** A lost Glab-Glab (page 10) chased from home by quakes. Fragments of memory returning as cave lotus leaves their system.
- 9. Rising waters:** Only affects canyon floor. Quake creates dam. 1 watch to bypass or brave 1d4+1 cave fish (page 10).

Collapse

1. Canyon vibrates like a great bell. Animals must **save vs paralysis** or flee for 2 turns. +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Waters rise to fill canyon floor in a foaming madness (+30' per turn). PCs climbing out: lowest CON must pass a WIS check or exhaustion sets in, requiring help to climb further. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. Like a drain emptying, waters rush out. Walls scoured. PCs in water: STR check or swept away. Canyon then groans as it slowly shuts.



The Buried City

Misty streets (lightless). **Cyclopean houses** (ghostly). **Frozen shadows** (like angels). **Great plaza** (stalls, statues).

- ▶ **Explore plaza:** A large pearly sphere stands on a stone cart surrounded by happy-looking Glab-Glab statues. If touched, the sphere emits a busy tone. If damaged, it explodes into opalescent shards dealing 2d6 damage in a 120' radius and the statues all collapse into dust. The frozen shadows begin to move again and a feeling settles over the city that the road to the Glab-Glab heaven has been forever closed. 1d6 turns to collect shards (1d10 x 100gp).
- ▶ **The frozen shadows:** 12 shadow angels (as *shadows*), caught between future and past. If released (above), they are drawn to life but too cowardly to enter lit areas.

Initial Exploration

Immaculate Towers

Layercake apartments (ornate, carved into bedrock). **Pedestrian bridge** (over-engineered).

- ▶ **Visit Bridge of Aeons:** 12 Glab-Glab skeletons hang from the bridge, clutching tablets exalting the God Fish, denying the false pearl. One has a gold key (see Small Treasures, page 7).
- ▶ **Explore apartments:** 1d4 turns per block. Find (roll d6): (1) 2d10 petrified Glab-Glab, (2) gilded plastics (heavy, 200gp), (3) 2d20gp in ivory coins, (4) a small treasure (page 7), (5) 1d6 frozen shadows, (6) ornate weapon or armour (100gp).

Further Exploration

Museum of Memories

Translucent building shell (stone and crystal, spectral figure within). **Iron door** (glittering, “Under Construction” sign). **Gardens** (stationary scenes, actually dioramas).

- ▶ **Enter shell:** A friendly AI ghost (as *spectre*) trapped in the shell approaches the PCs. Loves slowly and precisely sharing knowledge (1d6 turns per academic answer). Protects planetarium and its cosmic projector (9,000gp). PCs spending 1 watch permanently gain 1 INT as their minds expand.
- ▶ **Garden diorama:** Life-like automata displaying story of the Glab-Glab (1,000gp).
- ▶ **Iron door:** Sealed. Incomplete magi-optimist exhibit presenting the pearl gate’s promises. Unstable ceiling (**save vs paralysis** or 1d6 damage). In a dark corner a crate full of dusty literature warning of gate magic risks.

Path to
**The Ziggurat
of the Stairs**
(page 34)

Great ramps, corroded rails, collapsed wagons.

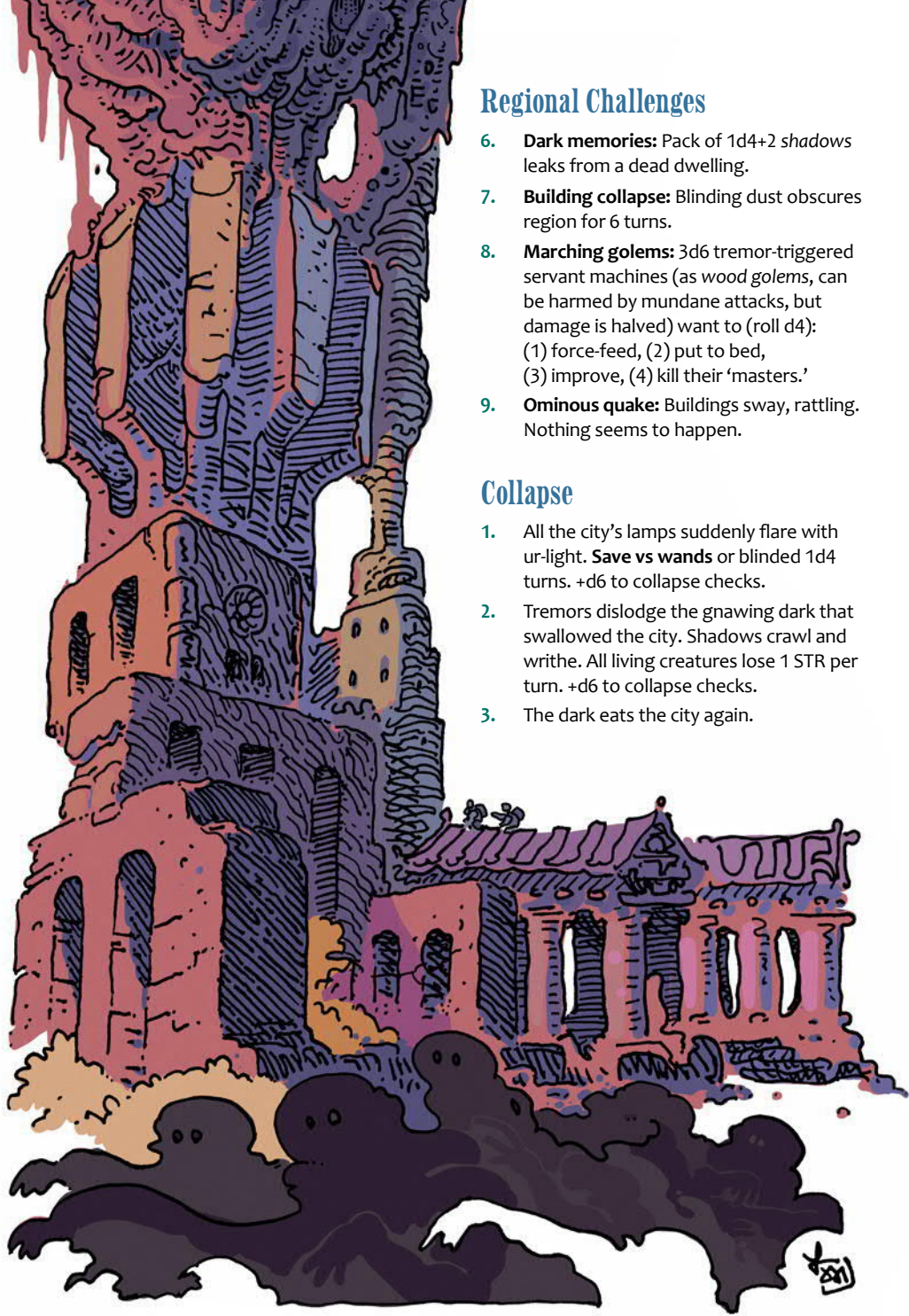
Path to
**The Magnificent
Canyon**
(page 36)

Footpaths, rapids, silken bridges, ladders.

The Buried City

Path to
The Fractured Arena
(page 40)

Flooded stairs, slabs, soda straw calthemites.



Regional Challenges

6. **Dark memories:** Pack of 1d4+2 *shadows* leaks from a dead dwelling.
7. **Building collapse:** Blinding dust obscures region for 6 turns.
8. **Marching golems:** 3d6 tremor-triggered servant machines (as wood golems, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved) want to (roll d4): (1) force-feed, (2) put to bed, (3) improve, (4) kill their 'masters.'
9. **Ominous quake:** Buildings sway, rattling. Nothing seems to happen.

Collapse

1. All the city's lamps suddenly flare with ur-light. **Save vs wands** or blinded 1d4 turns. +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Tremors dislodge the gnawing dark that swallowed the city. Shadows crawl and writhe. All living creatures lose 1 STR per turn. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. The dark eats the city again.

The Fractured Arena

U-shaped amphitheatre seating (cut rock). **Baroque viewing boxes** (water-stained). **Marble stage** (gilded bas-reliefs). **Obsidian altar** (on the stage, pre-human statues, faded theatre sets). **Automated stalls** (stone vending machines).

- ▶ **Examine altar:** Ingrained dread (touch: **save vs death** or beset by spirits of sacrificed innocents, fleeing 2 turns). On the altar a gold-plated statue (1,000gp) impaled with bronze dagger.
- ▶ **Automated stalls:** Promise food, drink, and charms. Cracked, metal glitters within.
- ▶ **Break stall open:** Takes 1d4 turns. 1d100gp, 50% chance of a small treasure (page 7), 2d6 Glab-Glab skeletons following outdated instructions.

Initial Exploration

Pilgrimage Chapels

Grand portal (marble, oversized). **Chapels** (carved into bedrock). **High reliefs** (lifelike renderings of fish worship). **Emperor's altar** (gilded carvings, giant glowing statue).

- ▶ **Portal marbles:** Frieze of painted marble Glab-Glabs (10,000gp intact).
- ▶ **Emperor's altar:** Gilded carvings (200gp) and three painted panels (900gp). Glass vitrine: seated glowing 18' display golem of the eternal emperor (as *frost giant*) holding a great gilded mace (200gp) inside. A large lever activates the golem, which proceeds to declare how it saved humanity from itself. If the vitrine is damaged, it shimmers into mist and the golem activates in relic protection mode. Beneath the golem: secret passage to imperial dressing room in Hypogeum.



Path to
The Great Lake
(page 42)

Timeworn platforms
and pillars lead to the
left shore.

Further Exploration

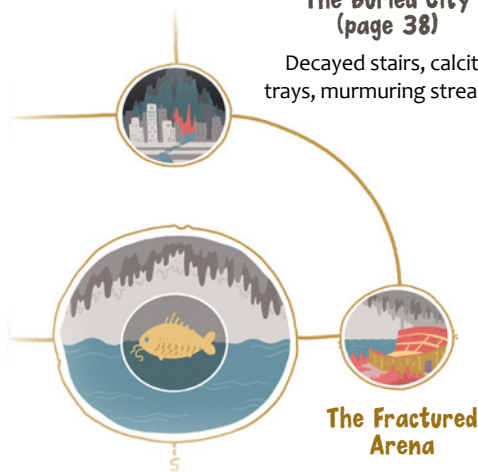
Hypogeum

Dank passages (humid). **Hexagonal court** (polychrome mosaics). **Damaged gladiatorial cells** (opulent, stygian, fire damage, half-flooded). **Grand sewer** (stagnant pools, debris).

- ▶ **Search cells:** 4 cell blocks off hexagonal court. 1 turn per cell block. Roll d6: (1) gold key (see Small Treasures, page 7), (2-3) fine mundane weapon, (4-5) small treasure (page 7), (6) lurking waterwight (page 11).
- ▶ **Search court:** Hidden door to the imperial dressing room.
- ▶ **Imperial dressing room:** Glowing mannikin wearing *imperial gladiatorial costume*. Recliner with corpse of last emperor of a forgotten empire (choked on a chicken bone). The corpse is perfectly preserved by the life-extending potions they imbibed daily. Large mural of the emperor hides a passage to the emperor's altar in the Pilgrimage Chapels.
- ▶ **Grand sewer:** 1d6 random cave fish (page 10) drawn by disturbed water. Blocked outlet conceals one-way path of waterfalls, ladders, and chasms to the Needle Gnome Outpost (page 24).

Path to The Buried City (page 38)

Decayed stairs, calcite trays, murmuring streams.



Regional Challenges

6. **Pack attack:** 4d10 *skeletons* of diverse species crawl out of the shadows, drawn by the living.
7. **Flood:** Wait on masonry outcrop (1 watch) or risk crossing violent rapids (DEX check or suffer 1d8 damage).
8. **Dangerous illusions:** Holographic re-enactment of Glab-Glab rites. Illusions obscure dangerously crumbled infrastructure (1 watch to traverse or all PCs suffer 1d10-2 damage).
9. **Deadly spectators:** 1d6 waterwights (page 11) sit, watching an empty stage, dispersing after 1 watch.

Collapse

1. Statues topple. Marble dust. Stone chips fly. Random PC must **save vs breath** or be blinded in one eye. +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Arena settles down into itself. Hypogeum crushed. Stalls break open, scores (2d6 x 20) of Glab-Glab skeletons pour out. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. Obsidian altar erupts in light. Glab-Glab dance macabre swallows the region.

Imperial Gladiatorial Costume

Glowing red-and-gold suit of *chainmail* +1. As bright as a dozen candles. No dirt, grease, or paint can ever stick to it or obscure its glow. Halves mundane weapon damage. Worth 650gp as a display piece.

The Great Lake

Vast cavern (ten miles around, twinkling wisps). **Rocky beaches** (crystal pebbles, broken stalactites, ancient debris). **Dark waters** (lapping waves).

- ▶ **Gaze across waters:** An island (actually the **Pharaoh Fish**, page 44) is faintly visible in the wisp-light.
- ▶ **Comb the beaches:** Beached hulks, washed up plastics, corroded cargo. Each turn spent combing also roll 1d6: (1) nest of 1d6 cave crabs (as *giant crabs*) with 100gp in ivory coins, (2–3) 1d12 x 10gp in odd coins, (4) ancient tablets of a sailing voyage to the heart of the world (200gp), (5) ivory slat-scroll of *wall of ice*, (6) plate inscribed with web.
- ▶ **Assemble raft:** 1 watch. Also scrounge up oars, harpoons, a ‘magically’ light 42-gallon float, and a striped floating cincture.

Initial Exploration

Serviceable Boat

Uncorroded hull (part-covered by dune).
Light metal (magnificent).

- ▶ **Float the boat:** 1 watch to dig out and drag to water. Curled 15’ water serpent skeleton in the hull. Fish hooks, poles, oars. Exhausted golem engine.
- ▶ **Fix golem engine:** Needs radiation battery. Reach island in 3 turns.

Further Exploration

Fishing Lodge

Giant stalagmite (200’ high, 50’ around).
Carvings on surface (bas-relief of fish & fishers). **Open door** (carved into the massive formation).

- ▶ **Poke inside:** Old fishing gear. Recent camp with golem stove, spelunking gear, rations (a week or two old), and notebook. Massive safe.
- ▶ **The notebook:** Self-aggrandizing and maudlin diary of one Vic Torbin. Apparently keen to steal the heart of the mountain and prove themselves a great trickster hero.
- ▶ **Stone safe:** Locked. Signs of failed entry attempt. cursory examination reveals needle trap (1 damage, faded poison). Inside is a lot of fishy folk love poetry and 300gp in acrylic coins. The safe has a false bottom.
- ▶ **False bottom:** Map to the “Daylight River.” A hidden artificial runnel of rapids, chasms, chutes, and deep pools that leads to the **Hypostyle Halls** (page 16). This one-way path takes 2 watches.

Path by shore to
The Temple of Protein
(page 26)

Ramps, pipes, dead conveyor belts, hooks.

Path by water to
The Pharaoh Fish
(page 44)

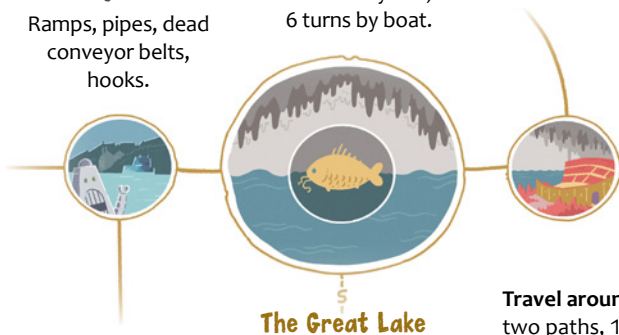
1 watch by raft,
6 turns by boat.

Path by shore to
The Fractured Arena
(page 40)

Cyclopean stairs, booths,
carved pillars.

Travel around shores:

two paths, 1 watch apart (only 1 visible at a time).



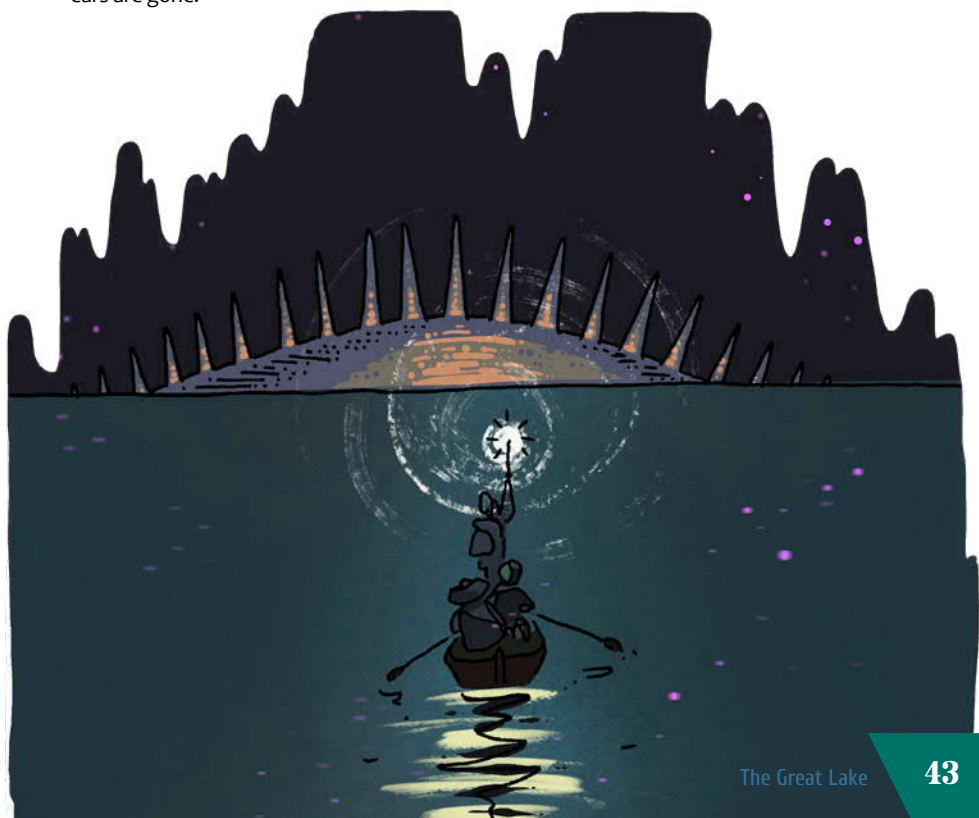
The Great Lake

Regional Challenges

6. **Small tsunami:** Water recedes from shore for 1d4 rounds, exposing 1d6 cave fish (page 10) and a small treasure (page 7). Then it smashes back in a powerful wave (2d8 damage, **save vs breath** for half).
7. **Mismatched waterweight pack:** 2d4 crippled waterweights (page 11) walking round the lake. Slow-moving: 60' (20').
8. **Earthquake liquefaction:** Shaking turns pebble beach to consistency of quicksand. Encumbered characters must **save vs paralysis** or start being sucked under. (Drown in 2d6 rounds.)
9. **Fisher golem:** A metal monster (as *bronze golem*, can be harmed by mundane attacks, but damage is halved), all screws, nets, and filleting knives, clatters down from the Temple of Protein (50%) or up from the waters (50%) seeking meat. Its kind old eyes confuse humans for fish. Its ears are gone.

Collapse

1. Waters rise in lapping, hungry waves. Beach disappears. Frenzied fish swirl in knee-deep water. -30' to base movement rates. +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Long-abandoned five-storey habitation stalactites fall into the lake. Great waves batter the shore. Creatures in water **save vs death** or drown. 1d6 small treasures (page 7) glitter in nearest ruined stalactite. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. With a heaving burp the waters seal passage to all air-breathers.



The Pharaoh Fish

Gleaming rocky "isle" (God Carp's back, centre of lake, 300' long and 30' tall). **Bronze surface** (harder than rock). **Row of spires** (centre of isle, sharp, a tattered sail).

- ▶ **Examine spires:** Thrum with divine energy. Touch: Cast cleric spells as 1 level higher for 1 day. Damage: Earthquake strikes island (fish moves), roll challenge.
- ▶ **Stuck sail:** Synthetic silk (75gp), name: Torbin's Dream.

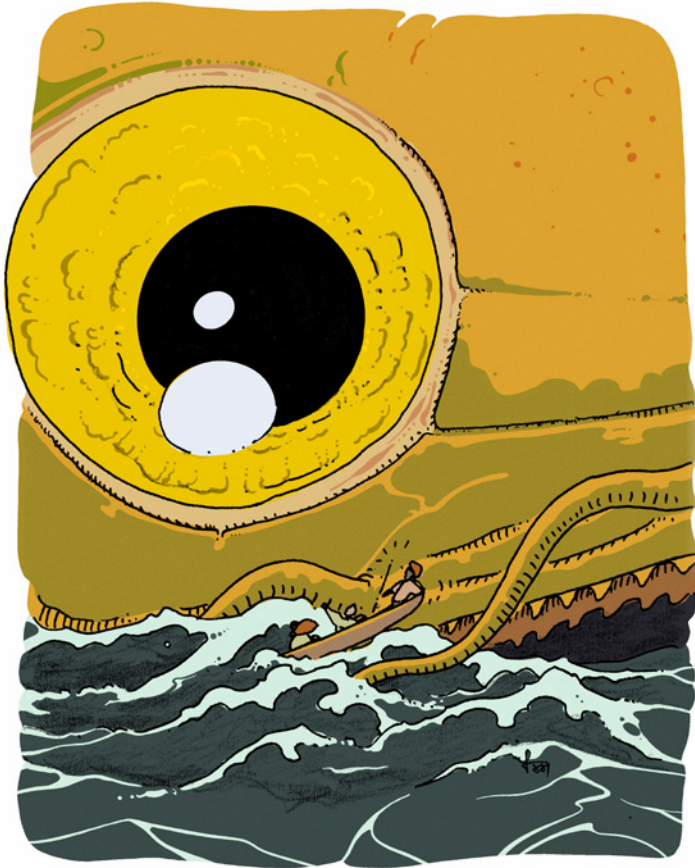
Initial Exploration

It takes only 1 watch to fully explore this region.

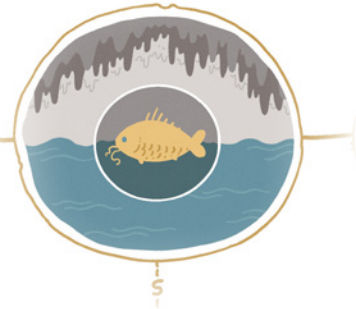
Immense Windows

Two half-submerged disks (God Carp's eyes, 50' across, opposite sides of island).

- ▶ **Touch disk:** Hard as adamant. Island quivers and a great eye refocuses from some inner turmoil. The God Fish's telepathic voice rakes across the PCs' mind, "What's this, then?" See Dealing With the Fish. **Save vs paralysis** or stunned 1 round.



The Pharaoh Fish



Path by water to
The Great Lake shores
(page 42)

1 watch by raft, 6 turns by boat. Roll 1d12 to determine where the party lands (12 marks the shoreline they had first arrived at).

Turbulent Waters

Foaming waves (six 300' barbels stir the water). **Gargantuan mouth** (100' across, barely visible, sucking in fish, plankton, and wisps). **Buoy** (bobbing).

- ▶ **Get the buoy:** Actually a lodged surfboard, tied tightly to a barbel at the mouth's corner.
- ▶ **Sensitive barbels:** alert the God Carp if PCs walk on them or enter the water nearby. The Fish addresses the PCs telepathically. See Dealing With the Fish.

Regional Challenges

6. **Shifting ground:** The island shifts 5'. Water swamps boats on short lines. DEX check or tumble 20' on the rocky slopes (1d4 damage).
7. **Mind-scream:** A rippling wave of intense frustration washes over the entire island (party affected by *confusion*).
8. **Wisp vortex:** A luminous galaxy of wisps attracted by the God Carp's frustration lights up the island. After 1 turn, it attracts 1d10+2 giant bats.
9. **Hungry parasites:** A wave of 3d6 giant fish lice (as giant crabs). Iridescent carapaces worth 100gp each.

Collapse

1. The God Carp sinks. A telepathic bellow wishes, "good speed, little janitors!" Wisps zip around with wild abandon. Lightning flashes, discharging across the cavern. +d6 to collapse checks.
2. Lightning begins to strike the waters where the fish sank. Every 2 turns, a random PC must **save vs breath** or be struck by a bolt of inter-dimensional lightning for 5d6 damage. +d6 to collapse checks.
3. The lightning creates a bridge of energy and pulls the ceiling of the cavern down into the deep waters. It is shut. The fish has left the mortal plane.

Dealing with the Fish

The fish does not care about why it exists or where. It does not care about time's passage or the little creatures that sometimes visit. But now it needs some assistance, so when it notices the PCs, it decides they are supplicants come to help.

How the Fish Talks

Aloof, wise, self-centred, ready to assume, quick to forget. It 'speaks' telepathically, its voice so loud it is painful (1hp damage per watch).

- ▶ **If PCs are human or demihuman:** "Monkeys! Was frogs last time."
- ▶ **If PCs have spears or swords:** "Ah, cleaners. Toothpicks, good. Good."

What the Fish Wants

It feels something stuck in the back of its mouth (actually in the gills). This annoyance is making it twitchy (hence the earthquakes). It wants the party to dislodge the offending particle—like worshipful plovers in a crocodile's maw.

"Do not worry. I will not eat you. I could. But I will not. Go in! Clean!"

The mouth then opens wide, rising above the waters, sucking in nearby vessels (STR check to paddle aside desperately).

Fighting the Fish

The God Carp is nearly a mile long and a deity. If the PCs attack, it can swallow them, crush them with its tentacles, drown them with its bulk, or even use its great will to make their brains run out of their ears. Every round, one random PC must **save vs death** or perish. However, it only pursues one creature at a time and there is a 25% chance after every round it gives up on chasing its target. Too much hassle.

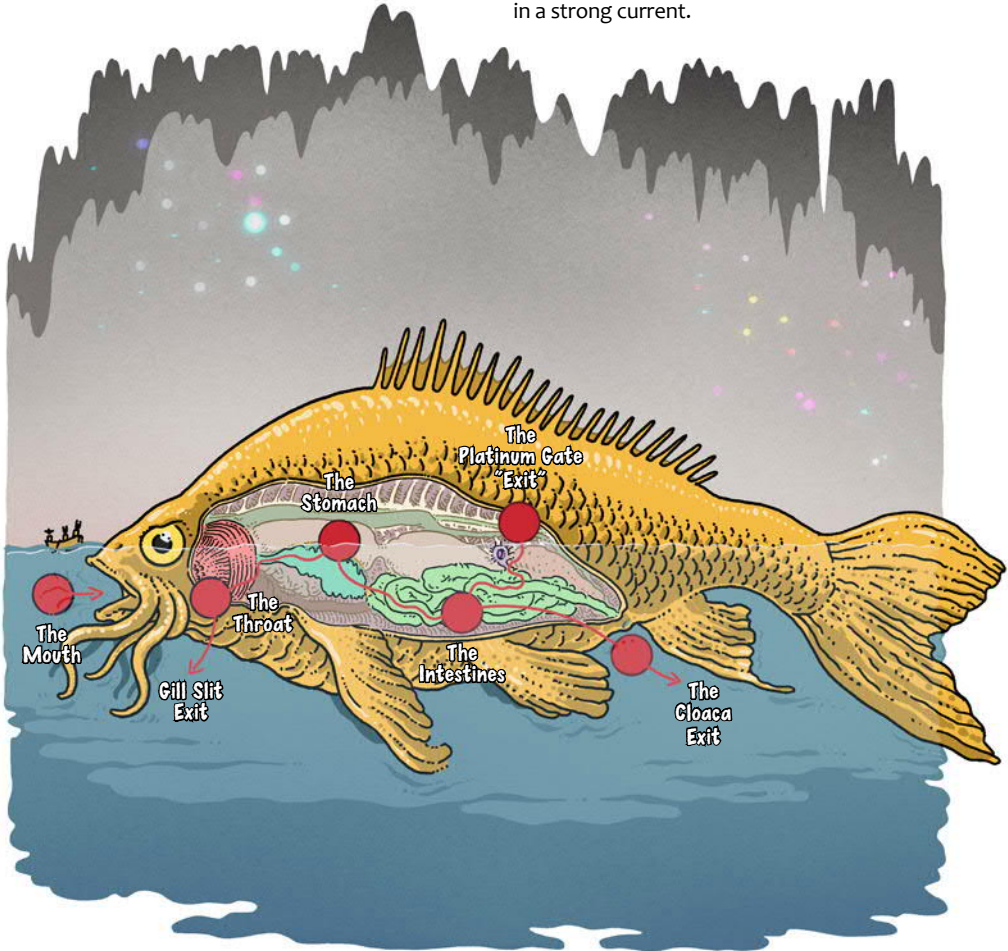
Inside the Pharaoh Fish

The Mouth

Sucking maw (100' wide, 2' deep water). **Six barbels** (waving welcomingly). **Oral cavity** (echoing, bony lucent plates). **Thorn-studded tongue** (placid). **Throat** (dark).

- ▶ **Boating in the mouth:** STR check to row out against the sloshing waters or make no progress on a given turn.
- ▶ **Smoke or fire:** Irritates the fish. Twitch. DEX check or fall (PCs in a boat fall into the water).

- ▶ **PCs in the water:** Smell of flesh attracts symbiotic arachnids (as *rhagodessa*) from the recesses after 3 rounds. 1d3-1 arrive per round (15 total). Lurk out of melee reach until at least 8 are ready to assault the party. The arachnids follow PCs into the throat.
- ▶ **Examine walls or tongue:** Ageless, studded with old scars. 1 turn searching reveals an old, ornate weapon (100gp) stuck in the tissue. Not the irritation.
- ▶ **From the throat:** A deep smell, like a swamp in full bloom. Water rushes down in a strong current.



The Throat

Sucking gullet (30' wide, 5' deep current, water rushing into gills). **Gill rakers** (tooth-like spines to prevent prey's escape). **Gill arches** (ten 100'-long boomerang-shaped structures, feathery filaments). **Gill slits** (opening and closing, 10' wide, 80' tall).

- ▶ **Fight the current:** STR check or anchor to avoid being swept into the Stomach. Need ropes to pull boat back into Mouth.
- ▶ **Exit through gill slits:** Exit the God Carp. DEX check to get a boat through without it being damaged by the massive bone plate of the operculum.
- ▶ **Examine rakers:** A fresh scar where an anchor was dislodged.
- ▶ **Examine gill arches:** Two arches stand uncomfortably apart, as though spread by an invisible screw jack 20' above the gullet floor. Attached to gills: 5 *giant leeches* feeding comfortably. The fish talks, "Right there. I can feel the foul thing."
- ▶ **Remove the leeches:** Something is still irritating the Fish.
- ▶ **Investigate the invisible screw jack:** A foul smell of rotting flesh. An invisible thing of leather and sticks is lodged in the gill filaments. Careful removal takes 1 turn.
- ▶ **Remove the thing:** Triggers a collapse check as the God Carp jerks in pain. The God Carp's telepathic voice then booms, "Ah. That was it! Good! Come out now, for your rewards—and quickly." The water level inside the God Carp's mouth and throat begins quickly rising (1' per round) as it prepares to swim back to the dreaming heart of the world.
- ▶ **Examine the thing:** It's Vic Torbin, halving adventurer's decomposed corpse dressed in the *leathern Suit of the Lungfish* and wearing the *Disvisual Ring*. Removing the ring ends the invisibility effect. Vic Torbin probably wanted to prove they were a great burglar like an illustrious relative.

The Disvisual Ring

Two interlocked sliding bands of titanium engraved with strange numbers, inlaid with red gold. It can be set to three different positions.

- ▶ Rotated and locked in one position, it casts *invisibility* on the wearer at a cost of 1hp damage per watch.
- ▶ In the second position, it conjures light on the wearer, as *continual light*, also causing 1hp damage per watch.
- ▶ In the third position, it hums gently, but doesn't seem to do anything. Dogs and other creatures with very good hearing find the hum annoying.

Leathern Suit of the Lungfish

Glabrous leathery suit, similar to a janitor's one piece, with a disconcerting face mask. Provides protection as *leather armour* +2. The lungfish leather draws oxygen from water, letting its wearer breathe water for up to 1 hour before they have to surface for air.

The Stomach

Ribbed vault (300' long, 60' wide, 30' tall, beating flesh walls). **Acidic pool** (30' wide, 10' deep down the middle of the vault).

Glittering treasure beaches (ceramic and gemstone, embedded in scabbed walls).

- ▶ **In the pool:** Three glistening cnidarian symbiotes (as *ochre jelly*) help the God Carp's digestion.
- ▶ **The beaches:** A fossilized history of sacrifices to the God Fish stuck in the scabrous stomach lining. Every turn spent searching roll d6: (1) 1d4 iridescent parasitic arachnids (as *rhagodessa* with 100 gp shell), (2–3) ceramic idol worth 1d6 x 20gp, (4–5) precious metal sacrifice worth 1d8 x 50gp, (6) alien skull with 1d4 gems in its eye sockets (1d6 x 50gp each).

The Intestines

Convoluted tunnels (1,200' long, 20' across). **Flowing slurry** (putrid, 2' deep). **Pulsating walls** (contract and relax).

- ▶ **Navigating the tunnels:** Whether walking or using a boat, ½ movement speed in the thick, bacteria-rich slurry.

The Platinum Gate

3.14' wide orifice (embedded in appendix, a portal from beyond time and space). **Platinum controls** (levers, knobs, antennae).

- ▶ **Activating a magic item:** (Even a scroll will do.) Jump starts the gate's alien magic. With a rattling cough, a shimmering gateway opens. It terminates (roll d4):
(1) about 100' below the lake's surface,
(2) about 30' above the God Carp's back,
(3) 3' above the lake, about 300' from

the shore, (4) on the opposite shore from where the PCs entered the Great Lake region.

- ▶ **Using the controls:** INT check to figure out how to set the terminus using the gate's janky control panel.
- ▶ **Stealing the controls:** The PCs can instead steal the platinum controls (400pp), breaking the gate.

The Cloaca

10' high orifice (sphincter). **Tightly sealed** (shuddering).

- ▶ **Opening the cloaca:** Requires 1 turn and a successful open doors check. A narrative veil descends to obscure the details of the PCs' strenuous efforts. They emerge beneath the God Carp, halfway down the length of its body, about 50' below the lake's surface.

The Fish's Blessing

After removing Vic's corpse and returning to face the God Fish, it accepts their work and offers each a blessing chosen from the following. Though it offers the PCs a choice, there is a 20% chance the careless fish accidentally grants a random blessing (roll d6):

1. "I shall make you as the glorious goldfish guardians of old! Strong and beautiful!" A random ability score is permanently +2 and the character grows many ornamental scales.
2. "I will whisper a truth to you that will make you a little better than you were." A random ability score is permanently +1.
3. "I will protect you from all flukes, worms, lice and other diseases that attack my kin!" The PC becomes immune to all waterborne diseases and afflictions.
4. "I will teach you to swim like my fishy children." The PC swims at their full movement rate.
5. "I will show you how the penguin and sealie folk hold their breath." The PC can hold their breath for a full turn.
6. "I will describe to you how to create enough water each day to maintain a pool of holy goldfish even in the driest desert." The PC can cast *create water* once per day as a 9th level caster.

Blessing granted, the God Carp says, "That's taken care of. I'm off to the Ocean at the World's Heart. You'd best leave swiftly or the earth will eat you."

The Divine Fish submerges in a maelstrom of waves and foam and the collapse begins (see Collapse table).

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Holy Mountain Shaker

Thunder and quake have come to the old town. Towers crumble, homes tumble, the quick become the dead. What omen could be more obvious? The Pharaoh Fish under the mountain is displeased. This God must be propitiated. Brave heroes must venture to buy the city's salvation. At the very least, the Town Council needs to appear in control and send some 'expert adventurers' into the depths.

*A fantasy pointcrawl adventure
for characters of 5th to 6th level.*

Requires Old-School Essentials
Classic Fantasy or Advanced Fantasy.



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