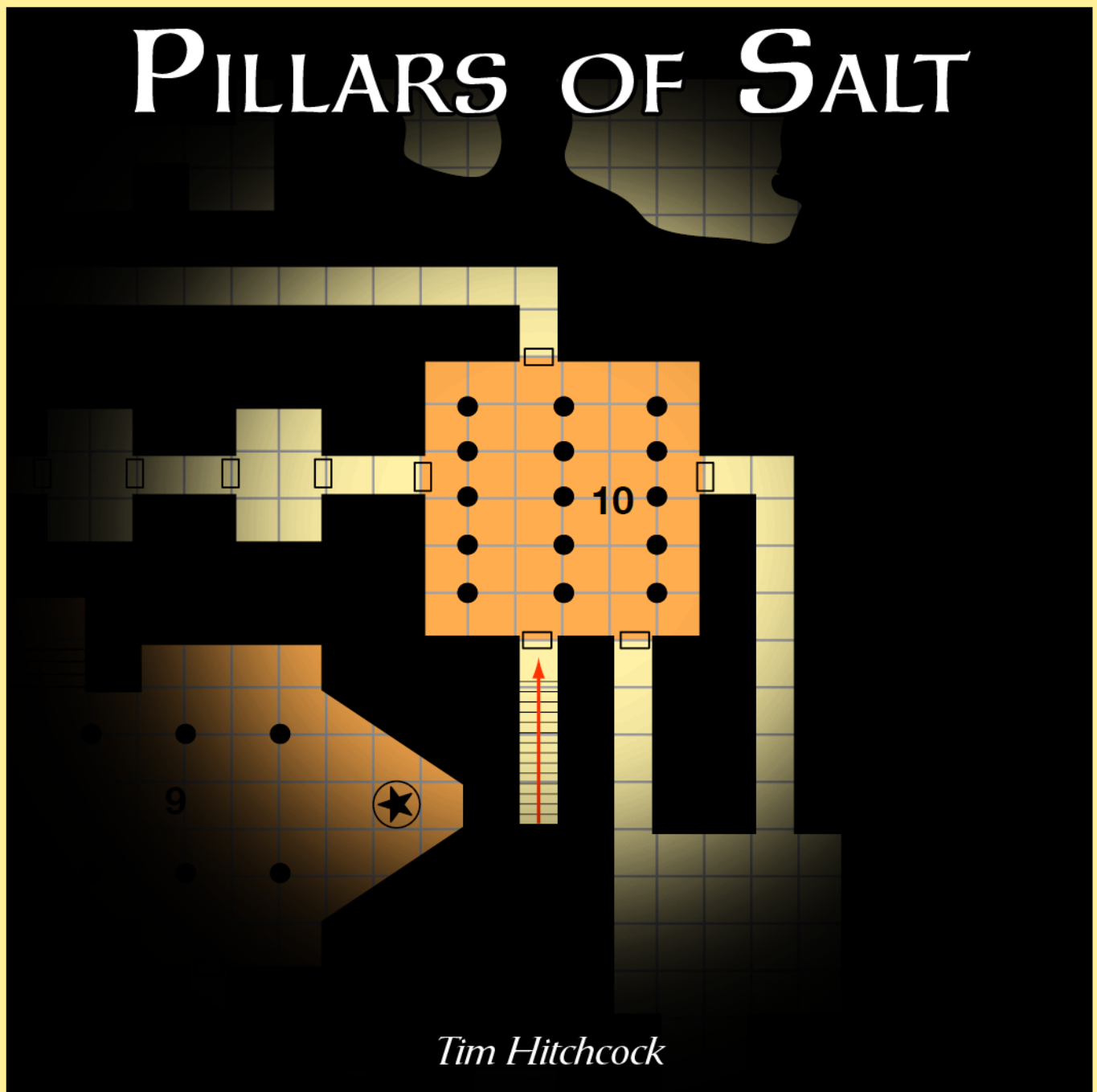


# THE DUNGEON UNDER THE MOUNTAIN

## ROOMS & ENCOUNTERS

Official Game Accessory

### PILLARS OF SALT



*Tim Hitchcock*



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## What is this Product

This product contains one room or one dungeon -based encounter. All the rooms featured here are taken from one of *The Dungeon Under the Mountain* products, available at [www.0onegames.com](http://www.0onegames.com), although these products are not necessary, since the encounter can be adapted without effort to any existing dungeon.

## How to Use this Product

This product takes advantage from the PDF technology, joining old-fashioned style with the most advanced electronic features. In order to use this product you must use Adobe Acrobat 6 or later.

This product has been designed to help busy referees in preparing dungeon adventures and encounters. Instead of wasting time scaling the encounters and adapting them to your party, here you will find a pre-scaled encounter suitable in three different versions (for low, mid and high level of play). At the beginning of the encounter text, you will find a big button like this.



By clicking on this button you can choose which level want to play (low, medium, high). When you have made your choice all the relevant portions of the text will change accordingly.

Monsters will scale, DCs will change, traps and behaviors of the villains will change, according with the level of play you choose.

Nevertheless, this is not all.

Beside each paragraph you will find the same button found before, but much smaller. This button allows you to change only the appropriate paragraph. Therefore, if you need stronger monsters in your low-level encounter, you can adjust them and use mid-level monsters instead of low-level ones. Likewise, if you want traps tougher, just click on the paragraph button and change the level of the traps paragraph. Blank spaces, due to different text lengths, will be filled with placeholder artwork, so you will have a good-looking page.

Finally, a paragraph called “Personal Notes” is left blank. This paragraph features a text field you can fill with your notes about the encounter, simply click and write.

The document saves automatically the notes when you close it. In order to recall the notes present on a document you must choose “Load Notes” from the paragraph button. Note that if you load the previous notes they will override the notes you are writing

The buttons will not be printed.

## The Maps

Those familiar with *The Dungeon Under the Mountain* products will found the maps easy to use. The product comes with two maps of the room. A smaller version of the map is intended for the referee; the second, larger one, may come split in more than one sheet and it is intended for miniature play.

The smaller map features the “Rule the Dungeon” button. Clicking this button, you can customize the map by opening or closing the doors, removing the furniture or removing the fill in the walls and more, depending on the room’s layout. All the choices made on the smaller map are reflected on the larger one.

## The Background

*The Dungeon Under the Mountain* is a massive dungeon complex extending endlessly below the ground. In a remote past, ancient evil beings dwelled in the area. Now, the remaining of these mysterious evil beings have seized the dungeons and filled it with deadly traps and monsters. Also, many known villains have established their strongholds in the depths of *The Dungeon Under the Mountain*. Nobody knows why this dungeon is filled by danger, but nobody cares, since this dungeon is the most prized adventure ground of the world. However be warned, adventurers, your life will be not easy here and dozens of self-calling heroes never returned from the *Dungeon Under the Mountain*!

## “You Have Been Warned”



## PILLARS OF SALT

THE DUNGEON  
UNDER  
THE MOUNTAIN

PILLARS OF SALT  
(LEVEL 1/ ROOM 10)

Background  
and Lead-ins

In order to enter this room, players must travel one of the five corridors leading in (one is actually a stair leading to the Great City). The stonework in the corridors is exquisitely carved from white limestone, with alabaster figurines of cherubic gargoyles framing large frescoed panels. The colors have faded and they are chipping badly, however a careful interpretation of the pictures tells the following tale:

*“Long ago there was a knight who was the high servant to the king. The knight had a younger sister, a sweet child whom he loved dearly. One day, she came before him in the courts and her beauty caught the attention of the king. Immediately, he demanded to wed her as one of his many brides. He sent the knight to fetch his sister and return before the following day. The knight went to his sister, but the young girl was stricken with grief for she didn’t love the old and lecherous monarch.*

*She told her brother she’d rather die, before marry the king. The knight pleaded with his sister, but she refused and stole his blade from his girdle and fell upon it, dying at her brother’s hand. Fearful of the king’s wraith and distraught over his sister’s death the knight fled, carrying his sister’s body deep into the woods where an old wise witch lived. There the witch made a foul pact with the knight to hide his deeds from the king. The girl’s body was burnt and the witch transformed*

*the knight’s tears to salt. When later the king confronted the knight about his missing sister, he remained stone-faced and unreadable. Still, the greater loss fell upon the knight for he was unable to mourn the passing of his sister and was forced to live out his life, unable to share his loss and love.”*

The corridors leading to this room are tunnels encrusted with crystalline salt shards. The tunnels are a little less than five feet in diameter making it a cramped and narrow crawl. The salt is enchanted to desiccate anything it contacts (see trap section). At the end of the tunnels, light reflects on the salt encrusted walls. Large deposits of salt have crystallized over the doorways completely sealing them but allowing some light to filter out. Damaging the crystalline deposits alerts the mephit residing in the room

Room Environment

**Lighting:** low-light. Candles reflecting off salt crystal.

**Terrain:** normal

Room Description  
for the Players

*As emerge through the salt covered door, your eyes are assaulted by a disorienting contrast of glare and shadow. Like the cramped tunnels leading here, the room inside is limned with salt deposits that cover the walls, floor, and ceiling. Scattered throughout the small chamber, a half dozen or so massive crystalline formations jut in threatening angles like frozen thorn bushes after a midwinter’s frost. Strangely, the room is lit by a score of poorly made tallow candles placed haphazardly atop various salt deposits. The room feels hot and dry and moisture seems to be siphoning out of your flesh. As your eyes adjust to the bouncing light, they rest on several dark shadows inside*

*some of the large crystals. As you peer closer, you see within them dried husks of humanoids so badly desiccated that you are unable to determine their original race. Their skins are pulled so tightly that they appear skeletal, though their postures and expressions are eerily preserved in an articulation of unimaginable pain.*

Room Description  
for the Referee

The room has seven salt entombed corpses, crusts ranging from between three-inches-thick to a pair that are almost foot thick. The thickest connect floor to ceiling and are the diameter of an oak, while the thinner ones almost look like humanoid statues (see treasure section for full descriptions). A search reveals another smaller crystal nearby that has been hollowed-out and filled with a handful of tear shaped salt crystals.

Combat Tactics

[high]

If PCs break the crystalline seal it draws the mephit’s immediate attention. First, he casts *invisibility* on himself, followed by *mage armor*, and *unholy aura*. Then he waits stealthily for the opportune moment to strike interlopers. He initiates combat with sneak attack against the closest opponent, then uses his breath weapon to retreat and use his spell-like power to draw moisture from the air. Next, he uses *darkness* to obscure his location and attempts to summon another salt mephit to aid him. Afterwards, he attempt further sneak attacks, augmenting his melee attacks with *smite good*, *contagion*, *chill touch*, and *poison*, and making additional breath attacks where possible. If reduced to 30 hit points or less, he casts *blur* then retreats and uses his *unholy blight* ability then alternates between his ranged spells, *horrid wilting*, and his breath weapon.



## Roleplaying Tactics

The PCs may try to reason with the mephit, which is not an impossible task. He is not pleased with the terms of his servitude and although he is powerful, he isn't brave enough to have tested the terms and conditions of his imprisonment/guardianship. PCs that immediately acknowledge his plight and show him some empathy can attempt to use Bluff to convince him that they have come to aid in his release. A successful opposed Bluff check causes him to cease his attacks and enter into wary conversation with an initial attitude of indifferent. From that point on, PCs can attempt to manipulate his attitude with Diplomacy checks.

If the mephit can be made helpful, he reveals that he once served a powerful witch who enslaved him as the guardian of the knight's tears. He believes he was once a knight as well, but the witch cursed him and altered his form when she made him guardian. He also believes that if the tears are removed from the chamber, he will turn into a pillar of salt. None of these statements are true, the mephit is the victim of a well-worded *modify memory* spell. Of course, dispelling the enchantment cures the mephit, though he may remain hostile towards PCs depending on previous actions and circumstances.

## Relevant Skill Checks

[high]

**Search DC 28:** Locates the doors behind the salt cover

**Search DC 25:** Locates the Crystal Container

## Traps/ Mechanical Devices/ Doors/ and Objects Statblocks

[high]

**Salt Encrusted Door,** thickness 2 in, hardness 8, HP 30

**Desiccating Salt (environmental hazard):** Any living creature entering the salt encrusted passage or room is subject to the desiccating effect of the crystalline deposits. Each minute the individual remains exposed to the salt crystals, he must make a Fortitude save (DC20) or lose 2d8 temporary points of Constitution damage as the crystals pull water from his body. Creatures with the earth subtype are immune to this effect while creatures of the water subtype receive a -4 penalty to saves against it. Water creatures that save successfully still take half damage.

**Salt-Sealed Doorway,** thickness 4 in, hardness 8, HP 60, break DC 40.

**Hollow Salt Crystal Container,** thickness 1 1/2 in, hardness 8, HP 22

## Treasures and XP

If the PCs resolve this encounter by roleplaying, award the same XP as they defeated the mephit in combat.

[high]

### Salt Crystallized Body 1:

A male wearing loose fitting cotton robes. He clutches a *rod of frost*. On his person is are several cracked and dried out leather pouches. Most hold only dust, but one contains three small garnets worth 150 gp each. Tucked into the robes is a bone scrollcase containing a *scroll of cone of cold*, *detect scrying*, and *stinking cloud* (CL 13)

**Salt Crystallized Body 2:** A female wearing a worn suit of ring-mail. The leather bodice of the armor is dried so completely that as soon as the salt crust is removed, the armor starts falling apart.

A +1 *longsword* is crusted into the floor at its feet.

**Salt Crystallized Body 3:** A female wearing a suit of leather armor that is remarkably still supple (*greater slick leather* +3). On her person is a crumbling backpack with a set of masterwork thieves' tools, three empty glass vials, a tinderbox, 60 platinum coins, and several other unidentifiable items dried to dust. On one of her fingers is a *ring of free action*.

**Salt Crystallized Body 4:** A male body wearing furs and hides that crumble to dust as soon as they are exposed to air. He is still clutching a +1 *battleaxe* engraved with primitive runes. Around his neck is a +2 *amulet of natural armor*.

**Salt Crystallized Body 5:** A female body wearing a suit of elven chainmail and clutching a +3 *dagger* and a *rapier of puncturing*. Slung across her back is a crumbling wooden lute, a *horn of fog* and a pack filled with dust.

**Salt Crystallized Body 6:** A male knight in suit of +3 *full platemail*



and holding a *lion's shield* and a *sun blade*. He wears a pale blue tabard resembling the knight in the tapestry.

**Salt Crystallized Body 7:** A ghoulishly pale and desiccated woman. She wears a gorgeous gown and veil hand-stitched from white lace now yellowed with age. She crumbles as soon as her body is exposed to air.

The **Crystal Container** holds five *greater salt tears*.

## Monsters and Villains Statblocks

[high]

**Jhermal** CR 18

Male half-fiend salt mephit rogue 7/sorcerer 5

CE Small Outsider (Earth, Extraplanar)

**Init** +2 (+2 Dex, misc. mods); Senses Darkvision 60ft; Listen +8, Spot +8

**Languages** Common, Terran.

**AC** 24\*, touch 16, flat-footed 24; uncanny dodge

**hp** 89 (15HD); fast healing 2/round;

**DR** 10/magic

**Immune** poison

**Resist** evasion; acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 25

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

**Spd** 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)

**Melee** 2 claws +17 (1d3+5) and bite +14 (1d4 +2); Multiattack

**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** +11

**Atk Options** sneak attack +4d6

**Special Atk** breath weapon (1/1d4 rounds), smite good, *summon mephit*

**Spells** (CL 5, +16 melee touch, +13 ranged touch):

2<sup>nd</sup> (5/day)– *blur*, *invisibility*

1<sup>st</sup> (7/day)– *chill touch* (DC13), *mage armor* (already cast), *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC13)

o (6/day)– *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *open/close*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC12)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15):

1/hr– *glitterdust* (DC 14)

3/day– *darkness*, *poison* (DC 17), *unholy aura*

1/day– *blasphemy*, *contagion* (DC 16), *desecrate*, *horrid wilting* (DC20), *unholy blight* (DC 17), *unhallow*

1/day– (CL6) draw the moisture from an area in a 20-foot-radius centered on itself. Living creatures within range take 2d8 points of damage (Fortitude DC 14 half). Plant creatures and aquatic creatures take –2 penalty to saves. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

**Abilities** Str 21, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 17

**SQ** trap sense +2, trapfinding

**Feats** Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Magic Aptitude, Multiattack, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

**Skills** Balance +10, Bluff +8, Climb +5, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Escape Artist +8, Hide +16, Intimidate +12, Jump +8, Move Silently +12, Search +5, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Spellcraft +7, Tumble +8, Use Magic Device +10, Use Rope +6 (+8 with bindings)

**Breath Weapon (Su):** 10-foot cone of salt crystals, damage 1d4, Reflex DC 13 half. Living creatures that fail their saves are tormented by itching skin and burning eyes. This effect imposes a –4 penalty to AC and a –2 penalty on attack rolls for 3 rounds.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** Jhermal heals only if in an arid environment.

**Smite Good (Su):** Once per day, Jhermal can make a normal melee attack to deal extra +15 damage against a good foe.

**Summon Mephit (Sp):** Once per day, Jhermal can attempt to summon another salt mephit, much as though casting a *summon monster*

spell, but with only a 25% chance of success. Roll d%: On a failure, no creature answers the summons that day. A mephit that has just been summoned cannot use its own summon ability for 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

## New Objects/ Spells/ and Magical Items

### Salt Tears

A *salt tear* can turn its user's expressions and emotions to stone, making their intentions and motivations unreadable to even the most skilled interrogator. The user activates a salt tear by crushing it, following which he gains a +10 competence bonus to all Bluff checks for the next 24 hours. Salt tears are usually found in groups of 4 +1d4

Moderate transmutation: CL7; Craft Wondrous Item; creator must have 10 ranks in Bluff; Price 250gp.

### Salt Tears, Improved

As *salt tears* except the user is also warded as if under the effect of an *undetectable alignment* spell

Moderate transmutation: CL7; Craft Wondrous Item; *undetectable alignment*, creator must have 10 ranks in Bluff; Price 700gp.

### Salt Tears, Greater

As *improved salt tears* except the user is also warded with a *screen* spell and the competence bonus to Bluff is increased to +15.

Strong Illusion: CL18; Craft Wondrous Item; *screen*, *undetectable alignment*, creator must have 15 ranks in Bluff; Price 3,600gp.

## Designer's Notes

When running this encounter, try as best you can to stress the drying effect. I suggest describing how the PC's skin grows slowly ashy and flakes

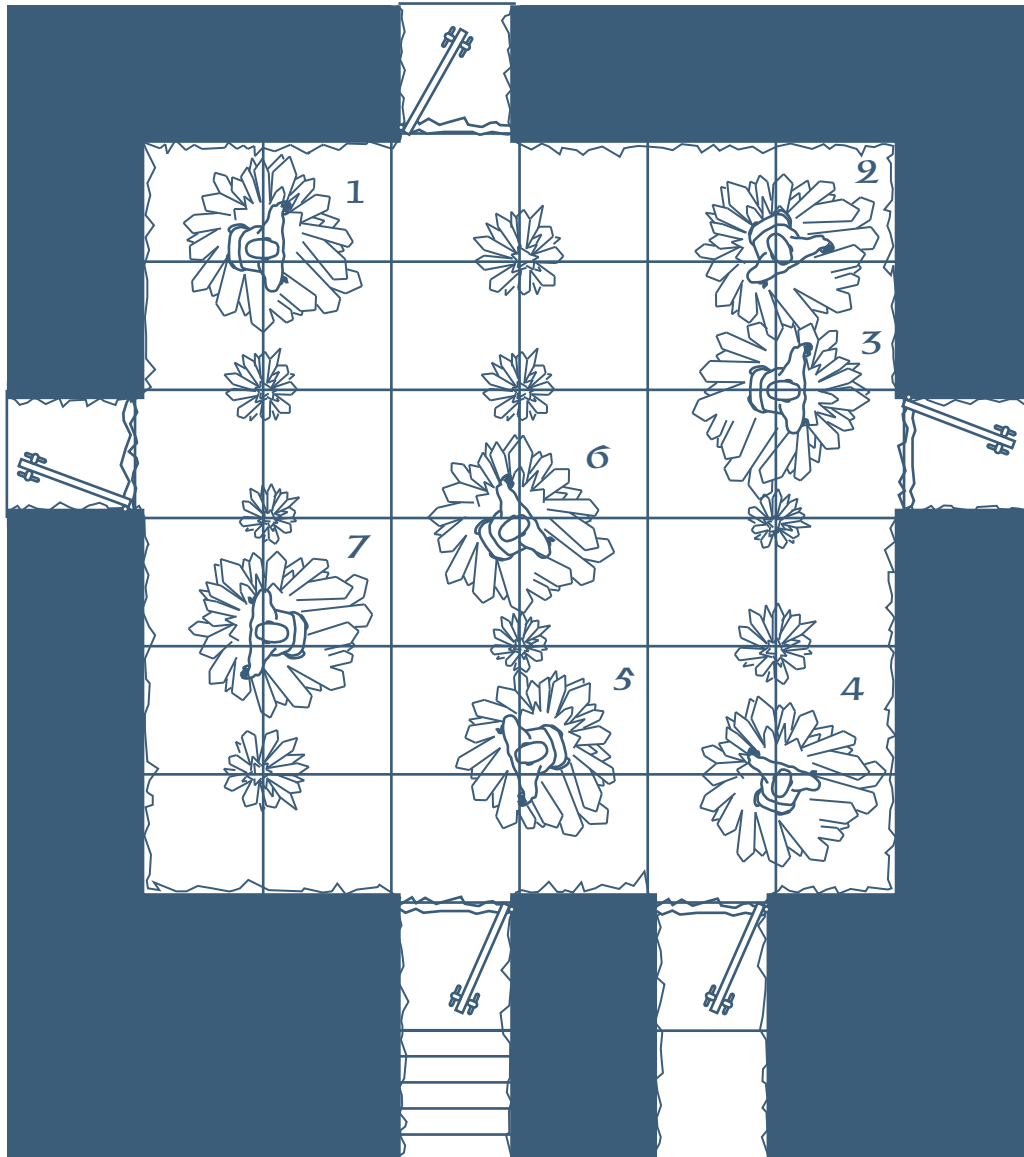
as it dries, make their eyes sting (you may even want impose a Spot penalty though the room is small enough that it shouldn't matter), and make their lips chapped and split. Don't be afraid to slightly excessive, because unlike a desert encounter, once the players leave the room they should have ample time to recover from any desiccating effects.

## Personal Notes

### Author's Bio

*This is Tim's fourth room for the Dungeon Under the Mountain. Recently however, he's discovered that there are further levels to the dungeon and is therefore beginning to think he might never find his way out.*

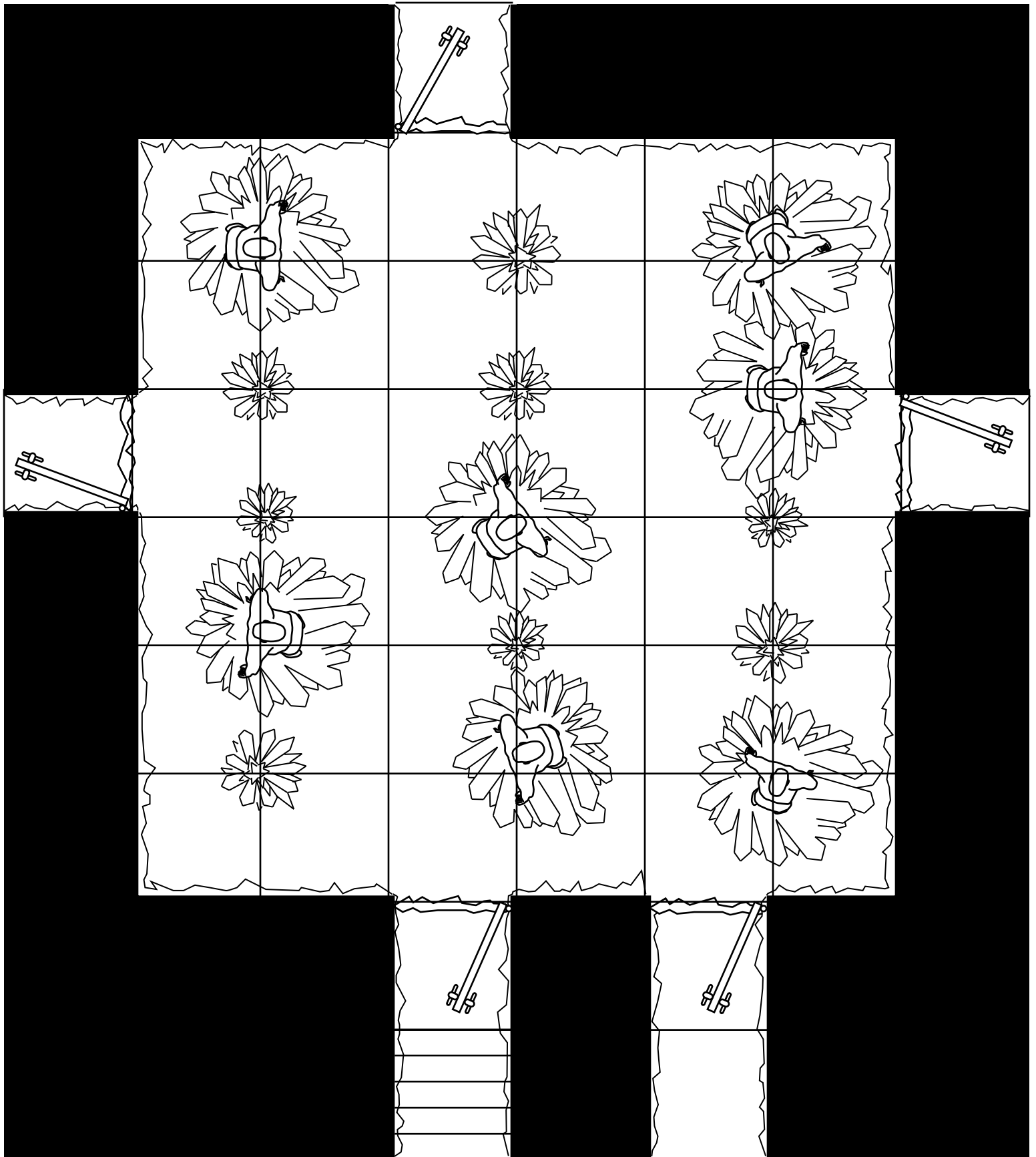




to the Great City

one square = 5 ft.





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