

DEADLY D • E • L • V • E • S



Reign of Ruin

A Level 7-8 Adventure

FIFTH EDITION

JON BRAZER
ENTERPRISES



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7th- or 8th-Level Adventure

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Open Content: All game mechanics.

Product Identity: All proper nouns, art, trade dress,
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Introduction

Reign Of Ruin is designed for compatibility with the fifth edition of the world's oldest fantasy roleplaying game, and is intended to challenge a group of four or five 7th- or 8th-level adventurers. Most groups will gain a level shortly after entering Floor D of the Temple of Ixtupi; groups of four who explore the temple thoroughly will almost certainly gain another level by the time they have reached the final confrontation with Nyrionaxys II in her lair, while groups of five may still be a bit short of gaining that last level after completing the adventure. Most of the encounters herein are weighted towards the more challenging end of the difficulty spectrum, especially those included after the midpoint of the adventure.

Background

Once a sprawling nation of agrarian hunter-gatherers spread across a vast wilderness of forests and plains, the country of Greenacre prospered beneath the rule of its high druid and his acolytes. However, Greenacre fell to draconic rule an eon ago by human reckoning, and a few generations have passed since that point even by a dragon's marking of time. The fearsome dragon queen of Greenacre was Nyrionaxys, a female black wyrm who organized several tribes of lizardfolk from a distant land into a conquering army. This frenzied horde of lizardfolk, the Ixtupi, believed the great black wyrm to be a herald of the evil water deity Tlaloc, come to lead them to dominance over the warmbloods.

Under the great wyrm's leadership, the lizards grew braver and more bloodthirsty, and their great

numbers easily conquered the peaceful human denizens of Greenacre. One by one, Nyrionaxys slew the other indigenous dragons of Greenacre, then slaughtered the guardian druids of the ancient human temple at the forest's heart. Devoid of its former masters, she converted the temple into her lair, where the lizardfolk of the Ixtupi tribe served at her command as slaves and enforcers. She then twisted the woods and fields of Greenacre with her foul magicks, causing fertile farmlands and rivers to become fallow salt marshes and swamps. Greenacre was no more—all that remained of that proud civilization were the Crannogfolk, a broken people who built settlements of thatch and reed across the befouled waters of the Great Swamp.

The remaining humans who survived the desolation of their lands retreated to the outskirts of the swamp that now devoured their once-pristine hills and forests, offering tribute to the great dragon and suffering unspeakable cruelties at the hands of her saurian sentries. Overcome with fear of the lizardfolk, they spoke even of their old temple only in terrified whispers as a place of death and despair. A foul creature of unfathomable lust and greed, Nyrionaxys also bred with numerous beasts within her domain, yielding enduring bloodlines of horrid half-dragon hybrids that served as guardians of her lands and proxies of her will.

It was not until many years later, at the prompting of several outside agents and emissaries of the great dragon's enemies, that Nyrionaxys' Crannogfolk subjects began to revolt against their lizardfolk masters. The Ixtupi were caught unaware as several settlements near the swamps dispatched their draconic overlords and quietly prepared for

A Deadlier Delve

If you would like to run this adventure for an 8th-level party or if your players prefer more of a challenge than usual, you can add additional elements to the encounters in this adventure:

Mistlevy: Allies are five Stormhammer guards and no clerics.

Into the Swamps: Add one sorceress.

A1: Add one stormwyt.

A2: Add twostormwyts.

B1: Add one kobold guard.

B4: Add one wraith.

B5: Add four mud zombies.

C: The glatisant's venomous retort also gives the target vulnerability to poison until the end of the glatisant's next turn (the venomous retort itself

has its damage increased by this vulnerability). Increase its Armor Class to 18 and its challenge rating to 8 (3,900 XP).

D1: The warpriest can cast other spells while conjuring the incubus, but must maintain concentration on the conjuring and can't move from the spot until the spellcasting is finished or the summoning is lost.

D2: Replace the savages with one dragonblood brute.

D4: A kobold guard handles activating the trap.

D7: Add one sorceress.

E2: Add one stormwyt.

E3: Add one brood spirit.

E4: Add one piranha school.

E5: Add one wyrm tainted piranha school.

war, and several of the dragon's mightiest spawn were dispatched by the rebels in rapid succession. Panicked, Nyrionaxys pleaded with the god Tlaloc for aid against her enemies. Tlaloc bid Nyrionaxys to retreat into the depths of the temple to hibernate with her precious clutch of unhatched pure-blooded children. There she would slumber, while her lizard slaves brought her sustenance and her enemies eliminated one another in the world outside her lair. Tlaloc assured Nyrionaxys that he would awaken her when the time was right, and she could then reclaim her lands without fear of reprisals from meddling foreigners. The great black dragon heeded her master's advice and prepared for a long slumber. Prior to her sleep, Nyrionaxys instructed her followers to wait for Tlaloc's call—a time when all beings with the blood of dragons coursing through their veins, including her foul half-dragon progeny, would feel compelled to strike out at their hated warmblood foes.

In the end, though, Nyrionaxys underestimated the perseverance of the warmbloods in their crusade for independence from the draconic tyrants. An elite party of Crannogfolk freedom fighters, aided by warriors from neighboring lands, stormed the Great Swamp and cut through the lizardfolk hordes. The heroes hunted down the sleeping Nyrionaxys in the lair beneath the Temple of Ixtupi and slew her as she dreamt of her triumphant re-emergence, crushing her entire clutch of eggs in the process (or so they thought). They severed the great wyrm's head and paraded it back to the Crannog Towns, leaving her massive body behind to rot and decay deep beneath the earth.

The people of the Crannogs had, perhaps, won their independence a bit too easily. With the great black wyrm gone, the lizardfolk were quickly cowed by the coalition formed between the foreign heroes and the indigenous Crannogfolk, although the Temple of Ixtupi and surrounding lands were never fully reclaimed from the lizards. The two human nations who planned the rebellion brokered an agreement stating that the Crannogfolk would hand over a large percentage of their able-bodied citizens, and all children born for the next year, to be trained by the foreigners as conscripts in their army. In return, the Crannogs would keep their independence, remaining free to govern themselves as they wished. These simple people chose the path which governs least, for better or for worse, allowing each town bordering the Great Swamp to function independently.

In the interceding years, the humans worked to tame the swamps and marshes that Nyrionaxys' enchantments had begat across the land, beating back the lizard hordes and slowly clearing hard-won safe passages through the swamps. In time, they also profited from breeding domestic buffalo for labor and meat, in addition to farming rice, wheat, and barley. What was once a savage and desolate frontier around the wetlands eventually became a thriving network of independent towns and villages, policed by the Stormhammers, a group of rangers founded from the first generation of the Crannogfolk to return from their service to the foreigners after repaying their debt with their servitude, bringing with them both the military training and the culture engrained in them by their masters. Yet the land

around the Temple of Ixtupi remains as cursed as it ever was, and even today no sane traveler dares to wander within even a league of the temple grounds.

Another faction also emerged during this time: a splinter clan of the Ixtupi tribe that did not believe the propaganda of their holy men. If Nyrionaxys truly cared for the lizards, they argued, she would have stayed to fight by their side instead of falling into torpor. Her retreat from the world, and subsequent death at the hands of the warmbloods, was the bitter fruit of the dragon's cowardice—and a blight on the lizards' faith in Tlaloc. These heretic lizardfolk carved out their own small territory in the western reaches of the Great Swamp, and swore their allegiance to Qucumatz, the Rainbow Serpent. These lizardfolk call themselves the Tsiikil. The Tsiikil are highly reclusive and do not have much contact with outsiders. They fight a constant war against the Ixtupi just to survive, and they doubt that the dracophobic humans of the Crannogs would trust them enough to consider an alliance against their common enemy.

Today, the Ixtupi lizardfolk stir once again near the temple grounds, for their priests guard a great secret: not all of Nyrionaxys' purebred spawn were destroyed by the warmbloods during that raid so long ago. A single egg survived the invaders' wrath, overlooked in their rush to claim shares of the wyrm's treasure. Hatched a few decades after her mother's death, the Ixtupi raised the hatchling as the final vestige of their mistress's legacy. This young adult wyrm has been taught from birth that she is the reincarnation of her mighty mother, and she is convinced that her progenitor's lost queendom is her birthright. This one surviving offspring has even taken the name of Nyrionaxys, both in zealous observance of her bloodline's destiny and as a means of striking fear into the warmbloods' hearts when she rises to heed the call of Tlaloc. Like her mother before her, the young Nyrionaxys II is a highly superstitious dragon and hopes to lure a group of virtuous heroes back to her lair to feed upon both their bodies and their souls as part of a blasphemous ritual—an act which, Tlaloc has assured her, will bind her dead brethren to her spirit (see area E3 of the temple for more details) and strengthen her for the coming war against the warmbloods.

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The adventurers become involved in Nyrionaxys' foul plot to retake the Crannogs and bind her spirit to her dead broodmates when a mortally wounded Stormhammer Ranger collapses near the locale or encampment where they are resting. He manages

to deliver a brief message before collapsing to the ground dead before them: "Northam has been razed. None survived. Send reinforcements immediately."

If this does not provoke them to investigate Northam, they may also cross paths with a group of traveling merchants who repeat rumors that the town of Northam has been decimated by the Ixtupi lizardfolk. The merchants explain that Northam is the site of a great mead hall built by the same generation of Crannogfolk who killed the great wyrm Nyrionaxys, whose name means Bringer of Ruin. The warriors who killed her brought her head back to Northam after their victory, where they flayed it down to bone and horn and mounted it upon the wall of their great mead hall as a reminder of their ultimate triumph over the evil dragon. The merchants speculate that perhaps the Ixtupi are preparing for war and attacked the village to reclaim their ancient queen's remains and exact their revenge upon the descendants of her killers.

Northam

The major settlements of Greenacre retain an inherently rustic look, and Northam is no exception. Most of the buildings on the crannogs are elaborate reed and wood structures, cut and lashed by skilled builders and, in the larger towns such as this one, modified and reinforced by engineers and mages. Yet here the thatched buildings sag mournfully, crushed or collapsed in the evident melee that has recently occurred. An entire pen full of water buffalo has been slaughtered, and large bites of the choicest cuts of meat on the beasts have been ripped from their carcasses. Collapsed portions of docks float listlessly upon the water as more corpses—or parts of them, at least—bob among the wreckage. The smell of blood, fire, and rot hangs heavily over the town, and carrion birds swarm the bodies of the fallen, gorging on bloated, sun-ripened flesh. Although the crannogs and docks are in ruins, an old two-story brick church and the walls of a stone longhouse still stand on the northern shoreline. In the center of the village, a message post dotted with burned paper notices is strung with the gutted bodies of four guardsmen in armor, their spears driven through their torsos, pinning them to the wooden pole. Strange writing is singed into the ground beneath the pole, as if someone had formed the letters by pouring acid onto the grassy earth.

Passing a **DC 15 Intelligence** check allows an adventurer to decipher the writing: it is a dialect of the Draconic language, and it reads, "Beware The Blackener Of Bright Waters, For She Is Come Again." Adventurers who are fluent in Draconic receive a +2 bonus on this check.

In the ruins of the town of Northam, the adventurers find scores of mutilated bodies, some

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of which have had the flesh mysteriously melted from their bodies, as if from a torrent of caustic acid rather than raw flame. A few lizardfolk bodies are also scattered throughout the town, but their numbers are scarce compared to the devastating number of human casualties. Investigating the lizardfolk corpses yields evidence of their collusion with Nyrionaxys and the cult of Tlaloc: they carry serpentine, wooden totems decorated with black dragon scales and gory bits of carrion (most of it human bone and offal). Additionally, where the few well-armed town guards have fallen, traces of black scales can be found (chipped away from the hides of the stormwyts during the battle).

The great mead hall stands out among the smoldering ruins despite the massive damage it sustained in the attack, its great stone walls mostly still intact, save for a few sections that have been melted away or knocked in by brute force. Inside, a large mounting plate adorns the southern wall; although it once held the skull of Nyrionaxys I, it is now bare except for the mutilated corpses of several Northam residents which are impaled upon the great iron spikes that once cradled the great wyrm's skull. A tactical map left behind in the rubble clearly shows Northam, scratched through viciously with charcoal and blood, and the town of Mistlevy to the west is also circled, indicating that this is the Ixtupi's next target.

A single survivor remains in Northam, crouched in the cellar of the now-ruined church—a farmer named Alphius. This farmer, if treated by the adventurers with care, can tell them what little he saw of the battle before he fled in terror: a score of Ixtupi savages riding wyverns swooped down from the skies and began attacking people. There were also winged lizardfolk who flew alongside the wyverns, and they led the assault on the mead hall. Once the winged lizardfolk breached the walls, a black dragon the size of a full-grown ogre descended from behind a storm cloud, ripping through what few warriors were left standing. The dragon seized the skull of the great wyrm Nyrionaxys, then took to the sky again, disappearing from sight. He also knows that the Ixtupi retreated southward into the swamps to regroup after the fight, having watched them leave from a hidden vestibule in the exterior walls of the church.

Mistlevy

The reed-and-wood architecture common among the villages of the Crannogfolk is evident here, as in all of the settlements surrounding the Great Swamp. The sight of intact houses and businesses,

and mostly content citizens, is a welcome change from the carnage you witnessed in Northam. Still, the villagers seem on edge; word of the Ixtupi attack on a larger town has no doubt reached the ears of Mistlevy's gossipers, and you notice more than a few people looking nervously toward the sky or the horizon as they go about their business. It is obvious that the center of commerce and activity in Mistlevy is the waterfront market, a small collection of crannogs and shanties housing shops and traders, as well as offering amenities such as private steam baths and boat rentals. In the center of the marketplace stands a great crannog connected to the docks by three wide walkways. A burned wooden sign over the thatched roof reads "The Meadmire Tavern." A group of four armored human men and women wearing longbows and warhammers and sporting tabards stitched with the symbol of a hammerhead mounted upon a bolt of lightning are entering the tavern as you arrive.

Give the adventurers time to rest and re-equip themselves when they arrive in Mistlevy if you wish; the village carries most any mundane piece of equipment adventurers may need, and various traveling merchants may have a few magic items for sale as well, if you want to be especially generous. When you're ready to proceed, read aloud the following text.

Suddenly, the midday sky darkens as a stream of shadows flows over Mistlevy. Above the village, you see four black-scaled wyverns carrying savage spear-wielding lizardfolk on their backs; two bulky, winged forms fly alongside them. A pair of the wyverns lands on the docks connecting the many crannogs, their riders poised to menace the unarmed humans who are fishing or passing by. The other two keep to the air, releasing foul jets of acid from their gullets. A few seconds later, the corrosive spittle crackles ominously with residual traces of electricity, igniting any flammable material it touches. The Ixtupi savages leap from the backs of their mounts and spread out to terrorize the villagers.

Mistlevy is under attack by the Ixtupi—and you are its only hope.

There are a total of eight lizardfolk savages in the raiding party, as well as four stormwyts and two half-dragon lizardman brutes. However, the Stormhammer Guards in the tavern will emerge to fight alongside the adventurers, making the fight a bit more even but still quite tough. The raiders rout once six of the savages, two of the stormwyts, or one of the brutes fall in combat (whichever of the three happens first). The remaining forces then retreat a short distance away—for those were their orders.



IXTUPI SAVAGES (8)

Lizardfolk, MM 204

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

TACTICS

During Combat The savages generally favor biting and clubbing opponents unless bludgeoning damage proves to be less effective, in which case they use their bites and spiked shields.

Morale These rank-and-file Ixtupi warriors are zealots devoted to Nyrionaxys, and fight to their deaths. In this encounter, however, the entire warband of savages, stormwyls, and brutes disperses if six of the eight savages are killed.

STORMWYTS (4)

The creature resembles a wyvern without a stinger but black-scaled and red-eyed. A pronounced horned ridge shades its brow, and its bat-like wings flap with the calm intensity of an apex predator on the hunt as it glides through the air.

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR 18 (+4)

DEX 14 (+2)

CON 16 (+3)

INT 5 (−3)

WIS 12 (+1)

CHA 6 (−2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances acid

Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Draconic

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Nightstalker. The stormwyl gains advantage on all Stealth checks in areas of darkness.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The stormwyl makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10+4) slashing damage.

Alkaline Mucus (Recharge 5-6). The stormwyl spits a glob of mucus at one creature within 50 feet. The target must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw. The target takes 13 (3d8) acid damage and gains the restrained condition until the end of its next turn on a failed save or takes half as much damage and is not restrained on a successful save. When this restrained condition ends, the target takes 9 (2d8) lightning damage.

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TACTICS

Before Combat Stormwyts always attempt to hide before striking in melee, especially at night or in dark areas so as to utilize their Nightstalker ability.

During Combat Stormwyts typically open with Alkaline Mucus attacks, then hide and dive to attack with bites and claws until their ranged ability recharges.

Morale Although they utilize hit-and-run tactics, stormwyts are vicious beasts who always fight to the death unless they have a rider to direct them to retreat. In this encounter, however, the entire warband of savages, stormwyts, and brutes disperses if two of the four stormwyts are killed.

IXTUPI DRAGONBLOOD BRUTES (2)

This lizardman stands a full head taller than his savage brethren, his scales a deep, near-black green and his eyes a bright crimson red. Leathery wings spanning eight feet rise from his shoulders, and his facial structure is noticeably more primal and draconic than the rest of the Ixtupi.

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor 13; breastplate)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 12 (+1) **CON** 15 (+2)

INT 11 (+0) **WIS** 11 (+0) **CHA** 15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +5, Wis +3

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +7, Survival +6

Damage Resistances acid

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Abyssal, Draconic

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hold Breath. The brute can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

Skewer. Once per turn, when the brute hits a living target with a trident attack, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) damage, and the brute gains temporary hit points equal to the extra damage dealt.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The brute makes two melee attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws or trident, or two with its trident.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage if wielded with two hands in melee.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). The Ixtupi brute exhales acid in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each target must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Gear trident, breastplate

TACTICS

Before Combat If paired with spellcasters, the Ixtupi brutes delay their assault until after the caster's turn to benefit from any buffs cast.

During Combat The brutes favor hit-and-run tactics against non-flying opponents, using trident multiattacks in melee to gain the benefits of their Skewer ability.

Morale Ixtupi brutes are fanatically loyal to Nyrionaxys, and always fight to the death unless ordered otherwise by the dragon, especially to prevent an opponent from advancing into the temple grounds. In this encounter, however, the entire warband of savages, stormwyts, and brutes disperses if one of the two brutes is killed.

STORMHAMMER GUARDS (4)

Knight, MM 347

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

TACTICS

Before Combat The Stormhammer Guards use their Leadership ability to aid allied adventurers or other Stormhammer Curates and Guards.

During Combat The Guards fire their heavy crossbows at flying enemies, switching to melee weapons as soon as any enemies move within 30 feet of their position and using their Parry ability to bolster their AC.

Morale The Stormhammers are the sworn guardians of the Crannogfolk and will fight to the death to defend Mistlevy.

STORMHAMMER CURATES (2)

Priest, MM 348

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

TACTICS

Before Combat The Stormhammer Curates call forth *spirit guardians* to protect themselves and nearby allies, using *spiritual weapon* to protect themselves from melee attackers so they can concentrate on making ranged attacks.

During Combat The Curates fire *guiding bolts* at flying enemies and cast *cure wounds* on badly injured allies.

Morale The Stormhammers are the sworn guardians of the Crannogfolk and will fight to the death to defend Mistlevy.

Nyrionaxys has gorged on fishermen and water buffalo for a few days now, and is spoiling for a good fight. She waits several miles from the village, content to let her minions do the grunt work, but she orders them to alert her immediately if they encounter any significant resistance, which the adventurers should certainly constitute. Once alerted to the presence of the heroes, the dragon seeks them out, flying directly to Mistlevy to engage them. She concentrates her ire on the Stormhammers (although it is best to leave at least one alive to act as an information resource for the adventurers as discussed below) but doesn't hesitate to attack the adventurers if they make a nuisance of themselves. The dragon is sizing these heroes up to see if they would make appropriate sacrifices for her blood ritual.

NYRIONAXYS II

Reign of Ruin, page 38

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 210 (20d10 + 100)

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

TACTICS

Morale Nyrionaxys retreats to the Temple of Ixtupi after a few rounds of combat, breaking away from the battle immediately if reduced to 75 hp or less.

The inclusion of Nyrionaxys in this encounter is meant to showcase the wyrm and give the adventurers an idea of what they are up against. If they don't get the hint after this encounter that they need to destroy this monster before it murders every last warmblood in the Great Swamp, feel free to create more villages along the shoreline of the swamp and have Nyrionaxys attack those locales too.

After the fight has concluded, the surviving Stormhammer Guards thank the adventurers for their assistance and tell them that they have received reliable reports of more dragon attacks occurring further to the south, close to the Temple of Ixtupi.

The Stormhammers can also recount the legends of the original Nyrionaxys and her destruction at the hands of their ancestors, as well as tales of the mythic hero Artos, who slew four great beasts to make the lands of Greenacre safe for the ancient druids and their followers to settle (see area C for more information on Artos and the four beasts).

Into The Swamp

Nyrionaxys can be easily followed back into the Great Swamp, since she flies directly toward the Temple of Ixtupi when she departs from Mistlevy. However, the marshes teem with dangerous wildlife, so if you wish to include random encounters during the journey to the Temple, roll on the Random Monster Table.

At some point, as the adventurers pursue the dragon into the swamp, they accidentally run headlong into a battle between the Ixtupi and their bitter rivals for territory in the Great Swamp, the good-hearted Tsiikil lizardfolk. The adventurers might initially mistake the Tsiikil for allies of the black dragon, but careful observation hints that these lizardfolk are different from the others



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Random Monster Table

1d10	Monster (Quantity)	Stat Location
1	Befouled Water Elemental (1)	Page 14
2	Giant Spiders (2d4)	MM 328
3	Half-Dragon Giant Toads (1d6)	Page 31
4	Ixtupi Savages (1d4) MM 204 (lizardfolk) & Sorceress (1)	Page 9
5	Wyrmtainted Piranha School (1d3+1)	Page 39
6	Stormwyt (3)	Page 6
7	Lizardfolk Mud Zombies (1d8+5)	Page 15
8	Green Hags (3)	MM 177
9	Shambling Mound (1)	MM 270
10	Giant Crocodile (1d3)	MM 324

they have encountered in a few ways: they carry different, less sinister totems of religious significance (serpentine-shaped woodcarvings decorated with multicolored feathers), and no half-dragons or stormwyt fight alongside them.

Tsiikil Warriors (8)

Lizardfolk, MM 204

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

TACTICS

During Combat The Tsiikil begin the battle by closing in on the sorceresses in groups of four and attempting to eliminate them first, blocking blows from the Ixtupi savages and stormwyt if possible, then turn their attention to the warpriest. If the adventurers join the fray, however, the Tsiikil wait until the Ixtupi spellcasters are otherwise engaged and then fan out to prevent the savages from harrying their new and more capable allies.

Morale The Tsiikil know they are outmatched by the Ixtupi warband but see no option but to fight to their dying breaths in hopes of attaining a narrow victory.

Ixtupi Savages (8)

Lizardfolk, MM 204

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

TACTICS

During Combat The savages generally favor biting and clubbing opponents unless bludgeoning damage proves to be less effective, in which case they use their bites and spiked shields.

Morale These rank-and-file Ixtupi warriors are zealots devoted to Nyrionaxys and fight to their deaths.

Ixtupi Sorceress

This Ixtupi is covered in bright war paint outlining intricate magical glyphs upon its green scales. She hisses viciously and forms a ball with her digits, her talons pulling a bolt of acid from thin air as she trains her eyes on you.

Ixtupi Sorceresses (3)

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), chaotic evil, 5th-level sorcerer (draconic bloodline)

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 63 (9d8 + 23)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR 15 (+2) **DEX** 10 (+0) **CON** 14 (+2)

INT 7 (–2) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 14 (+2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Draconic

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Elemental Savant. Whenever the sorceress casts a spell which normally deals cold, fire, or lightning damage, she can change it to deal acid damage instead.

Hold Breath. The sorceress can hold her breath for 15 minutes.

Metamagic Sorcery. The sorceress can apply heightened or subtle metamagic to her spells as if she had 5 sorcery points (see PHB 101).

Spellcasting. The sorceress is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, mage hand, poison spray, ray of frost, true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, false life, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, scorching ray*

3rd level (2 slots): *fireball*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sorceress makes two melee attacks: one with her bite and one with her claws or spear.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

TACTICS

Before Combat Ixtupi sorceresses utilize sorcery points to cast subtle *invisibility* so as to close with targets and drop coordinated rounds of acidic *fireballs* on them, or *true strike* to boost their chances of hitting with acidic *scorching rays*.

During Combat The sorceresses cast acidic versions of *scorching ray* and heightened *fireball* with abandon, attacking from *invisibility* if possible. They try not to hit other sorceresses or warpriests with these blasts, but don't care if brutes or savages get caught in the crossfire. If forced into melee, they cast *shield* in reaction to any incoming attacks and retaliate with acidic heightened *burning hands* spells.

Morale The sorceresses retreat if reduced to 15 hp or less, using subtle castings of *invisibility* to evade an enemy's notice and regroup with other servants of Nyrrionaxys.

Gear spear

IXTUPI WARPRIESTS

This Ixtupi lizardman wears a golden medallion representative of his deity, held around his neck by a necklace of vine and moss. Elaborate red silk robes embroidered with the silhouettes of black dragons drape his form. He clutches a finely crafted morningstar carved with runes which are traced in layers of dried blood.

IXTUPI WARPRIEST

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), chaotic evil, 6th-level cleric

Armor Class 19 (natural armor 13; splint armor and shield)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 10 (+0) **CON** 14 (+2)
INT 7 (−2) **WIS** 14 (+2) **CHA** 7 (−2)

Saving Throws Wis +5

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5 (disadvantage), Survival +7

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Draconic

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Guided Strike. Once per day when the warpriest makes an attack roll, he can add a +10 bonus to the roll.

Hold Breath. The warpriest can hold his breath for 15 minutes.

Spellcasting. The warpriest is a 6th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Evil Clerics and Spell Damage

The unstated assumption in the *PHB* is that the cleric class and spell descriptions are used to create non-evil spellcasters. Because the Ixtupi warpriests and high priest are devotees of a god of death and sacrifice, however, we recommend that any spells they possess which would normally inflict radiant damage instead be altered in play to inflict necrotic damage.

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *light*, *resistance*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *divine favor*, *guiding bolt*, *shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *enhance ability*, *magic weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *spirit guardians*

War Priest. Twice per day, the warpriest can make one weapon attack as a bonus action when using the attack action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The warpriest makes two melee attacks: one with his bite and one with his claws or morningstar.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Tlaloc's Blessing. Once per day when a creature within 30 feet makes an attack roll, the warpriest can use his reaction to add a +10 bonus to the roll.

TACTICS

Before Combat Ixtupi warpriests blanket the surrounding area with *spirit guardians*. If forced into melee combat, they cast *divine favor* or *shield of faith* on themselves.

During Combat The warpriest hides behind lines of grunts and attacks with *guiding bolts* while bolstering allies with Tlaloc's Blessing, then closes into melee and uses his Guided Strike and War Priest abilities to deliver maximum damage output on his first hit. He casts higher-level *cure wounds* on himself as needed to stay in combat.

Morale Ixtupi warpriests are typically utter fanatics who fight to the death in Nyrrionaxys' service.

Reign of Ruin

However, this warpriest has been instructed to return to the temple and inform Nyrionaxys if the adventurers who interfered in Mistlevy breach the swamps. He will flee on his stormwyt if either he or his mount are reduced to 25% of their total hit points.

Gear splint armor, shield, spear, holy symbol of Tlaloc

STORMWYT

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Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

TACTICS

During Combat Stormwyt typically open with alkaline mucus attacks, then hide and dive to attack with bites and claws until their ranged ability recharges.

Morale Although they utilize hit-and-run tactics, stormwyt are vicious beasts who usually fight to the death. However, this stormwyt's warpriest rider will direct it to retreat under the conditions outlined in his Tactics block above.

If the adventurers attempt to parley with the Tsiikil, the lizardfolk are receptive to negotiations, especially if the adventurers helped them defeat their Ixtupi attackers. The Tsiikil can easily point out the safest route toward the Temple of Ixtupi, and will offer aid and shelter if the adventurers wish to rest among the Tsiikil for the night. They may even share stories of their people's friendship with the ancient humans of Greenacre and their gift to the high druid of the temple in centuries past (the lost *rainbow sceptre* found in Area D3 of the temple). If the adventurers try to convince the Tsiikil to accompany them to the temple and fight against the Ixtupi, the lizardfolk will assent and offer four warriors (use stats for lizardman savages), but only with an extraordinary diplomatic performance (**Charisma [Diplomacy] DC 16**). Otherwise, they apologize for their inability to help, explaining that they cannot relinquish the vigil on the border of their territory against the Ixtupi unless the dragon is slain.

Once the adventurers arrive at the Temple of Ixtupi, they must break through the defending legions of the temple grounds and make their way into the depths of Nyrionaxys' lair within the temple itself, braving the horrors of the Ixtupi cultists' traps and guardians to reach the dragon's sanctum below.

The Temple of Ixtupi

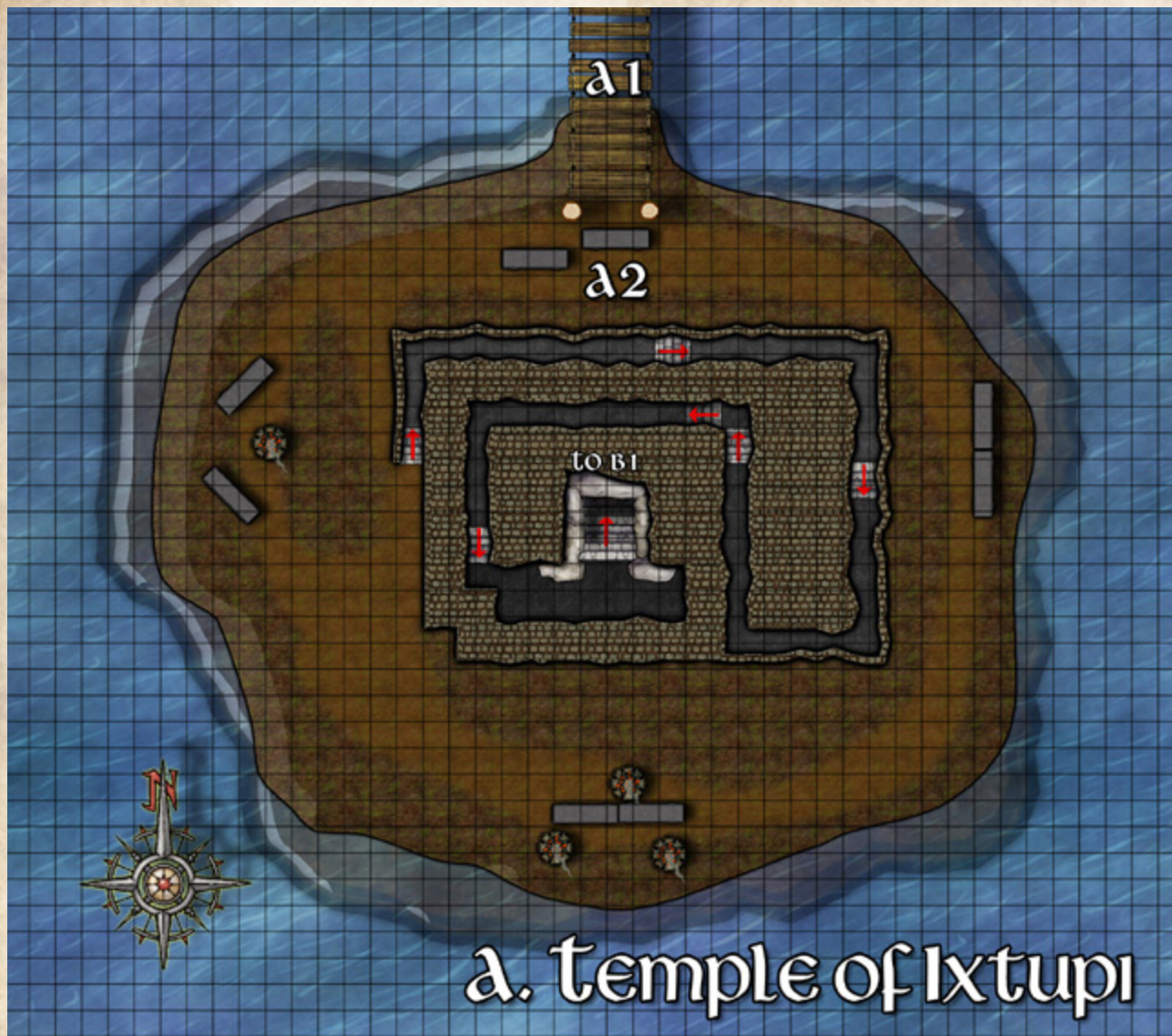
Nyrionaxys' lair is a great stone temple built by the primordial human denizens of Greenacre. Centuries ago, the lizardfolk tribes faithful to her rule exterminated the humans within the temple and claimed it for their own. The presence of the wyrm caused the land to grow foul and fell; she commanded her slaves to dig a great moat around the base of the temple and then called heavy rains to fill the moat to a depth of several hundred feet. Her lair is on the very bottom floor of the temple, accessible only by descending through the upper levels, or by way of a submerged tunnel in the foundation of the structure.

A1. The Rope Bridge

Ahead of you, the sodden earth drops off suddenly, as if repelled by some unnatural force. Below, murky water churns ominously, and the scarce light beaming through the treetops occasionally illuminates dark shapes swimming in the moor. Two massive wooden poles driven into the side of the ravine anchor a primitive but well-made rope bridge lined with wooden slats which connects the land upon which you stand to the massive mound of earth some 600 feet away. Two massive winged lizardfolk flank the far end of the bridge, cleaning their talons and conversing sparsely in a sibilant reptilian tongue.

MONSTERS: Two Ixtupi dragonblood brutes guard the bridge to the trilithon mound where the temple entrance waits. Enterprising and daring adventurers may attempt to climb across the chasm beneath the bridge (**Strength [Athletics] DC 15**), using the step slats as a horizontal ladder. This gives the brutes disadvantage on any Wisdom checks to notice the adventurers' approach (or lowers their passive Perception by 5).

Once alerted to the adventurers' presence, the dragonblood brutes warn their comrades on the mound of the intruders and advance across the bridge to attack, flying to surround advancing adventurers. However, since they are far away from their allies and angry outbursts are common among the Ixtupi, it requires a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check for the Ixtupi savages and stormwyt patrolling area A2 to even realize that something is amiss. An adventurer who takes any actions other than movement on the bridge must make a **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check each round to keep their balance on the rope bridge or risk falling into the water 100 feet below, suffering 10d6 bludgeoning damage and landing prone.



IXTUPI DRAGONBLOOD BRUTE (2)

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Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

TACTICS

During Combat The brutes favor hit-and-run tactics against non-flying opponents, using trident multiattacks in melee to gain the benefits of their Skewer ability. They may also attempt to shove an adventurer off the rope bridge and into the water below.

Morale Ixtupi brutes are fanatically loyal to Nyrionaxys, and always fight to the death unless ordered otherwise by the dragon, especially to prevent an opponent from advancing into the temple grounds.

A2. The Garden of Sun and Rain

The opposite side of the bridge ends at a pair of massive trilithons as tall as an ogre. The plateaued top of the mound is marked at the four cardinal points with more trilithons in varied arrangements—the ones nearest you are unadorned, but to the west you spot a stone pool nestled between two smaller stone formations. A trio of braziers burns before more standing stones far to the south. On the east end of the mound, hundreds of chimes and bells hang from a hulking dolmen larger than even the ones immediately before you, tinkling gently in the wind. The ground in the center of the mound is furrowed with graduated trenches dotted with crude stone stairs that lead down into the earth.

Once a sacred place of worship where the ancient druids of Greenacre paid homage to the elements and worked their most powerful magic, the Garden

Reign of Ruin

of Sun and Rain nevertheless succumbed to the taint with which the original Nyrionaxys poisoned all of her domain. The dragon used the trilithons to focus her own power in her foul sorcerous workings throughout her reign of ruin, and centuries of dark magic have now permanently altered the nature of the magic contained within the standing stones. The young Nyrionaxys is careful never to station her sorcerers here, for the Garden holds a curse: the use of any elemental magic within its boundaries causes a befouled elemental spirit—its existence as a child of nature forever tormented by the intrusion of evil in this place of power—to form and attack the caster relentlessly.

MONSTERS: Four Ixtupi savages patrol the Garden, each mounted on a stormwytt. The Ixtupi savages order their mounts to keep to the air in combat, swooping low to deliver melee attacks only when their stormwyts have exhausted their alkaline breath. Should the adventurers attempt to storm the warrens leading down to the temple entrance, the lizardfolk fly down into the tunnels to cut off the intruders' advance. They fight to the death to prevent anyone from breaching the entrance to the temple.

Additionally, if any adventurer uses a spell, magic item, or magic weapon which deals energy damage, one of the four trilithons produces a befouled elemental spirit which manifests near the trilithon and moves to target that adventurer, engaging any other creatures that interfere. The damage types which trigger this occurrence are as follows: acid—earth elemental, from the northern trilithon; cold—water elemental, from the western trilithon; fire—fire elemental, from the southern trilithon; lightning or thunder—air elemental, from the eastern trilithon. Each trilithon can only produce one such elemental per day. Although multiple trilithons may be triggered by different spell castings, no more than one elemental can be released at once—the elemental triggered next does not spawn until the first one triggered is destroyed, but the next activated trilithon surges visibly with barely-restrained power, offering a clue to the dangers that the standing stones present.

IXTUPI SAVAGES (4)

Lizardfolk, MM 204

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

TACTICS

During Combat The savages generally favor biting and clubbing opponents unless bludgeoning

damage proves to be less effective, in which case they use their bites and spiked shields.

Morale These rank-and-file Ixtupi warriors are zealots devoted to Nyrionaxys, and fight to their deaths.

STORMWYT (2)

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Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

TACTICS

Before Combat Stormwyts always attempt to hide before striking in melee, especially at night or in dark areas so as to utilize their Nightstalker ability.

During Combat Stormwyts typically open with alkaline mucus attacks, then hide and dive to attack with bites and claws until their ranged ability recharges.

Morale Although they utilize hit-and-run tactics, stormwyts are vicious beasts who always fight to the death unless they have a rider to direct them to retreat.

BEFOULED AIR SPIRIT

A noxious funnel of dust, debris, tumbleweeds, and stinking swamp air twirls toward you.

BEFOULED AIR SPIRIT

Air Elemental, MM 124

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 90 (12d10 + 24)
Additional Damage Resistance radiant
Additional Damage Immunity necrotic
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Awful Presence. A creature that begins its turn within 30 feet of a befouled air elemental must succeed on a **DC 9 Charisma** saving throw or suffer disadvantage on all its attack rolls against the elemental until the start of its next turn.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning and necrotic damage.

BEFOULED EARTH SPIRIT

Fallow, salty mud and craggy rock congeal into a vaguely humanoid form, hulking and formidable.

BEFOULED EARTH SPIRIT

Earth Elemental, MM 124

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 126 (12d10 + 60)

Additional Damage Resistance radiant

Additional Damage Immunity necrotic

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Awful Presence. A creature that begins its turn within 30 feet of a befouled earth elemental must succeed on a **DC 8 Charisma** saving throw or suffer disadvantage on all its attack rolls against the elemental until the start of its next turn.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft. one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning and necrotic damage.

BEFOULED FIRE SPIRIT

The flame morphs into a grinning maw of fiery teeth, billowing smoke that smells of a funeral pyre.

BEFOULED FIRE SPIRIT

Fire Elemental, MM 125

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)

Additional Damage Resistance radiant

Additional Damage Immunity necrotic

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Awful Presence. A creature that begins its turn within 30 feet of a befouled air elemental must succeed on a **DC 9 Charisma** saving throw or suffer disadvantage on all its attack rolls against the elemental until the start of its next turn.

Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) fire and necrotic damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 5 (1d10) fire and necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns.

BEFOULED WATER SPIRIT

A stomach-churning excrement-tinged odor fills your nostrils as this living tide of sewage draws near.

BEFOULED WATER SPIRIT

Water Elemental, MM 125

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Additional Damage Resistance radiant

Additional Damage Immunity necrotic

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Awful Presence. A creature that begins its turn within 30 feet of a befouled water elemental must succeed on a **DC 10 Charisma** saving throw or suffer disadvantage on all its attack rolls against the elemental until the start of its next turn.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning and necrotic damage.

DEVELOPMENT: Should the adventurers survive breaching the temple and manage to clear the area of all Ixtupi and dragonkin, they may wish to ritually purify the Garden of Sun and Rain, restoring Greenacre's ancient standing stones to their former glory. Finding the means to do so could be a story told over the course of an entire new adventure, and is beyond the scope of this module.

B1. Desecrated Shrine

At the bottom of the triliton-framed steps is a long chamber with a single exit. The walls are dotted with curved stone alcoves containing vaguely humanoid forms wrapped in thick layers of hardened mud. Four 10-foot-long carved stone biers rest in the quadrants of the room; the remains of various small creatures sit atop the slabs.

Once the resting place of honored heroes of the ancient humans, their remains have long been vacated from these biers and replaced with foul totems and blood sacrifices to the Ixtupi lizardfolk's own adopted deity, Nyrionaxys herself.

MONSTERS: An Ixtupi warpriest tends this area, fastidiously performing his dark rituals even through the sounds of combat above. Many of the stone alcoves contain lizardfolk mud zombies. Every round that a non-lizardman or non-dragon occupies this chamber, two mud zombies burst forth from the alcoves to attack. There are a total of eight mud zombies present. The priest aids them as well as he can, engaging with poorly-armored foes and bolstering his zombie thralls with spells.

IXTUPI WARPRIEST (2)

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Armor Class 19 (natural armor 13; splint armor and shield)

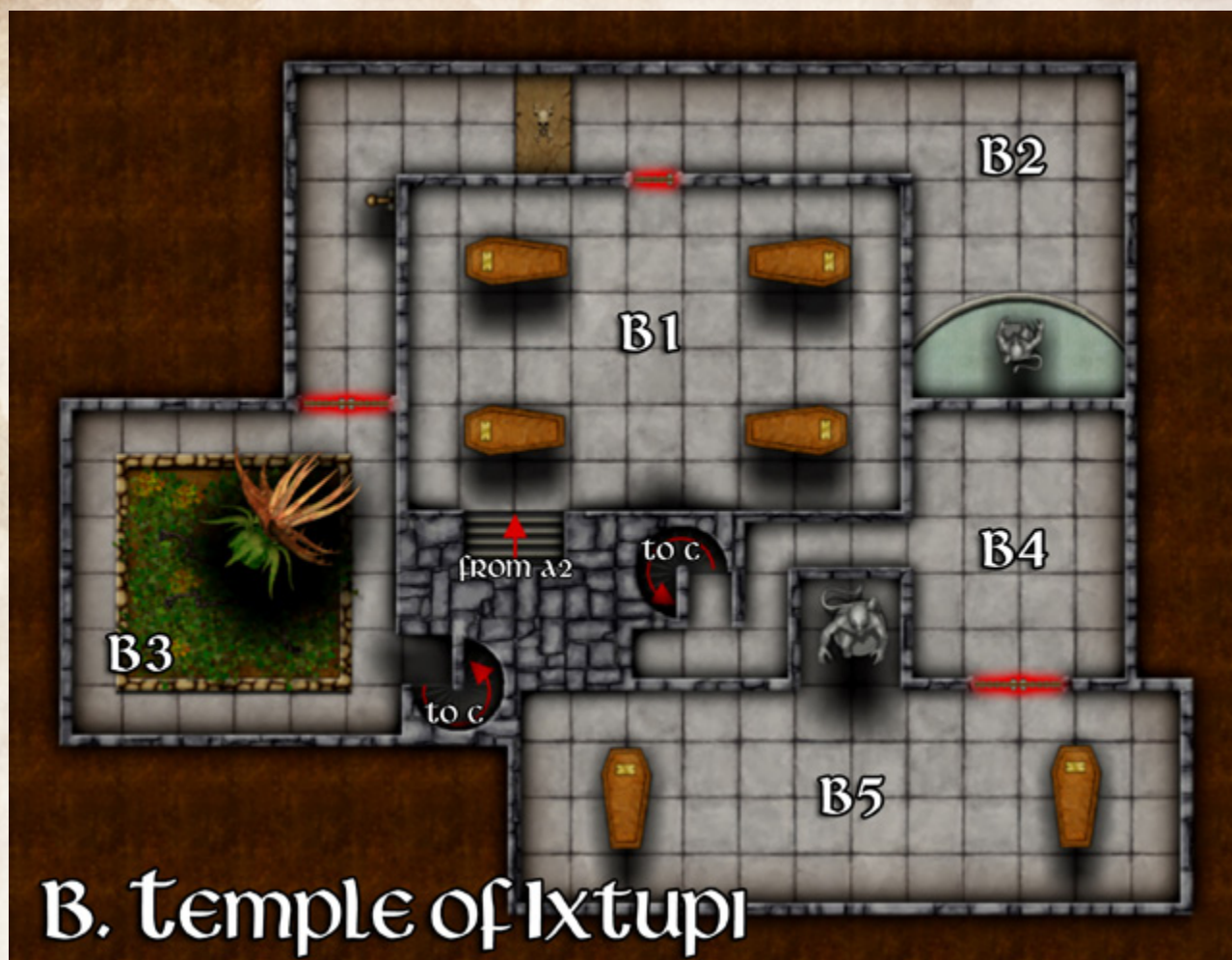
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP each)

TACTICS

Before Combat The Ixtupi warpriest blankets the surrounding area with *spirit guardians*. If forced into melee combat, he casts *divine favor* or *shield of faith* on himself.

During Combat The warpriest hides behind lines of grunts and attacks with *guiding bolts* while bolstering allies with Tlaloc's Blessing, then closes into melee and uses his Guided Strike and War Priest abilities to deliver maximum damage output



B. Temple of Ixtupi

on his first hit. He casts higher-level *cure wounds* on himself as needed to stay in combat.

Morale Ixtupi warpriests are utter fanatics of Tlaloc's cult who fight to the death in Nyrionaxys' service, believing her to be a profane herald of their foul deity.

LIZARDFOLK MUD ZOMBIES (8)

Layers of mud crack and flake as the desiccated body of this lizardman moves inside its hardened burial shell, lumbering toward you and loosing an unsettling hissing moan that shreds through its dry lungs and vocal cords.

LIZARDFOLK MUD ZOMBIE

Zombie, MM 316

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP each)

Dust Cloud. Whenever a mud zombie takes damage, a cloud of dust kicks up around it, causing nearby living creatures to cough uncontrollably. All living creatures within 5 feet must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution** saving

throw or suffer disadvantage on all attack rolls and ability or skill checks until the end of their next turn.

TACTICS

During Combat The mud zombies plod mindlessly toward the nearest enemy and attempt to pound them into submission with slam attacks.

Morale Zombies know no fear of death and fight until destroyed.

TREASURE: Among the rotting sacrifices scattered atop the stone biers, the Ixtupi fanatics have also left behind a *potion of greater healing*. Additionally, up to 8 uncut onyx gemstones, each worth 75 gp, can be harvested from the remains of the mud zombies—they are embedded in their hollow eyes.

B2. The Skull Passageway

This 10-foot-wide hallway leads both east and west, curving out of sight on both ends. Thousands of grinning skulls interspersed with crude mortar dot the walls.

TRAP: When any living being enters this hallway, the skulls in the wall spring to life and snap mindlessly at any nearby creature.

SNAPPING SKULLS TRAP

Magic trap

This trap is activated when any non-dragon, non-lizardfolk, or non-kobold living being enters the northern hallway of Floor B. The skulls set in the walls of the hallway begin to chitter and snap, and their empty eye sockets glow with a sinister red light as they stretch forth from the cracked mortar to gnaw at passersby. Every round that a living being meeting the above criteria remains in the hall, they must succeed at a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw on initiative count 20 or take 11 (2d10) piercing damage and 11 (2d10) necrotic damage. (Note that because a successful save does not halve this damage, the Evasion feature does not affect the amount of damage dealt for any creatures who possess that ability).

A spell or other effect that can sense the presence of magic, such as *detect magic*, reveals an aura of necromancy emanating from the hallway.

The snapping skulls trap can only be disarmed by purifying the cursed fountain in the northeastern chamber of Area B2. A successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion)** check is required to identify the ritual herbs needed to purify the fountain, which can be found in Area B3. Once the components have been identified and collected, completing the ritual takes 10 minutes, but requires no further checks to perform successfully.

FALLING BLOCK TRAP

Mechanical trap

A large stone block in the ceiling has been rigged to fall at a certain location (indicated on the map) when a Medium-sized or larger creature steps on weight-triggered sinking flagstones in the floor. When the block collapses, each creature in the area beneath it must make a **DC 18 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save.

The falling block trap can be detected with a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** check by any creature in the northern hallway.

The falling block trap can be armed or disarmed with the push of a lever mounted on the inner wall of the western hallway, just out of sight from the northern corridor of snapping skulls. It may also be manually disarmed with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** check with thieves' tools.

NONCOMBAT CHALLENGE: If the party survives or intentionally bypasses the traps, award them 2,300 XP.

FEATURE: The eastern hallway connecting to this passageway houses a white marble fountain filled with foul, stagnant water. The surface of the marble is covered in ancient carvings and archaic Common; a **DC 15 Intelligence (History)** reveals that the carvings depict the epic saga of a holy warrior named Artos. Additionally, with a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion)** check, an adventurer can recall a short ritual (taking 1d4 minutes to perform) that can purify the fountain, but it requires the use of specific magical herbs to do so. Once purified, drinking from the fountain will bestow one of the following restorative effects: benefit from the effects of a *potion of greater healing*, or remove the mummy rot effects of a mummy's Rotting Fist action as per a *remove curse* spell. Although the water remains permanently pure and safe for drinking after the ritual is performed, an adventurer can only benefit from the restorative properties of drinking from the fountain once per day. If the water is bottled and removed from the fountain's immediate vicinity, it loses all restorative properties. Purifying the fountain also disables the snapping skulls haunt in the passageway.

MONSTER/TRAP: A kobold slave named Pekdak stands in the northwest corner of the skull passageway. Most likely already alerted by the sounds of combat in B1, he hatches a plot to lure the adventurers into greater peril. Pekdak has rigged a large stone block in the ceiling to fall at a certain location when a human-sized or larger creature steps on weight-triggered sinking flagstones in the floor. Pekdak himself is not heavy enough to trigger the trap, and can arm or disarm the falling block with the push of a lever mounted on the inner wall of the western hallway (which he promptly does as soon as he hears fighting in the desecrated shrine). Pekdak taunts the adventurers in broken Common, then throws a flask of alchemist's fire at the closest one of them and runs into the western hallway, retreating to the pillar mosaic chamber to shout a warning to another kobold slave, Kipyra, who waits at the top of the stairs leading down to area D1. Pekdak then returns to the hallway to see if the intruders made it past his block trap, throwing more alchemist's fire and luring them into the reach of the giant flytrap in area B3.

PEKDAK AND KIPYA, KOBOLD GUARDS

The dragon hired ingenious kobold engineers to design her traps. The minions those engineers left behind to maintain them, though... well, someone has to be from the shallow end of the gene pool.

Reign of Ruin

PEKDAK, KOBOLD GUARD

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 31 (7d6+7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 7 (−2) **DEX** 18 (+4) **CON** 12 (+1)

INT 8 (−1) **WIS** 7 (−2) **CHA** 8 (−1)

Skills Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Cunning Action. Once per turn, the guards may use a bonus action to Dash, Disengage, or Hide.

Pack Tactics. The guards have advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of their allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Repel the Warmbloods! The guards have advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn in combat yet, and hits scored against surprised creatures are automatically critical hits.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the guards deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage on one creature they hit with an attack if they have advantage on the attack roll (or if an ally is within 5 feet of the target) and are using a finesse or ranged weapon.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the guards have disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Wyrmbound. The guards are bound to Nyrionaxys' service through a blood rite. If an attack would reduce a guard to 0 or fewer hit points, a Draconic glyph tattooed onto their chests glows brightly and grants them 30 temporary hit points. Disobeying the dragon's orders, or allying with an enemy of the dragon, causes them to immediately lose this ability.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Alchemist's Fire. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) fire damage per round until extinguished (**Dexterity** DC 10).

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that a kobold guard can see hits them with an attack, the guard may use his or her reaction to halve the attack's damage.

Gear dagger, studded leather armor, alchemist's fire (6 flasks)

TACTICS

Before Combat The kobold guards hide to get sneak attack damage on thrown vials of alchemist's fire or dagger attacks on passing enemies.

During Combat The guards goad enemies into chasing them by tossing alchemist's fire, trying to lead them into traps or near other allied creatures in the area.

Morale The kobolds are cowards deep down, and if reduced to 15 hp after their wyrmbound ability is expended, they will petulantly beg for surrender in a tantrum-like fashion.

In addition to possibly damaging the poor sap who falls for this trap, the fallen stone block also cuts off the passageway into the western hallway. The block can be pushed into the northwestern corner of the hallway to reopen the passageway; doing so requires the combined effort of two adventurers and four successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics)** checks by either of them.

B3. The Herb Garden

Shafts in the ceiling allow precious sunlight to beam into this chamber, illuminating a raised stone terrace wall surrounding a rich reservoir of soil filled with lush plants and herbs. Though obviously tended, the garden seems functional rather than ornamental in nature. A dense cluster of thorny vines and spiny knob-shaped growths occupies the center of the garden. A spiral staircase is visible to the southeast.

Monster: The spiny vine-like plant is actually a dormant dire flytrap. It waits patiently for potential prey to draw near enough for it to feed. The flytrap has been well-trained by the Ixtupi not to attack lizardfolk or kobolds who pass through the garden, but has no such reservations about rampaging adventurers.

DIRE FLYTRAP

This huge cluster of vines eats large creatures for breakfast.

DIRE FLYTRAP

Large plant, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 112 (15d10 + 30)

Speed 5 ft.

STR 17 (+3) **DEX** 9 (−1) **CON** 14 (+2)

INT 1 (−5) **WIS** 4 (−3) **CHA** 2 (−4)

Damage Immunities poison

DEADLY DELVES

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 7

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dire flytrap makes three tendrill attacks, or two tendrill attacks and one bite attack. If two or more tendrill attacks hit the same Medium or smaller target, the target is grappled (escape **DC 14**), and the flytrap pulls it 10 feet closer toward itself.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the flytrap uses Engulf on the target (see below).

Tendrils. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Engulf. The dire flytrap engulfs a Medium or smaller creature bitten by it. The engulfed target is blinded, restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw at the start of each of the flytrap's turns or take 21 (4d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the flytrap moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The flytrap can have only one creature engulfed at a time.

TACTICS

Before Combat The flytrap waits for a creature to draw near enough to pull it in with its tendrils.

During Combat The flytrap bites and engulfs any creature that will fit in its monstrous craw, relying on its tendrils to fend off foes while it sups on swallowed creatures.

Morale The flytrap is a mindless carnivorous plant that knows no fear of death.

TREASURE: An adventurer who successfully deduced the ritual process for purifying the fountain in area B2, either by examining the carvings on the fountain or finding the ritual engravings in area D3, immediately realizes that the herb garden here contains all the ingredients needed to perform the ritual. Of course, the flytrap vigorously attacks anything trying to collect the herbs from its bed, so they'll likely need to deal with that threat first.

B4. Tomb Antechamber

The short, narrow hallway ends in a small rectangular chamber lit by dozens of black wax candles which rest in carved marble alcoves along the opposite wall. Each candle is nestled into the vacant brainpan of a reptilian skull. A set of double doors to the south leads out of the chamber.

TRAP/MONSTERS: The flagstone in the last 5-foot square of the narrow hallway leading into the chamber is carved with a draconic sigil that roughly translates to "The Dark Shall Devour All" (**DC 16 Intelligence** check if no one can read Draconic). Stepping on this sigil causes a sudden gust of wind to rush through the room and blow out the candles, which plunges the room into darkness and releases a pair of hungry wraiths that evoke a vaguely reptilian shape. The Ixtupi wraiths relentlessly attack any creature in the chamber, even pursuing them out of this area.

IXTUPI WARRIOR SPIRITS (2)

Wraith, MM 302

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

TACTICS

During Combat The wraiths use ambush tactics, traversing the walls into areas B1, B2, and B5 to gang up on a single adventurer and dispatch them, then turning them into specters at the first available opportunity. If the fountain in area B2 has been purified, however, the wraiths cannot pass through the northern wall of area B4 (the holy water keeps them at bay).

Morale The shades of these ancient Ixtupi warriors know nothing but hatred for the living and will fight until their essences are extinguished.

B5. Ixtupi Clerics' Tomb

Rounded stone alcoves line the walls of this room. Each alcove is occupied by a mud-covered humanoid form. A recessed area in the northern portion of the room houses a lustrous hematite statue of a summer fey. Two stone sarcophagi dominate the center of the tomb.

MONSTERS: As in area B1, lizardfolk mud zombies animate and attack while any non-lizardman or non-dragon creature is present here; each round, two zombies emerge from their alcoves. There are four total mud zombies in this area.

The two stone sarcophagi are sealed shut, and each requires a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check to open. Opening either sarcophagus awakens the Ixtupi mummy within. Failure still awakens the mummy, and it bashes out of its tomb in 1d3 rounds to attack the intruders, chasing them relentlessly. The mummies will not pursue anyone past the stairs leading down to area C, however.

Reign of Ruin

LIZARDFOLK MUD ZOMBIES (4)

Zombie, MM 316

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Dust Cloud. Whenever a mud zombie takes damage, a cloud of dust kicks up around it, causing nearby living creatures to cough uncontrollably. All living creatures within 5 feet must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or suffer disadvantage on all attack rolls and ability checks until the end of their next turn.

IXTUPI MUMMY SENTINELS (2)

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)

Speed 20 ft.

STR 16 (+3) **DEX** 10 (+0) **CON** 15 (+2)

INT 6 (–2) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 14 (+12)

Saving Throws Wis +3

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Draconic

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mummy can use its Dreadful Glare and make one attack with its rotting fist.

Rotting Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 20 (4d8 + 2) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or be cursed with mummy rot. The cursed target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 20 (4d8 + 2) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies and its body turns to dust. The curse lasts until removed by the *remove curse* spell or other magic.

Dreadful Glare. The mummy targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. If the target can see the mummy, it must succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw against this magic or become frightened until the end of the mummy's next turn. If the target fails the saving

throw by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Dreadful Glare of all mummies (but not mummy lords) for the next 24 hours.

TACTICS

During Combat The Ixtupi mummy targets whichever creature disturbed its rest with its Dreadful Glare, attacking it or any other creature that engages it relentlessly.

Morale The mummy sentinels know only vengeance in undeath, and fight until destroyed.

FEATURE/DEVELOPMENT: The hematite statue depicts a beautiful faerie with a wicked smile who coyly holds a white crystal sphere before her face, as if proffering the item to whomever would take it. The sphere can easily be removed from the statue's hand; it may be used in area D3 to disarm the tomb sentinel golems and open the tomb of the high druid of ancient Greenacre.

TREASURE: Aside from the hematite statue, the only things of value here are the four uncut onyx gemstones embedded in the eye sockets of the mud zombies, each worth 75 gp.

C. Mosaic Pillar Chamber

This massive circular chamber stretches 50 feet from ceiling to floor. Two dilapidated wooden staircases line the southwest and northeast walls of the chamber. The most impressive feature of the room by far is the gargantuan pillar in the center of the room. Mosaic tiles arranged in the shapes of fanciful beasts wrap around the cylindrical column; toward the base of the pillar, another mosaic of an armored warrior bearing a greatsword stands at the ready as if preparing to fight the great beasts that surround him. The sound of water gently lapping at the base of the column echoes up through the chamber.

Long ago, the faithful of ancient Greenacre traversed this huge chamber using the staircases, which are now very precarious due to centuries of moisture rot. This bothers the Ixtupi little, for they possess the inherent climbing ability to scale the walls of the chamber with ease. The bottom 5 feet of the mosaic chamber is filled with murky water.

TRAPS: To make traversing the mosaic pillar chamber even more treacherous for intruders, Nyrionaxys' engineers also trapped portions of the staircases and the submerged floor. Areas marked T_B are trapped with scything blades that glide out of the wall when a creature steps onto the marked area. Areas marked T_P are rigged to collapse when a

creature weighing more than 75 pounds steps onto the marked area, dumping them into the stagnant waters below. Areas marked T_s are trapped with retracted spikes that spring up and impale anyone stepping on them. Each of these trapped areas is marked with general warning glyphs on the adjacent wall signifying danger in the Draconic tongue; a successful **DC 14 Intelligence** check can decipher their meaning to those that cannot speak Draconic.

COLLAPSING FLOOR TRAP

Mechanical trap

When a Medium-sized or larger creature enters the squares marked T_p on the map of Area C, that 5-foot-square section of the wooden walkway collapses, dumping anyone standing on it into the water below, dealing 11 (2d10) falling damage and alerting the ooze lurking in the stagnant water to the presence of potential food. A successful **DC 11 Dexterity** saving throw allows an affected creature to grab onto the adjacent square of walkway mid-fall. Treat clinging this way as the prone condition.

With a successful **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception)** check, a creature notices that the beams beneath this section of the rickety walkway have been rigged so as to collapse when the proper amount of weight is applied.

The collapsing floor cannot be disarmed or disabled except by repairing the beams, either with the proper tools (which takes 10 minutes) or a *mending* cantrip.

RETRACTED STAIR SPIKES TRAP

Mechanical trap

When a Medium-sized or larger creature enters the squares marked T_s on the map of Area C, a pressure plate sinks and spring-loaded spikes pop up and impale anyone standing in the space, dealing 11 (2d10) piercing damage. A successful **DC 11 Dexterity** saving throw allows an affected creature to jump into an adjacent safe square to avoid the damage.

With a successful **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception)** check, a creature notices conspicuous holes in the stone floor that are only partially filled with grime and dirt.

Wedging an iron spike or other object beneath the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating.

WALL SCYTHE TRAP

Mechanical trap

When a Medium-sized or larger creature enters the squares marked T_b on the map of Area C,

scything blades glide out of the wall at any creature in that square (melee weapon attack +5, 11 [2d10] slashing damage). These traps automatically reset one round after being triggered.

With a successful **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception)** check, a creature notices conspicuous slots in the stone wall that are only partially filled with grime and dirt.

Jamming an object into the slot along which the blade travels prevents the trap from activating, although it still deals damage to the obstructing object and operates normally again once the object breaks.

NONCOMBAT CHALLENGE: If the party survives or intentionally bypasses the traps, award them 450 XP.

FEATURES/MONSTERS: The warrior depicted in the mosaic is none other than Artos, the hero whose saga is told in brief through the carvings on the fountain in the eastern hallway of area B2. According to legend, Artos slew four great monsters during his crusade to settle Greenacre: the Caorthannach, a wily green-scaled fire Drake; the Glatissant, a half-snake, half-lion beast; the Sluagh, a vile crow spirit from the Hells; and Tethra, a balor prince from the pits of the Abyss itself. Years ago, the original Nyrionaxys laid an enchantment upon the mosaic pillar that would bring facsimiles of these legendary creatures to life if an intruder should happen to wander through her abode without knowing how to bypass the chamber safely. The northern quarter of the room is inscribed with Abyssal markings in red, the eastern with Draconic glyphs in gold, the southern with necromantic runes in violet, and the western with unseelie Sylvan scripts in green. Matching portions of this writing also appear on the bodies of each of the mosaic monsters when they manifest, cluing in the adventurers to the boundaries each monster must respect within this chamber as detailed in their individual tactics. Both the markings on the walls and on the creatures glow conspicuously.

Every 1d3 rounds, so long as any creature larger than a cat that is not a dragon, half-dragon, or kobold occupies Area C, one of the mosaic monsters emerges into existence from the pillar's surface and attacks the intruder. Once a mosaic monster is slain, it shatters into thousands of tiles, never to reappear again, although a faint outline of its form remains etched into the column.

CAORTHANNACH

The top quarter of the pillar is dominated by a mosaic image of a long-bodied green wyrm, its neck stretched forward and its mouth billowing with plumes of flame.

Reign of Ruin

CAORTHANNACH

Red Dragon Wyrmling, MM 98

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

TACTICS

During Combat The caorthannach takes flight to catch as any intruders in its fire breath as it can, resorting to bite attacks until its breath recharges. The caorthannach can only move freely within the 90-degree arc from the break in the northeast staircase to the middle of the southeast wall, measured from the central column.

Morale The facsimile of the caorthannach fights until destroyed.

GLATISANT

The second highest quarter of the pillar depicts a wondrous mix of snake and lion—a fanged reptilian head framed by a shock of tawny hair, its physique resembling that of a great cat covered in the ridged scales of a viper.

GLATISANT

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 165 (22d10 + 44)

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 17 (+3) **CON** 14 (+2)

INT 3 (−4) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 9 (−1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +4

Skills Athletics +10, Perception +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses passive Perception 14

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Pounce. If the glatisant moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength** saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the glatisant can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Running Leap. With a 10-foot running start, the glatisant can long jump up to 25 feet.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 13 (3d4 + 6) poison damage.

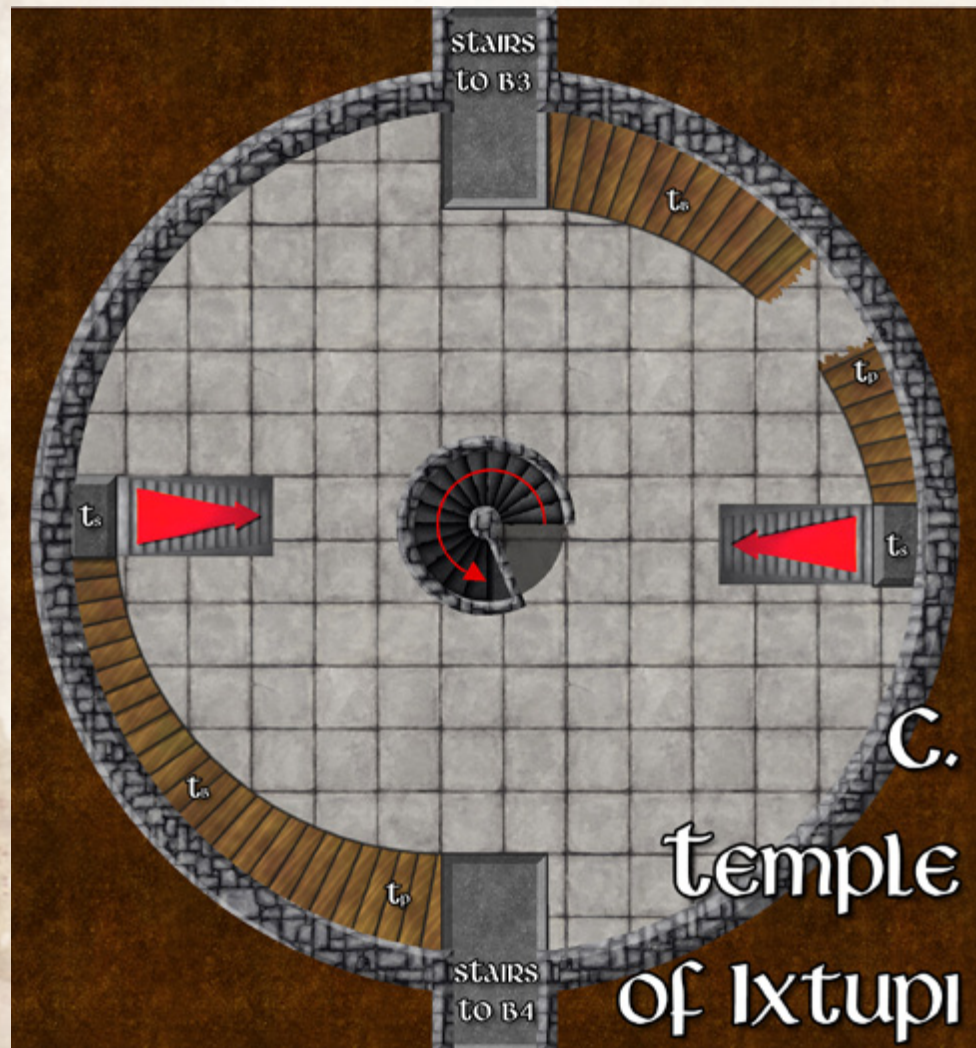
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Venomous Retort. If a creature misses an attempted melee attack against the glatisant, it can immediately make a bite attack against the attacker.

TACTICS

Before Combat The glatisant positions itself to make use of its pounce ability.



DEADLY DELVES

During Combat The glatisant can only move freely within the 90-degree arc from the middle of the southwest staircase to the middle of the northwest wall, measured from the central column. The beast pounces targets, jumping between platforms and walkways and uses its claw reach to limit melee attackers' options in close combat.

Morale The glatisant is fury embodied, and it fights to the death.

SLUAGH

The tiled image of hundreds of crows flocked together, forming the shape of one enormous crow that stands as a single creature, haunts the second lowest quarter of the pillar.

SLUAGH

Large swarm of Tiny undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 105 (14d10 + 28)

Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR 6 (−2) **DEX** 17 (+3) **CON** 15 (+2)
INT 12 (+1) **WIS** 15 (+2) **CHA** 16 (+3)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny creature. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., up to four targets in the swarm's space. **Hit:** 13 (2d12) piercing damage and 9 (2d8) necrotic damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage and 5 (2d4) necrotic damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way rises in 10 minutes as a wight (MM 300).

Peck. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 25/100, one target. **Hit:** 13 (2d12) piercing damage and the target's Charisma score is reduced by 1d3 until it finishes a short or long rest. If the target is a creature other than a construct or an undead, it must succeed at a **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw or lose 7 (2d6) hit points at the start of each of its turns as it bleeds profusely from the wound. As an action, a creature can stanch the bleeding with a successful **DC 9 Wisdom (Medicine)** check. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

TACTICS

During Combat The sluagh can only move freely within the 90-degree arc from the middle of the southeast wall to the middle of the southwest staircase, measured from the central column. The sluagh tries to catch as many creatures as it can in its swarm area, using its peck attack if no targets are within range of its claws.

Morale The sluagh is a spirit of death and seeks to feed upon the living until wholly vanquished.

TETHRA

The bottom quarter of the pillar bears the horrifying visage of a great demon with one eye in the front of its head and one in the back, reaching upward with a clawed hand to grab at the image of the armored warrior above it.

TETHRA

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 130 (20d10 + 20)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR 20 (+5) **DEX** 10 (+0) **CON** 12 (+1)
INT 11 (+0) **WIS** 13 (+1) **CHA** 15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +4

Damage Resistances cold, lightning

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Abyssal

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Magic Resistance. Tethra has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Tethra's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Tethra makes two attacks: one with his longsword and one with his whip.

Reign of Ruin

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d4 + 5) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) lightning damage, and the target must succeed on a **DC 16 Strength** saving throw or be pulled up to 15 feet toward Tethra.

REACTIONS

Brimstone Step (Recharge 5-6). When hit by an attack, Tethra can surround himself with a cloud of cinders and flame, dealing 10 (3d6) fire damage to all creatures within 5 feet before teleporting up to 30 feet away.

TACTICS

During Combat Tethra can only move freely within the 90-degree arc from the middle of the northwest wall to the break in the northeast staircase, measured from the central column. Tethra positions himself at the top of the stairs leading back up to B3 if no one is currently occupying that space, cutting off egress from the mosaic room and using his whip to drag enemies into melee range. If his brimstone step is triggered, he teleports to a spot between the pillar and the walkways, preferably within his whip's reach of an enemy. When in mid-air like this, he will whip a target, drag them out over the water, and drop them into the sludge below, which alerts the ochre jelly in the stagnant pool.

Morale Tethra is an ancient demon of unparalleled wrath and fights until destroyed.

Additionally, the stagnant water that fills the bottom 5 feet of the chamber is the home of a ravenously hungry aquatic ochre jelly. Its body is thinly dispersed across the surface of the water, so it is indistinguishable from normal algae for all intents and purposes. However, if any creature enters the water, the jelly gathers itself together and reforms into its normal size and shape near that creature's location (which takes a full round), attacking any potential food relentlessly.

AQUATIC OCHRE JELLY

Ochre Jelly, MM 243

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)

Speed 10 ft., swim 10 ft.

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

TACTICS

Before Combat The ochre jelly lays atop the shallow water in the bottom of the chamber, thinly dispersed so as to be almost invisible.

During Combat The famished jelly attacks any creature that disturbs the water relentlessly.

Morale The jelly lives only to feed and will not cease its onslaught until destroyed.

SECRET DOOR: The southeast quarter of the mosaic pillar hides a secret sliding stone door some 10 feet above the room's floor (5 feet above the water line). This door leads to a spiral staircase that winds downwards into area D1. Inside the pillar, the kobold slave Kipyra views the room through two small peepholes in the door. Her instructions are to run downstairs and sound the alarm if Pekdak reports intruders from above, or to open the door and lower a wooden plank that connects the secret door to the eastern staircase's stone landing if Ixtupi raiders are returning from the upper levels (the Ixtupi know that the water is infested with a bog scum and avoid it at all costs). When closed, this door can only be spotted with a **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception)** check, but the DC drops to 9 if Tethra is slain (his mosaic covers the outline of the door).

KIPYRA, KOBOLD GUARD

Kobold Guard, Reign of Ruin 16

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 31 (7d6 + 7)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

TREASURE: If all four mosaic monsters are slain, the mosaic of Artos animates and approaches the adventurers. The knight removes its helmet, revealing that the legends of the Stormhammer Rangers misrecorded one crucial fact now lost to the mists of time: Artos, the champion of Greenacre, was a woman. She praises them for their bravery and prowess, gifting to them her greatsword and helmet before disappearing in a similar fashion as the monsters. *Artos' blade* is a *greatsword of life stealing*, and her helmet is a *helm of lightning* (see sidebar on page 24).

D1. Lower Temple Sanctuary

This large cathedral-like chamber is illuminated by torches set into wall sconces every 10 feet along the ochre-stained walls. Defaced carvings and mosaics, relics of the ancient druids of Greenacre, are covered in tribal designs and profane draconic hieroglyphs. At the west end of the room, a set of stairs leads up onto a raised altar area adorned by flaming braziers and a stone block encrusted with dried blood. Four massive black snakes lie in coils in the lower sanctuary, their eyes gleaming lifelessly in the torchlight.

DEADLY DELVES

The snakes are actually statues carved from obsidian and ivory, but are remarkably lifelike in appearance; realizing that they are not alive requires either a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check or interaction with one, such as attacking a statue.

MONSTERS: A congregation of Ixtupi are gathered here paying tribute to their vile mistress, the reborn dragon Nyrionaxys, who will usher in a new reign of ruin across the Great Swamp. The warpriest is hard at work attempting to activate his *relic of unholy devotion* in hopes of summoning a demonic consort to please Nyrionaxys II. Fortuitously enough for the Ixtupi, the adventurers would make excellent sacrifices to such a demon.

IXTUPI SAVAGES (4)

Lizardfolk, MM 204

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP each)

TACTICS

During Combat The savages move to block adventurers from interfering with the warpriest's ritual, creating a line of humanoid shields through which the sorceresses can cast spells.

Morale These rank-and-file Ixtupi warriors are zealots devoted to Nyrionaxys, and fight to their deaths.

IXTUPI SORCERESS (3)

Reign Of Ruin, page 9

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 63 (9d8 + 23)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP each)

TACTICS

Before Combat Ixtupi sorceresses utilize sorcery points to cast subtle *invisibility* so as to close with targets and drop coordinated rounds of acidic *fireballs* on them, or *true strike* to boost their chances of hitting with acidic *scorching rays*.

During Combat The sorceresses cast acidic versions of *scorching ray* and heightened *fireball* with abandon, attacking from *invisibility* if possible. They try not to hit other sorceresses or warpriests with these blasts but don't care if the savages get caught in the crossfire. If forced into melee, they cast *shield* in reaction to any incoming attacks and retaliate with acidic heightened *burning hands* spells.

Morale The sorceresses retreat if reduced to 15 hp or less, using subtle castings of *invisibility* to evade an enemy's notice and regroup with other servants of Nyrionaxys.

IXTUPI WARPRIEST

Reign Of Ruin, page 10

Armor Class 19 (natural armor 13; splint armor and shield)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

TACTICS

Before Combat The Ixtupi warpriest is focused on setting up his altar to summon an incubus at Nyrionaxys' request.

During Combat The warpriest requires three rounds of uninterrupted concentration to complete his summoning. Once the summoning is complete, he reverts to standard tactics for a warpriest as detailed elsewhere in this adventure.

New Magic Items

HELM OF LIGHTNING

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a character proficient with all armor)

This helm has 3 charges. While wearing it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast the *lightning bolt* spell (save DC 15) from it. Alternatively, you can expend 1 charge from the helm as a bonus action after hitting a creature with a melee weapon to deal an additional 3d10 lightning damage to the creature you just hit.

The helm regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the helm's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the helm explodes and all creatures within 10 feet must make a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw. The explosion destroys the helm and deals 3d6 lightning damage to each creature, or half that on a successful save.

RELIC OF UNHOLY DEVOTION

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This idol resembles a horned, winged fiend with ruby eyes and obsidian talons, immaculately sculpted from black and gray marble. When placed on an altar to an evil deity or in another space that has been ritually prepared for conjuring a fiend, any fiend conjured within 30 feet of the relic gets a +2 bonus on its Dexterity and Constitution saving throws for the duration of the conjuration or until the relic is removed. Additionally, the first time each round that each character attacks the fiend, the attacker must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw prior to the attack. All the character's attacks against the fiend that round have disadvantage unless the save succeeds.

Reign of Ruin

Morale Ixtupi warpriests are utter fanatics of Tlaloc's cult who fight to the death in Nyrrionaxys' service, believing her to be a profane herald of their foul deity.

DEVELOPMENT: If Kipya the kobold slave was alerted to the adventurers' presence in area C, either by their own deeds or by Pekdak, she proceeds to this chamber to inform the Ixtupi sorcerers and their retinue of guards that intruders have breached the upper levels of the temple. She then scampers through the open secret door in the northwest portion of area D1, closing the door behind her, and runs to warn Nyrrionaxys in turn, who then responds as described in the sidebar on her tactical procedures within the temple (see area E4).

Meanwhile, the Ixtupi prepare to mount an offense, with the sorceresses using their spells to target adventurers from afar while the savages engage them in melee. The Ixtupi warpriest begins a ritual incantation over the bloodstained altar with the intent of summoning an incubus (via his *scroll of conjure fiend* [as *conjure celestial*, but it conjures

a fiend of challenge rating 4 or less]) to aid his underlings. This ritual takes 3 rounds to complete (see the description of the *relic of unholy devotion* in the sidebar for more information).

INCUBUS

MM 285

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

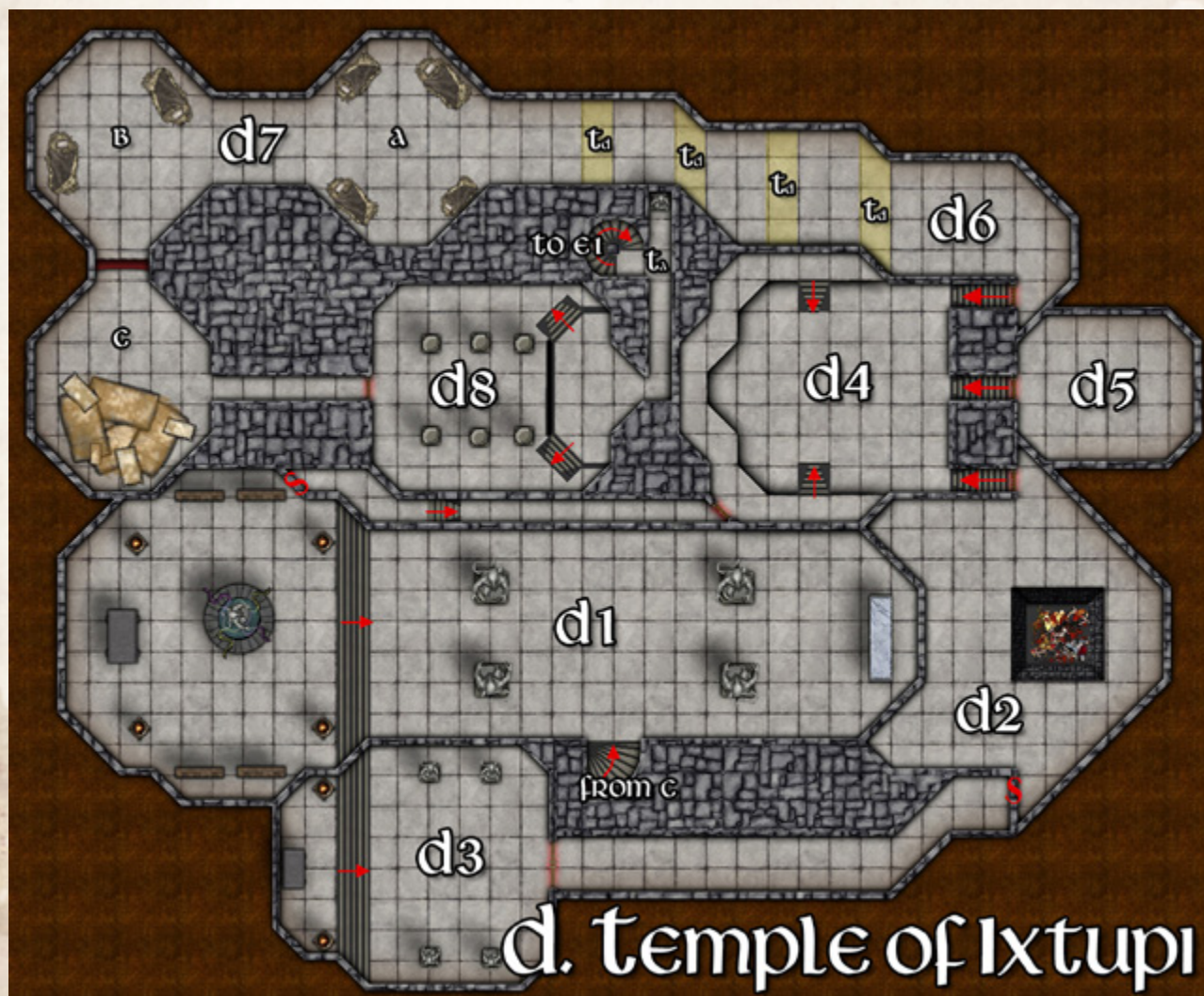
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

TACTICS

During Combat The incubus attempts to charm a heavily armed and armored adventurer (preferring a comely female, if possible) and turn them against their allies.

Morale The incubus is bound to serve by the warpriest's magic; if the warpriest falls, he might be amenable to parleying with the adventurers.

TREASURE: The altar on the dais holds a *relic of unholy devotion* (see sidebar), which the Ixtupi



warpriest uses to bolster the abilities of his summoned incubus.

SECRET DOOR: The door in the northwest portion of the altar area can be found with a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check, but opening it is a bit trickier. The secret is in the snake statues in the sanctuary area, which are mounted on movable blocks that turn in a circle when pushed; a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Arcana)** check is required to notice this. If each of the four statues is rotated so that the heads of the snakes face the altar, the audible grinding of stone on stone is heard echoing throughout the chamber, and the door opens.

D2. Charnel Pit

The overwhelming stench of rotting flesh assaults your olfactory senses as you enter this room. A pit filled to the brim with human bodies festers in the center of the chamber. On one side of the charnel, a lizardman priest chants vile prayers to forgotten gods. As his fevered incantations increase in pitch and intensity, several of the bodies atop the pile twitch and lurch, moving in a horrid simulacrum of life as they rise to their feet and walk over the other corpses, their lifeless eyes fixed upon the room's entrances.

The Ixtupi collect the bodies of fallen humanoids that they slay during raids and dump them here. Some are consumed as food, but most are used as zombie fodder to reinforce the temple grounds (their last batch was destroyed during a recent attack by the Tsiikil lizardfolk, so they are hard at work creating new ones when the adventurers enter the room). Assume that the pit contains enough bodies to create a dozen human zombies before their supply is exhausted.

MONSTERS: An Ixtupi high priest and four savages guard this chamber. They zealously fight to the death, hissing Draconic curses as they attempt to raise more zombies and turn away to hack away at the intruders.

IXTUPI HIGH PRIEST

Although wearing the same golden medallion and red robes as the other Ixtupi priests you have encountered, this lizardman clutches grisly carrion totems and wields a wicked-looking ceremonial dagger.

IXTUPI HIGH PRIEST

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), chaotic evil, 8th-level cleric

Armor Class 18 (natural armor 13; chain mail, cloak of protection)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR 16 (+3) **DEX** 10 (+0) **CON** 14 (+2)
INT 7 (–2) **WIS** 16 (+3) **CHA** 7 (–2)

Saving Throws Wis +7; all others +1 (*cloak of protection*)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +5 (disadvantage), Survival +8

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Draconic

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Bolster Undead. When the high priest animates an undead creature with a challenge rating of 1/2 or lower, that undead creature gains a +1 bonus to its attack and damage rolls.

Divine Strike. Once per turn when the high priest hits a creature with a weapon attack, he can deal an extra 4 (1d8) damage of the same type dealt by the weapon to the target.

Guided Strike. Once per day when the high priest makes an attack roll, he can add a +10 bonus to the roll.

Hold Breath. The high priest can hold his breath for 15 minutes.

War Priest. Three times per day, the high priest can make one weapon attack as a bonus action when using the attack action.

Spellcasting. The high priest is an 8th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, resistance, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, divine favor, guiding bolt, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *enhance ability, hold person, magic weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, bestow curse*

4th level (2 slots): *guardian of faith, stoneskin*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The high priest makes two melee attacks: one with his bite and one with his claws or dagger.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger of Venom. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage; the target also takes 11 (2d10) poison damage and must succeed at a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or gain the poisoned condition for 1 minute. The poison doesn't apply to subsequent attacks until the high priest uses an action to cause more poison to ooze from the blade.

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REACTIONS

Tlaloc's Blessing. Once per day when a creature within 30 feet makes an attack roll, the high priest can use his reaction to add a +10 bonus to the roll.

Gear chain mail, *cloak of protection*, *dagger of venom*, gold holy symbol of Tlaloc (worth 500 gp)

TACTICS

Before Combat When the sound of combat in Area D4 alerts the Ixtupi high priest, he casts *stoneskin* on himself, and then uses multiple castings of *animate dead* to create zombies from the corpses in the charnel pit.

During Combat The high priest directs his zombies and savages to attack any intruders, hurling *guiding bolts* at enemies from behind his minions. If enough adventurers have magical weapons that penetrate the high priest's *stoneskin*, he uses his other concentration-based defensive spells instead. If forced into melee, he casts *hold person* or *bestow curse*, targeting anyone who suffers the effects with his *dagger of venom* in conjunction with his Divine Strike, Guided Strike, and war priest abilities.

Morale The Ixtupi high priest disdains anyone who would defile his unholy sanctum and fights to the death in fanatical rage.

IXTUPI SAVAGES (4)

Lizardfolk, MM 204

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP each)

SECRET DOORS: An obvious door is set in the wall of the northmost area of the pit chamber. It is a one-way passage from the southeast corner of area D4 and cannot be opened from this side without a magical key--the high priest's golden holy symbol is enchanted to open the passage from this side when touched to the door. A much more subtle hidden door (**DC 20 Wisdom [Perception]** check to spot) is set in the corresponding wall to the south, and leads to area D3.

D3. High Druid's Tomb

A twisting, narrow hallway ends in a chamber shaped similarly to the great sanctuary, with stairs rising to a dais upon which sits a single, unmarred sarcophagus of white marble flanked by braziers that burn with white flame. Four crystal statues of warriors from ancient Greenacre flank the path to the stairs, two on either side. The flame's pure light refracts through the statues, creating a prismatic wash of rainbows on the walls and floors.



MONSTERS: The Ixtupi lizardfolk have never found the door leading into this chamber, where the high druid who oversaw the creation of the temple is interred. His remains are guarded by two crystal sentinels, who animate and attack any creature that moves adjacent to the steps leading up to the sarcophagus.

CRYSTAL SENTINEL (2)

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 142 (15d10 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4)	DEX 9 (−1)	CON 18 (+4)
INT 3 (−4)	WIS 11 (+0)	CHA 1 (−5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic;

bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

New Magic Item

RAINBOW SCEPTRE

Staff, very rare (spellcasting effects require attunement by a cleric, druid, sorcerer, or wizard)

The *rainbow sceptre* is a rod of gold molded in the shape of a couatl and decorated with beads, feathers, and gems of every size, shape, and color imaginable. It radiates a shifting prismatic light whenever a dragon, half-dragon, or lizardfolk is within 120 feet, intensifying in brightness as they draw nearer. Nearby dragonflies are drawn to the sceptre and will often perch upon its tip.

The *rainbow sceptre* can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff which grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. Additionally, it deals an extra 3d6 bludgeoning damage when it strikes a dragon. On a critical hit with the sceptre, the target of the attack must also succeed at a **DC 17 Wisdom** saving throw or be blinded until the end of the wielder's next turn.

The *rainbow sceptre* also imparts a quirk upon its wielder: the bearer of the sceptre begins to recognize the beauty of the infinite variations of the natural world and will pontificate upon that beauty at great length to anyone who will listen to them fawn over the colorful palette of Mother Nature.

The *rainbow sceptre* has 10 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC: *cure wounds* (1 charge per spell level, up to 2nd), *jump* (1 charge), *protection from energy* (3 charges), *remove curse* (3 charges).

The *sceptre* regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the *rainbow sceptre* loses its ability to produce spell effects by expending charges, but retains all other properties.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Dazzle (Recharge 5-6). The golem targets one or more creatures it can see within 30 feet of it. Each target must make a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw against this magic. On a failed save, that target gains the blinded condition for 1 minute.

TACTICS

Before Combat The golems remain motionless until a character moves adjacent to the stairs leading up to the tomb dais.

During Combat Both golems begin combat by using their dazzle abilities, then pounding targets into submission. They use their dazzle again as soon as it recharges, but never on two consecutive rounds.

Morale The sentinels are charged with guarding the High Druid's tomb at all costs unless the sphere from Area B5 is placed in the hemispherical impression on the sarcophagus, at which point they resume their eternal watch in the same position the PCs found them upon entering. They will not pursue fleeing adventurers outside of the tomb.

FEATURES: The lid of the sarcophagus is carved with runes of elemental symbolism and wards against evil, and in the very center of the stone lid is a half-spherical depression. Astute adventurers who collected the crystal sphere in area B5 quickly realize that the depression is sized to fit the sphere (**Intelligence DC 12**). Placing the sphere in the depression causes the tomb sentinel golems to cease their aggression and return to their starting places on either side of the tomb chamber.

Additionally, any adventurer who studies the carvings on the sarcophagus can make a **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion)** check to realize that they are very similar to those found on the befouled fountain in area B2, but these carvings fully describe the sanctification ritual that reactivates the fountain's restorative properties. This is the complete ritual formula for purifying the fountain, so if the adventurers did not deduce that information on their own, they can obtain it more easily here, but they will still need the herbs from area B3 to complete the ritual (which requires destroying the guardian flytrap, if they haven't done so already).

TREASURE: Inside the high druid's sarcophagus, swaddled in his dusty robes, is the most valuable remaining treasure of the ancient people of Greenacre—the *rainbow sceptre*. A gift to the human priesthood from a neighboring tribe of lizardfolk who followed Qucumatx, the Rainbow Serpent, it became a symbol of the office of the high druid. The *sceptre* was never passed on to the deceased high druid's successor; the high druid interred here died shortly before Nyrionaxys I conquered the temple, and all of his priests went into battle against the great wyrm's hordes, leaving the *sceptre* entombed with their fallen master and out of the hands of the Ixtupi.

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D4. Elite Guards' Post

The eastern portion of this room is sunken to a depth of ten feet below you, connected to the balcony on the western side by a pair of stone stairs to the north and south. The floor in the sunken area is a stark, bleached white, contrasting sharply with the ochre-colored walls. Three doors are set in the eastern wall. Four armored and armed half-dragon brutes stand guard here: two on the balcony and two in the sunken area.

MONSTERS/OBSTACLE: The dragonblood brutes in this chamber are the first line of defense protecting Nyrionaxys' lair from intruders, and they take their job very seriously. As soon as the adventurers enter this area, one of the brutes on the balcony throws a lever which causes the lower portion of the room to instantly flood with highly corrosive acid.

IXTUPI DRAGONBLOOD BRUTES (2)

Reign Of Ruin, page 7

Armor Class 15 (natural armor 13; breastplate)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP each)

TACTICS

During Combat The brutes first attempt to shove adventurers into the acid pool. Otherwise, they favor hit-and-run tactics against non-flying opponents, using trident multiattacks in melee to gain the benefits of their skewer ability.

Morale The Ixtupi brutes fight to the death to prevent opponents from advancing further into the temple, unless Nyrionaxys is present and orders them to do otherwise.

ACID BATH TRAP

Mechanical trap

The acid bath is set off by lowering a lever set in the northeastern-most wall of the balcony in Area D4. This causes the lower portion of the room to instantly flood with highly corrosive acid to a depth of about a foot, dealing 11 (2d10) acid damage per round to any creature standing in the bottom portion of the chamber.

A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature)** check notices that the discoloration on the walls of this chamber is consistent with acid washing. A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check means an adventurer notices the activation lever on the balcony and the pipes that pump the acid into the lower area. A successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** check allows a character to notice a second lever built into the floor of the room (and, presumably, submerged in acid).

The acid bath can be disarmed before activation with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** check with thieves' tools if it has not yet been activated; however, failure on this check by 5 or more indicates that the pump breaks and the room continues to fill with acid at a rate of 1 foot per round. Once activated, the acid can only be drained by pulling the lever set in the lower floor. This drains the acid out of the room at a rate of 3 rounds per foot of depth accumulated, but someone must reach into the acid to pull the drain lever, taking 22 (4d10) acid damage in the process.

NONCOMBAT CHALLENGE: If the party survives or deactivates the acid bath, award them 1,100 XP.

D5. Storage

The walls of this modest chamber are lined with crates, pots, and racks. Many are marked as containing foodstuffs and bear the brands of several prominent merchant guilds. The racks contain weapons of varying styles and sizes, none of which seem to have seen much use.

This area is used to store the spoils of the Ixtupi tribe's raids on nearby humanoid settlements. Nearly any sort of mundane equipment can be found here with 1d6 rounds' worth of searching, but nearby monsters alerted to the adventurers' presence by the sounds of combat may storm in to investigate while they plunder through the Ixtupis' stock. This is also a point at which Nyrionaxys may make a quick strike at the party, retreating immediately to let them simmer in their own panic and fear (see the sidebar on the dragon's tactical procedures within the temple under area E4 for additional information).

TREASURE: Although most of the contents of the stock room are mundane supplies, a careful search of the room (**DC 19 Intelligence [Investigation]** skill check) reveals a hidden pouch of ancient platinum coins worth 1,000 gp and a quiver containing fifteen mundane arrows and five +2 arrows.

D6. Trapped Hallway

The hallway doubles back on itself from the entrance, its awkward shape made all the more bizarre by the green mosaic tiles and pigments used to color the walls and floors. Shafts of yellow light beam through the walls, crisscrossing the hallway leading back to the west. The hallway seems to slant noticeably downward as it runs from east to west.

This hallway is lined with kobold-engineered traps: spring-loaded, light-activated murder holes loaded with poison darts that automatically fire

whenever a creature moves in front of the holes and breaks one of the light beams (marked T_p on the map), and an illusion that provides impetus for the adventurers to run headlong into the poison dart traps lining the hallway.

ROLLING BOULDER ILLUSION

Magic trap

Whenever the door from area D4 is opened, an illusion targets all creatures that can see area D6 12 seconds later.

A successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana)** check identifies subtle magic runes in the door frame indicating that the door is a magic trap of some sort. A spell or other effect that can sense the presence of magic, such as *detect magic*, reveals an aura of illusion magic around the easternmost wall of the hallway.

When triggered, the illusion shows the following events: the door to D4 slams shut and audibly locks, and the easternmost wall of the hallway slides upward, revealing a gigantic boulder nearly as wide as the corridor that rolls rapidly into the inclined hallway much like a rolling sphere trap (*DMG* 123). All observers who fail a **DC 18 Intelligence** saving throw believe the illusion to be real. Believers become frightened of the boulder while it rolls and must use their actions each turn to Dash westward away from the illusory boulder until it hits the western wall after 3 rounds, running headlong into the poison dart traps. Any adventurers unaffected by the illusion may warn their comrades as a bonus action on their turns, giving affected characters a second saving throw attempt to disbelieve the highly-convincing illusion. All believers that move less than 60 feet westward fail to keep ahead of the illusory boulder and believe it has hit them; they fall prone and take 17 (5d6) psychic damage which they perceive as bludgeoning damage.

A successful *dispel magic* (DC 16) cast on the wall destroys the trap.

POISON DART TRAPS

Mechanical trap

Four poison dart traps dot the walls of the hallway in Area D6. The beams of light that act as trip wires for the dart mechanisms are obvious and will likely raise suspicion, but deducing the presence of the dart traps themselves requires a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check. Small creatures do not set off these traps, since the beams of light are 4 feet off the ground; Medium creatures must duck, costing an extra 5 feet of movement (creatures Dashing as part of the rolling boulder illusion trap cannot choose to slow down that much).

Whenever a creature of Medium size or larger crosses through the indicated squares on the map, a dart fires, attacking at a +7 bonus and dealing 11 (2d10) poison damage on a hit. A creature hit by a poison dart must also succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or gain the poisoned condition for 1 minute thereafter.

A concealed lever on the diagonally-slanted southern wall just inside the hallway deactivates the traps, sealing the murder holes, while another lever just outside of area D7-A reactivates them. Locating either lever requires a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check as an action.

NONCOMBAT CHALLENGE: If the party survives or intentionally bypasses the traps, award them 2,300 XP.

D7. Living Quarters

Loud, sibilant growling echoes down the hall from up ahead. A short series of steps leads up to an octagonal room lined with heaps of straw and molded fabric. Lizardfolk sit or stand near the piles, casting bones in games of chance or wrestling for sport.

Although most of the Ixtupi tribe makes their beds in the swamps above, the select few chosen to guard the temple sleep either here or in the sanctuary (area D1). Their loud, violent cavorting prevents them from hearing the sounds of combat in other areas of the temple, so they are most likely taken off guard when the adventurers first enter this area. (If Kipyra the kobold slave managed to escape the adventurers' ire and run below to alert Nyrionaxys, she ran right through this area chittering unintelligibly and the Ixtupi took no notice of her, assuming that the dragon has summoned the pathetic wretch to perform some demeaning task in her lair.)

MONSTERS (ROOM A): Four Ixtupi lizardman savages and their pet, a half-dragon bog toad named Hopsey, inhabit this filth-ridden chamber lined with beds of fur and reed. Two of the Ixtupi are wrestling while the other two egg them on, each of them munching on raw buffalo haunches and clenching sacks of mushrooms and plant buds which are valued by the Ixtupi for their intoxicating qualities (and also happen to be their ante for the wrestling wager). Occasionally, one of the savages tosses a half-eaten bone or lump of gristle to Hopsey, who eagerly gobbles it up. The savages are either drunk or deep in the throes of mushroom intoxication, and Hopsey is incredibly dense and stupid even for a half-dragon, so they likely don't notice the adventurers approaching at all.

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IXTUPI SAVAGES (4)

Lizardfolk, MM 204

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

HOPSEY, JUVENILE HALF-DRAGON GIANT TOAD

Despite its draconic heritage, this thing isn't much smarter than your average bullfrog—but what it lacks in brains, it makes up for with brute strength and raw nastiness.

HOPSEY

Juvenile half-dragon giant toad

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Con** 11 (+0)

Int 4 (−3) **Wis** 10 (+0) **Cha** 3 (−4)

Damage Resistances acid

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Draconic

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amphibious. Hopsey can breathe air and water.

Standing Leap. Hopsey's long jump is up to 40 feet, and his high jump is up to 20 feet, with or without a running start.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage and 4 (1d8) poison damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Hopsey can't bite another target.

Swallow. Hopsey makes one bite attack against a Small or smaller target he is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the toad, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of Hopsey's turns. Hopsey can have only one target swallowed at a time. If Hopsey dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by him and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). Hopsey exhales acid in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a **DC 10 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

TACTICS

Before Combat Hopsey is slightly smarter than a bag of rocks, and makes no preparations.

During Combat Hopsey uses his breath weapon as soon as he sees an enemy creature, and then tries to bite and swallow any creature that will fit in his blubbery acidic gullet.

Morale Hopsey is a dumb animal with no greater desire than to gorge on flesh; he fights to his own death in pursuit of a meal.

MONSTERS (ROOM B): A lizardman priest and a lizardwoman sorceress are throwing dice on a rickety table in the northeast corner of the room as they pass a bottle of rotgut grain alcohol between them. They're facing the wall as they throw and accustomed to their rowdy neighbors beating each other until they're all bloody and screaming, so there's only a 25% chance each round that they notice any fighting that occurs in Room A unless someone does something unusual like casting a spell or setting off an explosion; however, loud conversation in Common will definitely get their attention if the adventurers are too chatty while they fight. Once alerted, the priest moves to keep as many allied lizardfolk as possible nearby him to impart combat bonuses while the sorceress withdraws to the entryway of Room C and starts hurling spells at intruders.

IXTUPI SORCERESS

Reign Of Ruin, page 9

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 63 (9d8 + 23)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP each)

TACTICS

Before Combat The Ixtupi sorceress utilizes sorcery points to cast subtle *invisibility* so as to close with targets and drop coordinated rounds of acidic *fireballs* on them, or *true strike* to boost her chances of hitting with acidic *scorching rays*.

During Combat The sorceress casts acidic versions of *scorching ray* and heightened *fireball* with abandon, attacking from *invisibility* if possible. She tries not to hit H'serisseth or the warpriest with these blasts, but doesn't care if brutes or savages get caught in the crossfire. If forced into melee, she casts *shield* in reaction to any incoming attacks and retaliates with acidic heightened *burning hands* spells.

Morale The sorceress retreats if reduced to 15 hp or less, using subtle castings of *invisibility* to evade an enemy's notice and regroup with other servants of Nyrionaxys.

IXTUPI WARPRIEST

Reign Of Ruin, page 10

Armor Class 19 (natural armor 13; splint armor and shield)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

TACTICS

Before Combat The Ixtupi warpriest blankets the surrounding area with spirit guardians. If forced into melee combat, he casts *divine favor* or *shield of faith* on himself.

During Combat The warpriest hides behind lines of grunts and attacks with *guiding bolts* while bolstering allies with Tlaloc's Blessing, then closes into melee and uses his Guided Strike and War Priest abilities to deliver maximum damage output on his first hit. He casts higher-level *cure wounds* on himself as needed to stay in combat, but will offer healing to H'serisseth at his own expense in deference to his chieftain once the barbarian brute enters the fray.

Morale Ixtupi warpriests are utter fanatics of Tlaloc's cult who fight to the death in Nyrionaxys' service, believing her to be a profane herald of their foul deity.

MONSTERS (ROOM C): A curtain is drawn over the entrance to this room, and the smell of lizard musk hangs heavy in the air. On top of an immense pile of rotting, mildewed mattresses and pillows, four female Ixtupi concubines attend the needs of an especially large and well-muscled male half-dragon lizardman brute, feeding and caressing him; this male is the strongest of Nyrionaxys' brutes, the warlord H'serisseth. Their chances of noticing trouble in the adjoining room are calculated similarly to those of the inhabitants of Room B (25% chance unless otherwise alerted). If attacked or alerted, H'serisseth throws his concubines off him and springs toward any intruders, grabbing his massive stone axe from the floor near the bedding and picking the biggest, most well-armored adventurer to attack relentlessly. His four concubines cower in Room C if fighting breaks out, but they will mob any adventurer that dares to part the curtain and enter the warlord's room.

IXTUPI SAVAGES (4)

Lizardfolk, MM 204

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

H'SERISSETH

This half-dragon brute is larger by far than any of the other Ixtupi lizardfolk you have seen until now. The gilding on his horns and breast scales that no other Ixtupi sports plainly marks him as a leader among his own kind. He casually hefts a stone axe taller than a full-grown human in his left hand, and you get the distinct impression he'd like to bury it in your cranium just for the fun of it.

H'SERISSETH

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), chaotic evil, 5th-level barbarian (berserker)

Armor Class 16 (natural armor 13; half plate)

Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

Str 18 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Con** 16 (+3)

Int 11 (+0) **Wis** 12 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +7, Wis +5

Skills Perception +9, Stealth +9 (disadvantage), Survival +9

Damage Resistances acid

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Abyssal, Draconic

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Hold Breath. H'serisseth can hold his breath for 15 minutes.

Mutilate. Once per turn, when H'serisseth hits a living target with a greataxe attack, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) damage, and H'serisseth gains temporary hit points equal to the extra damage dealt.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. H'serisseth makes three melee attacks: one with his bite and two with his claws or greataxe, or three with his claws or greataxe.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) slashing damage.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). H'serisseth exhales acid in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each target must make a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Rage. H'serisseth can enter a rage as a bonus action three times per long rest, gaining advantage on Strength checks and saves, a +2 damage bonus on all melee attacks, and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage for 1 minute.

Reckless Attack. When H'serisseth makes his first

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attack on his turn, he can elect to gain advantage on all of his attack rolls during that turn; however, attack rolls against him also have advantage until his next turn begins.

Danger Sense. H'serisseth has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that he can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, he cannot be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Frenzy. H'serisseth can go into a frenzy when he rages, gaining a single melee attack as a bonus action on each of his turns. When his rage ends, he suffers 1 level of exhaustion.

Gear +1 greataxe, half plate armor

TACTICS

Before Combat H'serisseth only emerges from his harem if alerted by the other lizardfolk in Area D7, assuming that any sounds of combat are merely the usual brutal internecine warfare that commonly occurs between his lessers in the tribe. Once he realizes intruders are present, he throws his concubines aside, grabs his greataxe, and charges into the fray.

During Combat H'serisseth uses his Rage and Reckless Attack abilities every round, hacking away at any opposition. If he has an opportunity to hit multiple targets with his breath weapon, he takes it, but otherwise he sticks to melee combat.

Morale H'serisseth is the champion of the Ixtupi tribe and brooks no challenge to his dominance. He rages against all enemies until felled.

TREASURE: The plant buds and mushrooms belonging to the wrestling lizardfolk in Room A are quite potent and would fetch as much as 500 gp to a black market trader who deals in drugs and poisons. The gambling lizardfolk in Room B left 250 gp on the table where they were throwing dice. A hidden compartment behind a loose brick in Room B (visible to anyone who succeeds on a **DC 21 Wisdom [Perception]** check) holds a *ring of x-ray vision* left there long ago by an apprentice druid who lived in these chambers before the reign of Nyrrionaxys I.

D8. Orsephia's Lair

Beyond the three pairs of stone pillars supporting the high ceilings of this room, elaborate hieroglyphs of inlaid silver decorate an obsidian stage that rises 15 feet above ground level on the east side of the chamber. Atop the stage, on a massive pile of silk throw pillows, sits a creature with the face of a beautiful, scarlet-eyed drow elf female, the forequarters of a black panther, and the hindquarters, wings, and tail of a black dragon. It gazes down at you bemusedly, yawning and beckoning you nearer with the casual claw-bearing

flex of a feline paw.

FEATURE: The ceiling of this chamber is 30 feet high. It is supported by the six columns on the map, but the columns are old and precarious. Any time a creature attacks a target adjacent to a column and misses on a melee attack by 5 or more, the attack hits the column instead. The affected column cracks and crumbles, dealing 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage to any nearby creatures as it falls (**Dexterity DC 14** saving throw negates). If all six columns collapse, the entire room west of the stage's front edge caves in, dealing 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage to all creatures in the collapsed portion of the room.

Noncombat Challenges: If the party triggers and survives any or all of the individual collapsing columns, award them 1,800 XP. If they trigger and survive the total collapse, award them an additional 2,900 XP.

MONSTER: Although sphinxes cannot typically reproduce, Tlaloc's divine intervention allowed the original Nyrrionaxys to capture and violate the androsphinx guardian of the high druid's tomb, yielding an offspring of great strength and wit: the half-dragon gynosphinx Orsephia. Maddeningly calm and loquacious, Orsephia does not receive many visitors; the Ixtupi priests who traverse her chamber with her mistress's permission are poor conversationalists indeed. She's quite likely to chat with the adventurers just to get news of the outside world and hear a voice other than her own, or the inelegant hissing of the Ixtupi, for a change.

Orsephia knows that the younger Nyrrionaxys desires the blood of strong, cunning heroes to use in her ritual to bind her broodmates' spirits to her own essence, and so she seeks to test the wits of any who dare to pass through her room and into the dragon's lair below. The sphinx poses three riddles to any who seek to pass, and only three correct answers will force her to yield. If the adventurers cannot guess, or guess incorrectly, an answer to a riddle, Orsephia sighs, shakes her head, and says, "You are not the ones. I appreciate the brief pleasure of your company, but it is time you left this place before your deaths find you." With that, she curls into a ball and feigns sleep. At the first sign of aggression from any of the adventurers, Orsephia attacks with her full fury.

ORSEPHIA, HALF-DRAGON GYNOSPHERINX

Imagine a great cat with the cruel countenance of a drow and the temper of a dragon, then make it a madcap genius. We promise you that Orsephia is worse.

ORSEPHIA

Half-Dragon Gynosphinx, MM 180 and 282

Large monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 153 (18d10 + 54)

Damage Resistances acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Draconic, Sphinx

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

ACTIONS

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). Orsephia exhales acid in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each target must make a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

TACTICS

Before Combat Orsephia attempts to defuse threats of violence with a strongly-worded *suggestion* to the most seemingly charismatic party member that they leave before things get ugly.

During Combat The dragon-sphinx uses *greater invisibility* to reposition herself around her lair and catch as many adventurers as possible in her acid breath, raking any obvious spellcasters with claws and teleporting away (via legendary actions) to later repeat this pattern of tactics.

Morale If reduced to 33 or fewer hp, Orsephia tries to parley with the adventurers to save her own life. She is pact-bound to refuse direct passage to anyone who cannot answer her riddles but might attempt to circumvent the pact by suggesting an alternate means of entering the caverns below, such as *polymorphing* into a rat to traverse the same tunnels that the dragon uses or *dimension dooring* to a specific floor.

Although GMs are encouraged to insert their own riddles (or mechanics for solving them) as appropriate to the acumen and tastes of their players, the three following riddles will serve just fine if your preparation time does not allow for custom additions.

“Under pressure is the only way I work,
And by myself is the only way I’m hurt.”

ANSWER: A diamond.

“A natural state, I’m sought by all.
Go without me, and you shall fall.

You do me when you spend,
And use me when you eat to no end.”

ANSWER: Balance.

“We hurt without moving.

We poison without touching.

We bear the truth and the lies.

We are not to be judged by our size.”

ANSWER: Words.

TRAP: The hallway behind Orsephia’s throne ends in an alcove occupied by an 8-foot tall obsidian statue of a black dragon, its maw open in a sign of aggression and its wings laid flat across its back. The area immediately in front of the stairwell down to E1 holds the trigger for an acid spray trap (T_A). Written in Draconic on this area of the floor is the following missive: “Kneel in supplication, ye accursed wretches, and worship at the talons of Nyrionaxys, the Blackener of Bright Waters and the Bringer of Ruin.”

ACID-SPRAYING STATUE

Mechanical trap

The 5-foot area immediately in front of the stairwell down to Area E1 holds a pressure stone that triggers an acid spray trap.

Detecting the trap requires a **DC 14**.

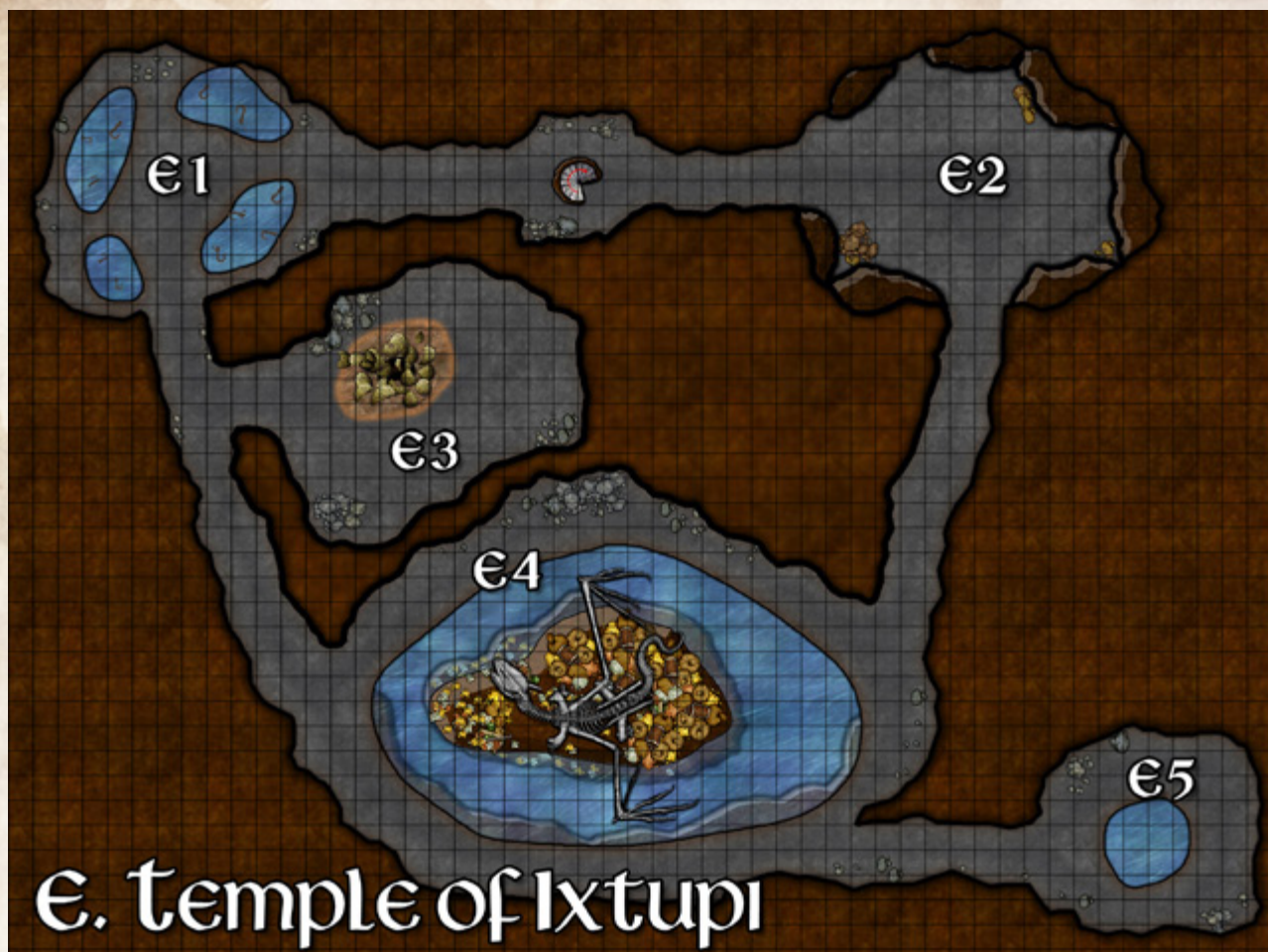
The trap activates when more than 20 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure stone. It sprays from the dragon statue’s mouth a line of acid which is 5 feet wide and 30 feet long. Targets in the line must make a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw (with advantage if they knelt as indicated by the warning carved under the statue in Draconic), taking 22 (4d10) acid damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

The trigger stone can be disarmed with a successful **DC 14 Dexterity** check with thieves’ tools by precisely wedging an iron spike or other object under the pressure stone.

E1. The Abattoir

The overwhelming stench of rot and death hangs heavy within this cave. Nearly a score of thick hemp ropes are suspended from the ceilings some ten feet apart from one another, and masses of nigh-unidentifiable gore—are those flayed and dressed carcasses?—dangle five feet or so off the floor from massive hooks which are tied to each length of hemp. Pools of brackish water lie beneath the hooks, and yet more dismembered flesh bobs on the surface of the pools.

Nyrionaxys uses this area to store captured live prey for later consumption, hanging her victims head-first on great meat hooks, cutting them down after a few days of agony (or, more likely, decomposition) to let them pickle in the caustic brine before devouring their rancid corpses. Although several hooks bear the remains of water



buffalo poached from human settlements and large fish or reptiles the dragon caught in the swamps, just as many are clearly identifiable as humanoid.

If the adventurers spend more than 2 rounds here, something horrific occurs: one of the impaled victims calls out to them in anguish, begging for their help. This tortured soul is a human male named Braegan, a member of the Stormhammer Rangers. Nyrionaxys took him from the village of Northam in the aftermath of her recent raid on that settlement and brought him here for her amusement. If the adventurers can manage to get Braegan off the hook and apply some sort of healing magic to him, he will likely survive, but he is still in no condition to fight Nyrionaxys or her minions. The dragon has bragged about her plans for the heroes to Braegan during the long, pain-filled hours she has spent torturing him here, and he can inform them of her plot to sacrifice them in a rite designed to bind her spirit to those of her dead broodmates.

MONSTERS: Should the adventurers attempt to rescue Braegan or otherwise disturb the carrion stored in the abattoir, two servitor chain devils that Nyrionaxys has bound to this chamber materialize, one at each entrance to the cave, and ready themselves to attack the intruders.

CHAIN DEVILS (2)

MM 72

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d8 + 40)

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP each)

TACTICS

Before Combat The devils animate the hooked chains hanging from the ceiling of the abattoir to bolster their multiattacks in subsequent rounds.

During Combat The devils attack relentlessly with their chains, using their Unnerving Masks to frighten intruders; they prefer to corner and kill targets rather than chase them out of the room, however.

Morale A line of glowing Infernal script limns the threshold of every exit from the abattoir; the same script is etched into the foreheads of the chain devils. Since they are pact-bound to fight to the death to guard Nyrionaxys' pantry, the devils cannot leave this chamber for any reason, and these markings should clue the adventurers in to this fact.



OBSTACLES: The pools of brackish water beneath the meat hooks are 5 feet deep, and highly caustic. Anyone stepping into the pools takes 3 (1d6) acid damage every round that they remain in the water. If pinned beneath the water, a creature takes 14 (4d6) acid damage.

TREASURE: If rescued and healed, Braegan gives the adventurers his +1 shield.

E2. Stormwyt Eyrie

An odor akin to bird droppings or bat guano permeates the air of this tall vertical cave, which reaches nearly 60 feet in height and is pitted with alcoves and ridged with ledges at various elevations. The earth here is damp and pliable. A draft of salty marsh air blows down from above you, and the cave roars with the echoing sound of rushing water.

Like the rest of floor E, this area is mostly below the exterior water level, except for the top 15 feet of the eyrie, through which sunlight pours during the day. The stormwyts use the large holes at the top of the eyrie to enter and exit the dungeon, eschewing the man-made routes in and out of the temple.

MONSTERS: Four stormwyts perch upon the various platforms here, resting and watching the cave floor for rats, snakes, and lizards to eat. The adventurers will do just as well for their tastes, though.

STORMWYTS (4)

Reign Of Ruin, page 6

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP each)

TACTICS

Before Combat The stormwyts utilize their Nightstalker ability to hide, waiting for most of the adventurers to enter their nest before striking.

During Combat The stormwyts spit Alkaline Mucus at the intruders, then dive to surround and attack any adventurers who remain standing.

Morale These stormwyts are guarding unhatched eggs and will fight to their deaths to defend their nest.

E3. The Nursery

The ground here is littered with shattered fragments of thousands and thousands of eggs. Judging by the varying sizes, shapes, and colors of the egg shells, a multitude of species have spawned here over the centuries. Pieces of the largest egg shells jut upward from the ground like concave tombstones, dotting the floor haphazardly.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** check reveals that although the eggs display a stunning variation in parentage of the species birthed, every egg shell here is at least partially draconic in origin. The original Nyrionaxys laid the eggs of all her foul offspring, pure-blooded or otherwise, in this cave. Her daughter has not yet taken any mates (much to the chagrin of her Ixtupi worshipers), so no fresh or intact eggs are present. The room hides a darker presence, though: the vengeful spirits of Nyrionaxys II's brood mates who were crushed by the heroes that slew the great wyrm so long ago. The hatchling brood spirits ravenously

Reign of Ruin

attack any creature other than their sister that dares to trespass here, following them out of the area and even up to other floors of the dungeon out of their zeal for vengeance against the warmbloods.

HATCHLING BROOD SPIRITS

An unnatural aura surrounds this not-quite-dragon-shaped flurry of shadows, the faint echoes of skittering eggshells shattering on stone accompanying their movements. These are things that should not be, you feel deep down inside—hungry entities of death scrambling for the precious scraps of life denied them by dragonslayers when they were yet unborn.

HATCHLING BROOD SPIRITS (3)

Small undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 42 (12d6)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR 5 (−3) **DEX** 16 (+3) **CON** 10 (+0)

INT 10 (+0) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +2, Wis +3, Cha +5

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities acid, cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Draconic

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP each)

Ethereal Sight. The brood spirit can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. A brood spirit can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The brood spirit makes two withering strike attacks.

Withering Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The brood spirit enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the brood spirit that can see it must succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 × 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to all the brood spirits' Horrifying Visage abilities for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Corrupting Breath (Recharge 6). The brood spirit exhales corrosive ectoplasm in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw. If a target fails, it takes 22 (5d8) necrotic damage and its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to half the damage taken until the target finishes a long rest. If a target succeeds, it takes half damage, and its hit point maximum is not reduced. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The corpse of a non-evil creature slain by this attack instantaneously produces a shadow (*MM* 269) under the brood spirit's control which acts immediately after the ghostly hatchling in the initiative order.

TACTICS

Before Combat The brood spirits taunt adventurers passing by the haunted nursery into entering the room, then hide to attack from stealth.

During Combat The hatchling ghosts use their corrupting breath on their first round of combat unless they have advantage from hiding, in which case they default to withering strikes before breathing. They use their etherealness and incorporeal movement to reposition themselves with impunity.

Morale The brood spirits have steeped in their hatred of all living things for nearly a century now, and will stop at nothing to destroy any being that intrudes upon the nursery or Nyrrionaxys' sanctum.

E4. Nyrrionaxys II's Lair

This cavern stretches nearly a hundred feet across from its east end to its west. A ring of stagnant water surrounds a sizable hill of treasure—gold, silver, and brightly colored gems glitter in the wan light of billions of patches of phosphorescent fungus growing on the cave walls. More unsettling details emerge as well—lumps of marrow, gore, and gristle, masticated and rotting in the near-

DEADLY DELVES

dark before you, and hundreds of tiny black shapes darting beneath the rippling moat encircling the treasure. Atop the pile of wealth rests the skeleton of a long-decayed behemoth—a great wyrm nearly half the cavern’s length in size. A large depression is visible in the mound of coins piled in the skeleton’s ribcage, where one might expect to see a beating heart.

Only one species of creature could call such a place as this home: a black dragon.

Nyrionaxys II, the only surviving daughter of the slain dragon queen of ancient Greenacre, sleeps, eats, and schemes here while curled atop the pile of treasure (her current location largely depends on you, though—see the sidebar “Thinking Like A Black Dragon” below).

OBSTACLES: The water ringing the skeleton and the treasure pile is 10 feet deep and highly acidic. Anyone stepping into the water takes 11 (2d10) acid damage every round that they remain in it; if fully submerged, they take 22 (4d10) acid damage. Nyrionaxys, of course, is immune to this effect. Additionally, the skeleton of Nyrionaxys I is as tall as 10 feet in some spots (mainly the horns and the peak of the spine), allowing both the adventurers and the dragon to climb, jump, or fly onto these points for tactical purposes or dramatic flair. GMs should take a liberal approach to player narrations of dodging behind a thighbone or ducking beneath enormous ribs to take cover from blows or surprise the dragon, but give Nyrionaxys the same liberties when you roleplay her.

MONSTERS: By now, the adventurers have likely run into Nyrionaxys at least twice (see the sidebar below on the dragon’s tactical procedures for additional details on how to run Nyrionaxys within the confines of the temple), so they should expect a hard and dangerous fight. Nyrionaxys uses the terrain here to her best advantage, moving between the flows of acidic water to lure foes into the caustic, piranha-infested moat or retreating atop the peaks of the skeleton’s bones to unleash her acid breath. She may even dive beneath the water to drop out of sight of the adventurers, granting her concealment while she is submerged.

NYRIONAXYS II

She is death on the night wind, the daughter of ruin, sole heir to her mother’s cruel reign. Her jaws can crush steel like a child crushes paper, and her talons are sharp enough to cleave through scale mail like butter. Her breath melts flesh and devours screams before they can even be born in a man’s throat. Beneath her wings roil currents of carrion and decay, which only serves to stoke your fear and awe as you gaze upon this fully grown black dragon.

NYRIONAXYS II

Large dragon, chaotic evil, 4th-level fighter (champion)

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 210 (20d10 + 100)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR 20 (+5) **DEX** 16 (+3) **CON** 20 (+5)

INT 12 (+1) **WIS** 11 (+0) **CHA** 15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +9, Wis +4, Cha +6

Skills Intimidation +5, Perception +6, Stealth +6

Damage Immunities acid

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Action Surge. Nyrionaxys can take one additional action on top of her regular action and possible bonus action on her turn. Once she has used this ability, she must finish a short or long rest before she can use it again.

Amphibious. Nyrionaxys can breathe air and water.

Improved Critical. Nyrionaxys’s weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Lair Actions. Nyrionaxys can use the black dragon lair actions as described on MM 89 while within the confines of Area E4.

Second Wind. Nyrionaxys can use a bonus action on her turn to regain 9 (1d10 + 4) hit points. Once she has used this ability, she must finish a short or long rest before she can use it again.

Wicked Lash. Nyrionaxys rerolls all results of 1 or 2 on her tail attack’s damage dice, but must use the new roll even if it is still a 1 or 2.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Nyrionaxys makes three attacks: one with her bite and two with her claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5–6). Nyrionaxys exhales acid in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a **DC 17 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

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LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Nyrionaxys can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. She regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Detect. Nyrionaxys makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. Nyrionaxys makes a tail attack.

TACTICS

Before Combat Nyrionaxys perches arrogantly atop the skeletal remains of her mother if she has not been significantly damaged in prior encounters with the adventurers. However, if they have exhibited combat prowess during her prior ambushes, she lurks beneath the water in the moat surrounding the treasure pile, waiting to pull enemies in with a lair action.

During Combat Nyrionaxys takes wing and uses her breath weapon at the largest cluster of enemies on her first turn. If she can corner and kill a spellcaster early on in the battle, she will do so relentlessly, using a legendary action to add a tail attack onto a multiattack sequence for maximum damage output on consecutive initiative counts. As soon as her breath recharges, she flies away to spit acid again.

Morale Nyrionaxys is vicious and bellicose but far from foolish. If reduced to less than 45 hp, she flees toward Area E5, alerting Unectus and using her wand to transform into a piranha (she always keeps two charges unused for just this purpose) to escape the temple caverns through the submerged tunnel, then taking to the sky in bat or crow form at the first opportunity if she has enough charges left to do so. If she manages to get away, she licks her wounds and plots her revenge against the adventurers who pre-empted her reign of ruin.

Gear wand of polymorph

WYRM-TAINTED PIRANHA SCHOOL

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 63 (14d8)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR 13 (+1) **DEX** 18 (+4) **CON** 10 (+0)

INT 1 (−5) **WIS** 7 (−2) **CHA** 2 (−4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities acid

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The swarm has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny piranha. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Water Breathing. The swarm can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 27 (6d8) piercing damage, or 13 (3d8) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

TACTICS

During Combat The piranhas voraciously attack any creature foolish enough to enter the water but will not disturb Nyrionaxys.

Morale The piranhas are mindless beasts and fight until destroyed.

TREASURE: The vast majority of Nyrionaxys' monetary treasure is copper pieces, since they're a plentiful currency that offers a nice cushioning layer of bulk to her lair. As a result, there is about 12,000 gp worth of coinage in the treasure hoard, but most of it is heavy, low-value copper. Only the top layer is gold, electrum, and silver—there is roughly 2,000 gp, 4,000 ep, and 20,000 sp. That leaves 600,000 cp for players to plunder as they see fit. Finding a means of moving all this treasure could well be the focus of another adventure.

Additionally, scouring through the pile of wealth (**DC 14 Wisdom [Perception]** check to sift through the mound of coinage) nets the following discoveries with each successful search:

- A crude stone goblet of obvious dwarven make which is completely unremarkable and seemingly nonmagical... until its owner has a really bad day, at which point it removes itself from the container in which it is stored, fills itself to the brim with fine dwarven lager, and hovers expectantly in front of its owner until he or she drinks from it. Henceforth, the goblet can be commanded to fill itself once per day. The lager instantly rereduces the drinker's exhaustion level by one.
- A necklace strung with five 1-inch-diameter pearls painted with red and gold designs. When a pearl is pulled from the necklace and

Thinking Like A Black Dragon

Nyrionaxys is a paragon specimen of her kind: cunning, malicious, and spiteful. Completely self-serving and obsessed with amassing power through bloody warfare and dark sorcery, she's easily convinced after one encounter with the adventurers that they are the heroes she requires to complete her binding ritual...or at least, some of them are. Others might not be as worthy, and she'll have no qualms about culling the adventurers she perceives to be the weakest in a cruel and horrific manner so as to demoralize and enrage their compatriots. If made aware of the adventurers' intrusion into her lair, whether by noticing them following her through the Great Swamp, staking out entrances to the temple, or receiving word from Pekdak and Kipyra that humans have breached the upper floors, Nyrionaxys seeks to goad the adventurers into striking out at her hastily. She wants them to be angry and off-guard, to rush into the depths of her lair without resting or preparing for the battle, so that she can more easily overtake them and sacrifice them to Tlaloc. With that in mind, consider incorporating the following ideas into the adventure:

- Many small tunnels connect the various floors and rooms of the Temple of Ixtupi, most too small even for a kobold or halfling to traverse—but perfectly sized for a Tiny lizard, which the dragon can turn into with her wand. In most cases, assume that Nyrionaxys can reach the adventurers' position within 5 rounds of in-game time (the sole exception to this is area D3, which neither the dragon nor the Ixtupi even know to exist).
- Have the dragon show up during an encounter for long enough to lash out at a few adventurers with her claws and bite, or use her acid breath on a few of them, before using her *wand of polymorph* and scampering away. She may also join an ongoing battle to aid her Ixtupi underlings, especially if they are already overwhelming the adventurers.
- If possible, don't allow Nyrionaxys to change forms where the heroes can see her do it, as that may prompt them to smash every little

creature they see for the rest of the adventure (although this added layer of paranoia can be fun and useful for GMs as well, if tipping the dragon's hand becomes unavoidable at some point.) Areas B2, D1, and D7 are ideal locations for her to use this ability and then run around a corner or behind a large object to hide and change shape, seemingly vanishing into thin air.

- If you want to get really cheeky, have Nyrionaxys use her *wand of polymorph* to change into human form and play the part of a damsel in distress who's been captured by the Ixtupi for a sacrificial rite. She isn't the greatest liar, but if the adventurers don't think to roll a **Wisdom (Insight)** check, she can glean a lot of useful information about them and then direct them into an ambush by seeding misinformation about the dungeon's denizens and layout.
- Once the adventurers are on floor E, all bets are off. Nyrionaxys will not sit comfortably on her pile of treasure waiting for heroes to just walk up to her and issue a challenge—she'll move around the various areas near her lair at will, joining in on other combats at the worst possible times or subtly alerting other denizens to their presence, perhaps by tumbling a few rocks in area E2 to stir the stormwyts, whispering to her foul undead brethren in area E3, or—if combat is going particularly poorly for the dragon—warning Unectus of their coming before she retreats to the swamps through area E5.
- It's probably best to give the adventurers ample opportunity to vanquish Nyrionaxys even if she leads them on a chase outside the temple boundaries. Don't deliberately try to rob them of victory by having her escape too easily, but do make any chase exciting and action-packed. Even so, if the dragon does manage to escape the adventurers with her life, Nyrionaxys could make for a great recurring villain—one who can bring much trouble and anguish into the adventurers' lives as their adventuring career progresses.

hurled to the ground, it functions as a *fog cloud* spell affecting a 10-foot radius with a 5-round duration.

- A fully-illustrated codex of trap schematics written in crude Draconic script, obviously penned by a kobold engineer. Some of the traps

are stunningly complex in nature. The book takes 1d3+1 days to read from start to finish, and grants anyone who reads it in its entirety advantage on one Wisdom or Dexterity check per day to find or disable a trap. This is a permanent benefit.

Reign of Ruin

- A book of foul necromantic rites written by Putrefect Brasmis, a lich arcanist who disappeared from the world many centuries ago. This book contains the details of the ritual for which Nyrionaxys plans to use the adventurers as sacrifices to absorb her broodmates' essences. It also contains the following spells, which can be copied into a wizard's spellbook or used individually as *spell scrolls*: *animate dead*, *blight*, *phantom steed* (always creates a translucent zombie-like horse), *vampiric touch*.
- A *dragon slayer spear*, the head of which is inscribed with druidic runes, taken from the descendants of some of the hunters who slew Nyrionaxys I.
- A bag containing eight expertly cut gems of various types, each worth 625 gp, which Nyrionaxys stole from a group of dwarven merchants she slaughtered. However, one of the gems is cursed, and every night at midnight a dwarf-shaped wraith manifests itself from the bauble, attacking any nearby creatures. This effect can be permanently dispelled with a *remove curse*.

E5. The Submerged Tunnel

This small cave is roughly 35 feet in diameter in any direction. Its lone feature is a 15-foot-wide hole dropping down into the earth. The sound of water slapping against stone rings off the cave walls.

Nyrionaxys uses this submerged tunnel to enter and exit her lair without passing through the upper levels of the temple or being sighted flying above the trilithons. Adventurers who decide to stake out the great mound instead of storming the temple directly will certainly notice the dragon using this entrance—even if she notices observers, she plays coy and dives in and out of the marsh surrounding the mound. Nyrionaxys is highly amused by the thought of adventurers breaching her lair through this tunnel, for she has placed one of her most powerful guardians here to intercept them: the half-dragon anaconda Unectus, one of her mother's favored offspring. The anaconda is nearly as cruel and powerful as Nyrionaxys herself, and savagely attacks anything that tries to swim through the tunnel. To make matters worse, another piranha school flits around the moat, and ill-prepared adventurers swimming the waters make easy targets for their ravenous appetites, although they seldom attack larger creatures en masse unless there is blood in the water from another fight—such as the adventurers battling Unectus.

WYRMTAINTED PIRANHA SCHOOL

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Armor Class 14

Hit Points 63 (14d8)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP each)

TACTICS

During Combat The piranhas voraciously attack any creature foolish enough to enter the water, but will not disturb Nyrionaxys or Unectus.

Morale The piranhas are mindless beasts and fight until destroyed.

UNECTUS, HALF-DRAGON ANACONDA

The snake is immense beyond belief, a thing from a nightmare, its sinuous form covered in black scales with a crest of oversized horn-like scales over its glazed red reptilian eyes. The dragon-snake coils as if to strike, its acidic breath befouling the water as its wickedly fanged maw parts hungrily.

UNECTUS

Half-Dragon Anaconda

Huge beast, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 199 (19d12 + 76)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR 19 (+4)	DEX 16 (+3)	CON 18 (+4)
INT 3 (−4)	WIS 12 (+1)	CHA 8 (−1)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Resistances acid

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Draconic

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Unectus makes three attacks: three with his bite, or two with his bite and one with his constrict.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (3d12 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and Unectus can't constrict another target.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). Unectus exhales acid in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each target must make a **DC 16 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

TACTICS

Before Combat Unectus waits in the depths of the murky water in the submerged tunnel, striking at any creature that dares to dive in, whether from the interior of the caverns or the bridge above the moat.

During Combat The half-breed anaconda bites and constricts any targets within range with a preference for lightly-armored foes, using its breath weapon to scatter clusters of melee fighters.

Morale Unectus flees to the depths of the moat if reduced to 30 hp or less, unless Nyrionaxys has commanded him to cover her escape.

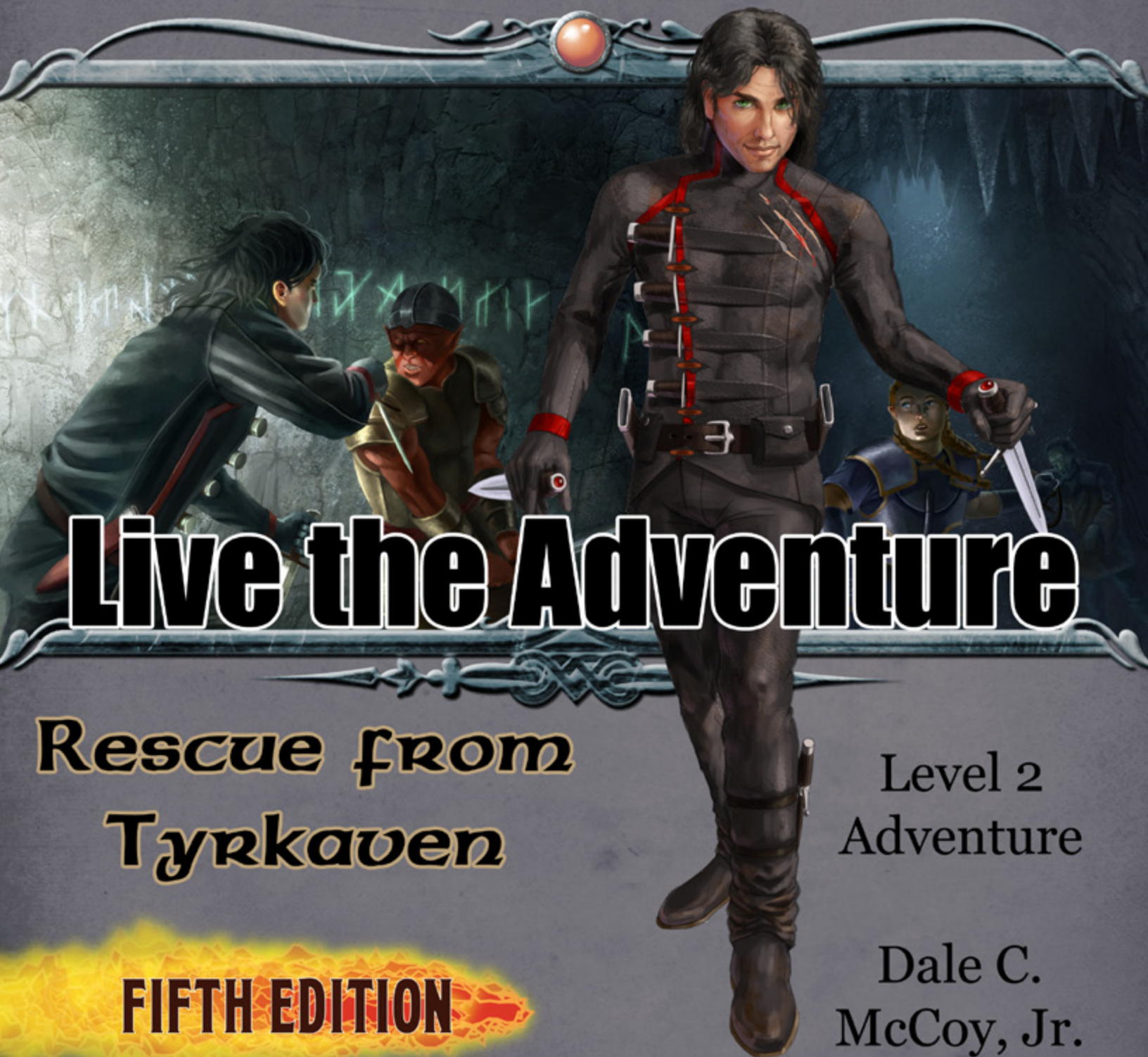
Concluding The Adventure

If the adventurers manage to defeat Nyrionaxys, the Crannogfolk owe them a great debt, and bringing back proof of the wyrm's destruction will certainly result in them being treated like heroes. The Stormhammer Rangers will certainly venerate the adventurers and attempt to recruit them into their order. The Tsiikil are likewise grateful that the reign of Nyrionaxys has finally ended, and the good lizardfolk will emerge from their homes in the swamp to broker peace with the humans.

The Stormhammers and the Tsiikil may decide to band together to retake the temple and its surrounding lands back from the Ixtupi, whose numbers remain significant despite the death of their queen. In time, efforts to restore and resanctify the temple might well cause the fetid marshes to dry up and restore at least a portion of the Great Swamp to the beauty it once exhibited before Greenacre was conquered by Nyrionaxys I. This could well be the focus of an adventure arc.

But what if the adventurers don't win? What happens then? That all depends on the sort of story you wish to tell, of course. Perhaps the dragon takes them prisoner and begins a lengthy preparation for her binding ritual, giving them a chance to escape or rally. Or maybe not. Maybe they were fated to die here, and Nyrionaxys fulfills her promised destiny by becoming the new dragon queen of the Crannogs. You may decide to advance the timeline of your world by a few decades or even centuries, during which time Nyrionaxys has all but destroyed human society once more, perhaps even ascending to become a true divine herald of Tlaloc. In such a desolate world, you may wish to have the adventurers play descendants of the heroes who died in the dragon's lair and continue the struggle between their bloodline and that of Nyrionaxys.

DEADLY D • E • L • V • E • STM



Live the Adventure

Rescue from
Tyrkaven

Level 2
Adventure

Dale C.
McCoy, Jr.

FIFTH EDITION

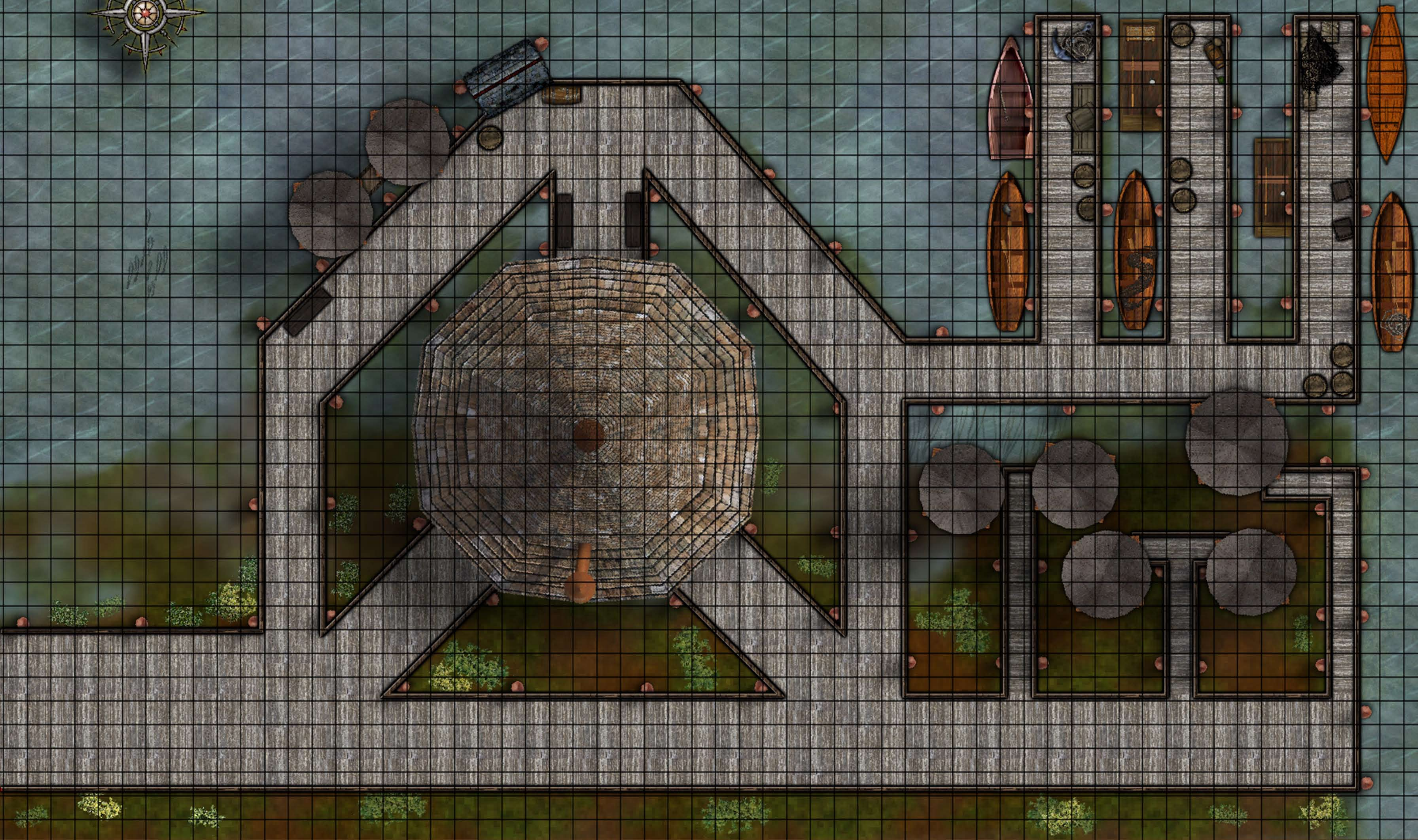
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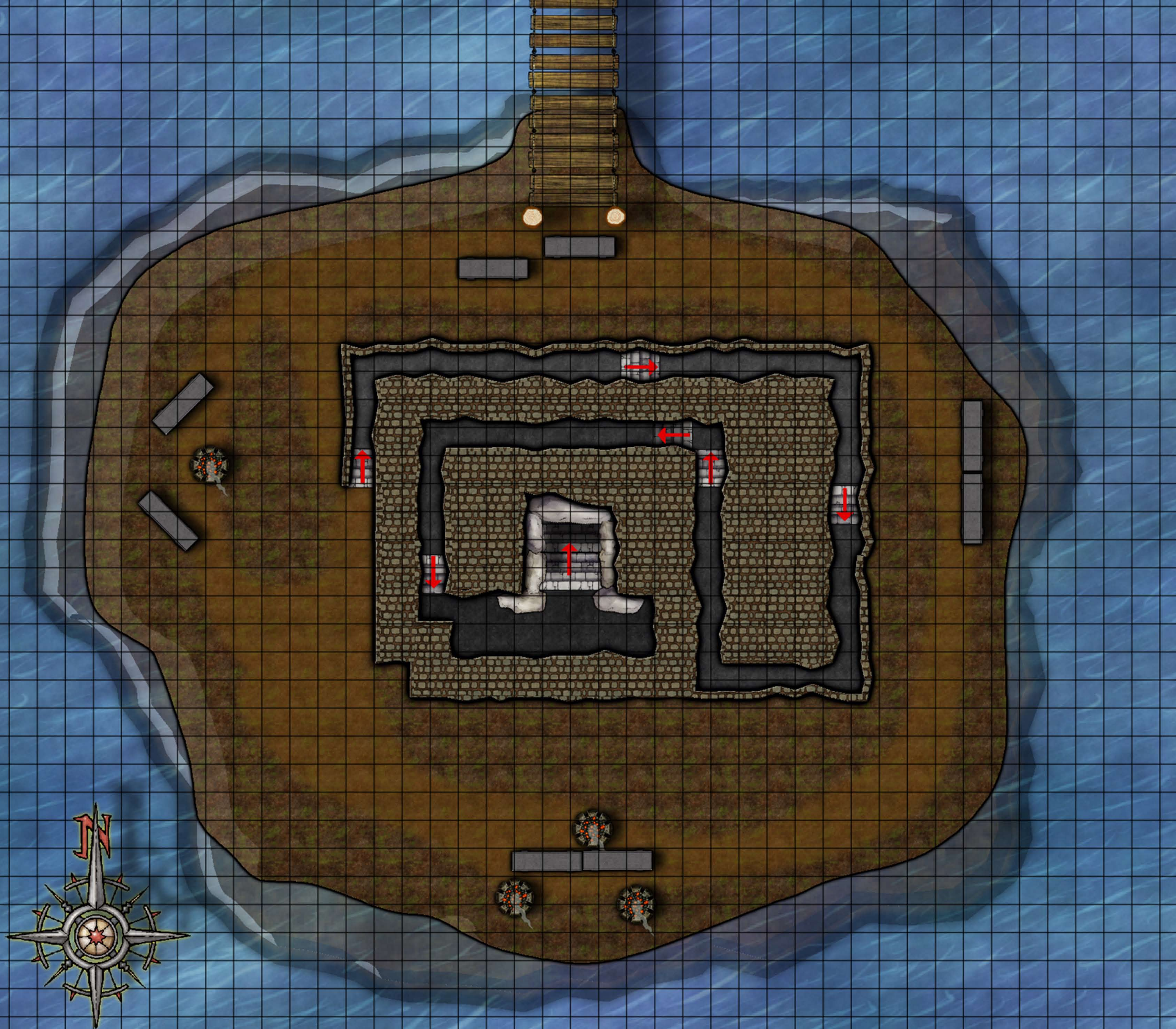
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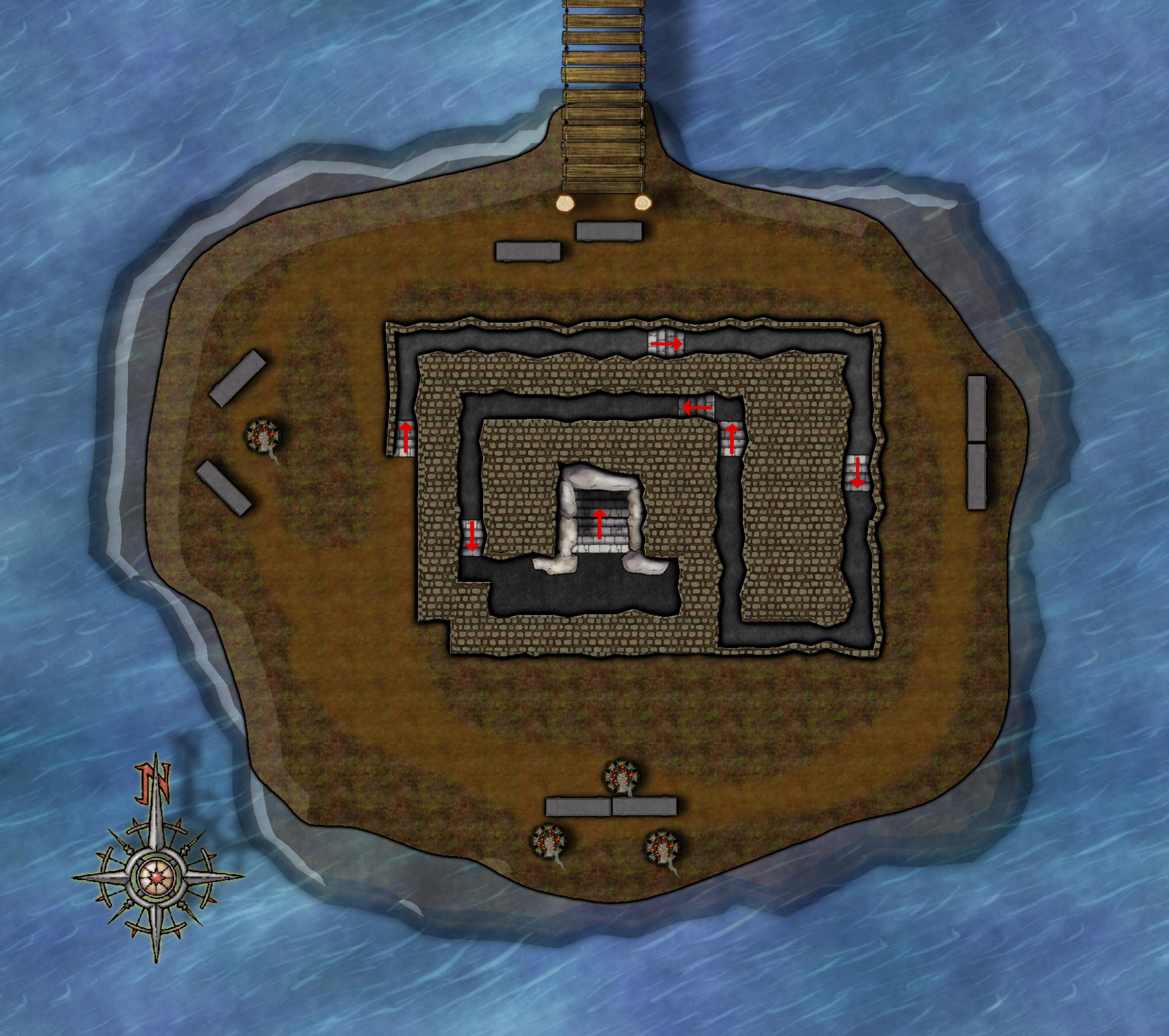
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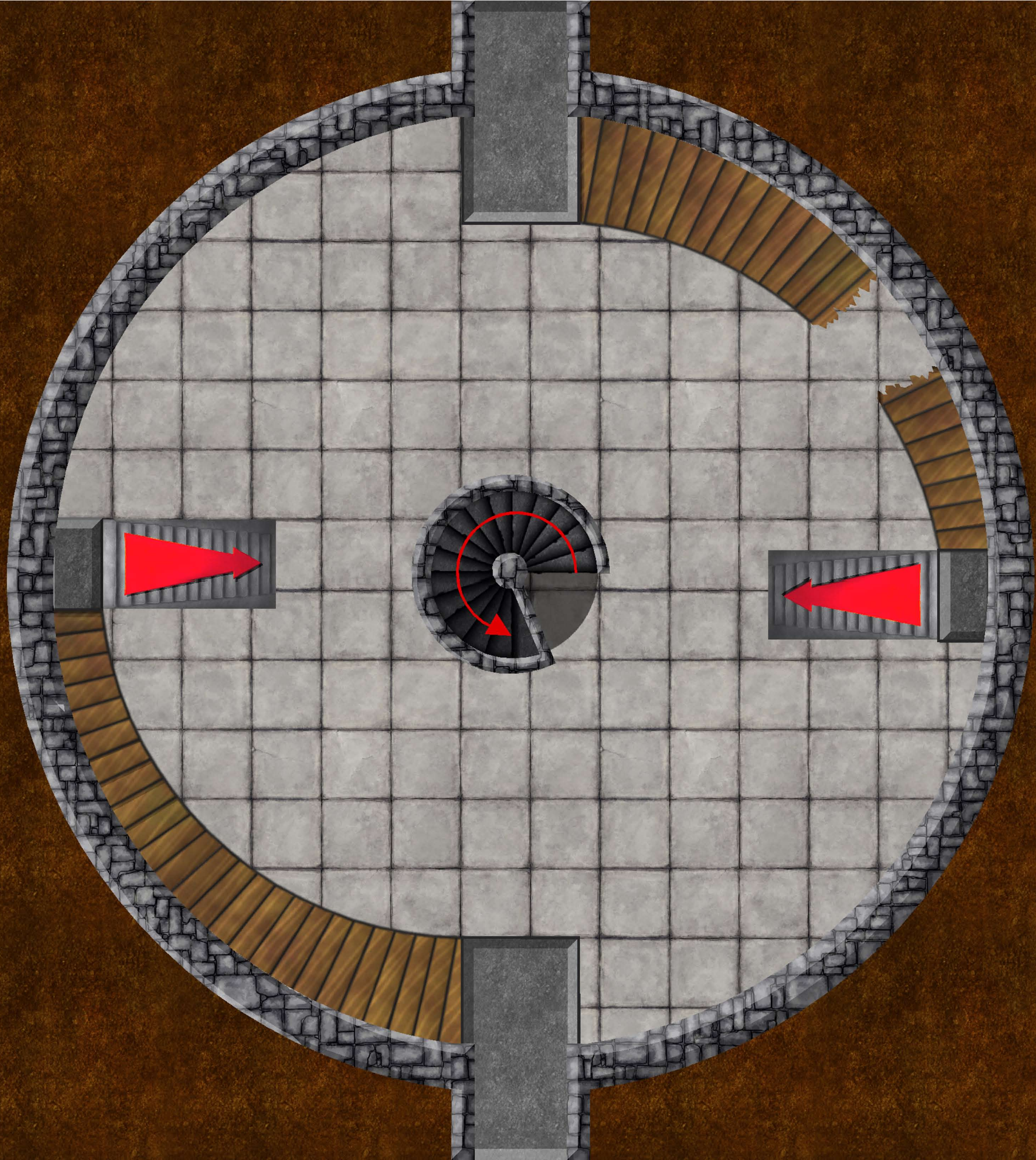


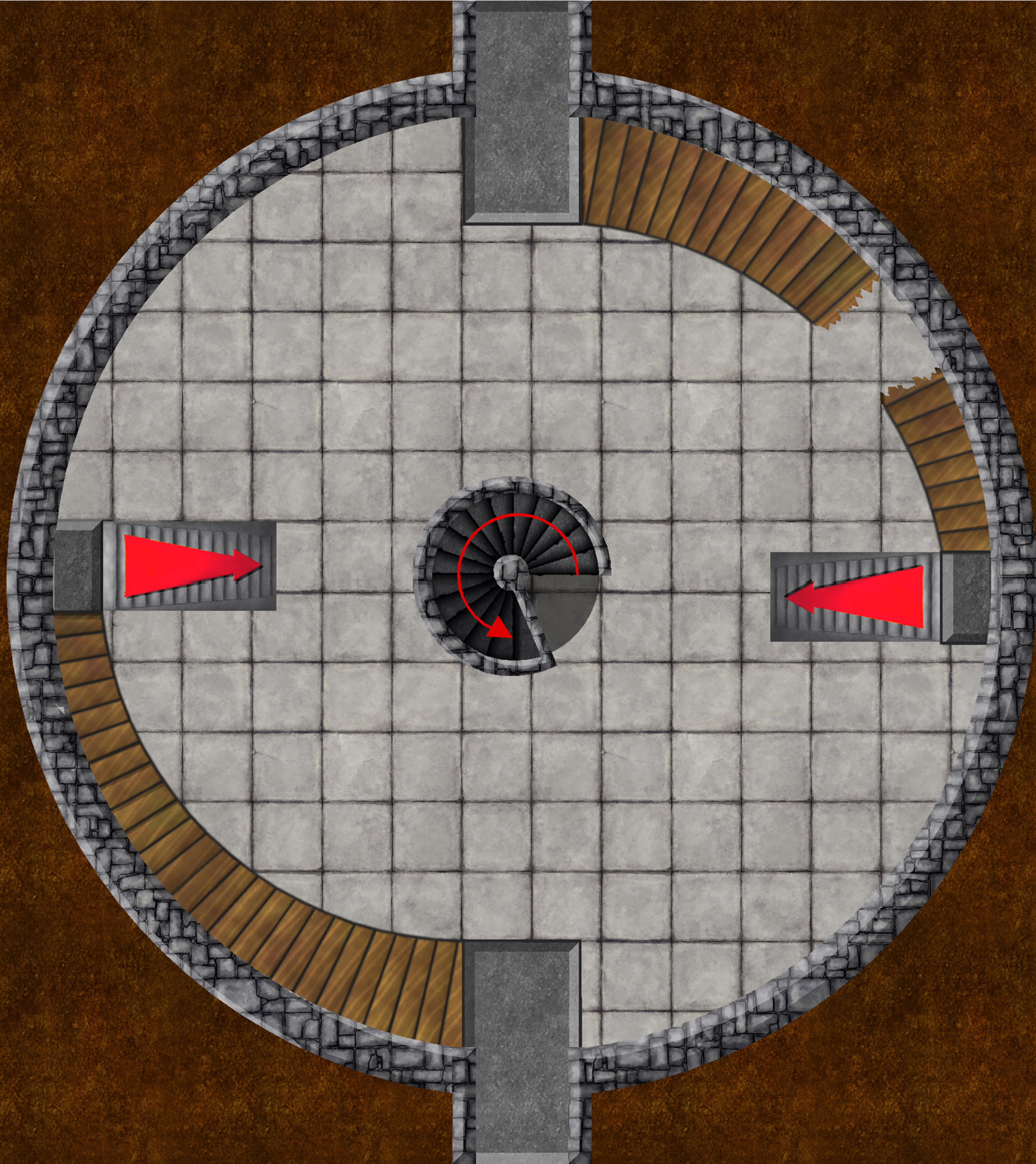


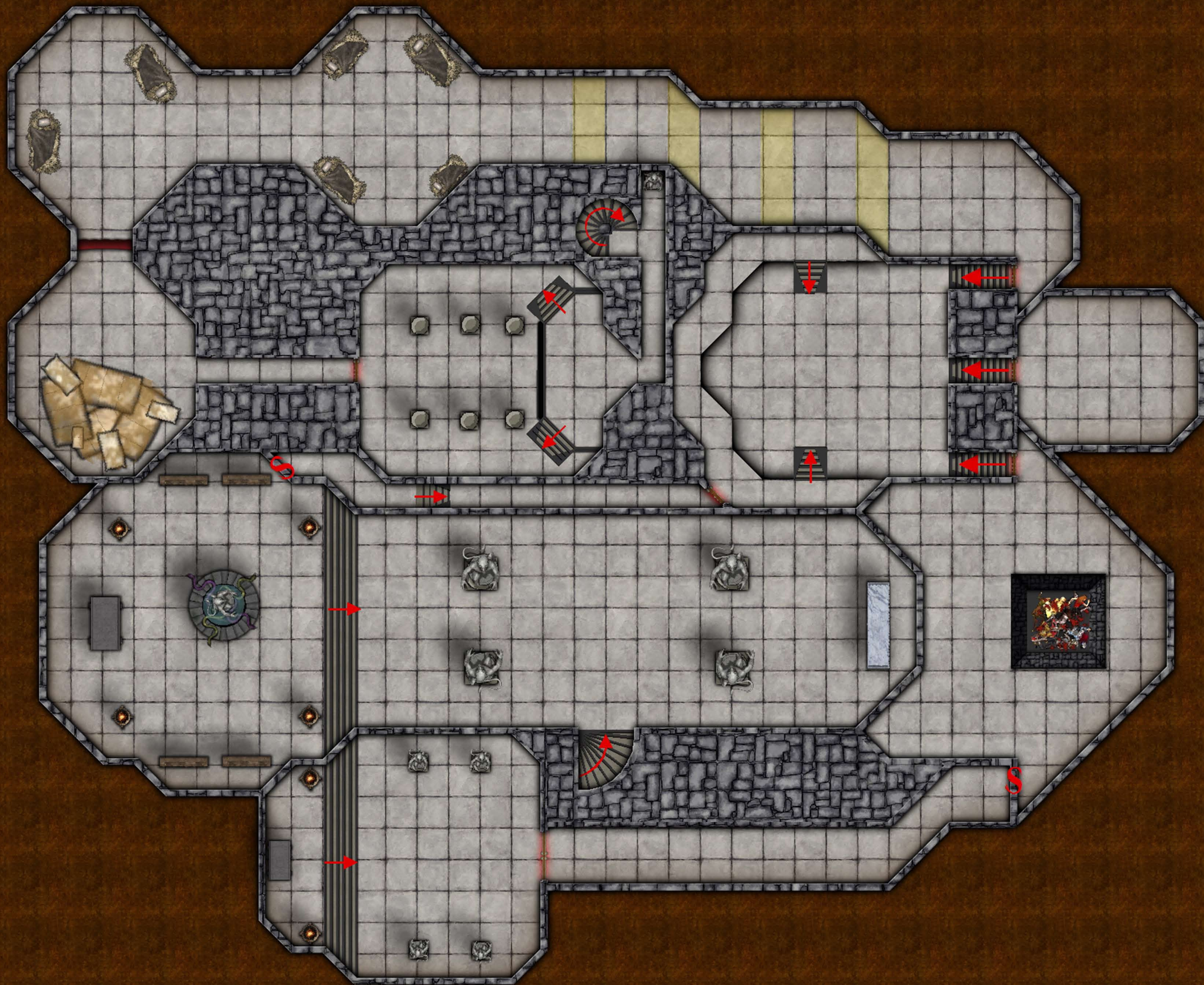


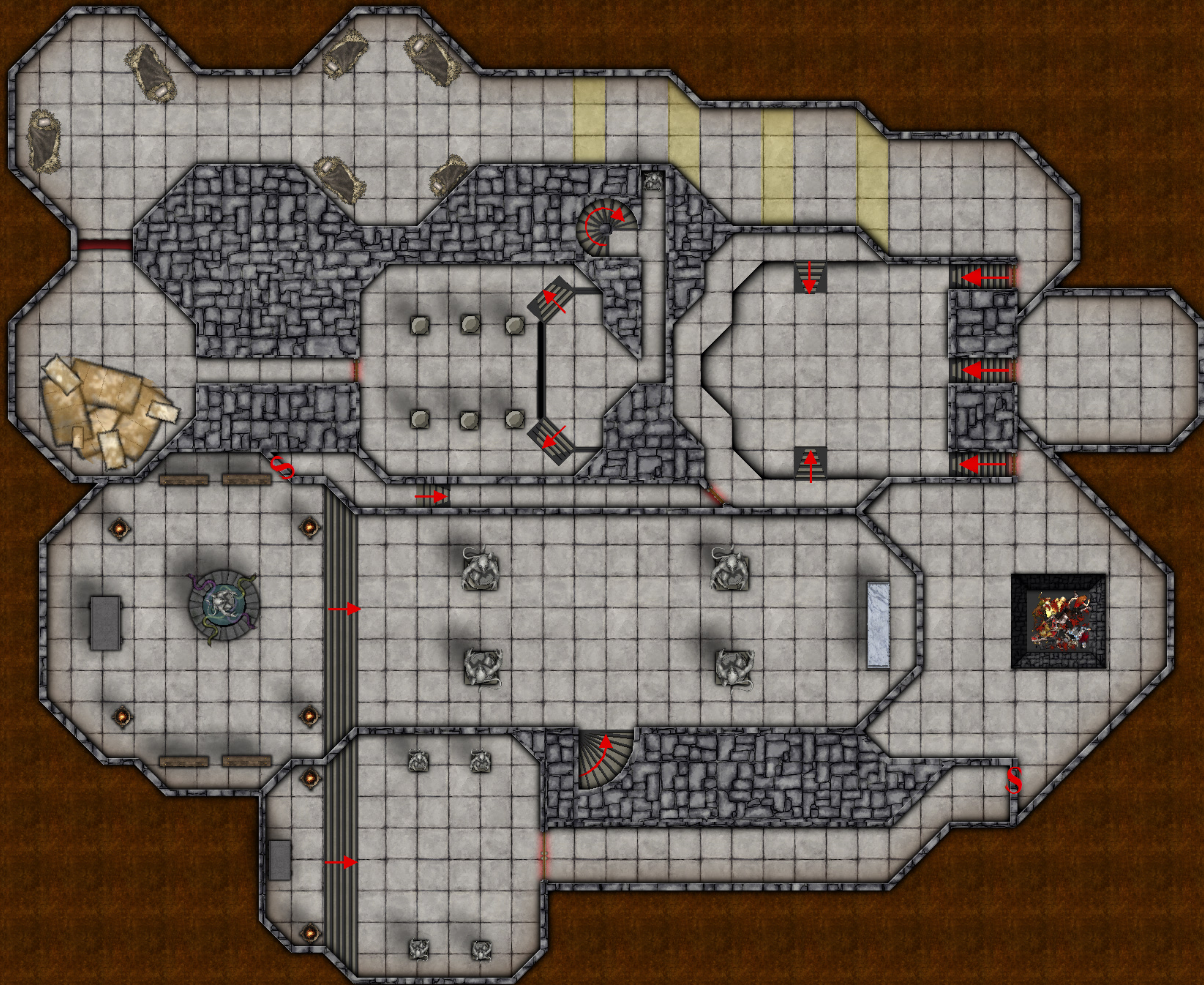
















Beware The Blackener Of Bright Waters, For She Is Come Again

Rumors of death move like a plague through the Crannogtowns of the Great Swamp—of ranger patrols mysteriously disappearing on routine scouting missions, of a winged shadow that blots out the midday sun, and of entire villages slaughtered, their homes left burning and the victims' flesh melted from their bones. All evidence gathered from the sites of these massacres points to the heart of the Great Swamp, where an ancient and primitive tribe of lizardmen have ruled from an abandoned human temple for centuries on end. The Crannogtowns' protectors, the Stormhammer Rangers, warn that horrid half-dragon monstrosities still stalk the bogs and travelers would do well to stay away from the inner swamp. Yet the killing and the carnage continue, and the people of the Crannogs plead for heroes to aid them now as they did in days long forgotten. Are you up to the challenge?

Reign Of Ruin is the exciting new adventure module in Jon Brazer Enterprises' **Deadly Delves** product line, and is designed for the **Fifth Edition of the World's Oldest Fantasy Roleplaying Game**. This adventure is designed to heartily challenge a party of 7th- or 8th-level PCs and leave them with a memorable heroic tale. Inside this volume, you'll find:

- **18 New or Modified Monsters and NPCs** for your campaign, including lizardfolk warpriests, swarms of undead, and a black dragon fighter
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- Full-color maps of a Crannogtown village, as well as five floors of a terrifying temple dungeon
- Specialized advice on playing a cunning black dragon against a group of PCs in a dangerous game of cat and mouse
- Enough content for five 7th- or 8th-level PCs to gain nearly two levels, with ideas to extend the story even further once you're done exploring the temple

Dangers Unknown. Treasures Untold. Adventure Awaits.



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