

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

DUNGEON FANTASY ADVENTURE™ TOMB OF THE DRAGON KING™



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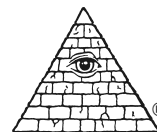
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
Recommended Books	3
Key Elements	3
Protagonists	3
<i>About GURPS</i>	3
Hooks	4
<i>N</i>	4
Custom Fit	4
Weird Abilities	5
Spin-Offs	5
About the Author	5
1. TOWN	6
BROKEN FANG POINT	6
<i>Hooks for Town</i>	6
<i>Holes for Town</i>	6
EVENTS IN TOWN	7
Recruitment	7
Shopping	8
<i>Travel</i>	8
Rumors and Research	8
2. THE DRAGON KING'S COURT	9
<i>Hooks for the Dragon King's Court</i>	9
<i>Holes for the Dragon King's Court</i>	9
<i>Constants</i>	9
OVERVIEW OF THE DRAGONS' PALACE	10
THE VESTIBULE	10
Side Rooms	10
MAP OF THE VESTIBULE	11
<i>Alarm Traps</i>	12
THE GREATER APARTMENTS	12
Loggia of the Vizier	12
MAP OF THE GREATER APARTMENTS	13
The Ambassador's Rooms	14
Lesser Rooms	14
MAP OF THE BASILICA	15
High Rooms	16
THE BASILICA	16
HALL OF THE DRAGON KING	16
MAP OF THE HALL OF THE DRAGON KING	17
<i>The Cowl of Ahten-Ahten</i>	18
EVENTS IN THE DRAGON KING'S COURT	18
Wandering Patrols	18
Treasure Hunting	19
3. THE DRAGON QUEEN'S COURT	20
QUEEN'S SQUARE	20
<i>Hooks for the Dragon Queen's Court</i>	20
<i>Holes for the Dragon Queen's Court</i>	20
The Libraries	20
MAP OF THE QUEEN'S SQUARE	21
The Museum	22
Events at the Queen's Square	23

THE POOL	23
Events at the Pool	23
MAP OF THE POOL	24
THE LABYRINTH	25
Events in the Labyrinth	25
MAP OF THE LABYRINTH	26
HALL OF THE DRAGON QUEEN	27
MAP OF THE HALL OF THE DRAGON QUEEN	27

*My armor is like tenfold
shields, my teeth are swords,
my claws spears, the shock
of my tail a thunderbolt,
my wings a hurricane,
and my breath death!*

– J.R.R. Tolkien,
The Hobbit

4. CONFLICTS	28
LIZARD CULT	28
Cause and Motivation	28
Resources	28
The Protagonists	28
Events	28
Holes	29
Custom Fit	29
Stats	29
<i>Dragon Magic</i>	31
<i>Kunukut and Yansolsi</i>	32
DRAGON ROYALTY	32
Cause and Motivation	32
Resources	32
The Protagonists	32
Events	32
Holes	33
Custom Fit	33
Stats	33
LURKING MONSTERS	34
Cause and Motivation	34
Resources	34
The Protagonists	34
Events	34
Holes	34
Custom Fit	35
Stats	35
INDEX	36

INTRODUCTION

Long ago, two dragon siblings ruled a forest kingdom. No one who came against them could defeat them, but they ended up killing one another. Centuries later, a group of adventurers are sent to the ruins of their palace (the “tomb”) in order to retrieve a notable artifact. When they arrive, they discover that the palace isn’t as deserted as they’d have liked. A cult of lizard men, worshipers of one of the deceased dragon monarchs, has reopened parts of the ruined palace and found the artifact the delvers are after, *and* is working on reviving and releasing the dragon king. The heroes can choose to focus on the cultists and the dragon king, or take a chance on releasing the dragon *queen*.

When you strike at a king, you must kill him.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

option, by picking up on clues from the cultists, the delvers could try to even the odds by making their way through a variety of *lurking monsters* (p. 34) inhabiting the *dragon queen’s court* (p. 20) to release the *dragon queen* (p. 34) herself and, in the chaos of the resulting titanic battle, steal the item and make their escape.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

This adventure requires **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons**, **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1**, **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 2: Icky Goo**, and **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3: Born of Myth & Magic**. It is assumed that characters are designed with **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy** templates, so any books relating to the desired templates may be helpful. **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level** and **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 8: Treasure Tables** are recommended, though the GM may be able to improvise around parts of the adventure that rely on them if necessary. Also, there are references to **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures** and **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds**, but these are far from necessary. This adventure is *not* a sequel to **GURPS Fantasy Adventure 1: Mirror of the Fire Demon**, and that book is not required to run this scenario.

KEY ELEMENTS

In this adventure, the heroes are recruited to travel to the ruins of a palace where they will enter the *dragon king’s court* (p. 9) and make their way to the *hall of the dragon king* (p. 16) to retrieve a lost artifact, the *Cowl of Ahten-Ahten* (p. 18). Once they arrive, they discover that this section of the ruins is occupied by a *lizard cult* (p. 28), which has revived the *dragon king* (p. 33) and taken possession of the object of their quest. They can attempt to take on the dragon king and the cultists directly, or employ a stealthy strategy to steal the item without direct confrontation. As a third

PROTAGONISTS

This adventure is intended for a group of four to six characters built using standard 250-point templates. No specific templates are expected, nor are published templates strictly required. However, adventurers *not* built on **Dungeon Fantasy** templates should have a similar mix of abilities, involving fighting, sneaking, magic use, and more fighting.

ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. We can be reached by email: info@sjgames.com. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

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Gamer and Store Finder (gamerfinder.sjgames.com): Connect with other people and places playing our games. Add yourself to our database so they can find you as well!

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for **GURPS** releases are available at sjgames.com/errata/gurps.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

There are, though, guidelines for some scaling to parties of different numbers and levels of capability (see *N*, below).

Hooks

The most common reasons for undertaking this adventure are the usual ones for a dungeon crawl: treasures obtained by killing things and taking their stuff. Some adventurers may pursue the quest not for the loot they may gather, but for pay by other parties who want someone to explore the dragon king's palace. If that isn't enough, there are numerous causes for which they might willingly undertake such a mission; *recruitment* (pp. 7-8) details a variety of groups who would want to send delvers to recover the missing artifact.

Psycho Killer

On one hand, killing everything is fairly common practice for traditional dungeon delvers. In fact, everyone and everything they meet is likely to be hostile and all too happy to kill them. Retaliating in advance only makes sense.

On the other hand, there are things to learn about the situation in this dungeon. Doing a little advance research is an excellent idea, and sneaking around a bit, eavesdropping, and even interrogating prisoners can be very useful. It's possible but difficult to survive this adventure by trying to kill everything on sight, and failure is at least likely to lead to a spectacular death. In particular, rushing into the lair of the dragon king or the dragon queen and hacking away is an excellent way of getting offed quickly. Even making a lot of noise and being slow to subdue the opposition can attract an excess of unwelcome attention, very possibly leading to delvers being overwhelmed by numbers (see the end of *Wandering Patrols*, pp. 18-19).

N

To scale opposition to the adventuring party, this supplement uses the notation "N" to indicate the number of monsters the heroes encounter. N is the number of PCs and combat-useful companions they have with them (a man-eating gryphon, armed hireling, or fighting clockwork automaton counts; a bunny rabbit familiar or a servant without combat skills or magic – who looks after the horses and cooks the meals and would run in fear from a house cat – would not). Round all fractions up. For example, if N is 7 and an encounter involves N/2 monsters, the number of monsters is 4. Experienced groups are tougher. Find the combatants' *average* point total and add 1 to N per *full* 20 points by which this exceeds 250 points.

Custom Fit

It should be possible to make this adventure fit in any low-tech fantasy campaign where dungeon crawling is a possibility, even if it isn't the main focus.

Overhauling Scenery

Within the bounds of dungeon-crawling adventure, this quest places modest demands on geography. It requires

enough wilderness to contain the ruins of a palace that haven't already been ransacked by previous generations of adventurers. Though written as a forest, the precise nature of the wilderness is of secondary importance. Boreal forest, desert badlands, steaming jungle, a remote island, icy wastes (none of the lizard cult are actually cold blooded; they won't like living on a glacier, but they can do it), and even gently rolling grasslands can work so long as they're lightly populated and a hill can be found somewhere.

Using Conflicts With Your Own NPCs

This adventure assumes that the delvers and the enemies they face have no reason to fight each other beyond the obvious: the monsters are hostile and the delvers want their stuff. It's also likely that they'll never have run into one another before and will never run into one another again.

But a campaign with a more complicated social or political milieu may have links that extend into the long-lost tomb of a dragon. The lizard cult is trying not just to bring back their king, but also to bring back his kingdom, and what's a kingdom without a few allies? If the heroes have recurring enemies or just run into a particular set of bad guys again and again (demon lords, necromancer kings, goblin hordes), a handful of their envoys may be present in the ruins of the castle, consulting with the dragon king. Other returning rivals might also be in pursuit of the same artifact as the delvers, greatly complicating the task; see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Adventure 1: Mirror of the Fire Demon* for suggestions on the size and composition of rival adventuring groups. And the lizard cult can be the source of a new recurring enemy group.

Major Changes

This is a basic retrieval mission: get in, get the thing, and get out. Enterprising adventurers or their employers may find alternatives. Instead of being sent to retrieve an artifact, the delvers might be sent to scout the tomb and report back on the state of the dragon king and his cult in order to plan a strategy for dealing with a resurgent dragon kingdom. Or rather than infiltrating the dragon king's tomb, they're sent to check on or even release the dragon queen while avoiding increasingly far-ranging patrols by the lizard cultists.

They may be sent to make contact with the dragon king, which won't be easy. The lizard cultists don't trust any outsiders and certainly won't let them in. The heroes must sneak or fight their way past the cultists and present themselves to the dragon king directly, very much hoping that their letter of introduction gets read before they get eaten.

Stuff You Can Use

The monsters included in this adventure can be widely reused. Most notably, the adventure contains stats for a variety of dragons, ranging from small (roughly human-sized) to fairly large ones, as well as lizard-themed fodder monsters. Also, delvers who concentrate on the dragon king's part of the ruined palace can always come back to the dragon queen's part later.

WEIRD ABILITIES

All of the abilities allowed in *Dungeon Fantasy* are fair game. However, not all GMs work purely by the book, so some types of abilities deserve special attention.

Exceptional Firepower: This adventure is calibrated for characters built on *Dungeon Fantasy* templates with *Dungeon Fantasy* weapons and armor, and all the limitations that implies. Higher-power weapons (like, say, what you'd find in the hands of 20th-century black ops agents or outer-space heroes) will make short work of the opposition as written. There are a few options for dealing with this. For parties with high-tech weaponry or the supernatural equivalent, it's tempting to double or triple the number of opponents and overwhelm the delvers with numbers. While that may not have an immediate impact, it can make delvers run through a lot more of their precious ammunition than they'd like. Upgrading the opposition is also a worthwhile idea. **GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy** offers some useful monsters geared for the age of machine guns, plus advice on matching numbers to adventurers. And if gun-wielding delvers get as far as the dragon king, perhaps he's learned Reverse Missiles.

Exceptional Transportation: The ability to travel long distances quickly – via seven-yard boots, jump jets, warp drive-equipped oxcarts, and so on – won't make a lot of difference here. The trip through the wilderness is fairly short already, so cutting the journey of a couple of days down to a couple of minutes mostly means that the delvers won't have to bring quite as much in the way of provisions with them and may have quicker recourse to healers in town than they might otherwise. Once inside the dungeon, some extra mobility in the form of flight or levitation would only serve to level the playing field a bit, since the delvers will face some flying enemies. Short-range teleportation can provide a nice escape route if things get too hairy, but the distances and irregular structure of the subterranean ruins make it risky to try to skip over dangerous areas.

Exceptional Information: Exceptional abilities that gather information, like mind-reading and accurate divination spells, can actually speed matters along a bit or even create new options. The front-line lizard cultists know how to get around traps in their part of the palace, which have been set up recently to slow down infiltrators, but beyond that, they don't have enough information which will cause great damage to the flow of the adventure. They might, though, clue the delvers in to the dragon queen's part of the palace (but not give them many details) and get them thinking of heading in that direction.

SPIN-OFFS

The quest to the dragon king's palace can be the beginning of no end of trouble.

- The palace was simply the center of an ancient kingdom. What other ruins might be found in the vicinity, and what treasures do they hold?

- The lizard cult is made up of followers of the dragon king. What about the dragon queen? If the dragon king becomes active again, the queen's followers may appear in hopes of reviving their own long-lost patroness or counteracting her murderer.

- If the delvers manage to recover the artifact without any grand confrontation with the dragon king, that leaves one very large, powerful dragon still in play. If a huge dragon starts terrorizing the area, the delvers may find themselves in a unique position concerning their knowledge of his whereabouts and motivations. Even if they don't care to face him, *he* may want to track down the people who stole a valuable item from his hoard.

- A great many organizations may potentially send adventurers after the artifact that sits at the center of this scenario (see *Recruitment*, pp. 7-8). The ones that didn't recruit the heroes who actually retrieve it may send *other* adventurers after the ones who have it. Getting the artifact may be just the start of a string of adventures, most of which involve avoiding or fighting through other interested parties in order to turn it over to somebody else.

- All of those lurking monsters in the dragon queen's court must come from somewhere, which means that part of the palace contains potential leads to other areas, notably holes that giant ants crawl through and a deep pool connecting to an underground lake. Where else might they lead? The palace might be the doorway to a much larger dungeon complex.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt Riggsby has been playing roleplaying games since the only game in town came in three poorly typeset tan booklets in a white box, using cheap dice that slowly converted themselves from icosahedrons to spheres. Having been educated in the lore of lost civilizations, he still kills things and takes their stuff while working a day job for artificers of engines of great healing. The marching order for the rest of his party includes a sorceress, a 10th-level rogue, and a pack of dogs.

CHAPTER ONE

TOWN

Adventurers can be recruited for this adventure from just about anywhere as long as they can travel to the spot, but the

last point of contact with civilization is at a small trading town at the bend of a remote stretch of a large river.

BROKEN FANG POINT

Countless small streams flowing out of the Echo Wall mountain range feed the upper reaches of the Gray Sand River. The slopes and forests of the Echo Wall are known to contain mineral wealth, valuable woods, and other resources. The entire region has at times been under the sway of now-vanished kingdoms whose treasures can still be found by

those bold enough to look for them, but those areas can only be reached on foot or by small boats portaged around rapids.

Near the southern end of the mountain chain, the river widens and slows as it bends to the east in the shadow of one of the range's last great peaks. The relatively calm water makes this the uppermost point on the river that can easily be reached by shipping. And so, a small town has grown up at the base of Broken Fang Mountain.

Broken Fang Point is a sprawling, ramshackle settlement occupying a shallow-sloped section of the foot of the mountain. A natural stone jetty projects a bit into the broad curve of the river perpendicular to the current. Several short wooden piers project from it. Warehouses and residences of the wealthier traveling merchants predominate the lowest tiers of the town. Above them are a variety of inns and shops, homes for more permanent residents, and a cluster of temples to a variety of popular deities (including Pidnos in his aspects as a healer and messenger, the mercantile goddess Mezzan, and the protean deity of fortune Ardo Yang). The streets, such as they are, are meandering and unpaved, though the ground of the point is more rock than dirt, so they rarely become muddy in poor weather.

While the mountains beyond are known to be full of dangerous creatures of every description, Broken Fang Point doesn't have much in the way of defenses. The fallen remains of a low wall (its origins obscure) stretch around the settlement about 300 yards up the slope, with a ditch just beyond that, but these end where the Point's shallow slope becomes cliff-like. The Point is quite well isolated from the region beyond the mountain, with no good landward approaches. The immediate neighborhood is clear enough that threats, such as monsters angry or hungry enough to leave the woods, can often be seen coming in time for the more-adventurous-than-average population of the town to deal with them.

HOOKS FOR TOWN

Broken Fang Point or some place sufficiently like it as to make no difference is an excellent place to end up after another adventure. It's at a point between an easily traveled river to civilization downstream and areas rife with monsters, exotic natural locations, and old ruins in all other directions. However, the events set in town don't have to take place in Broken Fang Point proper. If the heroes have another base of operations, the adventure can start there, with news of the dragon palace or their guild connections reaching them closer to home. Broken Fang Point is simply the last civilized stop along the way, and probably the best place to hunt down rumors and stock up on gear.

HOLES FOR TOWN

The biggest potential issue with goings-on in town is that the adventurers decide not to have an adventure. If they are unsure of potential rewards for undertaking the quest, they can turn up additional experts on the vanished dragon kingdom while searching for rumors (p. 8) to bolster the case for lost riches. Identifying a key deliver to motivate by direct appeal from a group he's attached to may be useful as well. For example, a reluctant barbarian may be convinced to take on the adventure if his tribe pushes him onto the path.

The second biggest issue is adventurers diving into the adventure unprepared. While charging into the wilderness at the slightest hint of loot shows admirable zeal, rumors in town provide adventurers with hints about the true nature of what's going on under the palace. Delvers who are prone to running off half-cocked might be provided with a guide who knows something about the area. A random encounter with a traveler along the river who won't shut up about the history of the dragon kingdom can fill the same purpose. Or if the adventurers seem too impatient even for that, the hints in the list of rumors (p. 8) might just be dropped into the history the adventurers are provided with when they're recruited for the adventure.

EVENTS IN TOWN

The most important thing that happens to the adventurers in town is that they're recruited to head out to the dragon king's palace. But while there, they can check up on what else is going on and try to find out more about the mission.

RECRUITMENT

The heroes may be drawn into this adventure well before they reach Broken Fang Point, although the town is an excellent place to begin. Someone approaches them and tells them a story about a long-lost treasure. As with any other adventure, this quest may come to the delvers in the form of an old man in a tavern with a treasure map, perhaps with explanatory text on it. However, adventurers with connections to organizations (see **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds**) may be sent on a mission, with the underlying reason depending on the organization (see below for ideas). Whoever tells it, the story is this:

Long ago, after Malthas split the Lightbringers into a hundred factions with heresy and before the mandarins of Shansin built their five-sided towers, two dragons came out of the jungles of Padan and passed the mountains of the Echo Wall. Ataban the Sharp was her name; Vestitius Longtail was her sibling. They burned all defenders and, brother and sister, ruled the land. Lizard men rose up from the swamps to be their closest servants and officials. For three generations of humans, no one could stand against them. They had great caverns dug for themselves in the dragonish fashion on opposite sides of a hill, and they had a palace raised above it from which they ruled. The dragon king had his seat in the east part of the palace, and the queen in the west.

But they could not keep peace between themselves forever. Each of them, brother and sister, plotted against the other over years, keeping secrets even from the lizard retainers who worshiped them. Each drew together mystical reserves to unleash when the other least expected an attack. One struck first, and in dying, the other struck back. The battle was brief but fierce. They toppled the walls of the castle, and many in residence there died beneath its stones. The dragon monarchs were entombed in the collapsed tunnels underneath.

That, of course, is centuries past. The ruins of the palace were considered cursed for many years. With the death of the dragons, their kingdom fell almost instantly, and their remaining followers were scattered to the four winds. In time, the region was abandoned to monsters.

The dragon king had in his throne room an item of great power. The gods granted the Cowl of Ahten-Ahten to a noted priest who used it for remarkable healing rituals. It passed through many hands until it came into the dragon king's hoard, where it was not used but only, as with many other treasures, jealously kept. But there the trail ends. None of the dragon king's treasures have been seen since.

The heroes can get this much from a chance encounter or a passage in a book. Who or whatever provides this information also gives a description of the Cowl of Ahten-Ahten (p. 18) and directions to the ruins of the palace (up the river and to the west a bit; see *Travel*, p. 8). There's a long-lost treasure hoard that includes the particularly powerful artifact, all believed to be undisturbed. That can be enough to get many delvers enthused. But adventurers who are being sent or recruited by a guild may have specific reasons for going.

Congregation: The Mother Church needs the cowl to bring care and comfort to the faithful.

Craft Guild: The masters of the guild believe that the cowl isn't magical, exactly, but rather a device of remarkable workmanship. They want to try to reproduce it.

Delving Company: The cowl is worth a lot.

Extended Family: while the cowl is publicly associated with a priest, the family originally gave it to him. We want it back.

Hermetic Cabal: Bring us the cowl. In a blue sack.

Military Company: A powerful healing device would save the lives of a lot of troops and get them back into battle quickly.

Noble Court: His lordship wishes to own the cowl for the greater glory of his lineage.

Spiritual Society: We foresee the cowl as a necessary tool to fend off a great evil that lurks on the edges of the wilderness.

University: The cowl is a fascinating and important object. The university desires it for further study.



Other organizations have reasons that overlap with those above. Mafia and merchant houses are interested in the sheer monetary value. Students of the master and tribes may have an ancient claim on the object similar to extended families. Sworn societies and rangers have an interest in using the item's power to aid their membership. Rangers and tribes native to the region may just be annoyed at the sudden influx of lizard cultists and want to stop them.

Whatever the motivation, delvers may be offered the same deal. The guild wants the cowl. They provide their assistance along with directions to the ruined palace. The heroes may keep anything they happen to recover along the way so long as the guild gets that artifact.

SHOPPING

Broken Fang Point sees a lot of adventuring types come through town, so for a settlement its size, with perhaps 2,000 people in residence at any given moment, it's surprisingly well equipped with arms, armor, provisions, wilderness gear, and the like. Special orders (*Adventurers*, p. 25) can be obtained. The town is, after all, full of traveling merchants who can pick up all kind of things. However, it requires a successful **Merchant** roll and a delay of at least a week (roll against **Merchant** again; the delay is seven days plus the margin of failure, if any) for the goods to show up.

Travel

The site of the palace is surprisingly close. Adventurers can travel up the river about 20 miles (a hard day and a half of travel up-river, or twice as long on foot) to a gap between hills on the west bank of the river. This leads to a plateau with a large hill about 10 miles farther west. The terrain is unremarkable woodlands (travel speed $\times 0.5$; see *Wilderness Adventures*, p. 22). Though visibility through the trees and underbrush is predictably poor, it's usually easy to see the nearby mountains, so it's essentially impossible to get truly lost along the way. The region is known to be inhabited by a variety of monsters, but nothing attacks the delvers along the way, nor are their watches at night disturbed by lurking shadows and sinister eyes shining from the dark.

RUMORS AND RESEARCH

Broken Fang Point has little resembling libraries or archives (the temples have modest repositories of religious texts, none of which are relevant to this quest), nor institutions of learning. However, it is full of people who know the region well, with particular attention to the kind of information important to dungeon delvers. Asking around can be worth the trouble.

Adventurers can track down rumors by talking to people around town, making one skill roll per day to find anyone with useful advice on a journey to the ruins of the dragon palace. A successful **Carousing** or **Streetwise** roll turns up a rumor from the list below, or two rumors on a critical success; all are at least partly true, but many are of limited utility. On a failed

roll, no information is forthcoming. On a critical failure, the adventurer hears a false rumor; pick something from the list below and change it (the dragon monarchs had giant ape followers, dragons have been leaving the mountains, etc.).

- *There's a shortcut to the ruins of the dragon palace.* (This is true, but it's a tricky route – a narrow pass leads to a set of hidden trails. This land route shaves a half day off of the easier but more roundabout route – see *Travel*, above – but requires a successful **Navigation** roll. On a failure, add an entire day of travel.)

- *The yellow blossom of the six-petal swamp flower is a powerful cure for poisons.* (This is sort of true. There is, in fact, a six-petal yellow flower growing in marshy ground in the region; roll **Naturalist** at +2 to find some. It isn't a cure, but it does provide some benefits. A concoction made from the flower heals 1 point of injury from poison. (To make one ounce of elixir, brew a dozen flowers for a half hour and roll against **Herb Lore** at +4.) For toxins that cause afflictions, it provides +2 to HT rolls. However, the flower must be fresh; blossoms lose their potency after three days.)

- *Dragons have been sighted in northern mountains recently.* (True, but it's a rare year when dragons *aren't* sighted in the mountains. However, dragon activity has been increasing lately, and further discussion, perhaps as the resolution of another rumor roll, will provide those details.)

- *The hordes around the mountains are changing their positions.* (There are a number of semi-organized groups of monsters in the region: lizard men, orcs, wildmen, and so on. There's clearly increased conflict between them, with a number of groups pushing against established positions.)

- *Orcs are migrating west and are trying to move across the river.* (The North Steppe Horde, a group of orcs well to the north, are indeed moving west and threatening the land on the other side of the mountains, but they're at least three or four weeks' travel away, not remotely a threat to anyone going to the dragon palace.)

- *The dragon monarchs were treated as gods by their reptilian followers.* (The followers rounded up humans and other mammal-like subjects to attend sacrifices to the dragon monarchs. Sometimes they were the sacrifice itself, but mostly it was a propaganda action, subjecting them to the terrible presence of the monarchs or their senior dragon lieutenants. No mammal-like humanoids were involved in the cult itself.)

- *The dragon king managed to trap his sister in her lair and, immobilizing her, killed her, but she had a counterstrike prepared which killed him in turn.* (Very true. In fact, she's still trapped.)

- *The dragon king was a beast of desert, while his sister was a beast of the sea.* (A bit metaphorical, but true so far as it goes. Ataban had greater affinity with water than Vestitius.)

- *The palace was largely for humanoid followers and visitors. The dragon rulers held court in caverns underneath the palace. Each one had a vast cavern it used as a throne room, but the entrances collapsed in the cataclysm of their battle.* (True.)

- *The dragon king ruled by manipulating those under him. The dragon queen was a master of craft and artifice.* (True.)

- *The dragons aren't dead, but only sleeping, and travelers in the area can hear their rumbling breathing from deep underground.* (Not quite true, but close enough. Ataban has gone through periods of making significant noise.)

CHAPTER TWO

THE DRAGON KING'S COURT

The palace of the dragon rulers had an extensive aboveground part: defensive wall, kitchens, stables, quarters for the servants, and so on. But it was almost completely leveled in the short, sharp battle between the siblings, and the forest reclaimed nearly all of what remained in the following years. The only part still visible is a fragment of a thick-walled keep. It's now covered in vines, but it can be seen poking above the surrounding trees.

Within the crumbled stump of the keep, the floor is made of flagstones, cracked from impacts and age, but on a successful **Vision** roll at +2, the heroes notice that obvious rubble has

been cleared away to the edges, and a significant amount of vegetation has recently been hacked away, leaving obviously cut branches on surviving shrubs and trees.

A set of bronze gates, about 12' high and 16' across, stands at one end of the keep interior. The doors are clearly battered and corroded with age, but delvers can notice that the hinges have been cleaned and oiled if they make a **Vision** roll or specifically inspect the hinges. The gates are locked, but may be unlocked easily (roll against **Lockpicking** at +3). They swing open to reveal a broad staircase spiraling down.

For an overview map of the palace, see p. 10.

HOOKS FOR THE DRAGON KING'S COURT

Once the adventurers have arrived at the hill, it should be clear that this is the only place they can go. There are no other entrances to any kind of underground complex or holes that could accommodate anything bigger than a well-fed rabbit. Very cautious adventurers may stake out the ruins of the palace to make sure there's nothing lurking in wait for them. This is unlikely to yield much in the way of results. The hill and the surrounding region are heavily forested, so it's exceptionally unlikely that they'll see anything if they don't specifically stake out the region of the gates.

If they aren't keeping an eye the gates, roll against **Observation** every day. On a critical success, they see a small dragon (p. 31) flying, eventually landing under the trees at the top of the hill. If they *are* watching the gates, on a success with **Observation**, they see a group of dragon cultists leaving the gates or coming back. It consists of N dinomen (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 11), N/2 lizard-man warriors (p. 30), N lizard-man brutes (p. 30), N/3 dragon-blooded priests (p. 29), and N/3 dragon-blooded magicians (p. 29). These forces are likely too big for delvers to attack, but should firmly indicate that this is, in fact, the place.

HOLES FOR THE DRAGON KING'S COURT

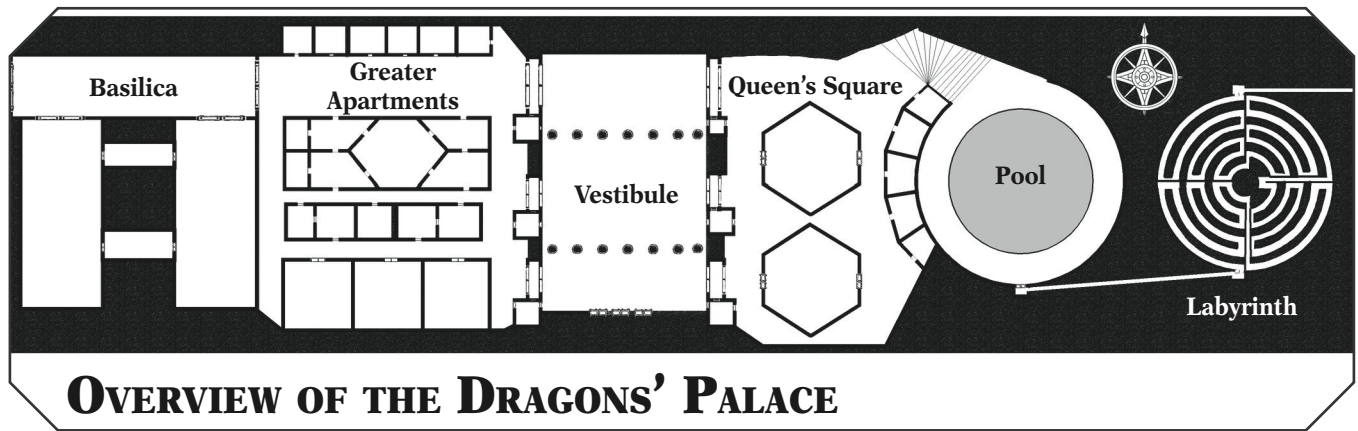
Once the adventurers have reached the entrance to the underground part of the ruins, there is, again, no other place to go. They can spend as much time as they like monitoring the entrance and little will change. If this goes on too long, the adventurers can be nudged. A lizard cultist patrol can come across whatever location they're using for a camp or observation post, which should be

good for a little action and may prompt them to move. If they absolutely refuse to budge, let events overtake them. The dragon king is freed from his buried lair and emerges to lay waste to the surface. He pops up from time to time to set forest fires here and there, and more lizard cultists stream into the area to follow him. Delvers face the same challenges, only more so now.

CONSTANTS

Unless otherwise noted, all doors are average (DR 2, HP 29) and can be picked at no penalty to **Lockpicking**. Regular doors open inward from corridors and large open spaces, though the large double doors separating sections

of the palace swing on pivots and can open either way. Also, unless otherwise noted, ceilings are 40' high. The underground chambers are all completely dark, except for those occupied by lizard cultists, which are lit by torches.



THE VESTIBULE

The staircase is very long. Anyone with the means and interest to measure finds that it's nearly 100' from top to bottom, taking nearly two minutes to descend at a walking pace. The stairs lead down to the entrance for the southern end of the vestibule.

The vestibule wasn't the first place outsiders saw when they came to the palace. But it was likely the first place where they saw the palace's most important inhabitants. The chamber served as a reception room and public court used by the dragon monarchs. (Each had a separate lair that acted as a sort of inner sanctum and private throne room.)

The vestibule, like the rest of the underground portions of the palace, has *very* high ceilings. This part of the palace was, after all, constructed for the comfort of large flying creatures. The vaulted ceiling is 60' high.

The chamber is divided into three sections by colonnades. From south to north, they are the Red Hall, decorated with glazed tiles in shades of red and orange; the Great Sea, tiled with green and blue stone in wave-like patterns; and the Place of Presence, which was once decorated with immense tapestries but now is plain, bare stone (a few shreds of rotten fabric here and there aside).

Sets of gates line the walls, three on each side of the room. Rubble still partially blocks some of the doorways on the east side of the room, leading to the queen's side of the palace, but the way to the gates on the west is clear.

For a map of the area, see p. 11.

This was likely the first place where outsiders saw the palace's most important inhabitants.

SIDE ROOMS

The vestibule has a number of small chambers and structures around the sides.

1. King's Gate

The dragon king used this portal to enter the vestibule. The 35'-tall double gates are sheathed in bronze that was embossed

with a series of spiky geometric motifs resembling flames. It took a crew of several people to open them. The impressive gates are now dented and bent in several places and jammed shut. If adventurers want to bash their way through anyway, treat as two extra-heavy ironbound gates (DR 30, HP 49).

2. Chamber of the Vizier

The head of the dragon king's chancery used this small chamber as an office and waiting room from which he could keep an eye on the vestibule while the dragon king was holding court, and enter quickly if need be. It has doors to both the vestibule and the greater apartment, and an arrow slit facing the space between the twin doorways of the King's Gate. The room is empty except for an alarm trap (p. 12) at each unlocked door.

3. West River Portal

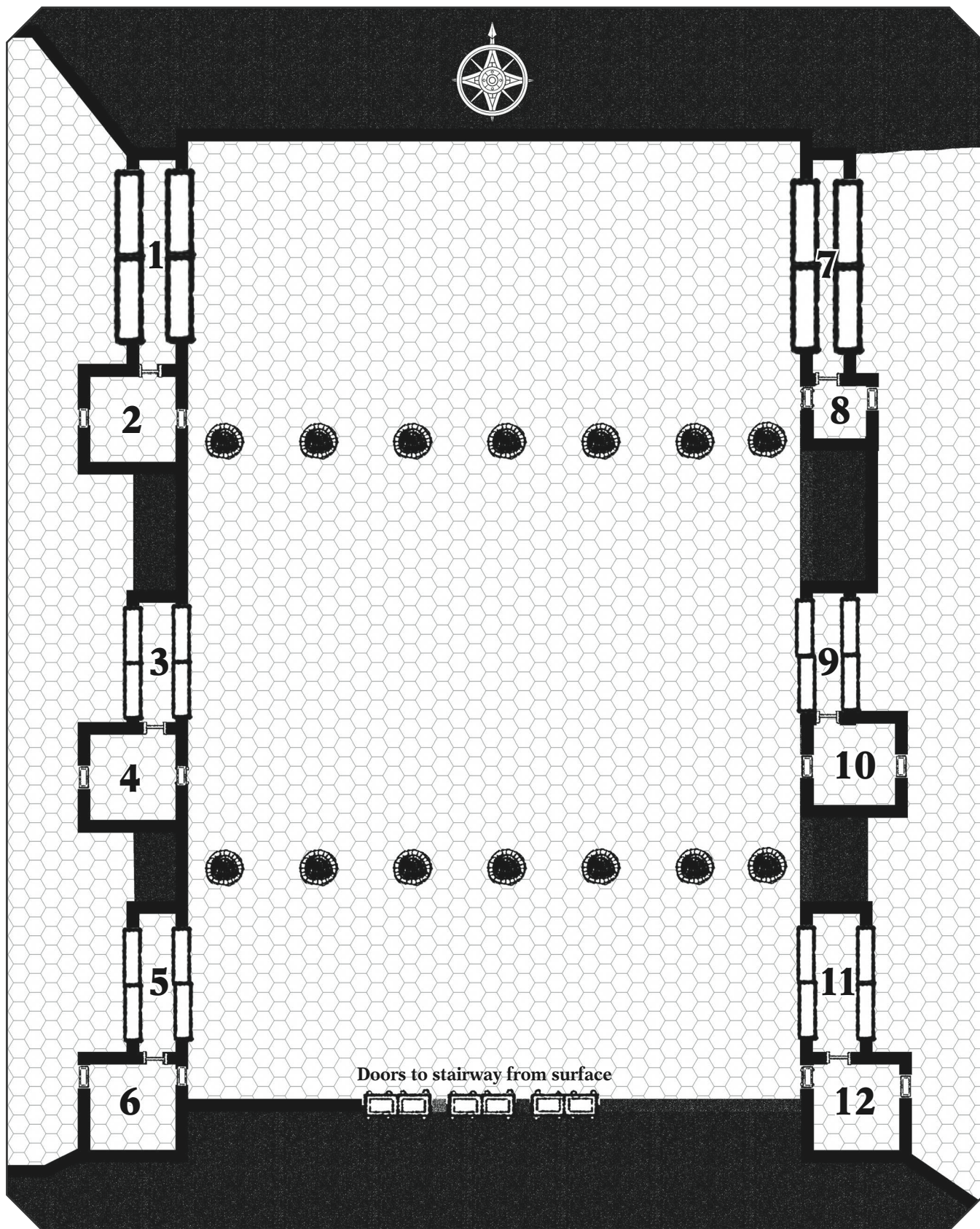
This 20' tall gate got its name from the carving around the stone doorway, depicting boats and serpentine monsters traveling along a river. The plain wooden double doors are locked (no penalty to **Lockpicking** skill to open) or can be bashed open as extra-heavy wooden doors (DR 6, HP 42). They're also very heavy and move on stiff hinges, requiring a combined BL of 100 to push open.

4. First Guard

This is another room where guards stayed out of sight or courtiers might have a quiet word with one another while not leaving the vestibule. Its doors are locked, and it has a window facing the space between the West River Portal doors. The room is empty, save for a sack containing three meals' worth of dried rations.

5. Portal of Hands

The smallest of the three doorways on this side (at 18' tall), these gates are decorated with thin brass sheets which, when the doors are closed, depict a set of clasped hands. The doors are unlocked. However, they open slowly and, since the hinges are in terrible condition, make a loud squealing noise.



MAP OF THE VESTIBULE

Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard.

They require a combined BL of 120 lbs. to open, and the GM should make a wandering patrol check (pp. 18-19) every time they are opened or closed. Should it become necessary to break them down, treat them as extra-heavy wooden doors (DR 6, HP 42); the brass is purely decorative and provides no protective value.

6. Second Guard

This room resembles the First Guard room (p. 10), with an arrow slit facing the space between the Portal of Hands doors. The room contains N dinomen (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 11) and a lizard-man warrior (p. 30). They're supposed to be on guard, but have fallen asleep. If delvers make enough racket to wake the cultists up, they'll lie in wait and attack if the noisy adventurers come close.

ALARM TRAPS

Several doors in this part of the palace are protected by crude alarms – a batch of metal debris falls to the ground, making a loud noise intended to attract cultist guards. However, between false positives and difficulties locating the source of sounds echoing around the high stone ceilings, they don't always work as intended. The poorly constructed traps collapse on their own occasionally, and destabilized piles of rubble around the tunnels sometimes fall.

Detect: Per-based **Traps**.

Disarm: DX-based **Traps**. Failure triggers.

Circumvent: The Silence spell is entirely effective, and piling soft items like bedrolls and cloaks on the floor under the trap allows a second DX-based **Traps** roll to prevent the trap from making its alarming clatter.

Evade: No.

Effects: Make a wandering patrol check (see pp. 18-19). Incoming monsters appear in 3d+20 seconds.

Shots: One.

Rearm: DX-based **Traps**. Resetting a trap takes a minute.

Steal: No.

7. Queen's Gate

The dragon queen used this portal to enter the vestibule. These are of identical construction to the King's Gate: 35' tall, bronze-clad, DR 30, HP 49. However, a pile of rubble is in the way (it's only 2' to 3' high and the doors open inward anyway, so it's an inconvenience rather than a real obstacle, but it's clear that these doors haven't been used in a long time). They are likewise jammed closed.

8. Chamber of the Commander

The dragon queen maintained a ceremonial bodyguard. This room served as a command post for its commanding officer. The door is heavily damaged. While delvers must climb over another low pile of rubble to get to it, it's easy to bash in (DR 1, HP 5; a solid kick can take care of it).

9. East River Portal

These gates are identical to those of the West River Portal (p. 10).

10. Chamber of the Master

This room, sometimes used for the entrance of artificers and scholarly masters, has a locked door on the vestibule side and unlocked door on the other. It is occupied by 2N giant rats (*Dungeons*, p. 24).

11. Queen's Head Gate

This gateway, decorated with a carved relief of a dragon's head, has identical stats to the Portal of Hands (p. 10). However, it is not so damaged that it can't be opened.

12. Prisoner's Respite

This room was once used to hold prisoners before they were presented to the dragon monarchs. It is now inhabited by N/2 howling ghosts (p. 35).

THE GREATER APARTMENTS

The section of the palace to the west of the vestibule nominally fell under the jurisdiction of the dragon king. It was used as a residence for mid-ranked officials and honored guests, divided into a series of rooms and apartments.

For a map of the area, see p. 12.

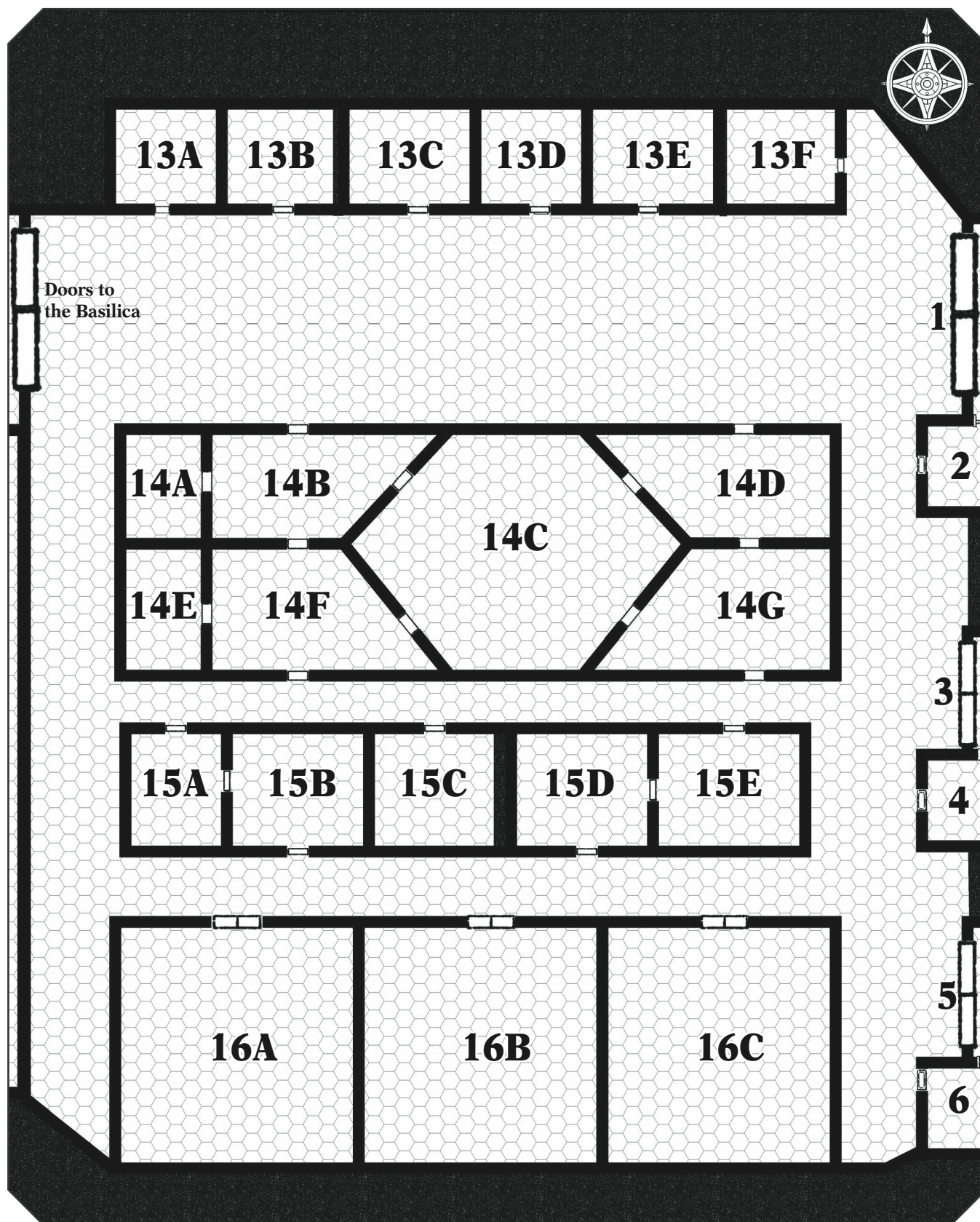
LOGGIA OF THE VIZIER

Not an actual loggia, the walls of these rooms have a series of decorative half-pillars, with a landscape vista of craggy mountaintops painted between them. The colors have faded with age but the art is in remarkably good condition save for a few gouges. These rooms have been taken over by the lizard cultists as storage rooms and occasional living space for lower-level members.

A commotion in any of the other rooms in the loggia or immediately outside the loggia (that is, in the area between the loggia and the Ambassador's Rooms, 14A-G, p. 14) prompts cultists in the loggia come quickly. In the event of sustained loud noise like combat, roll against a **Hearing** of 10 for each room. If the roll succeeds, the cultists in that room arrive at the site of the noise in 2d+10 seconds.

13A-B

Both of these rooms have alarm traps (above). These rooms are empty save for several joints of smoked meat, 2d+10 lbs. of it in each room. The meat can be used as rations (1 lb. per day), but it's borderline-edible for non-reptiles. At each meal, roll against **HT** to avoid being nauseated (p. B428) for an hour.



MAP OF THE GREATER APARTMENTS

Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard.

13C

The room is occupied by N/2 lizard-man brutes (p. 30) and N/4 dragon-blooded magicians (p. 29). They are resting or quietly involved in ritual devotions but will react quickly to disturbances.

13D-E

These rooms contain nothing but a few broken cots.

13F

As with 13C, this room is occupied by a number of resting cultists: N/3 lizard-man brutes (p. 30), N/4 dragon-blooded priests (p. 29), and one lizard-man warrior (p. 30).

*"A man with the head of
a snake!" Kull murmured.
"This, then, is a priest of
the serpent god?"*

*— Robert E. Howard,
The Shadow Kingdom*

THE AMBASSADOR'S ROOMS

These rooms weren't meant for any specific ambassador. Rather, they were used for whoever the most important foreign visitor at the time happened to be. The walls are painted with a red-and-orange pattern of spiky scales, a not-so-subtle reminder of who wielded power around here. All of the exterior doors are not just locked, but barred from the *outside*, and they have writing on them, recently scrawled in black paint. Anyone who can read reptilian languages can interpret the markings as saying "Keep Out." These rooms have persistent problems, and the cultists have decided to leave them as they are.

In addition to any other items specifically noted in these rooms, they haven't been stripped of smaller valuables. Should they find the time to do so, adventurers may poke through the debris for loot. Roll against **Observation** skill. On a success, roll on the *Lesser Treasure Table* (p. 19). On a critical success, roll on the *Greater Treasure Table* (p. 19). Each search attempt takes five minutes, and no more than three attempts in total may be made in any one room.

The east doors, which lead to the Basilica, are plainly fashioned extra-heavy wooden doors (DR 6, HP 42). They have not been locked.

14A

Every surface in this room is blackened and burned, and the corroded remains of a few weapons and pieces of armor are scattered about. A caustic blossom (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3: Born of Myth & Magic*, p. 16) hides in a pile of rubble next to the door. How it survives here without sunlight is an interesting theoretical problem, but probably not delvers' first priority.

14B

This room is burned out as well, and contains N/2 toxifiers (*Dungeons*, p. 26), whirling around it. They attack anyone who enters, but will not pursue them outside the room.

14C

On a successful **Hearing** roll, adventurers listening at a door will hear a faint chorus of moaning sounds. This room, once finely decorated, is a complete shambles. It is filled with a dark, swirling cloud; **Vision** rolls one yard away are at -5, and anything more than two yards away is completely concealed (-10 to combat rolls). The room is occupied by N+2 howling ghosts (p. 35). If any are destroyed, more will appear, one every 10 seconds or so, with a loud crackling noise until they reach N+2 again.

14D

The floor, walls, and ceiling of this room are entirely covered with mold and fungus. Some of it is very dangerous. In particular, the floor is carpeted with a 60-square-yard (SM +4) sticky green mold (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 2: Icky Goo*, p. 9). The room also hosts two howling ghosts (p. 35) and two toxifiers (*Dungeons*, p. 26). Something gleaming is visible atop the crumbled remnants of a cabinet in the northwest corner of the room. If recovered and cleaned, it turns out to be a large axe blade made from an unusual metal. It's useless by itself and weighs 4 lbs. However, an armorer or blacksmith in town can fit it to a suitable haft to make a fine-quality great axe that is immune to corrosion damage (for about \$40). A delver with appropriate tools and materials could do it in an hour with an **Armoury** (*Melee Weapons*) roll, but there's no suitable wood for it down in the dungeon.

14E-F

The door between these two rooms is shattered, and the rooms are filled with piles of reptilian corpses. If anyone spends more than a few seconds in either room, N+3 zombie dinomen rise up in that room and attack (dinomen from *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 11, using the undead lens from *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 38).

14G

The floor and several piles of debris in this room, as in 14D (above), are covered with mold, including another 60-square-yard sticky green mold (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 2*, p. 9). The mold has overgrown a set of life-size terracotta statues of big cats resembling lions or tigers. However, the clay contains N/3 obsidian jaguars (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 24), which have been trapped there for a very long time. If the display of statues takes more than 4 points of damage, it shatters, releasing the jaguars, which immediately attack.

LESSER ROOMS

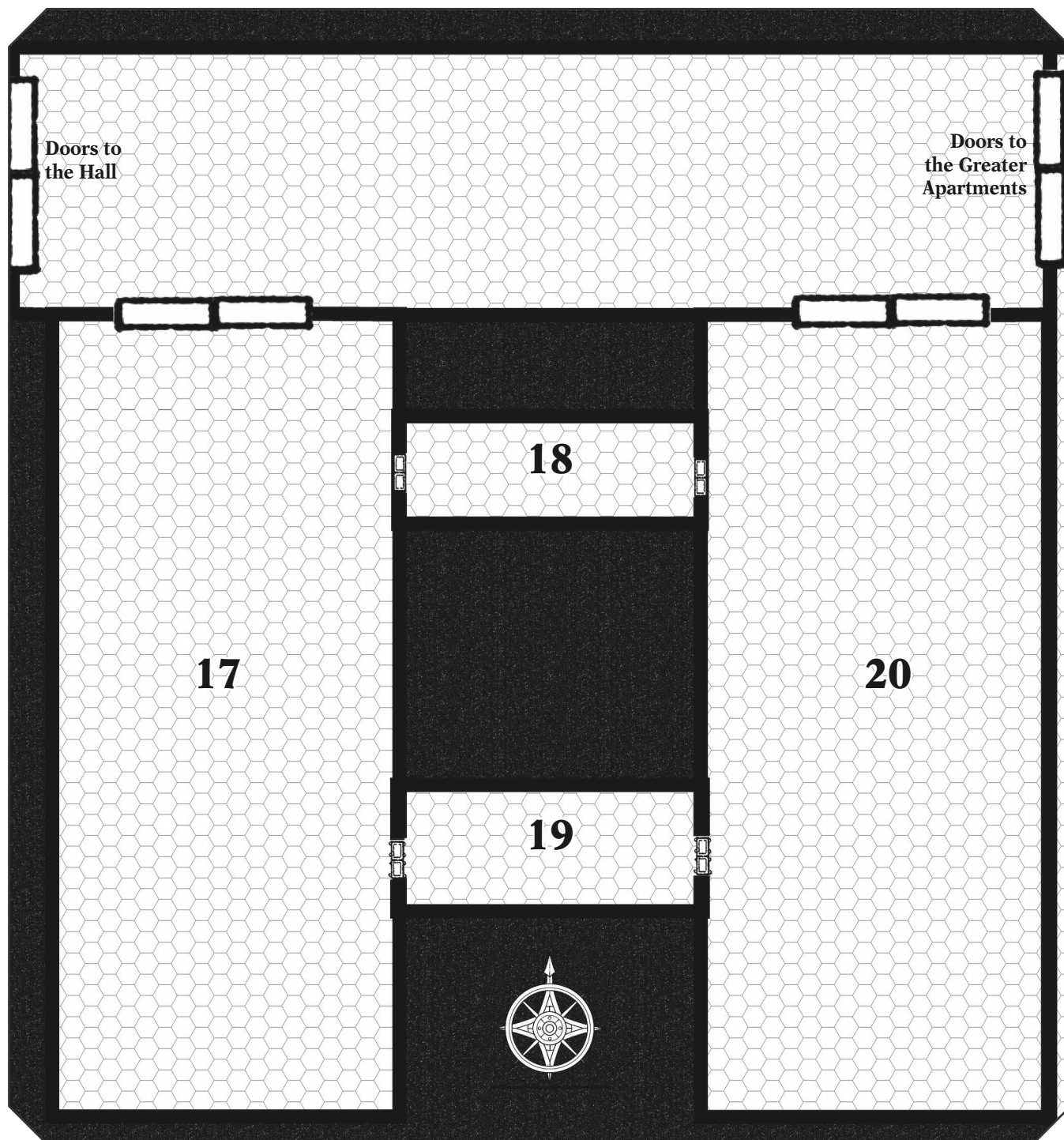
These rooms were once less prestigious ones, used for less important visitors. They had been decorated with jagged, snowcapped mountains painted on plastered walls, but now the paint is worn and the plaster has fallen off the brick walls in many places.

15A

The door here has an alarm trap (p. 12). This chamber is being used as a storeroom. It contains crates and bundles, including three sets of group basics, 20 torches, and 50 meals' worth of dried rations. These are entirely edible for anyone, if somewhat bland, unlike the dried sides of meat in 13A.

15B

This room contains N dinomen (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 11), a dragon-blooded magician (p. 29), and a lizard-man warrior (p. 30). They're sleeping. In the event of a loud disturbance elsewhere in or immediately adjacent to the Lesser Rooms, roll 3d. On 7 or less, they wake up and go to investigate, getting there in a minute or so.



MAP OF THE BASILICA

Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard.

15C

Another storeroom and a small armory. Contents include a dozen spears, a bundle of 40 arrows, and 50 meals of dried rations.

15D

The room is empty except for several cots and an alarm trap (p. 12).

15E

Another room used as barracks; N-1 lizard-man brutes (p. 30) and two dragon-blooded magicians (p. 29) are sleeping here. They're awoken by loud noises in nearby rooms on 7 or less on 3d and get there in a minute.

*I am the Lizard King
I can do anything*

– Jim Morrison,
“Celebration of the Lizard”

HIGH ROOMS

The High Rooms were decorated with scale-shaped patterns in copper leaf. The scales have sadly corroded to shades of green or simply fallen off the walls.

16A

A small dragon (p. 31) and N dinomen (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 11) occupy this room. All of them are sleeping. A pile of bundles in one corner contains \$2,000 in coins and jewelry.

16B

The room is empty, but a hollow under a loose stone (roll against **Observation** at -3 to find it) holds \$400 in silver and copper jewelry.

16C

N/2 hatchling dragons (pp. 30-31) are sleeping here. The room is otherwise scattered with bones and the half-eaten carcasses of a variety of animals. Those who care to spend several minutes looking can turn up \$100 in coins per dragon.

THE BASILICA

This section of the palace got its name from the long parallel halls, all decorated in a red-and-copper scale motif. These rooms were used for ceremonial occasions, and lesser authorities would hold court here, referring matters to the dragon king in his lair only if they became important enough to merit his attention. They have, to some extent, resumed their former function.

The doors for the wide corridor north of the Basilica are plainly fashioned extra-heavy wooden doors (DR 6, HP 42). They have not been locked.

For a map of the area, see p. 15.

17

This room contains N/2 dragon-blooded priests (p. 29), N/2 dragon-blooded magicians (p. 29), and Kunukut the dragon (see p. 32). Unless events disturb them (major earthquakes, etc.), Kunukut is likely to stay here, letting Yansolsi take care of lesser distractions. Should delvers enter the room, she'll toy with them, engaging them in conversation, and then abruptly try to kill them.



Kunukut is a wealthy dragon, but she doesn't keep her hoard here. The room contains perhaps \$500 in coins and another \$1,000 in jewelry (mostly rings and chains).

18-19

These connecting corridors used to be for storage and for getting between the halls of the basilica, but they're disused now. The ceilings are a mere 15' high. However, cracks in the ceilings and floors allow things to pass through now and again. Every time adventurers move through, roll 3d. On 11 or less, a jelly (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 2*, p. 7) lurks in the room, with SM +(N/2), maximum SM +4.

20

Yansolsi (p. 32) is here with one dragon-blooded priest (p. 29), one dragon-blooded magician (p. 29), and N/2 lizard-man brutes (p. 30). He tends to be the more active and impulsive of the two dragons in this part of the palace, but unless something has happened to rouse him, he's asleep. However, if adventurers awaken him, he'll leap into action instantly. He has \$4,000 in coins and \$2,000 in jewelry lying around the room.

HALL OF THE DRAGON KING

At the end of the broad corridors in the western wing of the palace lies a vast chamber. It appears to be a natural cavern – or at least one dug out roughly and not finished with masonry and smooth walls, though the floor is fairly level. It is lit here and there by torches and small fires, and there are

numerous glints in the walls and floor. (The doors leading into it from the Basilica are plainly fashioned extra-heavy wooden doors – DR 6, HP 42. They have not been locked.)

For a map of the area, see p. 17.

The room is occupied. 2N dinomen (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 11) and N lizard-man brutes (p. 30) labor at the piles of rubble at the western end of the chamber. They're digging away the collapsed rock and earth and dragging it by the bucket-load to the side, trying to reopen the collapsed entrance. They've got, at the very least, weeks of work ahead of them, but they've recently excavated an opening just big enough for something SM 0 or smaller to crawl through.

The work crew isn't armored, nor are they armed with more than the improvised weapons of picks and shovels. However, there's another N/2 each of lizard-man warriors (p. 30), lizard-man brutes (p. 30), dragon-blooded magicians (p. 29), and dragon-blooded priests (p. 29) scattered around the chamber. One of the priests is wearing the Cowl of Ahten-Ahten (p. 18).

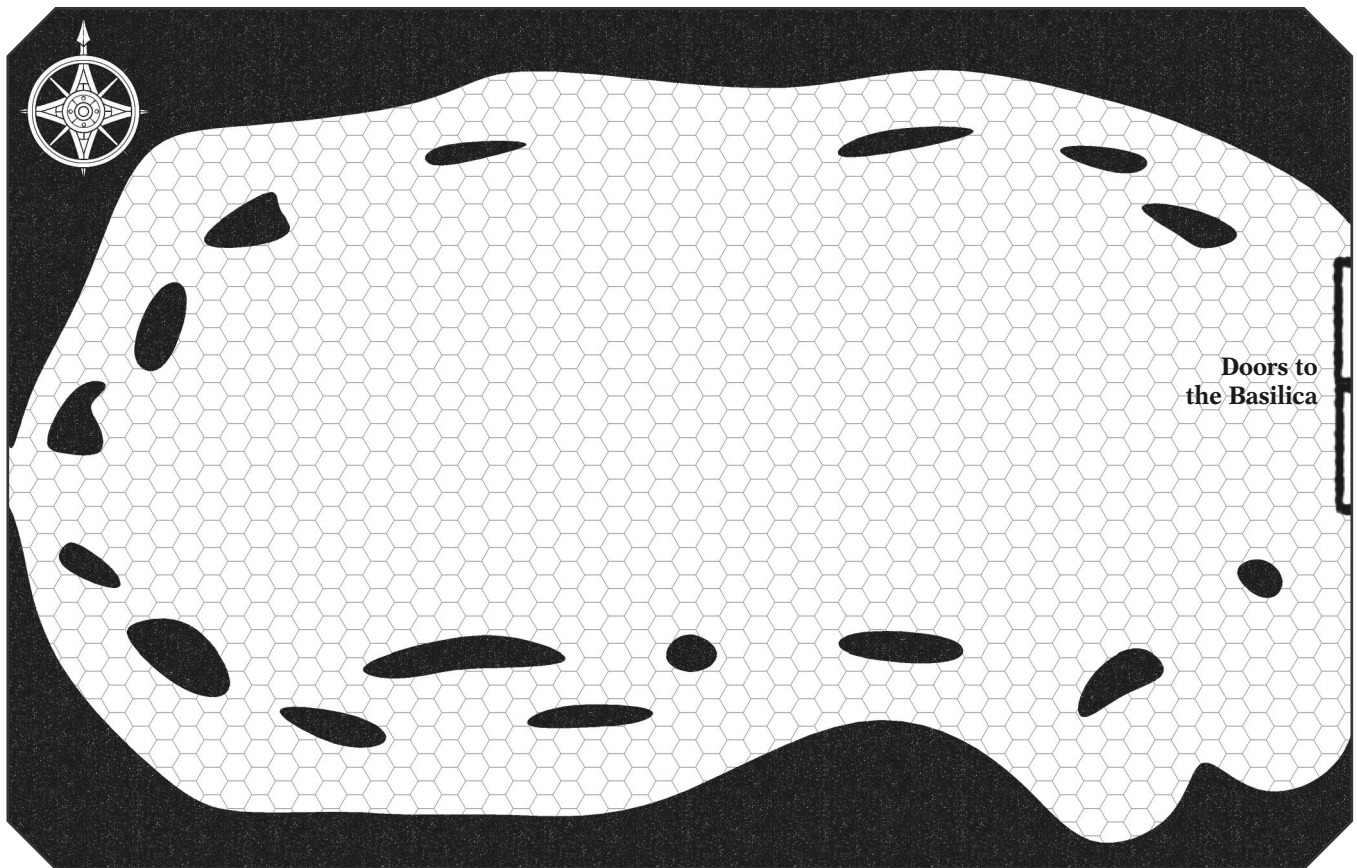
In the center of it, all is Vestitius (pp. 33-34), alive and well. The delvers and whoever sent them weren't the only ones aware of the Cowl of Ahten-Ahten. A group of lizard cultists discovered the secrets of the cowl, returned to the palace ruins, and used it to resurrect their master. The dragon-blooded priest wearing the cowl is a senior cultic official and an important servant to the dragon king, and he does not leave Vestitius' presence at any time.

Everyone involved is either working at the rubble at the west end of the room or milling about the open space in the center. No particular attention is being paid to the spoil piles

at the edges of the room, mounds of rock and dirt moved aside to clear the collapsed tunnel to the outside.

The motes of light that adventurers can see scattered around the room are bits and pieces of the dragon king's old hoard, mixed in with the dirt and rock. If they've got time, they can pick bits and pieces out of the rubble. For each minute spent digging, roll on the *Lesser Treasure Table* (p. 19). Loose coins are sufficiently plentiful here that this requires no skill roll. More concerted digging around can turn up larger, more valuable items mixed in with the dirt and rock. The selection is limited, but some things remain intact. For every minute spent looking, roll against **Observation**, **Scrounging**, or **Prospecting**. On a success, roll on the *Greater Treasure Table* (p. 19). Up to 20 rolls on that table may be made.

In the event of a commotion or other distraction, about half of the cultists not engaged in digging (but *not* the one wearing the cowl) move to check it out. In the case of adventurers directly making their presence known, at least that many cultists attack them, with Vestitius and the remainder of the cultists joining in if the fight goes on too long. Moreover, reinforcements appear quickly. After 10 seconds, roll on the *Wandering Patrol Table* (p. 18) to see what new cultists show up, then again every 15 seconds for a full minute. In the event that delvers manage to release the dragon queen, see *Dragon Royalty* (pp. 32-34) to handle the complicated battle that follows.



MAP OF THE HALL OF THE DRAGON KING

Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard.

THE COWL OF AHTEN-AHTEN

The cowl is a heavy leather hood that reaches the wearer's shoulders and partly covers the face (1.5 lbs., DR 1 in the unlikely event someone is unwise enough to use it as armor). The face mask, coated with silver leaf scales, is hardened into a long beak and exaggerated scales around the eyes. The remainder has shapes of feathers stamped into it and painted in red, green, and gold. It provides immense benefits for healing spells:

- *Anyone* can use it to cast spells in the Healing college, and Power Investiture requirements are ignored. Spells must still be learned, but they can be cast without Power Investiture so long as the caster is wearing the cowl.
- The cowl provides two points of energy for all Healing spells, per the Power enchantment.

- Remaining energy costs for Healing spells are *halved* (round up).

- Penalties for repeatedly casting Healing spells like Minor Healing are also *halved* (again, round up).

- Though it's of little use to adventurers, the amount of energy which may be contributed by spectators assisting the wearer when using ceremonial magic is doubled.

- The drawback to using the cowl is that users tend to be taken up into a higher plane. After any critical failure while using the cowl *and* after every full month of having it in one's possession, roll against HT. On a failure, the possessor of the cowl vanishes forever, leaving the cowl behind.

The cowl is essentially priceless.

EVENTS IN THE DRAGON KING'S COURT

Much of the action in the dragon king's court is driven by the delvers' own activities, but some things can happen to them.

WANDERING PATROLS

Most of the chambers in the dragon king's court contain supplies, lizard cultists at rest, or detritus left over from the initial disaster and centuries of neglect. However, the underground palace sees a great deal of activity, including regular patrols to fight off monsters infiltrating into the king's side from the queen's. Under normal conditions, roll 3d every

15 minutes. On 9 or less, a patrol approaches the delvers' current location; roll 1d, 1d on the *Wandering Patrol Table* (below). Patrols do not, under normal circumstances, attempt to move stealthily, so adventurers can make **Hearing** rolls far enough in advance to detect and avoid them. Patrol members, except for dragons, carry torches.

However, the heroes often do things that make patrols appear more frequently.

- If they engage in combat which last for more than five turns without taking steps to ensure they remain silent, make a check for a wandering patrol to be attracted by the noise. It will appear within a minute of the previous fight ending.

Wandering Patrol Table

Roll 1d, 1d to determine which group they encounter. If a dragon is in the group, consult the *Dragon's Breath Table* (p. 19) to determine what the creature can do.

Roll	Result
1-3, 1	N dinomen (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1</i> , p. 11)
1-3, 2	N/2 lizard-man brutes (p. 30), 2 dragon-blooded magicians (p. 29)
1-3, 3	N dinomen (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1</i> , p. 11), 1 lizard-man warrior (p. 30)
1-3, 4	N dinomen (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1</i> , p. 11), 1 dragon-blooded priest (p. 29)
1-3, 5	N lizard-man brutes (p. 30), 1 dragon-blooded magician (p. 29)
1-3, 6	N/2 lizard-man brutes (p. 30), N/2 lizard-man warriors (p. 30)
4-6, 1	2N dinomen (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1</i> , p. 11), 2 lizard-man brutes (p. 30)
4-6, 2	N lizard-man brutes (p. 30), 1 dragon hatchling (pp. 30-31)
4-6, 3	N/2 dragon hatchlings (pp. 30-31)
4-6, 4	N dinomen (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1</i> , p. 11), 2 dragon hatchlings (pp. 30-31), 1 dragon-blooded priest (p. 29)
4-6, 5	N dinomen (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1</i> , p. 11), N/2 lizard-man brutes (p. 30), 1 dragon-blooded magician (p. 29), 1 dragon hatchling (pp. 30-31)
4-6, 6	N dinomen (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1</i> , p. 11), 1 small dragon (p. 31)

• If they end a fight with escaped survivors on the other side or completely defeat three consecutive patrols, the defenders become *alert*. The size of patrols increases, and they may take measures to avoid detection. Add 2 to N, and patrols appear on a roll of 12 or less; if a roll for wandering patrols is 7 or less, the patrol is using **Stealth**, making the roll to detect them a Contest against **Hearing**. The cultists remain on alert for a day; if there are no further encounters with delvers, they return to their normal vigilance.

• For delvers who insist in making a spectacle of themselves – causing lots of noise and holing up in a defensive position to fight all comers – feel free to dispense with the wandering patrol rolls. Just add another result from the table every minute until the delvers are outnumbered by 10 to one.

Dragon's Breath Table

When a dragon is encountered, roll 1d and consult the table to see what kind of dangerous breath it has. Game features for each type are included in the dragon stats (pp. 30-32).

Roll	Breath	Roll	Breath
1	Acid	4	Fire
2	Cold	5	Lightning
3	Fire	6	Poison Spray

TREASURE HUNTING

The dragon king's part of the palace has largely been tidied up and stripped of loose valuables, but many locations still contain bits and pieces worth picking out of the rubble. Those valuables are essentially all metallic, with a few precious stones. Organic material has burned up or rotted away, and fragile materials like glass and porcelain have shattered. But precious metals and well-made weapons and armor remain.

Lesser Treasure Table

This table represents little bits of personal wealth, the former contents of purses, the draconic equivalent of loose change, and the like. Roll 2d to determine what searchers find.

Roll	Result
2-4	2d × 5 copper pieces (\$1 each)
5-6	3d × 5 copper pieces (\$1 each)
7-8	2d+1 silver pieces (\$4 each)
9-10	3d silver pieces (\$4 each)
11	1d-1 gold pieces (minimum 1; \$80 each)
12	Fragment of jewelry worth 3d × \$100

Greater Treasure Table

This table represents larger, more valuable items, some of which are even enchanted. Roll 1d, 1d to determine which item the delvers discover.

Roll	Result	Notes
1-2, 1	Draconic book (\$395, 18 lbs.)	[1]
1-2, 2	Large knife (\$40, 1 lb.)	
1-2, 3	Pot helm (\$100, 5 lbs.)	[2]
1-2, 4	Small dwarven shield (\$200, 16 lbs.)	
1-2, 5	Greathelm (\$340, 10 lbs.)	[2]
1-2, 6	Shortsword (\$400, 2 lbs.)	

Roll	Result	Notes
3-4, 1	Silver earrings with malachite (\$400/pair)	
3-4, 2	Broadsword (\$500, 3 lbs.)	
3-4, 3	Mail suit (\$645, 58 lbs.)	[2]
3-4, 4	Silver ring set with tiger's eye (\$650)	
3-4, 5	Mail suit with Fortify +1 (\$695, 58 lbs.)	[2]
3-4, 6	Scale armor suit (\$1,160, 80 lbs.)	[2]
5, 1	Silver-coated shortsword (\$1,200, 2 lbs.)	
5, 2	Orichalcum large knife (\$1,200, 1 lb.)	
5, 3	Electrum ring (\$1,705)	
5, 4	Small dwarven shield with Deflect +1 (\$2,200, 16 lbs.)	
5, 5	Fine broadsword (\$2,000, 3 lbs.)	
5, 6	Scale armor suit with Fortify +2 (\$5,160, 80 lbs.)	[2]
6, 1	Shortsword with Penetrating Weapon (\$5,400, 2 lbs.)	
6, 2	Broadsword with Accuracy +1 (\$5,500, 3 lbs.)	
6, 3	Gold necklace set with emeralds (\$10,000)	
6, 4	Greathelm with Reflect Gaze (\$12,340, 10 lbs.)	[2]
6, 5	Broadsword with Flaming Weapon (\$15,900, 3 lbs.)	
6, 6	Silver tiara with Resist Fire (\$16,600)	

Notes

[1] Dragons tend to go in for oral traditions rather than writing things down, but remnants of draconic libraries are lying around. As a rule, these are inscribed on metal plates, since flame-sensitive materials don't survive around dragons long. Roll on the *Book Subject Table* (below) for the skill covered by each book found.

[2] For each suit or piece of armor, roll 1d. On 1-2, it's for lizard men. On 3-4, it's for dragon-blooded (dragon-blooded armor, except the helmet, fits most SM 0 humanoids). On 5-6, it's for humans and most other SM 0 humanoids. Suits are full suits of armor providing head to toe coverage (see **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 8: Treasure Tables**, p. 34, for full descriptions of components).

Book Subject Table

Roll 2d on the table below to determine the topic of the book that they discovered. If a single book is discovered, it is a primer. If delvers find multiple books, each book for Religious Ritual and Engineer covers a different specialty of the skill. Multiple books on the other topics on this list contain overlapping information, with each one adding a bit more to what's in the others. Three books on the same subject can be used as though they made up a single textbook. Six on a single topic can be used as a thesis. See **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 4: Sages**, p. 13, for more on books.

Roll	Subject	Roll	Subject
2-5	Religious Ritual	10	Body Language
6-7	Engineer	11	Alchemy
8	Surgery	12	Hidden Lore (Dragons)
9	Veterinary		

CHAPTER THREE

THE DRAGON QUEEN'S COURT

The section to the east of the vestibule nominally belonged to the dragon queen. This area of the palace has been left alone by the dragon cultists. It is still full of rubble, partially rotted and burned timbers, centuries' worth of accumulated

cobwebs, and the remains of a variety of monsters, as well as some still living there. At the end of it all, there's what's left of the dragon queen herself.

QUEEN'S SQUARE

Beyond the vestibule, the dragon queen maintained an area of rooms that were used for teaching, craftwork, libraries, and other intellectual activities. Less civilized and intelligent monsters still inhabit this area. However, it hasn't been cleared out, so there's still some loot here as well.

Nearly everything here has been destroyed, leaving the old rooms mostly burned-out shells. Through the soot and centuries of dust and mold which have built up, interested adventurers can make out a wavy blue and green pattern decorating the walls of the square and its component structures. It contains two hexagonal chambers in the center of the room. A string

of chambers is across on the eastern side. To the northwest, a broad set of steps leads down to the nearby pool (pp. 23-25).

For a map of the area, see p. 21.

THE LIBRARIES

Two great hexagonal structures dominating the square were once repositories of knowledge. Their interiors are lined with stone shelves reaching as high as the ceiling (and they provide easy handholds, giving +3 to **Climbing** skill for anyone who wants to attempt the ascent).

Hooks for the Dragon Queen's Court

Initially, there's little to tempt anyone to explore the dragon queen's side of the palace. The delvers know that their target lies to the west, not the east. However, a few things might nudge them in that direction. One is the reasonable suspicion that something is going on there. If the adventurers pay attention to rumors and interrogate a lizard cultist or two, it should become quite clear that *something* is up. Another is the realization that treasure is likely in that direction. It's clearly undisturbed, which means nobody's cleared out the loot. Finally, there's the prospect of a safe haven. Safe-ish anyway. The cultist patrols don't go there, so it might be a reasonable place to lay low and patch up the wounded.

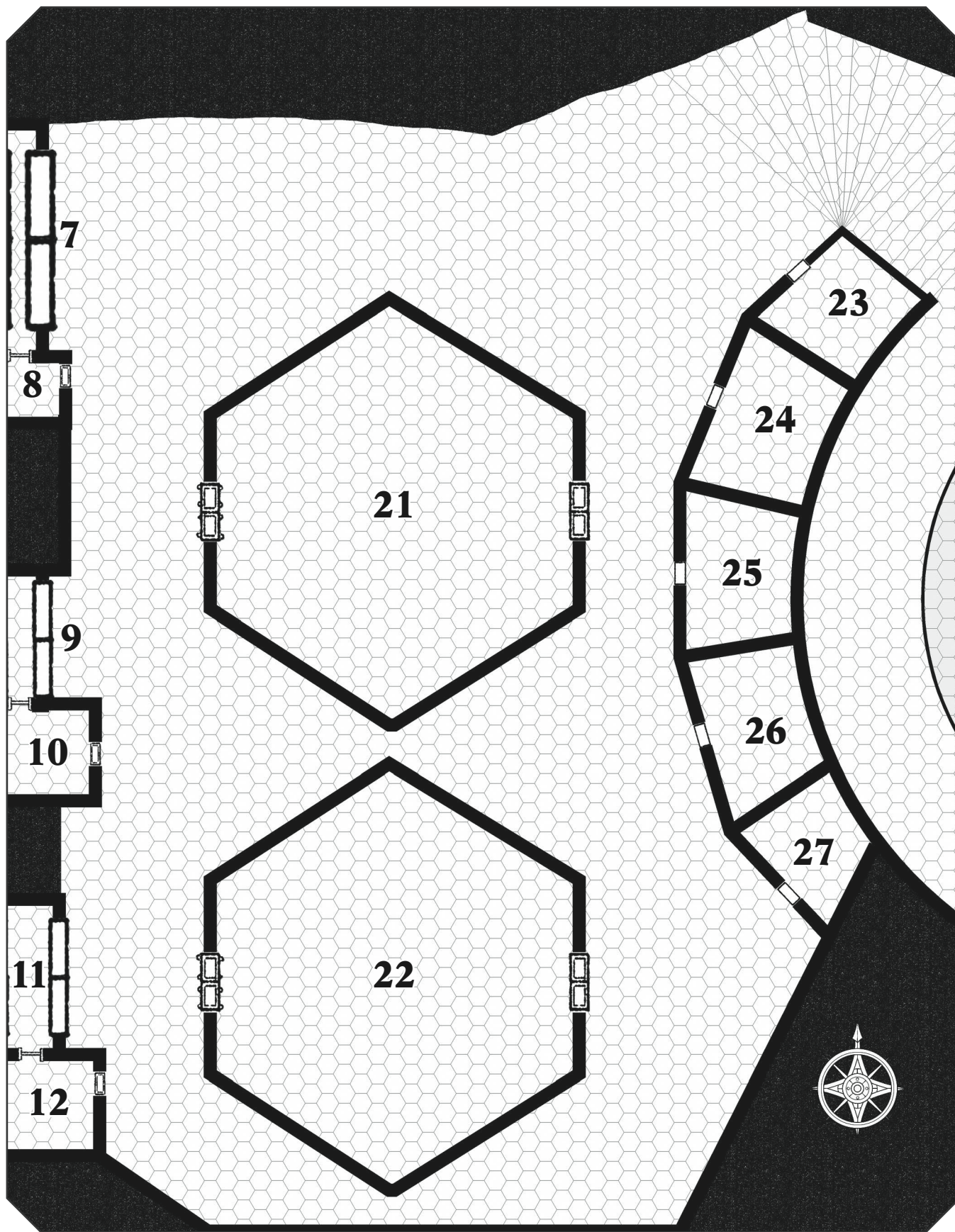
Holes for the Dragon Queen's Court

Ultimately, it's not necessary for adventurers bent on recovering the cowl to visit the dragon queen's court. Going there gives them more loot, a different set of challenges, and a chance of vastly complicating things for the dragon king. However, they are free to ignore it entirely if they so choose.

21

The interior of the north library smells horrible and is festooned with cobwebs. It has, sadly, become the abode of a flock of foul bats, N+2 of them. They're asleep when delvers come visiting, hanging upside down in the darkness at the ceiling 40' overhead. However, they wake up if intruders start making significant amounts of noise (such as rummaging through the debris for loot), and the creatures will swoop down to attack.

Adventurers searching for loot can roll against **Observation** skill. Each attempt takes five minutes. On a success, roll on the *Lesser Treasure Table* (p. 19). On success by 5 or greater, they find a surviving text (in metal, of course; \$395, 18 lbs.). Also, roll on the *Book Subject Table* (p. 19). On a critical success, the group instead finds a text containing a spell (GM should choose a suitable spell; the book itself is \$790, 18 lbs.). On a critical failure, they disturb a curtain spider (p. 35) lurking in the rubble. They make at total of up to five rolls to find loot before exhausting all the possibilities, but may make one additional roll per 10' they're willing to climb up the shelves.



MAP OF THE QUEEN'S SQUARE *Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard.*

The south library has been taken over by giant ants (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3*, p. 10); 2N fire ants, including two soldiers, mill around the room. Narrow openings to tunnels are both overhead and in the floor. The room is part of a larger complex of ant tunnels, so every 10 to 20 minutes, another N fire ants appear (roll 1d; on 1-3, they come down from the ceiling, and on 4-6 they come up from the floor).

A significant amount of shiny detritus is hidden in the rubbish. If adventurers get the chance to rummage through the room for loot, roll against **Observation** skill. On a success, roll on the *Lesser Treasure Table* (p. 19). On a critical success, they find an engraved metal book; roll on the *Book Subject Table* (p. 19). They may make a total of up to 10 rolls. Each search takes five minutes.



THE MUSEUM

This section once housed collections of curiosities. The more durable ones include some significant dangers.

23

This was the house of mechanisms, with displays of clockwork wonders. It now contains a great deal of corroded and broken rubbish of little value and N-2 bronze spiders (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 5). They cling to the walls 10' to 20' up, waiting to attack anything that comes in.

24

Partly a laboratory, partly a storeroom, this chamber held a variety of alchemical items. Most of it has gone very, very bad by now, and even the monsters avoid it. It still contains a number of potions in sturdy crystal containers: two alchemical antidotes, a balm of regeneration, two minor healing potions, one jar of liquid ice, and a sleep potion (all *Adventurers*, p. 29). However, it takes five minutes and a successful **Observation** roll to find one. On a critical failure, searchers find what appears to be an intact bottle containing

a potion, but it's turned toxic over the years, doing 2d injury to whoever drinks it.

All containers are labeled, but that doesn't guarantee the safety of the contents. Wise delvers will analyze them before using them.

The room is also contaminated with the remnants of its contents. Each search kicks up a lot of toxic dust. Searchers must roll against **HT** or suffer 1d of injury. However, a successful roll against **Hazardous Materials (Magical)** suggests countermeasures, reducing the injury to 1 point.

25

To dragons, the underworld is just another place to study, so it's not surprising that a chamber was set aside for the practice. It is further unsurprising that demons were left behind in the chamber and have been stewing there for centuries, constrained by a Pentagram-like enchantment around its perimeter. There are N/2 Demons of Old (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 10) in the room. They can't leave, but they can still grapple targets with their chains through an open doorway. Should the adventurers defeat the demons and ransack the room, it also contains \$1,000 in assorted jewelry and precious metal ornaments. On a critical success on an **Observation** roll, they find an engraved metal book: a primer on Hidden Lore (Demons) (\$395, 18 lbs.).

26

This room was an armory of sorts. The area contains three of each non-enchanted weapon on the *Greater Treasure Table* (p. 19) and two of each non-enchanted piece of armor in each of the lizard-man, dragon-blooded, and human versions. There are also N shadow warriors (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3*, p. 21) and one broadsword enchanted with flaming weapon in the hands of a sword spirit (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 29). The sword spirit is in a kind of magical stasis, which is broken when someone picks up the sword.

27

This was once a torture chamber. Wooden items like racks and frames are long gone, but an assortment of pointy items remain. A large iron brazier stands in one corner of the room, blazing away. The room is occupied by N-1 howling ghosts and N/4 flaming skulls.

The brazier is quite heavy (12 lbs.), but magical. With a successful **Religious Ritual** roll, the item can raise the sanctity of an area within a radius of five yards of it by one level as long as incense is burned in it. An ounce of incense lasts about a half hour, and the increase to sanctity benefits all clerics. However, the brazier is burning for quite another reason. A trapped flame lord (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 15) occupies it. The spell holding him is broken if the brazier is moved. He's been trapped there for centuries, so his bad temper is likely to be particularly active. The brazier is worth \$3,500 in town.

EVENTS AT THE QUEEN'S SQUARE

Not a lot happens in the queen's square that the delvers don't make happen themselves. There's little going on save for monsters passing through from time to time. If adventurers spend time just waiting (resting up, treating wounds, etc.), roll 3d every hour. On 10 or less, a group of monsters arrive. Roll on the *Wandering Monster Table*.

*Don't you draw the queen of
diamonds, boy,
She'll beat you if she's able.*
– Glenn Frey and Don Henley,
“Desperado”

Wandering Monster Table

Roll 2d to determine which creatures they encounter.

Roll	Result
2	N/3 toxifiers (<i>Dungeons</i> , p. 26) and N/3 flaming skulls (<i>Dungeons</i> , p. 22)
3	N/2 crushrooms (<i>Dungeons</i> , p. 22)
4	N howling ghosts (p. 35)
5	N/2 acid spiders (<i>Dungeons</i> , p. 21)
6	1.5N giant ants (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3</i> , p. 10)
7	2N giant rats (<i>Dungeons</i> , p. 24)
8	N rot worms (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3</i> , p. 20)
9	N curtain spiders (p. 35)
10	N rock mites (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1</i> , p. 25)
11	N/3 eyes of death (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1</i> , p. 14)
12	1 electric jelly (<i>Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1</i> , p. 13)

THE POOL

The broad steps from the dragon queen's square lead down to the pool. The pool is a surprisingly large body of water. It was how the dragon queen reached the rest of the underground portion of the palace. A tunnel was bored into the side of the well 20' below the surface, connecting it to the dragon queen's personal lair. Being entirely comfortable with water, she would dive into a pool in her lair, swim through the connecting tunnel, up through the pool, and then make her way to the vestibule. The tunnel to the hall of the dragon queen is four to five yards in diameter and 50 yards long, but a swimmer might not be able to get out at the other end (see p. 27).

The water starts about 3' below floor level, and is cold, dark, and very deep. Indeed, if they look, adventurers will be unable to find a bottom. Above is a high, domed ceiling. Around the edges of the room, the ceiling is 30' high, but the center of the dome is 60'. However, it's nearly impossible to see through a huge network of cobwebs that has built up over the centuries. Adventurers can spy the outlines of bones of all kinds and the occasional telltale glint of metal.

The pool has a broad walkway around it, which adventurers might regard as suspiciously clear of bones, cobwebs, and other debris. The sides of the room are lined with shallow niches with relief carvings in green stone of dragons in a variety of twisted poses. The only door is a human-sized set of double doors at the southernmost extreme of the room. If the delvers get there, they find it secured with a particularly difficult lock (roll **Lockpicking** at -4).

EVENTS AT THE POOL

The pool may seem like a quiet place when the delvers first see it, but a lot can go wrong here.

Under the Webs

If adventurers watch the webs overhead, a successful **Observation** roll reveals occasional tremors here and there. Clearly, something's up there making them move.

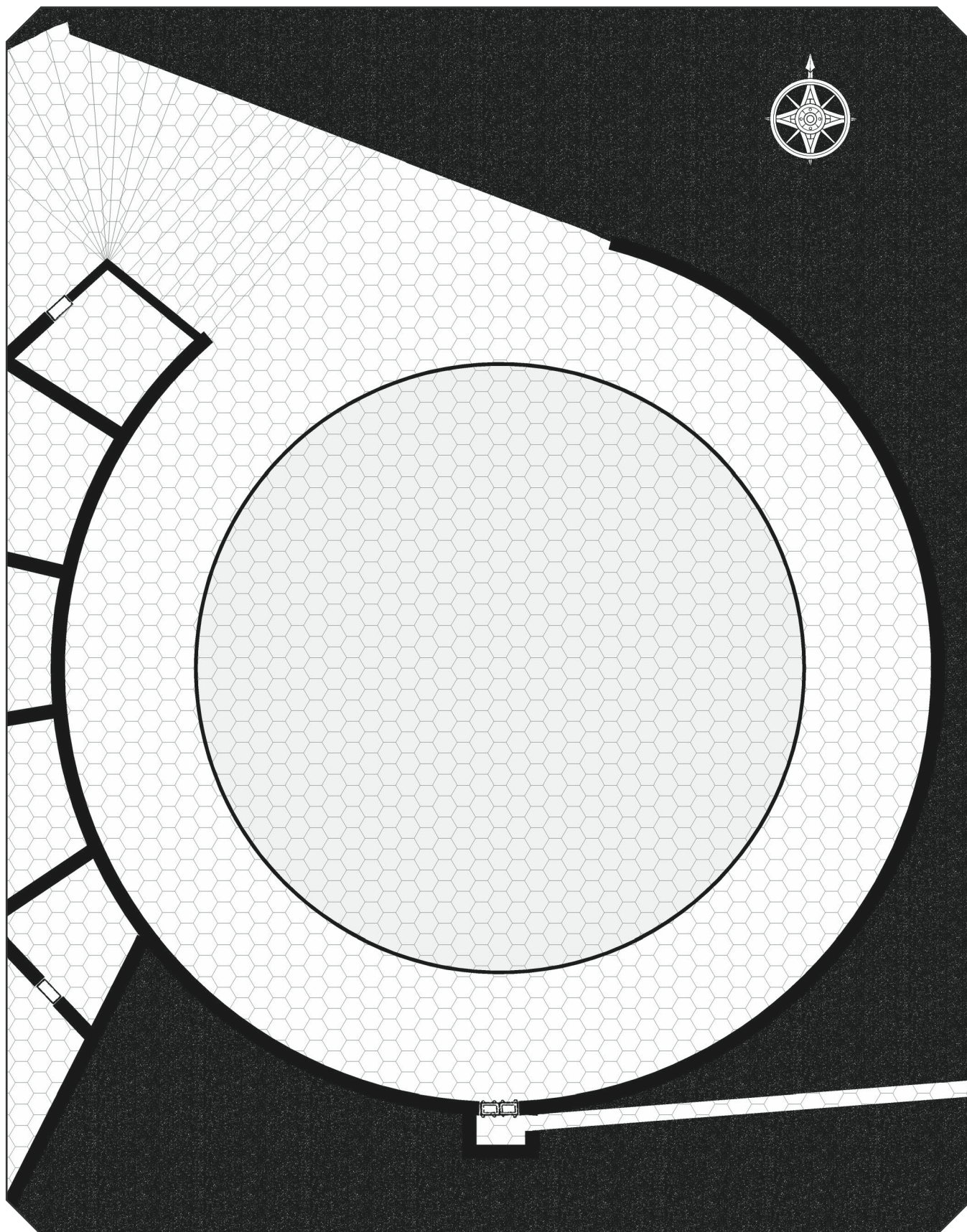
If the delvers decide to make their way around the pool walkway, roll 1d. After that many seconds, N/2 curtain spiders (p. 35) emerge from the webs overhead, with roughly a third somewhere in the 10 yards ahead of them, a third behind, and a third directly on top of them. New spiders emerge *every turn*, until they reach a total of 3N. If the delvers manage to fight them off, no more spiders will descend until the next time they enter the room. If party flees, no more than half of the spiders pursue them.

Delvers may think to take the fight to the spiders. Destroying enough cobwebs causes the spiders to retreat and avoid attacking *en masse* again. A hex of cobwebs can take five points of damage done with cutting or crushing attacks before it is torn into uselessness. Destroying 20 hexes of webs convinces the spiders to back off. However, until they do, spiders will continue to swarm around them.

The good news is that if delvers try to climb up into the cobwebs, they'll find an extensive network of webs strong enough to get anywhere with relative ease, but so coated with dust and debris that they're not sticky any more. Delvers can travel around at half their usual Move. If, for some reason, an adventurer falls (for example, if a martial artist fails to kick properly), the person must roll against **Climbing** or **Acrobatics** to avoid falling all the way to the floor.

The bad news is that they'll likely *have* to climb up to do serious damage to the webs. The cobwebs can be burned away in small spots by torches or magical fire spells, but fires do not spread; the material just isn't particularly flammable.

Hacking up cobwebs may also release valuable items, which fall to the ground below. Roll 3d for each hex destroyed. On 3-6, roll on the *Lesser Treasure Table* (p. 19). On 7-12, nothing happens. On a 13 or greater, bones and barely identifiable debris fall to the ground. If someone is in the hex immediately below, they must **Dodge** or take 1d-2 crushing damage to the head. If anything falls into the pool, see *Stay Out of the Water* (p. 25).



MAP OF THE POOL

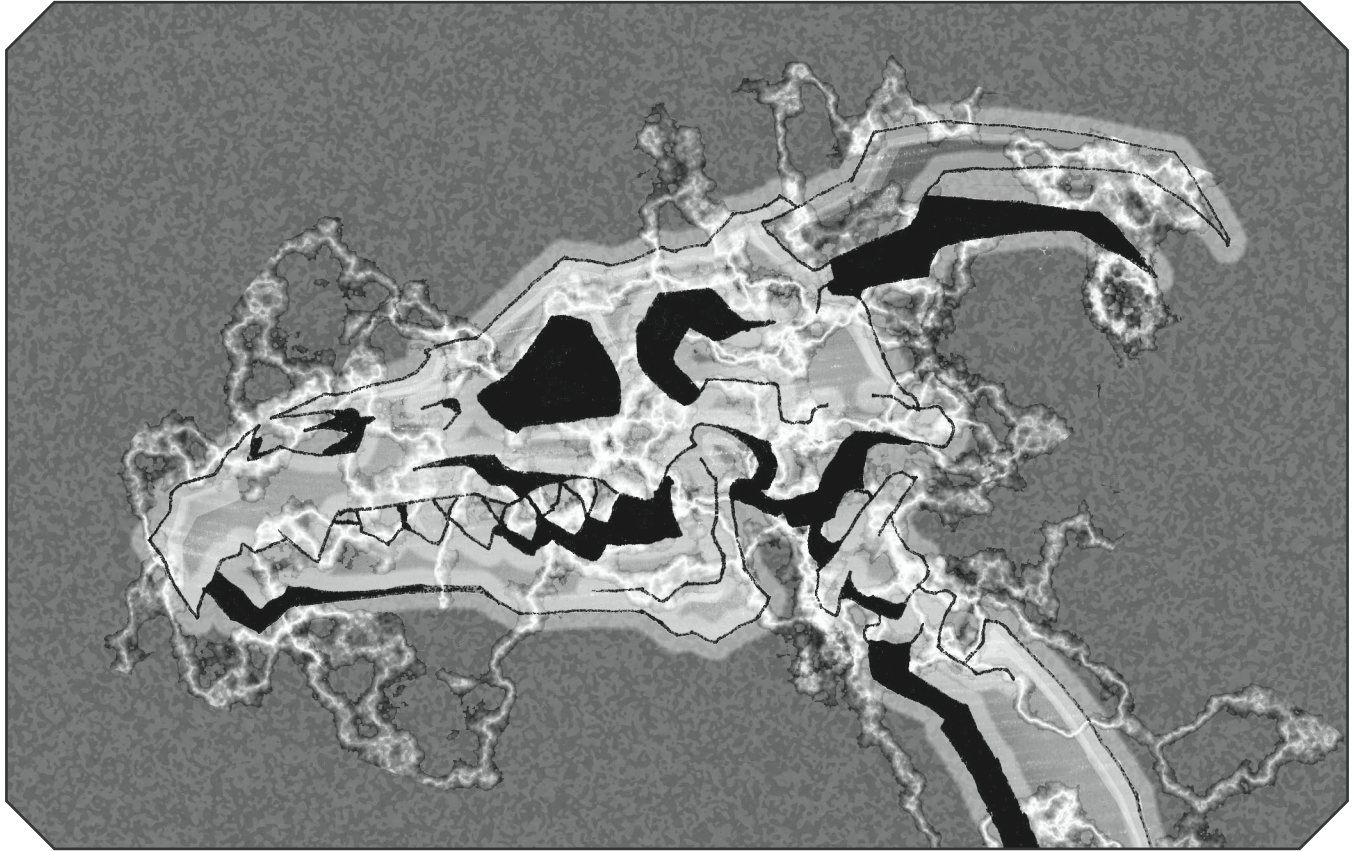
Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard.

Stay Out of the Water

Delvers closely watching the pool may, with a successful **Observation** roll, notice ripples with no apparent source crossing the surface.

If, against all good sense, adventurers should get in the water voluntarily, roll 3d. On 9 or less, the well beast (p. 35) appears in 2d+10 seconds. If someone or something falls in the water, make a separate roll. On 13 or less, the well beast

appears in that time frame. The curtain spiders are terrified of the well beast, and any present immediately retreat back to the webs, leaving the delvers to face it. It remains around, flailing at anything it thinks might be edible. If delvers manage to convincingly play dead (for example, if they're protected by a Silence spell) or just stay out of range of its sonar, the well beast spends about a minute "looking" around, loses interest, and vanishes back under the water.



THE LABYRINTH

Originally, the labyrinth was built as a way of demonstrating the devotion of the queen's servants. To reach her lair from the rest of the palace, they had to walk the twisting path to a stairway down. (The queen regarded the pool entrance to her lair as her own personal portal; anyone coming in that way was eaten as a matter of course.) While only one path goes through the labyrinth, it is a long, long walk through a dark tunnel.

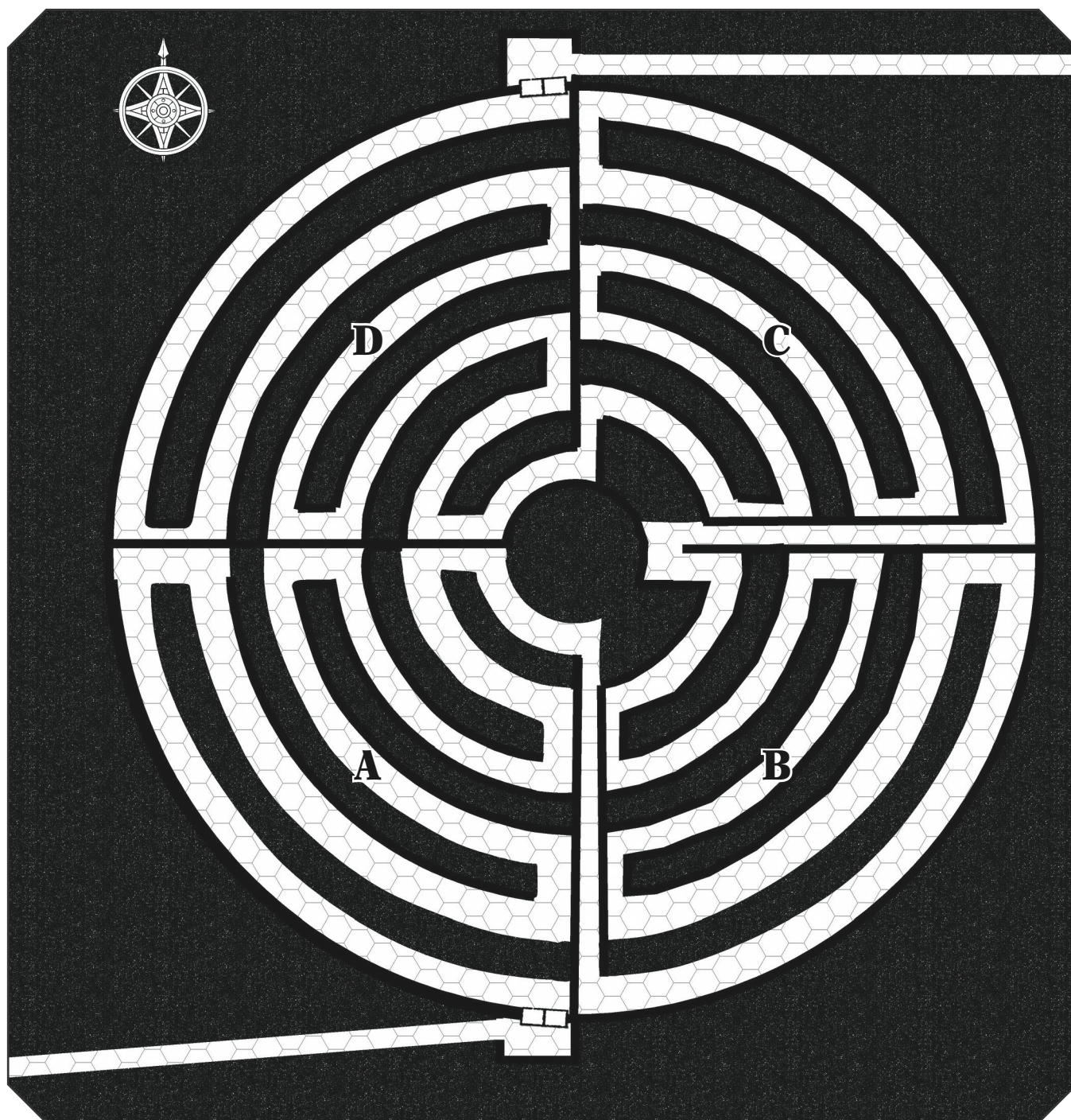
This is one of the few parts of the palace built to a human scale. Starting with the long corridor from the pool, ceilings here are a mere 10' high.

The labyrinth is also subject to a variety of disquieting conditions, different ones applying to each quarter. In *quarter A* (see the map on p. 26), the floor is slimy and slippery. Everyone walking through it must roll against **DX - (distance moved/3)** each turn to avoid falling down. Penalties for bad footing in combat apply. Sound is prohibited in *quarter B*, with the same

effect as the Silence spell (*GURPS Magic*, p. 171). A strong if unpredictable wind blows down the tunnels of *quarter C*. Adventurers on foot must roll against **ST** each turn or have their Move reduced by 1. Flying or levitating delvers have their air Move reduced by 2 and must roll against **ST** or be blown backward a number of yards equal to their margin of failure. *Quarter D* is blacked out, as with the Darkness spell (*GURPS Magic*, pp. 111-112).

EVENTS IN THE LABYRINTH

Getting through the labyrinth is a long, confusing slog made all the more difficult by monsters frequenting the place. As adventurers enter each quarter, roll on the *Wandering Monster Table* (p. 23) to see what shows up. Reroll acid spider and electric jelly results; they don't fit the tunnels!



MAP OF THE LABYRINTH

Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard.

We must picture to ourselves a building filled with numerous doors, and galleries which continually mislead the visitor, bringing him back, after all his wanderings, to the spot from which he first set out.

*– Pliny the Elder, **Natural History** 36.19*

HALL OF THE DRAGON QUEEN

The abode of the dragon queen was initially much the same as the abode of the dragon king. The unstable mouth of the tunnel leading to the outside collapsed, trapping her inside. However, her hall hasn't seen the recent work that Vestitius' has. No minions are here, digging out the tunnel. Moreover, when Vestitius struck, the magic he used created a barrier that prevented Ataban from escaping long enough for his additional spells to finish her off.

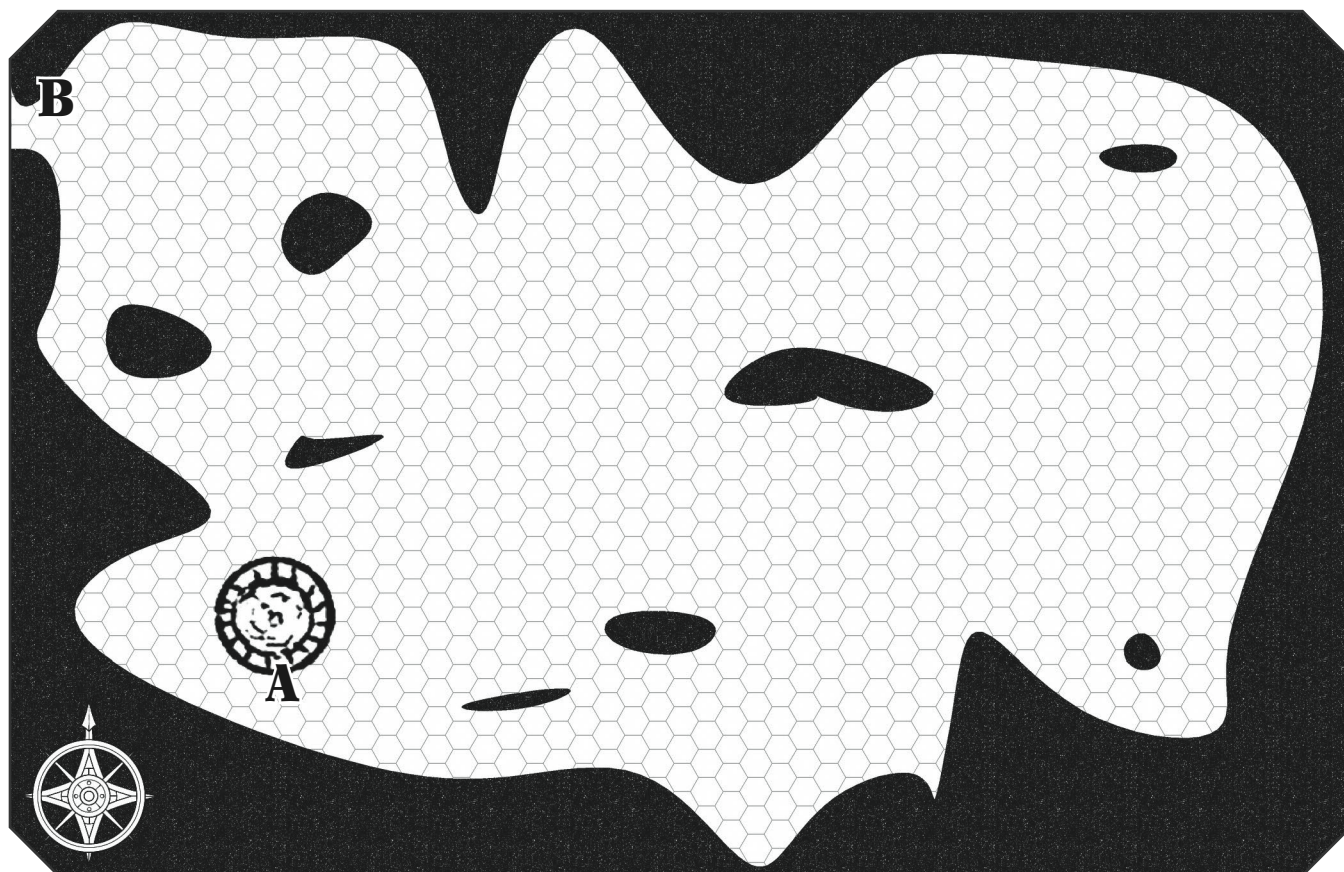
A large pool (A) toward the western end of the cavern shows definite signs of mystical activity. A faint, deep green glow comes from the surface of the water, and a network of brighter red lines crisscrosses it like a spider web. The magical force lines have small gaps between them; someone SM -1 or smaller could squeeze through.

Ataban is here as well. Vestitius managed to trap his sister in her room, but he hadn't prepared adequately for the response she had prepared and triggered. Both died in the battle. His cultists brought Vestitius back. Ataban came back under her own power, but only part of the way. She's not quite a lich, and not quite a ghost – rather, a spirit of great power, lasting malevolence, a semi-corporeal form, and not much intelligence. She has spent the past centuries doing the draconic equivalent of pacing back and forth,

sometimes roaring and snarling loud enough to shake the rocks and be heard outside. She kills anything unwise enough to come through the *door from the labyrinth* (B) and not leave again immediately.

The red web over the pool is Vestitius' trap. The lines of the web are impenetrable magical force. Ataban can't fit between them and isn't a shapeshifter, so she couldn't become something small enough to slip through the gaps. The lines originate from a set of a dozen stylized arrows, each about 2" long, atop spikes driven into the ground around the edge of the pool. The arrows rotate freely, like the needle on a compass. Turning one exactly the opposite direction of the water deactivates several of the lines (requires a successful **DX** roll); turning them all deactivates the web entirely. Ataban isn't smart or patient enough to figure this out.

As in the hall of the dragon king, the gleaming points of light through the cave are the scattered remains of the dragon queen's hoard. For each minute spent digging, roll on the *Lesser Treasure Table* (p. 19) for a maximum of 50 rolls on the table. Alternatively, for every minute spent looking more carefully for larger items, roll against **Observation**, to a maximum of 20 rolls. On a success, roll on the *Greater Treasure Table* (p. 19).



MAP OF THE HALL OF THE DRAGON QUEEN

Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONFLICTS

The ruins of the dragon palace are filled with creatures who will challenge any delver. They fall into three groups: the lizard cultists, who are attempting to restore the dragon king to what they regard as his proper station; the dragon monarchs

themselves, who have their own notable motivations; and the semi-intelligent and unintelligent monsters who still roam the unoccupied corners of the ruined palace.

LIZARD CULT

The bulk of the opposition the delvers will face on the dragon king's side of the palace is the lizard cultists. These are a collection of intelligent reptiles descended from the original followers of the dragon king. They range from brutish dinosaur mooks to minor-but-true dragons.

CAUSE AND MOTIVATION

The cultists are descendants of the dragon king's onetime followers (any successors of the dragon queen's followers are not in evidence). They regard the dragon monarchs with something between the veneration of ancestor worship (among the dragons) and the worship of true gods (among the lesser reptiles). While they see both as essentially divine, they are specifically devoted to the dragon king. Regardless of theological subtleties, they are more-or-less fanatically devoted to what they see as a founding figure.

RESOURCES

An indefinitely large number of cultists lurk in the dragon king's part of the palace. Their greatest asset, in a way, is Vestitus. Long dead or nearly so, they've managed to revive him. This takes them from being a meandering group of dangerous fanatics to a focused group of dangerous fanatics with an even more dangerous leader. The cult's long-term plan has been successfully put into action. Now they're just waiting for further orders.

THE PROTAGONISTS

The cultists' willingness to negotiate is minimal. Mammals are enemies, or at least should be properly subjugated under the iron-taloned rule of the dragon king. Other reptiles, should they appear among groups of delvers, aren't friends, but may be afforded the opportunity to leave before they get killed. Very persuasive delvers, though, might play on the

inherent greed and egotism of the young dragons to get them monologizing. While most of the cultists are simply followers looking to get their legendary divine leader back, the dragons are angling to be the dragon king's closest advisers and lieutenants, the ones commanding cultists in the field. Clever adventurers can use that.

EVENTS

Most of the cultists are greater or lesser mooks who know little or nothing about what's going on and show up randomly on patrols.

Dinomen can say little except to express their devotion to their master, recount digging holes to

free him, and complain about fighting monsters.

Lizard men can express the same sentiment a bit more intelligibly – they've cleared out the dragon king's court and have revived their master with magic. That alone should be significant news to delvers. They can also say that they've been patrolling to keep monsters from the other side of the palace from coming over, but have been forbidden from crossing the vestibule to clear out that half as well. They don't know why, nor are they particularly interested in finding out.

Dragon-blooded cultists and the actual dragons understand the whole picture. Under the guidance of their draconic leaders, they've used the cowl to resurrect the dragon king and are having the strong backs among the cult (that is, the *dinomen* and *lizard men*) excavate the collapsed entrance to the cavern below to free him from his lair. Once he can get out, he can lay waste to the countryside and reestablish his kingdom. Their other big news is that they're not reclaiming the queen's half of the palace because she's not actually dead. They're not sure of her exact state; some believe she's a ghost, while others believe she's some more corporeal form of undead. Either way, she's still in her lair, which, like the dragon king's, has been at least partially collapsed. Between that and enchantments laid by the dragon king before their final battle, the dragon queen is just as trapped as the dragon king. But if those old spells should be disrupted, she might escape to resume her battle with her brother.

"Lizards?" he said. "If you think we're in trouble now, wait till you see what's happening in the elevators."

*– Hunter S. Thompson,
Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*

HOLES

The lizard cultists are garden-variety ugly, green, and more-or-less humanoid monsters, not too different from orcs and goblins apart from the scales and a bit of magical support in their dragon-blooded officers. This should be fairly typical opposition for a group of dungeon-crawling adventurers.

Still, they might be either too much or too little for oddly composed groups of dungeon-delving heroes. With no undead or banishable targets, some clerics and wizards can't use certain abilities. Conversely, exceptionally stealthy groups may slip past even heavy cultist patrols (which don't have particularly remarkable sensory abilities). Likewise, the fairly stupid fodder monsters are easy prey for bards and magic users with mind-control abilities. Thus, the GM may opt to tailor the challenges as written to the group. For example, undead dinomen provide opposition that clerics can turn away but bards can't talk their way around, and a heavier contingent of high-Per dragon-blooded patrol leaders or sharp-eyed dragons can make things suitably difficult for stealthy parties. See *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, pp. 36-38, for creature-modification inspiration.

CUSTOM FIT

If cooperating dragons don't fit the campaign world, or if a large number of intelligent bipedal species are inappropriate, other monsters can be substituted at will. For example, the low-ranking cultists might be orcs and trolls, while the higher ranks may be smarter monsters like gorgons, vampires, and demons.

STATS

Lizard cultists come in two varieties: the bipeds (lizard men, dragon-blooded, and dinomen) and the dragons. The bipeds are, relatively speaking, mooks, though in the case of some of them, relatively powerful mooks. Some of them are roughly comparable to starting delvers, but most lack the adventurers' flexibility.

Dragons are all kinds of dangerous. While they don't have notable immunities like many demons, undead, and other more magical monsters, they don't have matching vulnerabilities. They have multiple close-in attacks: sharp teeth, spiky horns, a whip-like tail, and buffeting wings. They also have a formidable ranged attack in the form of a ferocious breath. Many dragons exhale fire, but there are a number of variants, some of which are listed here. And, of course, they can fly. The smallest dragons are a match for individual delvers who aren't combat-oriented, while the biggest one can take out large groups of adventurers. Dragons are often at a disadvantage in the narrow tunnels typical of dungeon-delving scenarios, but since the palace of the dragon siblings was built *for* dragons – giving them enough room to go airborne – ground-dwelling delvers are at great risk.

Dragon-Blooded Magician

The magicians, along with the priests (below), are the nominal leaders in the field when dragons aren't around to do the job, or at least political officers making sure that

the stronger but dumber lizard men and dinomen do what they're supposed to. Since dragons are rarely available for such tasks, magicians form what is essentially middle management in the cult.

ST: 11	HP: 11	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 15	Move: 6
IQ: 15	Per: 12	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: 12	DR: 3

Bite (12): 1d-2 cutting. Reach C.

Flame Breath (15): 1d burning. Range 5/10.

Kick (10): 1d-1 cutting. Reach C, 1.

Punch (12): 1d-2 cutting. Reach C.

Staff (14): 1d+3 crushing *or* 1d+1 crushing. Reach 1, 2.

Traits: Bad Temper (12); Disturbing Voice; Fanaticism (The dragon king); Frightens Animals; Magery 3; Nictitating Membrane 2; Peripheral Vision.

Skills: Body Sense-10; Brawling-12; Climbing-11; First Aid-15; Gesture-15; Hidden Lore (Dragons)-15; Hiking-11; Innate Attack (Breath)-15; Scrounging-12; Staff-14; Stealth-11; Tactics-13.

Spells: Apportation-16; Blur-16; Continual Light-16; Darkness-16; Daze-16; Foolishness-16; Haste-16; Hinder-16; Light-16; Mass Daze-16.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Dragon-blooded magicians, like most magicians, belong in the back, screened by bigger, stronger companions, and they're smart enough to realize it. Their leather armor provides a bit of protection, but not enough to let them stand on the front lines. They mostly perform support functions, slowing and confusing their enemies from a safe distance, or sometimes hosing them down with goutts of fiery breath. That said, they're also fanatics willing to die for their cause, so if they must, they'll go down swinging their staffs (typically enhanced with the Staff enchantment). Notable equipment includes:

- *Leather Armor Suit* (covering all locations except the face), \$340, 19.5 lbs.
- *Staff*, \$10, 4 lbs.
- *Power Item*, an item of jewelry or decoration on the staff increasing its value to be used as a power item worth 4 FP. \$340 (or \$330 worth of gems and other decoration on the staff), neg.

Most lizard cultists lack the flexibility of adventurers.

Dragon-Blooded Priests

The cult has religious professionals, though they qualify as evil clerics rather than regular clerics. Use the same stats as for dragon-blooded magicians (p. 29), but they have Power Investiture rather than Magery, they replace Hidden Lore-15 with Religious Ritual-13 and Theology-13, and they use a different set of spells:

Spells: Armor-16; Aura-16; Clumsiness-16; Command-16; Darkness-16; Death Vision-16; Destroy Water-16; Detect Magic-16; Foolishness-16; Icy Weapon-16; Itch-16; Pain-16; Paralyze Limb-16; Recover Energy-16; Resist Cold-16; Resist Fire-16; Seeker-16; Shield-16; Stench-16.

Lizard-Man Brute

Save for the near-feral dinomen, these form the bottom rung of the lizard cult. Big, strong, and not very bright, they usually serve as front-line troops in battle.

ST: 17 **HP:** 17 **Speed:** 6.25
DX: 13 **Will:** 9 **Move:** 7
IQ: 9 **Per:** 9
HT: 12 **FP:** 12 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 9 **Parry/Block:** 11 **DR:** 6/4

Axe (15): 3d+1 cutting. Reach 1.
Bite (14): 1d+1 cutting. Reach C.
Kick (12): 1d+2 cutting. Reach C, 1.
Punch (14): 1d+1 cutting. Reach C.
Tail (12): 1d+3 crushing. Reach C.

Traits: Bad Temper (12); Bloodlust (12); Disturbing Voice; Fit; High Pain Threshold; Nictitating Membrane 2; Peripheral Vision; Temperature Tolerance 3; Terrain Adaptation (Swamp).

Skills: Axe/Mace-15; Brawling-14; Gesture-9; Observation-8; Shield-14; Stealth-13.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Brutes are competent enough to follow their leaders into battle. Without smarter officers in charge, they tend to lose patience and make frontal assaults. Notable gear includes:

- *Axe*, \$50, 4 lbs.
- *Mail Armor Suit (covering all locations except the face)*, \$645, 58 lbs.
- *Small Shield*, \$40, 8 lbs.

Lizard-Man Warrior

The warriors are the most dangerous of the cult's fighters. They're not particularly bright, but they are very strong and very tough.

ST: 17 **HP:** 17 **Speed:** 7.00
DX: 14 **Will:** 9 **Move:** 8
IQ: 9 **Per:** 9
HT: 14 **FP:** 14 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 11 **Parry/Block:** 12 **DR:** 6/4

Bite (15): 1d+1 cutting. Reach C.
Bow (15): 1d+3 impaling. Range 255/340.
Kick (13): 1d+2 cutting. Reach C, 1.
Punch (15): 1d+1 cutting. Reach C.
Sword (16): 3d cutting *or* 1d+3 crushing. Reach 1.
Tail (13): 1d+3 crushing. Reach C.

Traits: Bad Temper (12); Bloodlust (12); Combat Reflexes; Disturbing Voice; Fit; High Pain Threshold; Nictitating Membrane 2; Peripheral Vision; Temperature Tolerance 3; Terrain Adaptation (Swamp).

Skills: Bow-15; Brawling-15; Broadsword-16; Gesture-9; Leadership-10; Observation-8; Shield-16; Stealth-13; Tactics-10.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: With their poor intelligence, lizard-man warriors aren't the greatest tacticians, but they *are* capable of the leading

troops into battle and the occasional clever maneuver, so it's dangerous to underestimate them. However, young dragons often lead the warriors instead. Notable gear includes:

- *Arrows* x20, \$60, 3 lbs.
- *Broadsword*, \$500, 3 lbs.
- *Mail Armor Suit (covering all locations except the face)*, \$645, 58 lbs.
- *Regular Bow*, \$100, 2 lbs.
- *Small Shield*, \$40, 8 lbs.

Hatchling Dragon

Other monsters may have "dragon" in their names, but this is the smallest *true* dragon. These stats represent the draconic equivalent of a teenager, old enough to do something other than just run away screeching when attacked, but not yet a truly fearsome monster. Its body isn't much bigger than a large dog's, but its long neck, tail, and broad wings increase its size considerably.

ST: 18 **HP:** 18 **Speed:** 6.50
DX: 12 **Will:** 11 **Move:** 6 (Ground)/13 (Air)
IQ: 11 **Per:** 13
HT: 14 **FP:** 14 **SM:** +1
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 9 **DR:** 2

Bite (13): 1d+1 cutting reach C, 1.

Breath (13): Costs 2 FP per use. Most dragons have *one* kind of breath weapon from the list below, each of which comes with an additional defense. Unless otherwise indicated, these are all jet attacks (1/2D 5, Max 10; see p. B106).

Acid: A spray of acid does 1d-1 corrosive damage in a 1-yard radius in front of the dragon's head *and* the target must make a HT roll to avoid being blinded. Double dragon's DR against corrosive damage.

Cold: 1d+2 burning, but does not start fires. Double dragon's DR against cold damage and switch the Temperature Tolerance range to -21°F to 118°F.

Fire: 1d+2 burning. Double dragon's DR against fire attacks.

Lightning: 1d+2 burning; metal armor provides only DR 1. Double dragon's DR against lightning.

Poison Spray: A spray of contact poison in a 1-yard radius in front of the dragon's head. Roll vs. HT – on a success, 1d injury; otherwise, 2d injury. Dragon has Immunity to Poison.

Claws, Front (13): 1d+1 cutting. Reach C, 1.

Claws, Back (11): 1d+2 cutting. Reach C, 1.

Horn (13): 1d+3 cutting. Reach C, 1. May also parry!

Tail (11): 1d+2 crushing *or* double that for knockback-only damage. Reach C, 1, rear hexes only.

Wings (13): 1d+1 crushing *or* double that for knockback-only damage. Reach C, 1.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Extra Attack 1; Greed (12); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Nictitating Membrane 2; Night Vision 9; Peripheral Vision; Temperature Tolerance 6 (7°F to 146°F); Unfazeable.

Skills: Brawling-13; Innate Attack (Breath)-13; Tactics-11.

Class: Mundane.

*At this age,
a dragon is
dangerous, but
inexperienced.*

Notes: At this age, a dragon is dangerous, but inexperienced. The subtlety and cunning for which dragons are famous are largely aspirational for them. While some exceptional individuals may have Magery 0 and know a handful of spells (see *Dragon Magic*, below), they're very much learning at this point. Mostly, they're limited to fighting, but even then, they're tough opponents.

Small Dragon

This is an adult but still quite young dragon, or a fairly mature individual of a naturally small variety. At this size and larger, breath weapons are cones, letting them target multiple individuals at once.

ST: 25 **HP:** 25 **Speed:** 6.75
DX: 12 **Will:** 12 **Move:** 6 (Ground)/13 (Air)
IQ: 12 **Per:** 14
HT: 15 **FP:** 15 **SM:** +3
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 10 **DR:** 3

Bite (14): 2d+3 cutting. Reach C, 1.

Breath (14): Costs 2 FP per use. Unless otherwise noted, these are cone attacks (see p. B413), 1 yard wide by 10 yards long. Most dragons have one of these.

Acid: A spray of acid does 1d-1 corrosive damage in a 2-yard radius in front of the dragon's head *and* the target must make a HT roll to avoid being blinded. Double dragon's DR against corrosive damage.

Acid: 1d-1 corrosive damage *and* targets must make a HT roll to avoid being blinded. Double dragon's DR against corrosive damage.

Cold: 2d+2 burning, but does not start fires. Double dragon's DR against cold damage and switch the Temperature Tolerance range to -25°F to 120°F.

Fire: 2d+2 burning. Double dragon's DR against fire attacks.

Lightning: 2d+2 burning; metal armor provides only DR 1. Double dragon's DR against lightning.

Poison Spray: A spray of contact poison in a 2-yard radius in front of the dragon's head. Roll vs. HT – on a success, 1d injury; otherwise, 2d injury. Dragon has Immunity to Poison.

Claws, Front (14): 2d+3 cutting. Reach C-2.

Claws, Back (12): 2d+4 cutting. Reach C-2.

Horn (14): 2d+3 cutting. Reach C, 1. May also parry!

Tail (12): 2d+4 crushing *or* double that for knock-back-only damage. Reach C-3, rear hexes only.

Wings (14): 2d+3 crushing *or* double that for knock-back-only damage. Reach C-3.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Extra Attack 1; Greed (12); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Nictitating Membrane 3; Night Vision 9; Peripheral Vision; Temperature Tolerance 6 (5°F to 150°F); Unfazeable.

Skills: Brawling-14; Diplomacy-12; Fast-Talk-12; Innate Attack (Breath)-14; Tactics-12.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Dragons of this size are more likely to have up to Magery 2, know a number of wizardly spells (see *Dragon Magic*, below), and even have Energy Reserve up to 25. They're also smarter and more eloquent,

so they're well-suited to negotiating with and, if they feel like it, deceiving potential opponents.

Medium Dragon

At this size, a dragon goes from being a notable individual combatant to being a threat to *parties* of delvers.

ST: 35 **HP:** 35 **Speed:** 7.25
DX: 14 **Will:** 14 **Move:** 7 (Ground)/14 (Air)
IQ: 14 **Per:** 16
HT: 15 **FP:** 15 **SM:** +4
Dodge: 10 **Parry:** 11 **DR:** 6

Bite (16): 4d+2 impaling. Reach C, 1.

Breath (16): Costs 2 FP per use. Unless otherwise noted, these are cone attacks (see p. B413), 2 yards wide by 10 yards long. Most dragons have one of these.

Acid: A spray of acid does 1d-1 corrosive damage in a 3-yard radius in front of the dragon's head *and* the target must make a HT roll to avoid being blinded. Double dragon's DR against corrosive damage.

Cold: 4d-1 burning, but does not start fires. Double dragon's DR against cold damage and switch the Temperature Tolerance range to -25°F to 120°F.

Fire: 4d-1 burning. Double dragon's DR against fire attacks.

Lightning: 4d-1 burning; metal armor provides only DR 1. Double dragon's DR against lightning.

Poison Spray: A spray of contact poison in a 3-yard radius in front of the dragon's head. Roll vs. HT – on a success, 1d injury; otherwise, 2d injury. Dragon has Immunity to Poison.

DRAGON MAGIC

Draconic spell casters are as diverse as other magic users and may have whatever spells the GM feels are suitable for the occasion. With their formidable natural weaponry, they rarely learn missile spells and related combat magic, though there are always exceptions. For convenience, here are some sample sets of spells a dragon might have:

- Create Air, Purify Air, Shape Air, and Windstorm.
- Command, Fear, Foolishness, and Forgetfulness.
- Clumsiness, Fumble, Itch, and Spasm.
- Dark Vision, Infravision, Keen Vision, Night Vision, and See Invisible.
- Detect Magic, History, Seek Earth, Seek Magic, Seeker, and Trace.
- Complex Illusion, Illusion Disguise, Illusion Shell, Simple Illusion, and Sound.
- Hide Emotion, Hide Thoughts, Sense Emotion, and Sense Foes.
- Apportation, Armor, Missile Shield, and Shield.

Small dragons might have two or three of these at level 12. Medium dragons are likely to have at least four or five of them at level 16. An exceptional hatchling might have one of these at level 12.

KUNUKUT AND YANSOLSI

Another pair of dragons, Kunukut and Yansolsi, leads the cult. Both are medium dragons (pp. 31-32); Kunukut spits acid, while Yansolsi breathes fire. Both are survivors of the dragon king's era. Both were little more than hatchlings at the time, outside of the palace when their rulers killed one another. They along with a few other younger dragons formed the core of the dragon cult.

Dragons are natural loners (they require a large catchment area to stay fed, and they are almost all tremendous egoists). Thus, keeping other dragons involved has been quite a feat, though the cult is rife with potential internal schisms papered over with their diplomatic skills and the promise of riches when Vestitus returns to power. Very skilled diplomats could, given time, drive a wedge between them and turn factions of the cult against one another. Unsurprisingly, both Kunukut and Yansolsi have contingency plans for eliminating the other and taking sole control of the cult. But no dragons are likely to take largely mammalian delvers seriously, and the return of Vestitus has just rendered the cult's internal divisions mostly moot.

Claws, Front (16): 4d+2 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-3.

Claws, Back (14): 4d+3 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-3.

Horn (16): 4d+2 cutting. Reach C, 1. May also parry!

Tail (14): 4d+3 crushing *or* double that for knock-back-only damage. Reach C-4, rear hexes only.

Wings (16): 4d+2 crushing *or* double that for knock-back-only damage. Reach C-4.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Extra Attack 2; Greed (12); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Nictitating Membrane 6; Night Vision 9; Peripheral Vision; Temperature Tolerance 6 (5°F to 150°F); Unfazeable.

Skills: Brawling-16; Diplomacy-14; Fast-Talk-14; Innate Attack (Breath)-16; Tactics-14.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Dragons of this size may have up to Magery 4 and Energy Reserve up to 35. For suggested spells, see *Dragon Magic*, p. 31. They're smart and tough, they have multiple attacks per turn (any one of which can potentially take down even a well-armored delver), and they're fliers. Their major weakness is their need for a lot of room.

DRAGON ROYALTY

The crux of this adventure is the two dragon monarchs: the recently revived dragon king Vestitus Longtail and his mostly dead sister Ataban the Sharp.

CAUSE AND MOTIVATION

Vestitus has recovered from his long slumber, and he's going to pick up where he left off. In proper megalomaniacal fashion, he intends to take over the world. There seems little chance that he'll be able to do it, of course, but he's nevertheless powerful enough that a lot of people are going to get hurt before he's stopped.

Ataban is dead, which severely limits her interests. She has remnants of her living motivations somewhere deep in her ghostly mind. She has a residual interest in her hoard but quickly forgets it if she's not around it. Her natural draconic aggressiveness makes spending time in her vicinity dangerous, but she doesn't seek out things to kill or destroy. Her one persistent motivation is revenge against her brother. She's more like a force of nature with a personal grudge than a personality at this point.

RESOURCES

The destruction wrought by his battle with Ataban has severely reduced the magical items Vestitus previously had on hand, even if he were willing to let them be used instead of keeping them in a pile of shiny things he can sleep on. What he does have is a sizable number of lizard cultists willing to do his bidding, even unto death. Given his ruthlessness and utter disregard for anyone who isn't him, that's quite a likely destination for

them. Still, in order to get anything done, he needs the side of the mountain dug out so that he can leave.

Ataban has nothing but those powers naturally (and super-naturally) accruing to her.

THE PROTAGONISTS

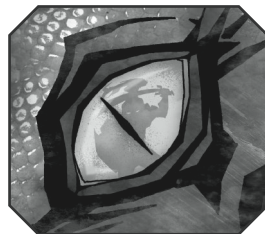
Vestitus is unlikely to be interested in anyone coming after him. To him, dungeon delvers are the sorts of vermin he uses cultists to keep from bothering him. If they make it as far as his lair, he wants them killed quickly so that he can get back to the important things he was doing before. If they look like they'll be a challenge, he'll subvert them. He'll propose an alliance, offer generous terms, and then kill them when they're not expecting it.

Ataban is interested in nothing but revenge. If the delvers are clearly visible, she'll take out some of her unending anger on them, but she won't pursue them very far if they manage to escape her.

EVENTS

Vestitus is impatiently awaiting release from his lair. Unless the delvers cause a truly legendary ruckus in the more public part of the dragon king's court, they'll have to come to him rather than the other way around.

If delvers enter the dragon queen's lair, she'll make a desultory attempt to kill them. Should they manage to remove the stakes keeping her trapped, events will progress rapidly. Ataban is, in her own way, aware that her brother is alive. If the water portal opens to her, she will immediately head for it, into the water, through the pool, and straight across the palace to the dragon king's lair.



It's likely to be a remarkable fight. Vestitius is smarter than Ataban at this point, he's got a batch of spells he can use, and he's got an army of lizard cultists backing him up. On the other hand, Ataban can sweep through a lot of cultists without even noticing, and she's very, very hard to hurt, let alone kill.

Should this come to pass, rather than play out a battle between a semi-corporeal dragon-ghost, her entirely material brother, and a small army of reptile people, the fight can be handled abstractly. If the adventurers release Ataban and hurry after her to take advantage of the chaos, Vestitius and Ataban concentrate on fighting each other. The cultists present in the dragon king's lair join in, but half of them break off to fight the delvers if they appear.

In addition, both cultists and adventurers may be the targets of collateral damage. Each turn, randomly pick one each from among the adventurers *and* any lizard cultists with whom they are engaged in fighting. That target is subject to one randomly chosen attack from one of the dragons: a wing strike, a tail strike, or a breath attack. It may be dodged or otherwise avoided normally.

If the delvers choose to fight one or the other of the dragon monarchs directly, they are subject to at least one attack from the dragon in question. If they've attacked the dragon king, all the cultists go after the adventurers as well.

The explorers might release Ataban in hopes that she'll finish off or at least weaken Vestitius so they can stroll in and mop up easily. Unfortunately, they've miscalculated. The battle reaches such a pitch that the dragon king's lair, already not terribly stable, caves in entirely. Vestitius is likely dead again along with any cultists in the chamber, and Ataban is at the very least immobilized. However, the cowl is lost under many tons of rock and dirt.

HOLES

Adventurers, on finding Vestitius alive *and* surrounded by a small army of followers, may be too taken aback to confront the dragon king (which, to be fair, is wise) or to waylay the dragon-blooded priest wearing the cowl. If they've also failed to investigate the situation further, either through exploring the dragon queen's court or questioning captive lizard cultists, they won't think of using the dragon queen to their advantage. As a result, they may be paralyzed with indecision.

If this happens, events can take their natural course. In a week or so, the lizard cultists will dig a hole big enough for the dragon king to fit through. He and his followers will leave the underground chambers and head out into the world, bent on conquest and destruction while an army of other intelligent reptiles flock to the dragon king's banner. The cowl-wearing priest will then be on the move, in the middle of a growing horde of monsters, but quite likely apart from Vestitius, who will spend considerable time terrorizing nearby settlements from the air. That doesn't solve the delvers' problem, but it does, at least, turn it into a different problem.

CUSTOM FIT

Just as the lizard cultists can be customized if they're inappropriate to the campaign, so can the dragon monarchs. They might be replaced with powerful demons (who, perhaps, have taken draconic form) or other very large, very powerful, intelligent entities.

STATS

The dragon monarchs are both formidable, but in different ways.

Vestitius Longtail

Vestitius is very close to an archetypal dragon. He is an enormous, winged, fire-breathing reptile (or close enough; any herpetologist looking for potential distinctions between dragons and reptiles will be eaten). He's also greedy, vain, and exceptionally dangerous.

He's about the size of a school bus, 14 yards long and three wide at the torso with wings folded, though his neck and tail are much narrower. His scales are predominantly red and orange, dull on his underside, faintly metallic on most of his upper body, and downright iridescent around his face. Given his ego, it's no accident that that color scheme is repeated through his part of the palace. Despite the name, his tail isn't exceptionally long. The name comes from an incident in the very distant past which involved defeating a powerful wizard, who was closer to the dragon than the wizard thought, only to be struck down by the dragon's tail.

ST: 50	HP: 50	Speed: 7.25
DX: 14	Will: 16	Move: 7 (Ground)/14 (Air)
IQ: 16	Per: 18	
HT: 15	FP: 15	SM: +5
Dodge: 11	Parry: 12	DR: 9 (18 against fire)

Bite (16): 5d+6 impaling. Reach C, 1.

Breath (16): Costs 2 FP per use. 3-yard-wide by 10-yard-long cone. 5d+2 burning.

Claws, Front (16): 5d+6 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-5.

Claws, Back (14): 5d+7 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-5.

Horn (16): 5d+6 cutting. Reach C, 1. May also parry!

Tail (14): 5d+6 crushing *or* double that for knockback-only damage. Reach C-6, rear hexes only.

Wings (16): 5d+6 crushing *or* double that for knockback-only damage. Reach C-6.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Callous; Combat Reflexes; Danger Sense; Discriminatory Smell; Energy Reserve 40 (Magical); Extra Attack 3; Greed (12); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Magery 3; Nictitating Membrane 9; Night Vision 9; Peripheral Vision; Temperature Tolerance 6 (5°F to 150°F); Unfazeable.10

Skills: Brawling-16; Diplomacy-16; Fast-Talk-16; Innate Attack (Breath)-16; Tactics-16.

Spells: Analyze Magic-18; Apportation-18; Blur-18; Clumsiness-18; Command-18; Continual Light-18; Counterspell-18; Darkness-18; Daze-18; Deflect Missile-21; Detect Magic-18; Dispel Magic-18; Foolishness-18; Forgetfulness-18; Haste-18; Hide Thoughts-18; Hinder-18; Identify Spell-18; Itch-18; Lend Energy-18; Light-18; Mass Daze-18; Mass Sleep-18; Pain-18; Recover Energy-18; Sense Emotion-18; Sense Foes-18; Sleep-18; Spasm-18; Truthsayer-18.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: There are smarter, wiser, and more magically talented dragons than Vestitius, but they rarely come much bigger. If he's got the leisure to do it, he'll lull opponents into a state of inattention, either through his own powers of persuasion or by magic, and then launch a physical attack.

Notes (continued): He has no particular regard for his cultists save as sometimes-useful tools. He will not hesitate to send swarms of them against enemies, knowing they'll be cut down in the process, if it buys him a few moments to get in a few attacks of his own.

Ataban the Sharp

Ataban was once quite similar to Vestitus, differing somewhat in temperament and coloring. She's become something quite different. She's a vengeful spirit now, not entirely immaterial but nevertheless not entirely connected to the material world. Her visible form is still the shape of a dragon, but she's a glowing skeleton sheathed in lightning.

ST: 50 **HP:** 50 **Speed:** 7.25
DX: 14 **Will:** 16 **Move:** 7 (Ground)/14 (Air)
IQ: 6 **Per:** 8
HT: 15 **FP:** 15 **SM:** +5
Dodge: 10 **Parry:** 11 **DR:** 1

Bite (16): 5d+6 cutting. Reach C, 1.

Lightning Breath (16): Costs 2 FP per use. 3-yard-wide by 10-yard-long cone. 5d+2 burning; metal armor protects with only DR 1.

Claws, Front (16): 5d+6 cutting. Reach C-3.

Claws, Back (14): 5d+7 cutting. Reach C-3.

Electrical Aura: 1d burning (metal armor protects with DR 1). Target rolls HT at -1 per 2 points of penetrating damage or be physically stunned (roll vs. HT at the same

penalty every turn to recover). This harms anyone Ataban touches as well as anyone who touches her either directly or with a metal weapon. This includes attacking her or parrying attacks!

Horn (16): 5d+12 cutting. Reach C, 1. May also parry!

Tail (14): 5d+6 crushing *or* double that for knockback-only damage, reach C-4, rear hexes only.

Wings (16): 5d+6 crushing *or* double that for knockback-only damage, reach C-4.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Bad Temper; Berserk (12); Discriminatory Smell; Extra Attack 2; High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Immunity to Mind Control; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse); Night Vision 9; Peripheral Vision; Short Attention Span; Temperature Tolerance 6 (5°F to 150°F); Unfazeable.

Skills: Brawling-16; Innate Attack (Breath)-16.

Class: Faerie.

Notes: Vestitus is more than a match for most delvers, but even he would hesitate to face his sister now. Not only is she still every bit his physical match in power, she's almost impossible to harm physically and just touching her is dangerous. Worse yet, while she's undead-ish, she's not undead *enough* to be turned by True Faith and similar abilities. Her weakness is that she's essentially a rage-driven beast now, reacting to what's around her but not making long-term plans and clever strategies. If nothing else, running away and hiding can be an effective defense against her. For targets that aren't Vestitus, she'll eventually lose interest and wander off.

LURKING MONSTERS

Here and there, mostly in the dragon queen's court but from time to time making their way into the other half of the palace, a variety of other monsters infest the place.

CAUSE AND MOTIVATION

The various non-cultist monsters are largely non-intelligent beasts with the occasional restless spirit thrown in. They're dangerous, but most of them don't have much of an agenda beyond survival and eating the faces off of any surface-dwellers who come through.

RESOURCES

A few spots in the dungeon have specific monsters lurking in them, but most of these creatures infiltrate from elsewhere or simply hide in the shadows, coming out when it suits them. They have, for all practical purposes, unlimited numbers even if few of them are around at any given moment.

THE PROTAGONISTS

Most of the monsters are brutes without the wit for motivations beyond eating and defending their territory. To them, adventurers are food or invaders to be destroyed. The few exceptions are largely hostile to pretty much anything, so they

have little use for adventurers as well, save to kill the intruders for their own amusement.

EVENTS

The lurking monsters either stick to their lairs or they wander about according to their own logic and desires. Unlike the lizard cultists, they are as likely to run away from a loud noise (interpreting it as a threat) as they are to attack (interpreting it as a meal). There is, therefore, no general state of alert for monsters in the dragon queen's court.

When you're a villain, you're just lurking in the shadows waiting for the hero to pass by. Then you pop them in the head and go home.

— James Marsters

HOLES

Like the lizard cultists (pp. 28-32), the lurking monsters have limited scope. They're somewhat more diverse, but they still lack demonic and undead threats, which can be either dull or overwhelming for parties whose abilities are particularly focused in those areas. They likewise lack intelligence; the lurking monsters are almost entirely brutes.

For a party with large numbers of clerics, bards, and others, the GM may change up the opposition. Undead easily fit here; howling ghosts can be made undead rather than faerie, for a start. Zombies and ghouls can pop up anywhere. Visiting demons and other intelligent monsters can make a nice change of pace as well. Perhaps the well beast (below) has a much higher IQ and will let delvers through if they can correctly answer riddles.

CUSTOM FIT

If the monsters here aren't suitable for the campaign, others can easily be put in their place. The criteria for sensible monsters here is that they should be creatures that can reasonably survive in an underground dungeon setting (plant-based monsters who need sunlight are probably out, as are most aquatic monsters, though amphibious ones can work). However, they should not be so ambitious as to leave behind such places in search of treasure, conquest, the souls of the innocent, and the like. Giant frogs, minor demons, different kinds of ghosts, insect swarms, and more can reasonably show up here.

STATS

While many of the monsters lurking the ruins of the dragon palace can be found in the *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters* series and *Dungeons*, a few are unique to the place.

Curtain Spider

Curtain spiders get their name from the large, thick sheets of webs they build up over time. They're a bit on the small size for monster spiders, about the size of a small goat or large dog. They don't always kill their prey; often, they just use their enveloping webs and stunning venom to incapacitate their targets, plant eggs in them, and let them go.

ST: 8	HP: 8	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 10	Move: 6
IQ: 2	Per: 10	
HT: 11	FP: 11	SM: -3
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 2

Toxic Bite (14): 1d-2 cutting + follow-up 2 points fatigue. Reach C.

Traits: Binding 6 (Melee Attack; Sticky); Clinging (Move 5); Dark Vision; Extra Legs (Eight legs); Horizontal; No Fine Manipulators; Peripheral Vision; Striking ST 2; Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-14; Stealth-12.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Curtain spiders aren't terribly strong, but they tend to attack in significant numbers. Their ability to move on walls and ceilings almost as well as on the ground lets them strike from unexpected angles. They typically try to entangle their prey first, and then bite to knock them out temporarily. Anyone incapacitated by curtain spiders and left alone with them is likely to be implanted with a clutch of eggs – roll a hit location randomly. If not treated with **Esoteric Medicine** within three days, the clutch will hatch into a swarm of tiny spiders who eat their way out, doing 1d injury to that location.

Howling Ghost

Howling ghosts are not, technically, ghosts. They're disembodied spirits which tend to appear in places which have seen turmoil and destruction, but they do not originate from any specific individual's death. They look like translucent bundles of pale rags in a strong wind.

ST: 0	HP: 4	Speed: 6.00
DX: 14	Will: 10	Move: 12 (Air)
IQ: 6	Per: 10	
HT: 10	FP: N/A	SM: -1
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 0

Poison Cloud (Resisted by HT-4): Contact agent emanated in a 2-yard radius; always on. Failure to resist does 1d toxic damage.

Stunning Shriek (14): Roll vs. HT-4 or be stunned. Cone attack (range 5, 2 yards wide); hearing-based.

Traits: Dark Vision; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Flight; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse); No Legs (Aerial); No Manipulators; Vulnerability (Vacuum and wind-based attacks x2).

Skills: Innate Attack (Breath)-14.

Class: Faerie.

Notes: Howling ghosts neither spend nor have FP. They are constantly in flight until destroyed. Their usual tactic is to whirl around their targets, stunning them with a focused, banshee-like scream (often using a Move and Attack maneuver, for -4 to hit with a maximum adjusted skill of 9), then whipping around in a tight orbit to expose victims to the toxic aura.

Well Beast

Deep beneath the ruins of the dragon palace is an underground lake. Isolated from the outside world for unknown eons, the black depths are occupied by countless blind sea serpents. One of them (at least, perhaps more) found the well from beneath and now comes to the surface from time to time to find edible tidbits. It's usually monsters passing by the pool, but it could just as well be a party of adventurers. The well beast is black and scaly, with a broad, flat head vaguely resembling a cobra's. It has no eyes, but rather navigates by sound.

ST: 60	HP: 60	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 10	Move: 6
IQ: 4	Per: 10	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: +8
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 6

Bite (14): 7d-2 cutting. Reach C-15.

Smash (14): 7d-1 crushing. Reach C-15.

Traits: Blindness; Doesn't Breathe (Gills); Injury Tolerance (No Eyes); No Legs (Aquatic); No Manipulators; Scanning Sense (Sonar); Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-14.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: The well beast essentially attacks by flopping down on its prey, crushing it. Its SM only accounts for the *visible* portion of the beast that rises above the water, about three yards across and reaching up to 20 yards.

INDEX

Adventure, *exceptional firepower and*, 5; *exceptional information and*, 5; *exceptional transportation and*, 5; *hooks*, 4; *major changes*, 4; *modifying the location*, 4; *overview*, 3; *PC aggression*, 4; *power level*, 4; *spin-offs*, 5; *with established NPCs*, 4.

Alarm traps, 12.

Ambassador's rooms, 14; *map*, 13.

Ataban the Sharp, 27, 32-33; *stats*, 34.

Basilica, 16; *map*, 15.

Books, *draconic*, 19; *subject table*, 19.

Broken Fang Point, *see* Town.

Ceilings, *typical*, 9.

Court of the dragon king, 9-19; *entrance*, 9; *holes*, 9; *hooks*, 9; *maps*, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17; *patrols*, 18-19; *treasure*, 19; *vestibule*, 10-12.

Court of the dragon queen, 20-27; *entrance*, 12, 20; *holes*, 20; *hooks*, 20; *maps*, 10, 21, 24, 26, 27; *vestibule*, 10-12.

Cowl of Ahten-Ahten, 18; *guilds and*, 7-8; *legend*, 7; *location*, 17; *losing*, 35.

Curtain spiders, 23, 25, 35.

Dinomen, 28.

Doors, *typical*, 9.

Dragon-blooded, 28; *magicians*, 29; *priests*, 29.

Dragons, 28; *Ataban the Sharp*, 27, 32-34; *breath table*, 19; *magic*, 31; *royalty*, 32-34; *stats*, 30-32; *Vestitius Longtail*, 17, 32-34.

Ghosts, *howling*, 35.

Greater apartments, 12-16; *map*, 13.

Guilds, *recruitment ideas*, 7-8.

GURPS, 3; *Dungeon Fantasy*, 3, 5, 35; *Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, 3, 12, 14, 23; *Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level*, 3; *Dungeon Fantasy 4: Sages*, 19; *Dungeon Fantasy 8: Treasure Tables*, 3, 19; *Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures*, 3, 8; *Dungeon Fantasy 17: Guilds*, 3, 7; *Dungeon Fantasy Adventure 1: Mirror of the Fire Demon*, 3, 4; *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, 3, 9, 12, 14-18, 22, 23; *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 2: Icky Goo*, 3, 14, 16; *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3: Born of Myth & Magic*, 3, 14, 22, 23; *Magic*, 25; *Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy*, 5.

Hall of the dragon king, 16-17; *map*, 17.

Hall of the dragon queen, 27; *map*, 27.

High rooms, 16; *map*, 15.

Howling ghosts, 35; *customizing*, 35.

Kunukut, 16, 32.

Labyrinth, 25; *map*, 26.

Legend of dragons, 7.

Lesser rooms, 14-16; *map*, 13.

Libraries, 20-22; *map*, 21.

Lighting, *typical*, 9.

Lizard cult, 28-32; *see also* *Dinomen*, *Dragon King's Court*, *Dragon-Blooded*, *Dragons*, *Lizard Men*.

Lizard men, 28; *brutes*, 30; *warriors*, 30.

Loggia of the Vizier, 12-14; *map*, 13.

Maps, *basilica*, 15; *greater apartments*, 13; *hall of the dragon king*, 17; *hall of the dragon queen*, 27; *labyrinth*, 26; *palace overview*, 10; *pool*, 24; *Queen's Square*, 21; *vestibule*, 11.

Monsters, *dragon-blooded*, 28, 29; *lizard men*, 28, 30; *new*, 34-35; *patrols*, 18-19; *wandering*, 23; *see also* *Dragons*.

Museum, 22; *map*, 21.

N, *explanation*, 4.

Organizations, *recruitment ideas*, 7-8.

Palace, *ceilings*, 9; *doors*, 9; *entrance*, 9; *legend*, 7; *lighting*, 9; *overview map*, 10;

vestibule, 10-12; *see also* *Dragon King's Court*, *Dragon Queen's Court*.

Patrols, *wandering*, 18-19.

Pool, 23-25; *map*, 24.

Queen's Square, 20-23; *map*, 21.

Recruitment, 7-8.

Research, 8.

Rumors, 8.

Shopping, 8.

Spiders, *curtain*, 23, 25, 35.

Tables, *book subject*, 19; *dragon's breath*, 19; *greater treasure*, 19; *lesser treasure*, 19; *wandering monster*, 23; *wandering patrol*, 18.

Tomb of the dragon king, 3, 7; *see also* *Court of the Dragon King*.

Town, *events*, 7-8; *geography*, 6; *holes*, 6; *hooks*, 6; *overview*, 6.

Traps, *alarm*, 12.

Travel, 8.

Treasure, 19; *tables*, 19.

Vestibule, 10-12; *map*, 11.

Vestitius Longtail, 17, 32-33; *stats*, 33-34.

Wandering, *monsters*, 23; *patrols*, 18-19.

Well beasts, 25, 35.

Yansolsi, 16, 32.



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