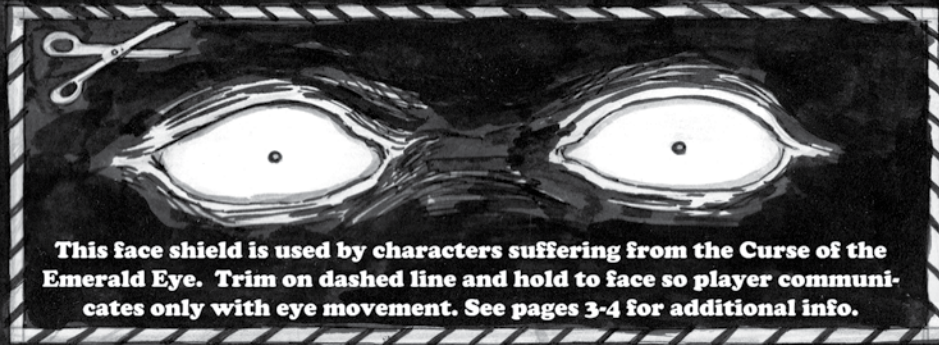


DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

THE ONE WHO WATCHES FROM BELOW

#81: A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE
BY JOBE BITTMAN





This face shield is used by characters suffering from the Curse of the Emerald Eye. Trim on dashed line and hold to face so player communicates only with eye movement. See pages 3-4 for additional info.

THE ONE WHO WATCHES FROM BELOW

A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE
WINNER OF THE 2012 MYSTERY MAP ADVENTURE DESIGN COMPETITION

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INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

This adventure is designed for 6-8 level 1 characters. It pits the adventurers against otherworldly horrors of ever-increasing ferocity. The novice characters' resolve and sanity will be stretched to their utter limits. Those who wager their wits will emerge from the Undertemple of Shigazilnizthrub with fat purses and tales of legend. To have even the faintest chance of survival, the adventuring party must consist of a well-rounded team learned in the arts of warfare, thievery, wizardry, and holy might. Otherwise, they are certain to meet their doom.

The conclusion of the adventure finds the band of adventurers locked in mortal combat with an aspect of an elder god itself. The weak and dull-witted will perish in agony. Their bloated corpses will fodder the voracious acid worms, and their living eyes will be plucked from the still-warm sockets to spend an eternity in silent witness to the magnificence of the One Who Watches from Below.

HISTORY

In the beginning, there was chaos. The universe was a primordial cauldron of gurgling dread, a darkness that not even a thousand suns could light. In this black soup, the elder gods battled for supremacy. They feasted on fear and drank madness. Then the small things came. They skittered and foamed in the pockets between the elder gods' crushing might - shambling, killing and feeding upon one another - until they produced an infinitesimal speck of light. In an instant, they were many - points of light which became stars that begat suns then ascended to godlings. The new gods rose up in a white-hot explosion of defiance against the corpulent lords of chaos. A cataclysmic chain-reaction triggered, birthing all that is. This is the story of the gods before the gods, a tale unknown to the histories of humans and demi-humans alike.

For eons, the deposed old gods have roiled and churned in a seething pool of raw power beneath the universe, their foul intellects periodically bubbling to the surface. Chief among the dark gods is Shigazilnizthrub, sadistic eater of worlds. The invocation of the name alone has the power to wither crops and crumble cities to dust. His mad followers refer to him only as "The One Who Watches from Below." The foul deity has established three strongholds beneath Aereeth, their purpose unknown. For now, it watches, it gathers power, and it waits for celestial bodies to align in the heavens.

For it is written:

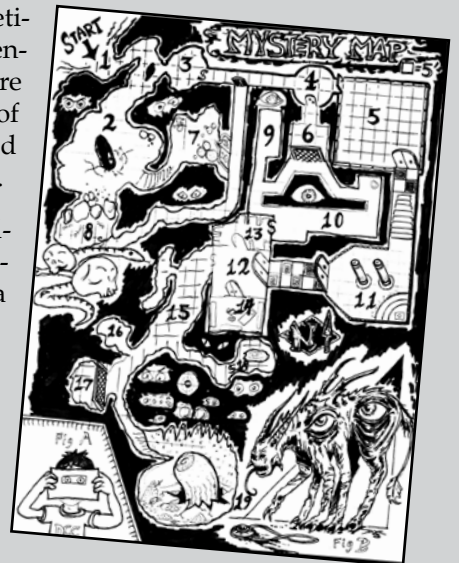
"The old gods will one day return."

THE MYSTERY MAP ADVENTURE DESIGN COMPETITION

In June 2012, Goodman Games sponsored a special adventure design competition. Our Free RPG Day 2012 adventure module included an incomplete adventure map. Readers could complete the map, send in their associated adventure proposal, and compete for a \$1,000 contract to write that adventure. A panel of distinguished judges read the flood of proposals, and finally whittled the field down to a handful of contenders. After lengthy debate, a winner was chosen.

The adventure you hold in your hands is the winner of the Mystery Map Adventure Design Competition. There were many great submissions to the competition, but Jobe Bittman's stood out above them all. This adventure has a strong Appendix N theme, unique encounters that your players will remember for a long time, many highly visual scenes that will stand out in your players' minds, and some terrific twists and turns. It also features one of the most creative player handouts I remember seeing. Prepare for a very fun time. I think you'll enjoy this adventure as much as we did.

- Joseph Goodman, Goodman Games, November 2013



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND



Among the mystics of Punjar, it is known: There exists a miraculous cave where mortals can taste of the true power of prophesy, where any question can be answered – if you're willing to pay a hefty price in coin. Legend calls it the Cave of Secrets. Its location is closely guarded for fear of abuse by the greedy and corrupt. The source of the cave's power is an even deeper mystery, unknown even to the sages and mystics who visit. Were it known, the only conscionable course of action would be to purge the temple and reduce the cave to rubble. Beneath lies a temple dedicated to Shigazilnizthrub, an elder god with dark motives. All those who dared venture beyond the sleeping chambers have never been seen again.

The bargain for prophecy is a simple one. The seeker of knowledge enters the cave with coins, gems, or magic items as tribute. Soporific herbs are burned that induce a deep sleep. The truth seeker must focus on his or her question as they drift off. The answer comes in dreams. Some never wake. If the elder god sees something contrary to his schemes in the truth seeker's future, his thralls murder the sleeper and dispose of the corpse.

Here are a few ideas for entangling your players in Shigazilnizthrub's web:

- The party hears tales of the great treasure in the Cave of Secrets. The lucre is probably only guarded by a few old monks. What could possibly go wrong?
- The adventurers are faced with a riddle they cannot solve. A wizard gives them a map to the cave and suggests they can find the answer there.
- Mystics have been disappearing. Their friends in Punjar suspect bandits are picking them off on the road to the cave. A cabal member enlists the party to make a fake delivery to a point near the cave to flush out the outlaws.

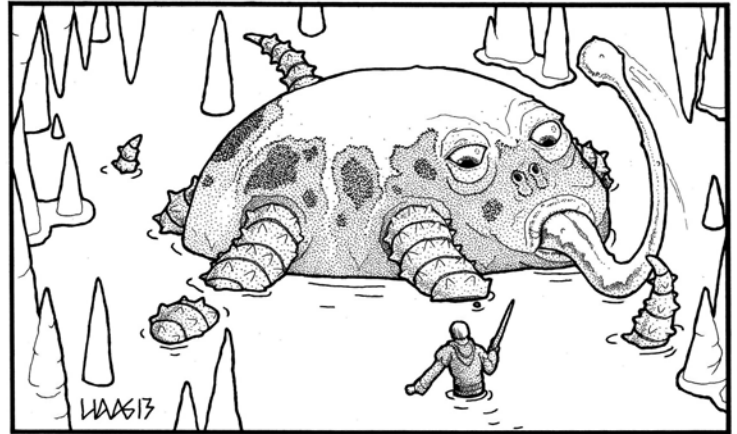
JUDGE'S NOTES

The One Who Watches from Below can span 1-4 sessions of play depending on the choices of the adventurers. If you'd like to run it in a single four hour session, remove all random encounters and strongly lead the party toward the Vault of Eyes after the third hour.

This adventure takes a little more careful reading than many others. There are a few features that you should make sure you fully comprehend before going in.

The most important feature is the Curse of the Emerald Eye. Cursed gems found within the complex have the power to transform characters in a rather unpleasant way. While triggering the curse is certainly not required, it is one of the things that make this adventure unique. A solid understanding of how the curse works is essential.

Some area entries contain a "curse event" section. These



events or situations are usually only applicable when a player character becomes or is already cursed.

Another departure from other low-level adventures is the disparity in power between the characters and the monsters in the final encounter. The adventurers face a titan beast with god-like powers guarding a massive stockpile of treasure. The risk is high, but so is the reward.

CURSE OF THE EMERALD EYE

This curse is most often used by powerful spellcasters to protect treasure hoards and sacred places. Using a lump of green glass and a freshly plucked eyelash, the caster fashions a faux emerald large enough to cause even the most prudent adventurer to throw caution to the wind. The gem is usually placed in a statue or other setting. The curse is sealed within the gem while reciting the following lines:

*Heathen, cutpurse, turn back now
Your thieving ways you must avow
Surely soon you'll see the light
The doom of everlasting sight*

This curse carries a -2 Luck penalty in addition to nasty side effects. When the gem is subjected to any force from pulling or prying, the curse is triggered and immediately rearmed. Anyone touching the gem with their hands or any implement, and anyone touching that person, becomes violently ill and falls to the floor. The screaming victims' eyes move over the body and into the floor or wall, leaving their faces with only smooth skin where the eye sockets should be. The targets' consciousness travels with the eyes while the bodies slumber in a coma-like state. The eyes stare from the surface in which they are imprisoned – somewhat like a *magic mouth* spell for eyes. Cursed eyes have AC 12 (AC 20 when eyes are closed), 3 hp (per eye), and no save bonuses.

Cursed eyes: Init +0; Atk none; AC 12 (AC 20 when eyes closed); HD 1d6; hp 6; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP dominate creature, -2 Luck; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL (same as owner).

Characters affected by the trap immediately lose the ability to speak, but they can blink and make expressions with

their eyes. The judge should hand controlling players a face shield, a sheet of paper with an eye slit cut out as shown on the inside cover, and give the instruction that the player is no longer allowed to communicate anything about the affected character using speech. The player may only impart information through the face shield using only his or her eyes and other non-verbal cues. Examples include blinking, eye movements, and eye expressions.

After the initial shock, a cursed character will realize that while they have lost many abilities they have also gained a few. By staring in a particular direction and concentrating, a character can physically move their eyes along any inanimate objects in contact with one another – walls, floors, doors, even another character’s shield. Clever players may wish to move their eyes in a way to spell out letters and messages to others at the table. If the characters are literate, this is a valid solution to the communication problem. Make the player trace the letters in the air with a finger or write them on a slip of paper. This mode of communication is very inefficient. It takes 5 minutes of game time for the character to spell out 20 characters. If the adventurers are not well-hidden, this means the judge rolls for random encounters after every 20-character message.

Cursed eyes also gain the ability to dominate unintelligent creatures, such as the beasts in the kennel (area 2-12). Eyes can move onto any unintelligent creature that is unconscious, pinned, or otherwise restrained using an action die. The target creature must succeed in an opposed Will save or be under the control of the disembodied character. (Note that attempting to dominate any cursed body always fails and causes intense pain.) While dominating a creature, the player uses the creature’s stat block. The character can speak only at the ability of the dominated creature. Make the player speak in grunts, hisses, or howls. Why should the judge be the only one doing funny voices?

The cursed eyes can be positioned on the host’s body as desired. The dominator can release its quarry with another action. The host body gets a new save every hour. A suc-

cessful save means the host regains control of their body and the eyes are forced to move off the body. The death of a host has no consequence; the eyes can move off the dead body just like any other inanimate object.

REMOVING THE CURSE

Escaping the Curse of the Emerald Eye is no easy task. A book or scroll detailing the Reunification Ritual must be found (such a description can be found in area 2-9). The ritual details the construction of a special altar. This altar normally takes 1d3 weeks to build, though the altar in area 2-10 can be used. A set of cursed eyes and body are placed on the altar. The face is rubbed with several raw materials – choady tongue (a tadpole like creature from the southern swamps), eye of newt, and owlbear fur – while the ritual spell is recited. The ritual requires a DC 20 spell check by the primary spellcaster to succeed. Each reagent used is consumed and adds +1 to the check. Additional spellcasters add half their spell check bonus plus any spellburn to the check. For more information, see “Ritualized Magic” (DCC RPG page 124).

There is also a quick-and-dirty way to remove the curse, but it’s not recorded in any book. Destroying both cursed eyes causes them to immediately appear on the owner’s body (1d3 damage per eye to owner). The owner awakens with their savaged eye sockets restored, blind, and in intense pain. Magic healing or divine aid can help. A cleric can use the Lay on Hands ability to heal the blindness condition. Healing ruined eyes requires at least 4 heal dice or a DC 20 request for divine aid.

To those ingenious adventurers who manage to remove the cursed gems by use of spells or other devices without invoking the curse, I salute you. Giant emeralds are worth anywhere from 10,000-100,000 gp depending on the size. Unfortunately, the cursed gems crumble to dust when exposed to sunlight. Finding a buyer that is not allowed to touch the gem or see it during the day might prove a difficult task.

RUNNING THE CURSE

The Curse of the Emerald Eye plays a central role in this adventure. Characters can use it to scout ahead, reach normally inaccessible areas of the map, and take over monsters. When the curse is first encountered, you must enforce the rules of the curse with an iron fist. Confer privately if you must. Strongly remind cursed players that they are NOT allowed to speak. If you do not clearly set the boundaries at the outset, the problem-solving aspect of the curse will be lost. You only have one chance to get this right.

In most of the playtests, the players quickly adapted to the rules. First, they used the face shield. Then, they asked to trace letters (I forced them to draw them in the air the first time). Finally, the players asked to write out the messages, which I allowed, but only 20 characters at a time per 5 minutes of game time. If the party is not well-hidden, you will need to roll for wandering monsters every 5 minutes (see the Random Encounters section). The players may also try to dominate each other to relay information not realizing the toll domination takes on the host; the experience drains the target, inflicting a cumulative -1 penalty to all defenses for 1d3 hours.

You may notice there are few locked doors in this adventure. In most playtests, the thief was the one who invariably triggered the curse first. If you use the curse in another adventure, be careful not to create chokepoints that require the use of thief skills.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Hideous beasts and halfling hybrids constantly prowl the halls beneath the Cave of Secrets. Random encounters occur as follows:

Area 1 - Cave of Secrets: No random encounters.

Area 2 - The Temple, area 3 - the Brood Pit, and area 4 - the Undertemple: For every 5 minutes the party spends exposed in a hallway, or whenever any encounter area without monster stat blocks is entered, there is a 1 in 8 chance of a random encounter occurring. Whenever an empty room or cave on the map is entered, there is a 2 in 8 chance of a random encounter occurring.

When an encounter occurs, roll 2d4 and read or paraphrase the box text to fit the current situation. Each encounter table item lists a total number of creatures. Whenever a creature is slain, reduce the total. If the supply is exhausted, reroll or pick an adjacent available encounter.

If you wish to emphasize the horror elements of the adventure, roll a 1d3+1 on the random encounter table until the adventurers reach Area 3, and remove the halfling hybrid encounter from area 2-2. This should reduce grind and increase the eerie atmosphere.

RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

2d4	Encounter	# Appearing	Total
2	Spying eyes	1d3	10
3	Rat swarm	1	2
4	Dwarven eyes	1	1
5	Halfling hybrids	1d8	60
6	Laser harpies	1d3	15
7	Eye slime	1	3
8	Double cockatrice	1	1

Spying eyes: *You spot disembodied eyes spying on you from across the room.*

A Mighty Deed of Arms Precision Shot of 3 or higher can take out a pair eyes in a single shot. The eyes maintain a distance of 20 feet at all times. They will continue to follow the party until stopped. The eyes can also dominate characters with an opposed Will save. On a failed save, the target falls under the control of the spying eyes (target gets a Will save every hour). For more information about this power, see the "Curse of the Emerald Eye" section.

Spying eyes (1d3): Init +0; Atk none; AC 12 (AC 20 when eyes closed); HD 1d4; hp 2; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP dominate creature; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

Rat swarm: *Rats shower from holes in the ceiling like grey rain. The vermin pool on the floor then surge forward - an iridescent purple insect eye twitching on each back.*

The ravenous rats are all under the control of the intellect of a single predatory insect. The insect eyes have a powerful hypnotic effect that traps foes in a maze in their own mind.

Anyone standing in attack range must make a DC 10 Will save at the beginning of their turn or be immobilized until the next round.

Rat swarm (1): Init +4; Atk swarming bite +1 melee (1); AC 9; HD 4d8; hp 18; MV 40' or climb 20'; Act special; SP bite all targets within 20' x 20' space, half damage from non-area attacks, mind is maze (DC 10 Will save or immobilized); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will -2; AL N.

Dwarven eyes: *A pair of eyes with a frightened expression is staring at you from the floor. The eyes blink furiously.*

The disembodied eyes of the dwarf sleeping in the Cave of Secrets have nearly gone mad. The eyes dart skittishly to and fro. While the characters watch, the eyes blink in code. A dwarf will immediately recognize it as dwarven torch code; other classes require a DC 15 Intelligence check. The repeated message is "Klazath save me." The dwarven eyes will leave after a few minutes, always heading in the direction of the altar (area 2-10). This random encounter can happen multiple times if the eyes yet live.

The dwarf can replace a dead character or be introduced as an NPC. The eyes can be reattached to their body using the altar in area 2-10. The dwarf, who calls himself Gorm Ultimak, insists on the return of his axe if the party found it in the bone pit (area 1-6).

Gorm Ultimak: Init +2; Atk battleaxe +3 melee (1d8+2); AC 11; HD 2d12; hp 9; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; AL L.

Halfling hybrids: *Waist-high figures in burlap robes rush you clutching curvy daggers in their tiny clawed hands. Their faces are completely concealed beneath their hoods.*

Halfling hybrids are abominations against all that is holy. The hybrids are unintelligent and vocalize in long hisses. They also have a limited ability of *invisibility* (1/day). Beneath the robes hide stunted bodies with swollen, stiff joints and a pale purple pallor. Their over-sized heads are twisted and deformed. All features are crammed near the bottom of their faces. Yellow teeth, too large for their mouths, jut at awkward angles. Their eyes are black like an eel's eye. Vestigial gills line their necks.

The hybrids' large craniums are perfect vessels for dominating eyes. Any adventurer who pulls back a hood will see a skull honeycombed with blinking eyes. Eyes from Shigazilnizthrub's vault control the hybrids at their tasks of tending the truth seekers, maintaining the temple, and repelling intruders. When new hybrids are needed, they are synthesized in the brood pit (area 3).

Halfling hybrid (1d8): Init +1; Atk curved dagger -1 melee (1d4) or dart -2 missile fire (1d4); AC 11; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP invisibility (1/day); SV Fort -1, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C.

Laser harpies: *A filthy bird with a little girl's face erupts from a nest of ratty sticks and trash. The beast shrieks and gnashes at the air while a baleful red eye glares from its mid-section.*

The harpies roost in crevices across the temple and undertemple. The red eye has the ability to fire beams of searing red light.

Laser harpies (1d3): Init +0; Atk claws +3 melee (1d4) or laser eye +2 missile fire (1d6); AC 13; HD 4d8; hp 17 each; MV 20', fly 50'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; AL C.

Eye slime: *A thick puddle of pink slime races along the wall. Half-digested eyeballs bob in the transparent mass.*

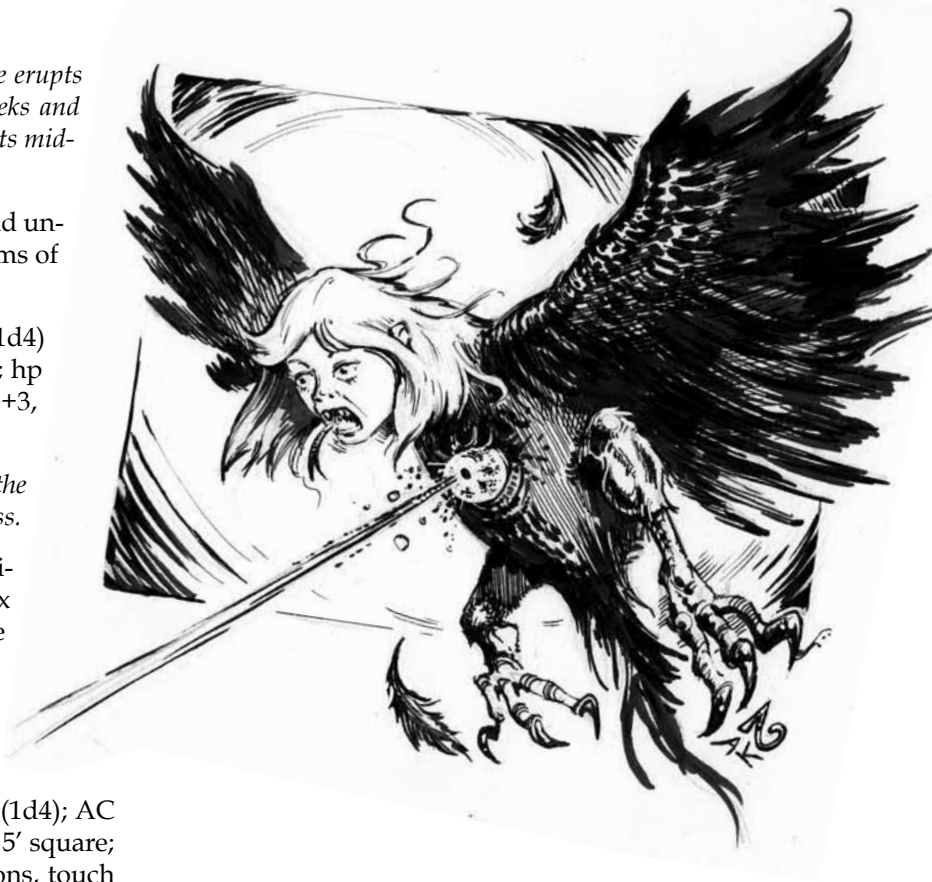
Slimes rove the halls looking for their favorite delicacy - living eyeballs. The slime occupies a 5' x 10' area and is highly caustic to metal. When the slime is hit with a metal weapon or lands a blow against metal armor, there is a 50% chance the item dissolves to nothing in 1d3 rounds; magic items are immune.

Eye slime (1): Init +1; Atk pseudopod +4 melee (1d4); AC 10; HD 2d8; hp 9; MV 10', climb 10'; Act 1d20 per 5' square; SP half damage from slicing and piercing weapons, touch dissolves metal (50% chance to dissolve non-magic metal weapons and armor, -1 cumulative penalty to hit/damage/AC, item is destroyed after 1d3 rounds); SV Fort +4, Ref -6, Will -6; AL N.

Double cockatrice: *The crowing of cocks echoes through the chamber. Conjoined at the chest, a feathered monstrosity struts awkwardly into view on four scaly feet. Two rooster heads rejoin their cries of challenge while slowly flapping three mismatched bat wings, a reptilian tail trailing behind.*

The only thing more fearsome than a cockatrice is a double cockatrice.

Double cockatrice (1): Init -1; Atk peck +0 melee (1d3 plus petrification); AC 13; HD 3d16; hp 25; MV 15', fly 5'; Act 2d20; SP petrification (DC 13 Will save or petrified); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3; AL C.



ENCOUNTER TABLE

Area	Type	Encounter
1-5	C/T	Cursed portal Giant spider
2-2	C	5 halfling hybrids
2-3	C	2 giant eyestalks
2-8	T	Electric floor trap
2-12	C	2 vilehunds
2-13	C	8 library books
3-2	C	12 proto-hybrids
3-4	C	Halfling hybrid lord 8 halfling hybrids
4-3	C	2 giant acid worms
4-4	C/T	Eyeless gorilla
4-5	C	1 juvenile koe-bel 5 adult koe-bels
4-6	C/T	Negative Plane Negative creep
4-7	C	Whateley (dark form) 4 halfling hybrids
4-8	C	Primordial titan 5 walls of eyes

ADVENTURE START



The read-aloud text below is suitable for a one-shot adventure. You will need to tailor the lead-in if you have an ongoing campaign world.

For years, you've heard rumors of the Cave of Secrets, a mystical cave where any question can be answered – if you're willing to pay the price. You dismissed it as a mere legend until two nights ago. A grey-robed man with a white beard, deep in his cups, boasted too loudly of his trip to the very cave. The stories are true! In exchange for coin and gems, any secret can be uncovered. But what care have you for secrets? When the old man spoke, your mind began to race. Where do all the coin and gems end up?

As the doddering codger stumbled toward the door, you decided

to follow and perhaps strike up a little chat in the alley around the corner. As luck would have it, fate intervened. The drunk tripped over a bench, sending mugs in all directions and angry revelers to their feet. In the commotion, you saw a scroll tube fall from the man's pocket and roll under the bar. While pretending to lace your boots, you slipped the tube into your sleeve and disappeared into the night. The tube contained a neatly-drawn map of the countryside showing the city of Punjar and an X marked "Cave of Secrets." If this map is to be believed, it's a mere two days travel away.

Allow the characters adequate time to purchase supplies before departing. The adventure begins outside the cave indicated on the map.

AREA 1: CAVE OF SECRETS



Most of the area is comprised of rocky caverns and natural passageways. Just below the somber religious atmosphere of the mystic chamber is the seedy undertone of opium dens. The air is cool and dank. Random encounters do not occur in this area.

Area 1-1 – Cave of Secrets: *After several days of hard trail, you finally reach the area indicated on the map. Your pulse quickens as you spot the cave. Near the opening a simple weathered sign beats in the wind. It reads, "ENTER."*

The passage is dark, but any character with infravision can see there is some sort of dim illumination further on.

Area 1-2 – Mystic Chamber: *The entrance passage gradually widens into a large cavern. A light smoke hangs in the air, diffusing the light of the scores of candles placed around the chamber. The air has a thick richness to it – tart, sickly sweet with floral undertones – and makes you feel light-headed. Through the smoky gloom, you can see body-length niches are carved on every wall. A large, obsidian obelisk stands at the room's center beside a small altar.*

The stone altar is covered in flickering candles. A beaten copper collection bowl lies next to a plate of bags containing dried flower bulbs. Sniffing the bulbs causes an intoxicating head rush.

Even over the strong odor of this area, dwarves will distinctly smell the delicious stench of gems coming from area 1-5.

Sleepers: Two figures currently slumber in this chamber beneath threadbare blankets. Inspection reveals one to be a recently deceased elven female and the other a geriatric human male. Searching the elf turns up 1d10 sp. The septuagenarian is Whateley, a wizard and secret follower of Shigazilnizthrub. If shaken, Whateley awakes groggily. Whateley always answers a question with a question of his own.

Whateley is asked... / Whateley answers...

Who are you / What are you doing here? I'm the caretaker around these parts. Are you truth seekers?

How do we learn secrets / What are we supposed to do? Well... (sighs) ...you see you place the tithe on the plate there, you see? Then you burn one of these here bulbs and lay in those rocks over there. Your answer will come in dreams. (pause) Are you supposed to be here?

How much is the tithe? An even 1,000 gold coins or equivalent in gems. Only one question, one person, you see? (long pause) Are you sure you're supposed to be here?

As soon as Whateley realizes the characters don't belong here, he tells them to leave. If they don't comply immediately, he raps the closest character over the head with his staff (1 point damage) and shouts at them to go. A DC 15 Pick pocket check that succeeds during the conversation nets a dark grey key that opens the gate in area 1-4.

If anyone attacks, Whateley transforms into a black smoking shadow and disappears into the obelisk. If the characters leave and return, Whateley is missing. The wizard grabs his most important research from his bed chamber and retreats to another of Shigazilnizthrub's strongholds.

Obelisk: The obelisk is carved from jet black stone and juts from a hole in the floor. A large, baleful eye has been carved into one side. The artifact resists any attempt to move or break it. The eye of the obelisk turns to look upon any character who casts a spell in this area.

Area 1-3 – Alcove: *You enter a smaller chamber cut with the same niches. A mouse darts across the floor and disappears into a crack in the wall. It seemed to have a glistening hump on its back, but it moved too quickly for you to be sure. A stout figure is curled in a niche at the far end of the room.*

A dwarf sleeps in one of the niches with his back to the party, clothed in simple padding of the sort worn under plate armor. The dwarf is undoubtedly a pious man as he wears the symbol of Klazath, god of war, around his neck. The characters discover that the dwarf's eyes are missing when the body is searched. Smooth flesh covers the place where eye sockets should be. The body is warm to the touch and

very much alive, but in an unresponsive coma state. Turning out the dwarf's pockets produces 1d8 copper pieces and a small hand mirror. The dwarf's disembodied eyes roam the halls of the complex below (random encounter 4).

Area 1-4 – Locked Gate: *A massive metal gate blocks the passage ahead. A large metal plate is set in the middle of the door with a keyhole positioned at the center. Beyond the gate, you see a large stone portal carved in the image of some hideous monster, glittering with jewels.*

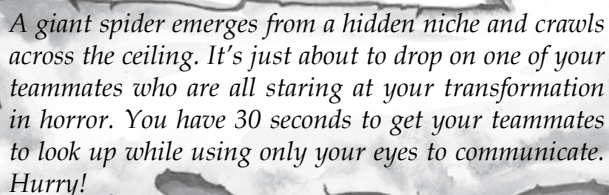
The gate is constructed from an adamantite alloy; DC 25 Strength check to break. The lock is the work of a true craftsman. The parts of the tumbler have been milled with amazing precision, making it extremely difficult to pick the lock; DC 25 Pick lock check. However, the gate can easily be unlocked from the other side. The bars of the gate are wide enough to fit an arm through. Using a mirror or reflective surface, one can easily see the release on the back of the metal plate. The catch is just beyond the reach of human arm length, but a staff, short sword, or other implement can finish the distance; DC 10 Agility check to open.

Area 1-5 – Cursed Portal: *The floors, walls, and ceiling are constructed from smooth stone blocks in sharp contrast to the natural rock in the previous area. A 10-foot-tall stone door carved in the image of some ancient demonic beast glares balefully from the far wall. Three fist-sized emeralds are set on the door like eyes. Large clay jars stand at the north and south ends of the chamber.*

Show the players Handout A (which is part of the map on page 22). Dwarves can detect the gems set in the portal from several rooms away. The Curse of the Emerald Eye event (see page 3) is triggered by the slightest touch of any door gem, even with an implement. The jars at the north end of the chamber are filled with soporific flower bulbs; those at the south end are filled with water.

Door: The stone door is barred from the other side with a piece of wood, but not locked; a DC 15 Strength check is all that is required to bash it open. If cursed eyes travel under the door, the hallway is dark. Infravision is required to see the weak bar on the door.

Curse event: A giant spider hidden in a niche in the ceiling only attacks if a character triggers the portal's curse. Go to the Curse of the Emerald Eye section and make the player aware of the restrictions on his or her character's actions. Then give the person the following note:



A giant spider emerges from a hidden niche and crawls across the ceiling. It's just about to drop on one of your teammates who are all staring at your transformation in horror. You have 30 seconds to get your teammates to look up while using only your eyes to communicate. Hurry!

Give the player 30 seconds of real time to send a message to the other players while using the face shield. If the player succeeds in getting even one player to look up at the ceiling, the spider loses its advantage. Otherwise, the spider's surprise assault grants +20 to its initiative and a +5 bonus

to its first attack roll. The giant spider has many pairs of eyes on its abdomen. When the spider is killed, the eyes slip off the corpse, move across the floor and disappear under the cursed portal.

Giant spider (1): Init +1; Atk mandible +2 melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 3d8; hp 17; MV 40', climb 40'; Act 1d20; SP web (10' radius; DC 12 Agility check or immobilized for 1 round); SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N.

Area 1-6 – Bone Pit: *The cave floor slopes downward gently and widens, ending at a precipice. A railing cobbled together from discarded wooden planks is the only thing between you and the cavernous black pit. The chilly, wet air stinks of bat guano and decay.*

The pit is over 100 feet deep. Dropping a light source into the pit reveals the piles of bones far below. Climbing down the pit with ropes is a trivial task, but free-climbing requires a DC 15 Agility check. The temple's halfling hybrids roll dead truth seekers into this abyss; others enter the pit through a secret passage at the bottom to strip any valuables. The looters overlooked one item, a battleaxe with the word "Ultimak" inscribed on the handle in dwarven.

Bone piles: Most of the dead have been reduced to pristine skeletons. Oddly, the skulls have only smooth bone where the eye sockets should be. A fresh corpse writhes with earthworms stripping away the meat from the bones. A character who touches a worm will notice a burning sensation as the creatures secrete a mild acid.

Secret door: The entrance to the secret passage is behind a boulder between two sconces. The sconces each contain an extinguished torch. The hidden passage opens easily by pulling either sconce – even the act of lighting the torch is enough to trigger it. The boulder slides to the side with a grinding sound to reveal the small opening. Human-sized creatures need to crawl to get through the passage, but the rocky tunnel behind it is roomy. A lever opens and closes the secret door from the other side.

Area 1-7 – Eerie Hall: *A low hum drones from the darkened hall behind the door. A loud thunk reverberates from above and the ceiling is suddenly illuminated as if by torches, but you see no source for the light. The thumping sound continues along the length of the hall, lighting the black corridor as it goes. The floors and walls are absolutely spotless.*

The strange illumination follows the character wherever they travel throughout the temple. Emphasize the sense of impending doom by adding phantom clicking sounds, rumbling floors, and flickering lights as the adventurers delve deeper into the complex.

Secret door (1-6A): The secret door to the south can be discovered with a DC 15 check. Finding and opening the door from the inside is trivial.

Secret door (1-6B): The secret door is opened by pulling a catch near the floor. The catch is accessible from area 1-7 by poking a dagger into a hole.

AREA 2: THE TEMPLE



The temple is a masterwork of masonry, architected from flawless stone blocks of an ancient style. The floors and walls are immaculate throughout the entire area. Magic illumination lights all areas to allow roving eyes to see.

Area 2-1 – Round Room: You discover a circular room while traveling the long east-west hallway. Tall clay jars are evenly spaced along the north section. A metal grate is set in a two-foot wide round pipe positioned directly in the center of the south wall flanked by clay jars on each side.

Jars: The clay jars are currently empty, but the insides are damp and acrid air lingers. The jars are wide and tall enough to make a decent – if temporary – hiding spot.

Grate: The metal grate blocks a pipe leading deeper into the complex. It is constructed from the same nearly-indestructible adamantine alloy as the gate near the entrance.

Curse event: Cursed eyes can easily travel through the pipe to the area behind. A rat is waiting just around the corner, ready to pounce. Pass the following note if eyes enter the pipe:

When you reach the end of the pipe, you hear the clatter of claws on stone. A mangy sewer rat squeezes into the pipe and bounds toward you baring its yellow teeth.

A cursed character that tightly closes his or her eyes is impervious to the rat's bite; the rat will give up after a few minutes. Cursed eyes can easily outrun the rat to reach their group. Otherwise, the rat attacks eyes with +2 bonus to hit for 1 point of damage. The rat can be killed by an adventurer by stepping on it; no attack roll is necessary. A DC 15 Agility check is required to capture the rat alive. The rat may be used as a vessel for cursed eyes if captured alive; no opposed Will save necessary.

Area 2-2 – Trophy Room: Alabaster statues of creatures in fighting poses line the walls: elves, dwarves, strange reptile-like humanoids, and, in the northeast corner, a giant snake-haired creature with a large bowl between its cloven hooves. Bleached skulls are mounted on wooden plaques high on the wall. Neither the statues nor skulls have eyes.

This room is filled with the remains of temple's mightiest opponents. In the end, they were all defeated and their eyes added to Shigazilnizthrub's vile hoard in the vault below. The bowl at the feet of the statue is 3' in diameter and filled with black, wet earth, wriggling with fat earthworms that secrete a mild acid.

Stairwell: A party that rushes through this room will run right into a group of halfling hybrids entering from the south stairwell. Adventurers who poke around this room will hear the group approaching and have one round to take action before they arrive.

Halfling hybrids (5): Init +1; Atk curved dagger -1 melee (1d4) or dart -2 missile fire (1d4); AC 11; HD 1d6; hp 4 each;

MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP invisibility (1/day); SV Fort -1, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C.

Area 2-3 – Guardian Pillars: The stairs open into a great hall, the high ceiling held in place by two massive opalescent columns. Triangles of green light reflect off three gems set in a large stone skull that watches silently from a dais at the east end of the room. A grand set of doors looms over the west end of the hall. Tapestries on the north and south wall depict enormous eyeballs on a background of crawling worms.

Show the players Handout B.

Columns: The two columns in the center of the room are the eyestalks of a gargantuan subterranean beast compelled to guard this area by the power of Shigazilnizthrub. The eyestalks remain erect and perfectly motionless until a character either attempts to open the double doors or touches the "columns". Then, they spring to life, smashing and rolling over any character in sight. The eyestalks are long enough to reach 25 feet from their base, but cannot reach beyond the door or into the stairwell. Due to their large size, the eyestalks use Crit Table G as a giant, but only score a critical hit on a natural 20.

Skull: The stone skull is twice as tall as a human. Using a Mighty Deed of Arms, it would be possible to roll the head down the platform's steps, immediately severing and killing one random eyestalk. Large emeralds in the idol's eye are trapped; go to the Curse of the Emerald Eye section if anyone attempts to remove them.

Curse event: A grate near the ceiling allows cursed eyes to travel to area 2-5.

Giant eyestalks (2): Init -2; Atk bash +3 melee (1d8, range 25'); AC 15; HD 4d10; hp 23 each; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SP crit table G/1d4; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -1; AL N.

Area 2-4 – Upper Stasis Room: Shelves upon shelves circle the room from floor to ceiling. Each shelf is packed with evenly spaced jars containing small clumps suspended in clear liquid. A warm, pink light bathes the entire area, coming from crystals set in the masonry. An oblong hole in the center of the chamber continues down at least 80 feet to the bottom and is lined with countless shelves of jars. Several ladders extend from the mouth of the hole to the bottom. The architecture in this area is unlike anything you've ever seen. The floor and walls are constructed from smooth porous stone like coral and every corner is rounded off.

Fetus Jars: The jars on the shelves are filled with halfling hybrid fetuses, kept in stasis by the pink light. The fetuses move and blink periodically. Opening a jar releases a powerful musty odor. Drinking fetus water has no ill effects and actually promotes healthy fingernail and hair growth. Characters may use the ladders to reach area 3-1 below.

Curse event: The secret door can be opened by pulling the catch from the inside or from the outside hall by inserting a

dagger or other small long implement into a hole near the floor. A cursed eye cannot travel through the hole because the dowel is in the way. Pass this note if needed:

You see the inside of a secret door with a strange mechanism. A dowel is poking through a small hole near the floor. Pushing against the dowel from the other side probably releases the catch to open the door.

Area 2-5 – Armory: *You are in a long room stretching east to west. Wooden weapon racks overflowing with armaments run the length of the room. A few shields hang above rectangular chests.*

Racks: Usable weapons recovered from dead pilgrims or looters are stored here, including 1d3 battleaxes, 1d6 blowguns, 2d6 daggers, 2d10 darts, 1d8 handaxes, 1d10 javelins, 1d8 longbows, 1d4 maces, 1d14 different types of polearms, 1 two-handed sword, and 1d20 staves.

Chests: Wooden boxes contain ammunition: 300 arrows, 5 silver-tipped arrows, and 65 sling stones.

Armor: There is little in the way of armor: only 2 wooden shields and a metal shield polished to a mirror-sheen hang from hooks on the walls. This *mirror shield* gives off a faint magical aura. It has the power to block incoming beam attacks. When hit by a beam attack, the wielder can use an action die out of initiative order to block and redirect the attack once per round. The attack bounces off the shield, and there is a 50% chance the attack hits a random creature within 50'. The character may use remaining actions on their normal initiative.

Curse event: In one of the storage closets, a metal grate is set in a two-foot wide round pipe positioned directly in the center of the west wall. Cursed eyes can travel through a spiraling pipe to reach area 2-3.

Area 2-6 – Side Room: *The room is constructed from large stone blocks and almost completely empty. A large rug is situated in the center of the room. You hear an almost imperceptible buzzing sound. The air feels charged with energy.*

If the characters enter from under the trap door, also read:

A loud ka-chunk reverberates from above and the room is suddenly as bright as day, but there is no visible source of light. The sound continues to the east, lighting sections of another room as it goes. The floors and halls are absolutely spotless.

Shaft: A 15' vertical shaft runs straight up from the rock passage. A set of well-anchored iron rungs leads to a wooden trap door. The door is unlocked and concealed beneath a large square area rug. The rug can be moved with little effort. Characters that walk across the rug from above can easily feel the trap door beneath their feet.

Area 2-7 – Alchemy Lab: *Cabinets with glass doors crowd around a smallish work table covered in tubing and glassware. Every cabinet is filled, overflowing with beakers and jars containing strange reagents. Air blows gently from a round hole covered by a grate near the ceiling.*

Worktable: An alembic, shears, and a mortar and pestle sit

on a workbench in the center of the room

Cabinets: Each cabinet contains hundreds of bottles, alphabetically sorted and meticulously labeled. It would take hours to read them all. A character looking for the specific reagents listed in the ritual book in area 2-9 will be able to find jars of choady tongue and eye of newt; each jar contains enough material to perform two rituals. The jar labeled owlbear fur is empty.

Curse event: Cursed eyes can travel through the hole near the ceiling to reach the upper stasis room. Reference the curse event in area 2-1.

Area 2-8 – Rune Hallway: *The heavy double doors squeal open on halting hinges to reveal an arched hallway. Five-foot-square red and black flagstones create a checkerboard pattern on the floor. Another set of stout doors stands closed at the far end of the passage.*

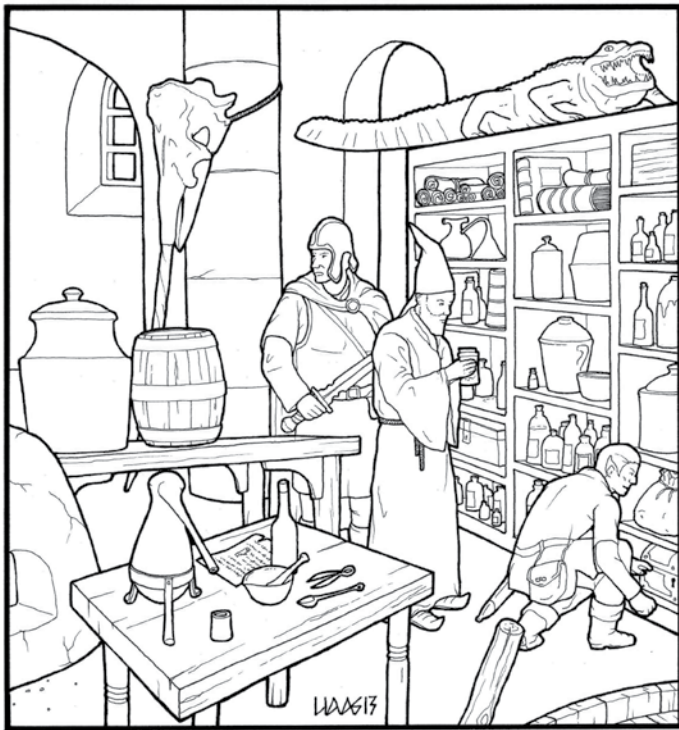
The entire floor of this area is covered by an electrical trap. Careful inspection of the floor reveals the flagstones do not touch directly; they are separated on all sides by thin strips of wood. Touching any body parts, metal, or other conductive item across a red and black flagstone releases a stored electrical charge. The trap causes 3d6 of shock damage to anyone barefoot or wearing metal armor (scale mail or better) that touches a red and black tile simultaneously. Leather shoes act as a weak insulator reducing the damage to 1d6. Any creature in physical contact with the target takes the same damage.

The electrical trap is easily avoided by jumping from flagstone to flagstone. If a player explicitly states a desire not to touch two tiles at once, there is no chance of triggering the trap. Jumping over flagstones requires a DC 10 Agility check. On a failed check, there is a 1 in 6 chance that a character will accidentally short a set of charged floor tiles when they land. If characters traverse the floor heedless of the danger, there is a 2 in 6 chance that they trigger a charged tile for every 5 feet traveled.

Curse event: If the curse has still not been triggered by this point, you as the judge have a decision to make. While the adventure is playable without the curse, the players will miss out on a great deal of the experience by being too cautious. You can force the issue in this room. Add a trap to the door at the end of the hall. The trigger is behind the door, thus undetectable. When the door is opened, a small cannon fires a gem down the hall. Each character in the hall must succeed in a DC 20 Ref save. The first character to fail gets hit by the gem.

Area 2-9 – Bed Chamber: *The air is tinged with smoke in this cozy, semicircular chamber. Wide bookshelves, a fur rug, reading chairs, and a comfortable, four-poster bed are luxuries out of place in the austere temple. Desk drawers are dumped onto the floor. Books are piled at the foot of the half-empty shelves. A waste can is filled with ash and burnt paper.*

The bedroom was tossed by someone in a hurry. Clothes, papers, and books are missing. The papers in the waste can

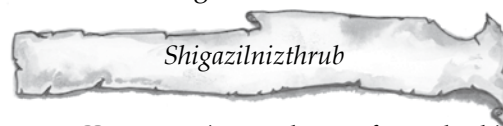


Show the players Handout C.

This large chamber is situated centrally, connecting many important rooms of the complex. The worm statue stands over a large bowl of dirt filled with stinging earthworms.

Runes: The runes are written in an ancient, forgotten language which is a predecessor to the demonic, infernal, and abyssal tongues; a character who knows one of those languages receives a +5 bonus to skill checks when attempting to decode the runes. The runes can be deciphered by a thief using the Read languages skill or other character classes with an Intelligence check; the check for both is DC 15.

Write the word “Shigazilnizthrub” on a note card and hand it to the player whose character deciphers the runes. Whenever the name “Shigazilnizthrub” is spoken aloud, the entire complex shakes and rumbles for several seconds while dust falls from the ceiling.



Area 2-12 – Kennel: A cacophony of growls, hisses, and shrieks erupt as soon as you open the door. Iron cages line the walls, filled with a wild assortment of beasts from far-flung regions. Two spiny hounds leap to the ground in front of you. Each has enormous eyes with stone grey irises on their flanks. The vile beasts trot toward you sideways on three pairs of legs, all the while hissing and tossing their heads from side to side.

Show the players Handout D. The kennel is filled with various guardian beasts. A pair of demonic hounds has been dominated by basilisk eyes controlled by Shigazilnizthrub. Those who meet the gaze of the basilisk eyes must make a DC 12 Fort save or turn to stone. The gaze attack can only target characters whose eyes are open. With a mirror or polished shield, an adventurer can reflect the petrifying gaze attack back at a vilehund by using an action.

Cages: Various other creatures are solidly locked within their cages: 2 giant ants (worker), 1 gargoyle, 1 four-armed ape-man, 2 dire wolves, 1 owlbear, and 1 giant rat. Cursed eyes can attempt to dominate the creatures in this area, but the target must first be grappled, paralyzed, or otherwise restrained. All stat blocks can be found in the monster section of the DCC RPG core rulebook.

Vilehund (2): Init +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d8), AC 16; HD 2d6; hp 6 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP petrifying gaze (DC 12 Fort save or petrified); SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; AL C.

Area 2-13 – Library: Tall bookshelves are arranged in neat lengthwise rows and stacked against every wall, packed with a wealth of tomes in every size and color. Comfy reading chairs and tables are gathered along the northern side. A thick book lies open on a wooden lectern facing the entryway.

The tome on the lectern catalogs every book in the library and its location. The roster of books is impressive indeed, including atlases, historical references, map folios, compendiums of flora and fauna, religious texts, and treatises on alchemy. Searching for spells among the stacks is fruit-

are mostly blank except for a single scrap containing part of a phrase, “...power of the One Who Watches from...”

Books: Digging through the pile of books turns up a magic tome detailing the Ritual of Reunification. The ritual can be used to purge the curse from a body and permanently reattach the original eyes. For more detailed information, read the “Removing the Curse” section. In short, the characters must first find choady tongue and eye of newt (area 2-7), shear an owlbear to obtain a handful of fur (area 2-12), and powder the reagents (possibly in area 2-7). After that, the body and original eyes must be placed on the special altar (area 2-10), and then the ritual is ready to be cast.

Area 2-10 – Ritual Chamber: Graven runes circumscribe a stone altar cut in the outline of a humanoid at the center of the room. The floors, ceilings, and walls are lined with metal plates.

Altar: The altar can be used to cast the Ritual of Reunification found in area 2-9. For details, reference the “Removing the Curse” section. Casting the ritual takes 30 minutes and there is a 1 in 8 chance of a random encounter occurring. If the doors are secured, creatures from random encounters will be heard from behind doors, but cannot interfere with the ritual. Unsecured doors will burst open and creatures from the random encounter rush in. If a ritual caster does anything other than concentrate on the ritual during their turn in combat, the ritual fails and all reagents are consumed.

Area 2-11 – Inner Sanctum: Massive columns buttress the cathedral ceiling high above you. A gigantic earthworm statue towers over a large bowl set in a pedestal at the center of the room. Runes running from floor to ceiling are carved directly into the stone block walls. The letters wrap around the entire room, seeming to spell out a single word.

less. The library's collection of magic research is rather dry and theoretical.

Catalog: A character looking for anything out of the ordinary in the catalog or specifically flipping to the 'S' section for references to Shigazilnizthrub finds a peculiar entry – the runes from area 2-11 written out next to a bookshelf location. The thick tome is bound in a scaly, grey hide with a black iron clasp. Gilt embossed runes are emblazoned across the front, reading "The One Who Watches From Below." The entire book is written in the same ancient tongue as the runes in the inner sanctum.

Book of Chaos: The book can be read using the same skill checks from area 2-11, or simply grant the ability to read the text to any character that previously succeeded in deciphering them. Faint ghostly whispers are heard from around the room when the book is open. Every time the book is read from the reader must make a DC 15 Will save or go mad for 1d3 minutes. The judge dictates the character's actions during their temporary insanity, but the character absolutely will not attack anyone in the party. Some ideas for symptoms include panic attacks, table flipping, paranoia, delusions of grandeur, pathological laughter, speaking in tongues, or all the above.

The following information can be discovered:

- Shigazilnizthrub is a powerful, elder god – older even than the world itself – cast down by younger, upstart deities whose own names are lost to history. More information can be found in the History section.
- The One Who Watches from Below has three vaults of power.
- It is a truism that wherever there is great power, one will find the lunatic and the deranged. As hard as it is to believe, there are some whose lust for power outstrips their instinct for self-preservation. Devotees of Shigazilnizthrub must cut out their own eyes with a sacrificial dagger and lay them on one of the elder god's black altars. All initiates must relinquish all worldly possessions to their dark master from that point forth. The locations of the altars are not detailed. What dark powers devotees receive in exchange is not described.

Research: Once the characters have completed their research, the grey tome and other books on the shelves fly into the air and attack. The books only attack after the players have received all the information they need or the party attempts to remove one from the library. In this case, read the following:

The heavy tome slams closed on its own accord and begins shaking violently. Eyes suddenly sprout on the cover, glaring with malice. The book rockets into the air, the cover flapping like wings. Books launch from every shelf swooping through the air in a bizarre flock.

The heavy tomes will slam into intruders until they are all destroyed or the characters flee. The books are highly flammable; they take double damage from all attacks that





include fire and prefer to attack enemies not holding burning torches or open flames. The books will not pursue the characters beyond the library. Once the intruders have left, any remaining books return to their shelves.

Library books (8): Init +3; Atk slam +1 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d6; hp 5 each; MV 0', fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP vulnerable to fire; SV Fort -2; Ref +3, Will -1; AL C.

Area 2-14 - Tapestry Room: *The chamber's curved walls abruptly meet the flat western wall. An enormous tapestry hangs from a brass rail, depicting a strange scene. It looks like a cross section of an underground world. At the very top, there is grass, green and light. Many large eyes at the bottom of the tapestry look up. A lattice pattern of large earthworms begins near the eyes. The worms gradually become smaller as they approach ground level. A lonely wheelbarrow rests on its side in the southern corner of the room.*

This large entrance is used primarily when moving supplies and treasure to the vault. The tapestry slides easily to one side revealing a 20' square rolling door. The passage beyond leads to the undertemple.

Wheelbarrow: The wheelbarrow has a broken wheel. A few bits of treasure lie on the floor nearby: 1d6 gp and a cat's eye agate worth 9 sp.

AREA 3: THE BROOD PIT



his entire area is filled with an almost alien architecture: all corners are rounded, the walls are coated in whitewash, and strange glowing crystals are mounted on every surface. The ceilings are low to accommodate the small inhabitants. All races except dwarves and halflings take a -1 penalty to hit.

Area 3-1 - Lower Stasis Room: *Shelves of identical jars circle the entire room and continue spiraling up through a hole in the ceiling. The jars contain small white blobs suspended in liquid. Several ladders near the center of the room extend through the hole, secured to a landing high above. Pulsing crystal shards embedded in the walls radiate pink light and give off heat.*

Like the upper stasis room, the jars on the shelves are filled with halfling hybrid fetuses that move and blink if watched long enough. Opening a jar releases a powerful musty odor. Drinking fetus water causes no damage and actually promotes healthy fingernail and hair growth over time. Characters may use the ladders to reach area 2-4 above.

Area 3-2 - Birthing Pools: *The light crystals in this room glow as bright as the sun. The intensity of the light reflecting off the whitewashed walls makes it nearly impossible to see, creating the impression that the room has no walls at all and you are standing in an endless alabaster void. Three pools of milky, purplish fluid stand evenly spaced on the floor. Four-foot-high glass pyramids dancing with multicolored lights are placed at the corners of each pool.*

This room is used to create new hybrid workers when needed. Fetus jars are emptied into the pools which mature over the course of several weeks. The pyramids are easily smashed with a weapon or a projectile bursting in an explosion of glass shards. Anyone within 5' of an exploding pyramid takes 1d4 damage (DC 15 Ref for half damage).

Disturbing the contents of any pool causes the gestating hybrids to rise and attack. The proto-hybrids are not fully formed; they are smaller than full-grown hybrids, their hands and feet are webbed, and they have neotenic eyes over large gills. The proto-hybrids have no difficulty seeing in the bright light. While fighting in this room, they receive a +2 attack bonus (not reflected in stat block) against the blinded adventurers.

Proto-hybrids (12): Init -1; Atk bite -2 melee (1d3); AC 10; HD 1d3; hp 2 each; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -2, Ref -1, Will -1; AL C.

Area 3-3 – Cloak Room: *Small, hooded robes hang from pegs that circle the entire circumference of this domed-shaped room.*

When a hybrid dies, its cloak is returned to this room ready to be claimed by the next generation. Searching the room turns up a book on vivisection with a note reading, "Return to library." Foot traffic is low here making this is an excellent hiding place.

Area 3-4 – Work Floor: *This room is bustling with activity. A hooded figure with its back to you is whacking away at a butcher's block with a meat cleaver. The figure is a full head taller than its brethren. A line of similarly-garbed workers carries pots brimming with purplish severed limbs and black organs. Another group feeds the chunks of meat into a bubbling vat connected to pipes that feed into the floor.*

When a hybrid dies, it is brought here to be reclaimed. Dismembered bodies are pulped into a milky liquid that's used to birth new hybrids. The butcher is a halfling hybrid lord. While grappling a target, the hybrid lord can attempt to dominate by moving some of its eyes onto the target; success is determined by an opposed Will save.

Halfling hybrid lord (1): Init +3; Atk cleaver +1 melee (1d6) or dart +0 missile fire (1d4); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 7; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP eye transfer (dominate melee opponents with opposed Will save); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C.

Halfling hybrids (8): Init +1; Atk curved dagger -1 melee (1d4) or dart -2 missile fire (1d4); AC 11; HD 1d6; hp 4; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP invisibility (1/day); SV Fort -1, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C.

Sub-chambers: There are several smaller rooms attached to the work floor.

- **3-4A – Emergency Exit:** *This room contains several empty crates and a circular hatch. The hatch leads to a secret door.*
- **3-4B – Eye Tanks:** *Green light glows from a large glass cylinder. Eyeballs floating in viscous liquid seem to stare directly at you. Newborn hybrids are dunked into this tank to receiving guidance from their dark master.*
- **3-4C – Polyopticus:** *Three 4' tall pyramids are positioned in a triangular pattern in this room. Each pyramid is topped by a spinning glass prism, dancing with lights. Peering into a prism shows areas of the temple above through the viewpoint of wandering eyes. The characters can remotely view other areas (in order): a library, a ritual chamber, and a kennel filled with monsters. If anyone in the party is cursed, a viewpoint behind their eyes will be seen. Finally, the adventurers will see themselves looking into the prisms. If they look up, a pair of eyes is staring at them. Trigger random encounter 2 (spying eyes).*
- **3-4D – Rejuvenation Vats:** *Naked half-sized mutations are suspended in glass tanks glowing with purple light. These tanks contain wounded hybrids that are healing. They have no defense against attack and 2 hp each.*
- **3-4E – Prisoner:** *A tall figure with a bag over its head is curled up on the floor. The unconscious prisoner here can be used to replace a dead character. Otherwise, the prisoner is a dead elf, bound and gagged.*

AREA 4: THE UNDERTEMPLE



The entire area is devoid of light. The rooms are mostly naturally occurring rock with some corridors tunneled by giant acid worms. A mysterious stench permeates every room which grows stronger as characters get close to the Vault of Eyes.

Area 4-1 – Antechamber: *Curving stone stairs lead to a large natural rock cavern. Flaming braziers flank the bottom landing, casting light over half the room. Sickeningly sweet smoke wisps from a brass censer, barely covering a rank, musty odor. The cave slopes downward into inky blackness.*

Several paths converge in this cave. Stairs lead back to the temple, two tunnels lead deeper into the complex, and a hidden door connects to area 3-4A. A search of the area

turns up 3 gold coins near the southernmost exit. The tunnel walls are polished smooth as melted glass.

Area 4-2 – Crossroads: *The passage widens into a well-traveled intersection. Small footprints lead in all directions. Muted thumping sounds emanate from the ceiling. Clusters of mushrooms sprout from floor to ceiling. A glassy, yellow eye opens from the center of a mushroom cap, staring you down.*

The bulk of the footprints at the crossroad head east. The sounds above are coming from the brooding facilities in area 3. After the first mushroom sees the adventurers, all of the large mushrooms, of which there are 40, open their eyes. Outside of withering stares, the mushrooms are harmless. Each mushroom has 1 hp and no defenses.

Area 4-3 – Worm Tunnel: *You are in a passageway 15' in diameter that can only be described as a borehole. The rock is smooth and almost perfectly rounded. The borehole drifts gradually from left to right then down. The end of the tube is in sight. Earthworms, thick around as tree trunks, writhe along the tunnel wall shrouded in acrid mist.*

The giant worms bore holes through solid rock using a powerful acid, carving out rooms and connecting rocky caverns at the behest of the temple's master. Though slow-moving, the worms are deadly adversaries. They attack by spraying a stream of acid up to 30' feet.

The worms immediately twist around and pursue the intruders. The worms are unintelligent and have limited senses. If the characters move beyond 50' away, the worms will stop the chase and eventually return to their duties.

Giant acid worms (2): Init -1; Atk acid touch +3 melee (1d4) or acid spray + 6 missile fire (1d6, 30' range); AC 12; HD 3d8; hp 18 each; MV 15'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +8; Ref -1, Will -2; AL N.

Area 4-4 – Holding Cell: *Chains are secured to every cave wall here. A hairy, silver-backed brute lies curled up against the wall, one arm dangling from a locked manacle. The simian beast nuzzles its head against its free arm then starts snoring. You can see its face is devoid of eyes.*

The eyeless gorilla is a heavy sleeper. Sneaking across the room without disturbing the ape requires a DC 5 Agility check; characters with the Sneak silently skill automatically succeed. The ape immediately attacks upon awaking. Roll initiative and position the ape at the bottom of the order. In the first round, the ape spends its action die to break its restraint. The blind gorilla has acute hearing and will rush toward the last sound it heard if no one is within melee range. The ape also has a special attack: a backhand swipe, +1 melee (1d6), that sends its target flying through the air to land prone 25' away. The ape can be dominated by cursed eyes, using an opposed Will save as normal. It gains a +2 to all attack rolls and initiative when its vision is restored because the gorilla's disability is already factored into its stat block.

The gorilla will remain in this area if the characters do not disturb its slumber. If walls of eyes from area 4-8 are pursuing the party through this area, the ape provides a great distraction. The gorilla bursts free and attacks eyes at random, giving the characters time to escape. The referee should decide what happens when the characters have left the scene. Perhaps the ape causes damage to the eyes before they resume their relentless pursuit or maybe the eyes dominate the ape and the party is intercepted in the temple above by a giant ape covered in eyes, firing ray attacks in all directions.

Eyeless gorilla: Init +0; Atk bite +2 melee (1d6) or thrown stone +1 missile fire (dmg 1d4); AC 13; HD 3d8; hp 14; MV 20' or climb 30'; Act 1d20; SP knockback (+1 melee, 1d6 damage, target lands prone 25' away); SV Fort +6, Ref -2, Will +1; AL L.

Area 4-5 – Portal Pool: *The narrow tunnel opens into a large rocky cavern with a pool of steaming brackish water at the center. A five-foot wide fleshy sack floats just below the surface of the water. The pungent air stings your eyes and irritates your nose and throat.*

Secret door: The only entrance into this room is via secret door known only to Shigazilnizthrub's devotees. The faux rock wall exterior merely needs to be pushed. A spring allows the false wall to hinge inward.

Pool: The water in this area has a strong chemical odor, like diluted bleach. The pool is roughly 3 feet deep all around, but at the center is a tunnel wide enough for one person at a time to swim into a sunken tunnel. Drinking from the pool causes no ill effects outside of an upset stomach. The five legged fleshy sack in the pool is a baby koe-bel. It is aggressive and attacks anyone who approaches the pool.

Koe-bel, juvenile: Init +0; Atk bite +2 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 2d10; hp 12; MV 5', swim 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

Portal: The tunnel is a magic portal to another of Shigazilnizthrub's strongholds several hundred miles to the south. Small glowing motes illuminate the tunnel, swirling and eddying around anyone who swims through it. After what a swimmer perceives as 50', the tunnel opens into an immense boiling underground lake. The ceiling, a great deal above, is covered by miles of glowing moss that gives off ultraviolet light. Denizens of the lake glow a ghostly purple under the moss sky. Swimmers pop out of the water 20' from a shore choked with oddly shaped luminescent fungi.

An adult koe-bel, a five-legged bloated sack of flesh as large as a house, half submerged in the steaming muck, notices any characters who surface and attacks by swinging its fat tongue like an enormous club. Koe-bels prefer to kill by grappling their target (+4 Strength check) with their footholds, then dragging it below the water's surface. After 3 rounds, the submerged target takes 1d3 damage per round from drowning. Four more koe-bels are floating nearby and join the fray later – one per round starting in the third round. The koe-bels are too large to pursue any characters that flee back via the submerged tunnel.

Populating this area is left as a challenge for the judge. If the characters persist in exploring this extremely dangerous area, the Vault of Eyes (area 4-8) can be reskinned with a swampy setting and placed somewhere off the boiling lake. Hidden portals here lead to Shigazilnizthrub's other subterranean strongholds across the globe. Characters that battle their way to the surface can use the stars in the night sky to discover they are hundreds of miles to the south of their starting location.

Koe-bel, adult (5): Init +2; Atk tongue club +5 melee (1d10+4); AC 16; HD 4d10; hp 22; MV 10', swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP drag below(+4 Strength check to grapple; after 3 rounds, target takes 1d3 damage/round from drowning); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.



Area 4-6 – Negative Plane: A black grey metal grate blocks you from further passage. A riveted metal door hums ominously from the other side.

Cursed eyes can travel through the grate; others will find it impossible to break through the otherworldly alloys. Eyes that travel through see the following:

You see a large opening in the rock ceiling not visible from the other side of the grate.

Secret door: Traveling up through the hole leads to a secret entrance in a nearby passage, hidden by illusory rocks. Non-cursed characters can move through the illusion and drop down to access the metal door.

Door: The metal door is locked, but yields to a DC 15 Pick lock check or a DC 20 Strength check to break it down. Once the door is opened, read the following:

Beyond the portal, your mind reels to comprehend the sight before you. The colors are all inverted and saturated with black. A sort of pedestal is positioned in the center of a star-shaped room. Something small and shiny is positioned on top of it.

The adventurers have stumbled upon a portal to the Negative Plane. Cursed eyes can travel freely, but any other characters receive a painful jolt of white energy (1d3 damage) if they even dare to poke a finger through the door.

A negative ring lies upon the pedestal. When placed on a finger, the wearer travels to the Negative Plane, an inverted version of the real world. While in the plane, the wearer becomes invisible and, for all intents and purposes, does not exist in the real world. Every turn spent in the plane causes 1d3 damage. Plane travelers can move as normal and see spectral outlines of real world beings, but cannot attack. A character that dies while in the plane immediately reappears in the real world with zero hit points and begins bleeding out.

When the ring is removed, the character reappears in the corresponding real world location. Of course, there are a few side effects. When one returns from the Negative Plane, there is a 5% chance of receiving a minor corruption and a 10% chance of a creature from the Negative Plane hitching a ride to the real world for 1d10 rounds. These effects also apply to anyone exiting the room.

A negative creature appears as a vaguely humanoid, partially avian smoking black rip in the fabric of space. Its only desire is to recover the ring, thus it focuses all attacks on the ring wearer. “The ring! The ring!” it croaks. Relinquishing the ring voluntarily will appease the creature and it will return to its plane. However the beast now has the limited power to return to the real world. Unexpected consequences may ripple through a campaign.

Negative creep: Init +0; Atk sword beak +8 melee (1d12+2); AC 17; HD 5d10; hp 30; MV 40', fly 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +4; AL C.

Area 4-7 – Depot: A metallic bang echoes from a largish cavern to the south where several wheelbarrows are arranged in a neat row. The stench of decay, sulfur, and mold wafts strongly from passage to the east.

Whateley, the seemingly elderly caretaker from the cave entrance, and his halfling hybrid guards are hugging the walls of the south-most cave, ready to attack. If the PCs move down the passage to the east, the ambushers rush to seal off their escape. Whateley and his guard will immediately attack anyone who enters the depot.

When the ambushers are revealed, read:

The elderly man from the cavern entrance steps into view flanked by a retinue of small, robed figures wielding daggers. The man now stands before you in flowing, wizardly robes, holding a black tome in his hands. “Fools! It’s too late. He is coming.” The man mumbles a strange phrase as his head morphs into an enormous eyeball. The hideous orb launches from the wizard’s robe trailing a stringy mass of transparent black goo littered with eyeballs. Tendrils shoot at the cave walls and the goo expands into a massive black web. The eyeballs suspended in the webbing glare with malice.

Whateley in dark form attempts to first grapple, then dominate his targets. He can dominate up to 10 creatures at once—one for each eye he has. Due to Whateley’s size and stickiness, he gains a +4 Agility bonus to grappling checks.

When Whateley dies, he dissolves into an ebony pool of gurgling acid. His spellbook reappears in the puddle and begins dissolving. While the book can’t be saved, a character could attempt to quickly rip out a spell page containing one random spell of level 1d3 before it’s destroyed (DC 15 Agility check). There is only time for one ability check and it must occur within 1 round of Whateley’s demise. Failure causes 1d3 acid damage.

A search of the depot turns up 1d6 gp, 1d10 sp, and 1d20 cp in loose coins. There are four wheelbarrows in total, all in working order.

Whateley (dark form): Init +3; Atk pseudopod +1 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 3d8; hp 15; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP sticky (+4 Agility bonus to grappling), eye transfer (dominate melee opponents with opposed Will save), half damage from non-area attacks; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C.

Halfing hybrids (4): Init +1; Atk curved dagger -1 melee (1d4) or dart -2 missile fire (1d4); AC 11; HD 1d6; hp 4; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP invisibility (1/day); SV Fort -1, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C.

Area 4-8 - The Vault of Eyes: You descend a wide set of stairs carved directly into the rock. The stairs open into an enormous chamber. The foul, musty, reek is unbearable. Above you can dimly see stalactites piercing the ceiling like giant daggers. A narrow rocky ledge extends toward the center of the pit at the end of which lies a stone altar topped by a pile of gold coins. To each side of the ledge, wide stone stairs descend to the cave floor.

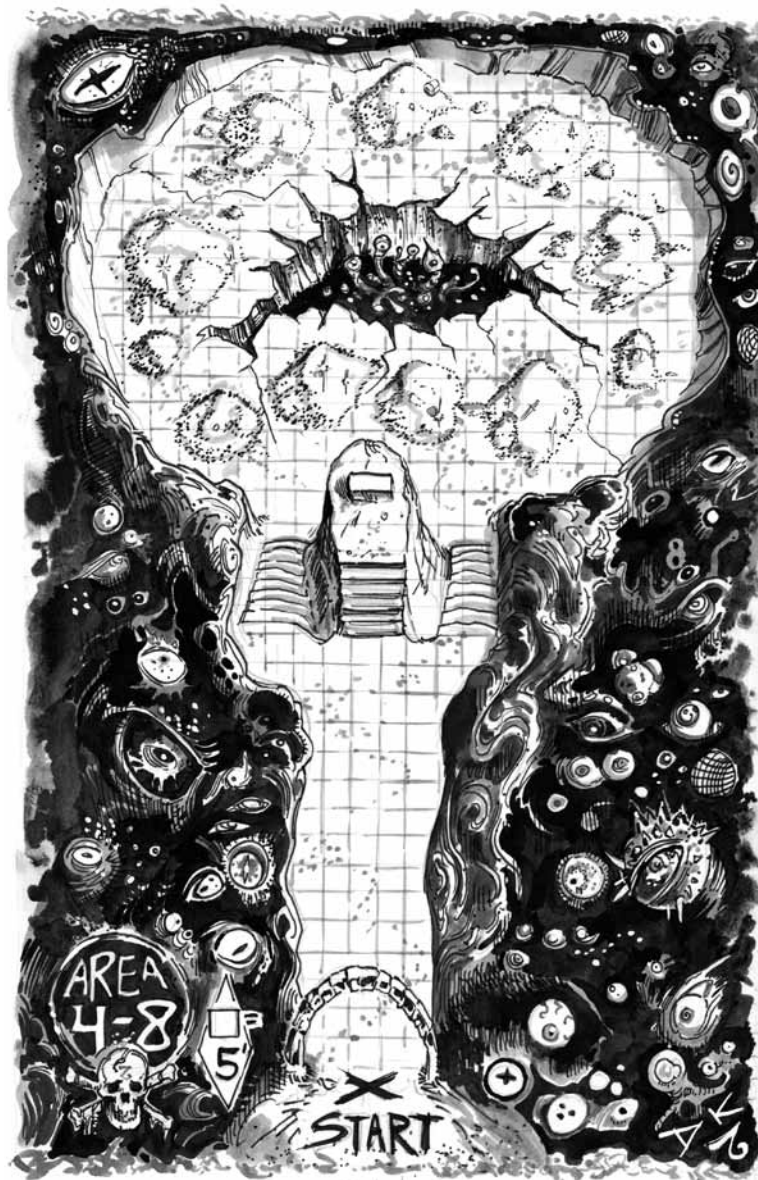
The adventurers have discovered one of Shigazilnizthrub's three treasure vaults. If the characters move up to the stairs, they see an unbelievable sight: a gaping, black pit surrounded on all sides with enough treasure to fill ten dragon hoards - mountains of gold coins, precious gems, gleaming swords, and huge chests. The players won't see Shigazilnizthrub's most prized treasures, the eyes of the vanquished, hidden among the rocks. The walls of this chamber are covered in thousands of disembodied eyeballs. This silent congregation is the source of the subterranean god's might, for the very act of perception fuels its dark power. Once the guardian awakes, its thrashing causes the entire complex to shake and the ceilings to collapse. The treasure begins to spill into it the crevasse at the center of the room. After the third round, each player must make a DC 10 Ref save every round or take 1d6 damage from falling rocks. Unless they beat a hasty retreat, the adventurers may be forever entombed.

Treasure: If the characters can pull off this heist, they will be fabulously wealthy. Keep track of the size of the containers holding treasure. The treasure table below can be used to determine the size of the haul after the adventure is over. Grabbing treasure requires the use of an action die.

The closest treasure is located on the altar 100' from the exit. The altar holds 1 lockbox and enough coins to fill one small bag. The next closest treasure is located at the foot of the stairs 120' from safety. There are 2 lockboxes, 4 coffers, 1 treasure chest, and enough coins to fill any size container. The best loot is located closer to the pit, 145' from the exit. There are 10 coffers, 4 treasure chests, and piles of coin to fill any size container.

Close to the pit, two magic items are in plain view:

- A blue wand which casts *force manipulation* once per day. Effect: call into being a tower shield-sized wall of force at a point within 25'. It exists for 2d6 rounds and grants a +4 AC bonus to adjacent characters. The wall cannot move from where it was called into existence but remains in existence if the caster moves out of range.



- A gleaming long sword with a blood red hilt and black tassels. It is *Sparklefang*, a +1 long sword with the following properties:

- Int 5 (simple urges)
- AL: Chaotic
- Banes: vampires (death dealer; when bane is struck, it must make a Fort save (DC = 1d20+10) or instantly die)
- Special Purpose: dominate all others
- Type I Power: Detect vampires within 30' x 100'

Encumbrance: The maximum amount of treasure a character can carry without slowing down is 1 small bag. At half speed, a character can move 2 lockboxes or small bags, 1 coffer or large bag, or half a chest. Moving a chest requires two characters. A character with a wheelbarrow can move at normal speed while pushing twice their maximum weight. Moving a large chest with a wheelbarrow would still halve the mover's speed, but the chest can be moved by a single person.

TREASURE TABLE

Container	Size	Loot
hands, pockets	tiny	1d10 gp, 1d10 sp, 1d10 cp
small bag, lockbox	small	1d4 x 10 gp, 1d4 x 10 sp, 1d4 x 10 cp, 5% chance of magic item
large bag, coffer	medium	2d6 x 10 gp, 2d6 x 10 sp, 2d6 x 10 cp, 15% chance of magic item
treasure chest	large	3d6 x 10 gp, 2d8 x 10 sp, 2d8 x 10 cp, 25% chance of magic item

MAGIC ITEMS

d100	Item
1-5	Effervescent potion: poisoned, DC 15 Fort save or 1d6 damage
6-10	Potion of flight: gain fly 10' for 1d5 rounds
11-30	Potion of vitality: heal 5 hit points
31-49	Potion of luck: regain 1d3 Luck
50-64	Iron ring: +1 Fort saves
65-79	Ring of resolve: +1 Will saves
80-89	Red dragon ring: (1/day) resist 3 fire damage for 1d3 rounds
90-94	Generate scroll using scroll rules (DCC RPG, page 373)
95-99	Generate sword using sword magic rules (DCC RPG, page 366)
99-00	Roll again twice

Losing loot: Escaping with treasure is easier said than done. If a character attempts any risky athletic or acrobatic maneuvers, give them the choice to accidentally drop some portion of the treasure as a way to avoid the consequences of a failed check. You can spare your players from a total party kill by attacking their loot as well. The titan and the eyes can focus attacks on treasure containers (use same defenses as holder). Each point of damage reduces the amount of treasure in a container by 10%. Sometimes getting hit in the wallet hurts just as bad as a physical wound.

Guardian: An ancient, primordial titan controlled by the One Who Watches from Below guards the hoard. The beast lurks in the crevasse at the center of the chamber. If any of the treasure is touched by a character or a spell (e.g. *rope-work*), the guardian bursts from its resting place. The primordial titan's powerful suggestion attack allows the titan to determine one of a character's actions. On the character's turn, the character picks one action to perform, using either an action die or movement. The titan is free to use the character's remaining actions.

When the guardian arrives, read the following text. Each wall of eyes takes up a 10' x 10' section of wall and consists of many eyes:

A sudden blast of wind from the pit almost knocks you to the floor. The entire chamber glows with sickly green light coming from the pit as a gargantuan black rubbery mass of tendrils, fins, and eyestalks thrusts up from the stygian depths. The hair on the back of your neck stands up as the writhing stalks twist into the air. Enormous eyes glare malevolently with orange irises, like pools of fire. Thousands upon thousands of glittering pairs of dots appear on the walls around you. They are eyes! A maddening sound, like screeching monkeys and breaking glass, thunders in your skull. Is this some sort of language? The eyes on the walls start to drift along the wall toward you. The walls shudder as a stalactite falls from the ceiling and crashes into the floor.

The guardian pauses momentarily to see what the characters do. The adventurers are little more than playthings. If the characters immediately drop any stolen treasure and run, it won't attack. However, the walls of eyes will attack and pursue the adventurers until they flee from the entire complex.

Primordial titan: Init +3, Atk tendril whip +6 melee (1d6, range 50') or psychic scream +8 missile fire (3d4 Int damage, range 100'); AC 16; HD 10d12+30; hp 98; MV 0'; Act 3d20; SP immune to *charm* and *sleep*, powerful suggestion (DC 15 Will save or all but one of target's actions are under command), blind-sense (perfect perception of all things, including invisible targets, within 500'); SV Fort +10, Ref +2, Will +12; AL C.

Wall of Eyes (5): Init +1; Atk eye ray +2 missile fire (random eye ray, range 50'); AC 10; HD 4d8; hp 25; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP immune to *sleep*; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +4; AL C.

d6	Eye Ray	Effect
1	Frost	1d3 damage and 10% chance to stun; PC falls to bottom of initiative.
2	Heat	1d3 damage and DC 15 Ref save or target is on fire (1d6 damage per round) until extinguished with Ref save.
3	Death	1d20 damage (DC 15 Will save for half damage).
4	Polymorph	Target changes form for 1d3 hours: (roll 1d6) 1 chicken, 2 cat, 3 turtle, 4 mouse, 5 opposite gender, 6 pony.
5	Sleep	DC 15 Fort save or target falls asleep for 1d3 rounds.
6	Fear	DC 15 Will save or target runs away for 1d6 rounds.

AFTERMATH



nce the adventurers escape the Vault of Eyes, they are out of range of the titan guardian, but they aren't safe yet. The eyes continue to chase the adventurers until they reach the exit. If the characters made a map or have decent memories, they might be able to remember which path they took. If the adventurers run through an encounter area with monsters, add them to the fray. You no longer need to roll for random encounters.

If the party does escape with a large amount of loot, keeping their treasure might be easier said than done. Low-level

characters spending gobs of money in town might attract unwanted attention. Ruffians and crime lords might want to divest the characters of their wealth. The local lord will surely want a cut of treasure seized on his lands. The royal tax collector will want documents supporting the source of the new-found income. And don't forget the brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, second cousins, charlatans, and hucksters that will be looking for a few minutes of time...

Life doesn't have a happy ending.

SUGGESTION & DOMINATION



he titan's "powerful suggestion" ability was originally a "domination" attack, but everyone hates being dominated because it invalidates a player's entire turn. I changed the attack to "powerful suggestion" and the playtesters seemed to like it better. An affected PC chooses to move OR use 1 action die. The player still gets to make a choice on their turn – and the choice they make is very important.

The intent of the power is to recreate a moment often seen in movies and books where an unwilling character is forced to attack allies while under the control of evil influences. "Powerful suggestion" caused several ping-pong matches at the game table. A controlled character would be out of attack range, and use an action to run away from the party. Then the titan would force them to run right back into attack range. It played well at the table. "Powerful suggestion" also saved multiple characters who ventured too close to the pit since the titan and eyes focus their attacks on others. A controlled character was forced to get closer to the exit for range and line of sight as others attempted to flee. Several times the controlled characters made successful saves near the exit, allowing a seemingly impossible escape.

EPIC ENDINGS



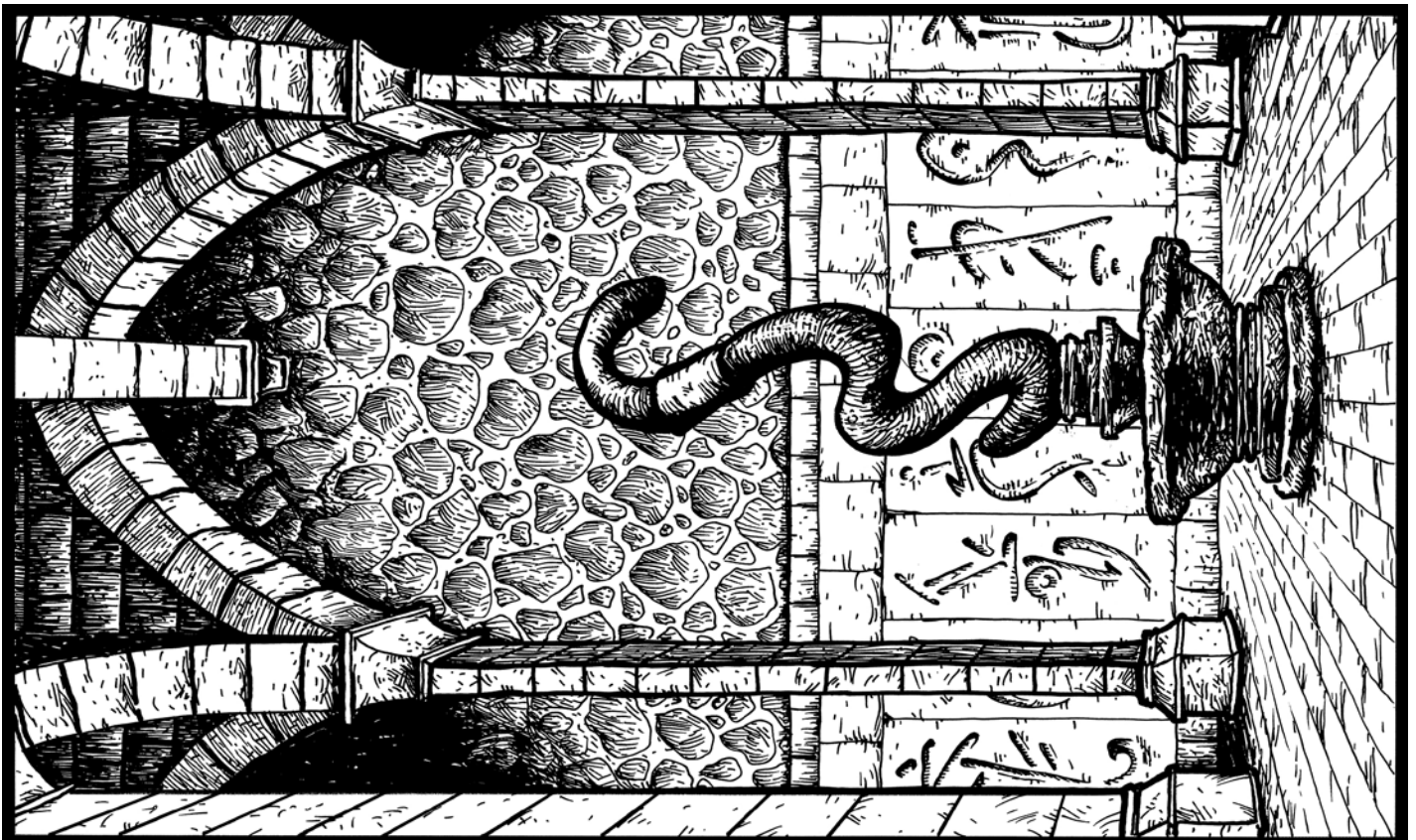
f all the playtests, the most epic ending happened at Norwescon. The band of adventurers entered the Vault of Eyes in rough shape. The party only had five characters left and the thief, who had fallen prey to the Curse of the Emerald Eye, had dominated the body of the eyeless gorilla. The wary cleric lingered near the altar while the rest of the party – dwarf, warrior, gorilla-thief, and wizard – walked all the way down the stairs to the edge of the treasure pit before awakening the titan. The wizard immediately fell under the influence of the titan's superior will and struggled to regain his senses for the rest of the battle. The cleric scooped everything atop the altar into a large sack and ran for the door. He made it to the exit on his next turn, but lingered – hesitant to abandon his friends, but reluctant to get within range of the wall of eyes' missile attacks. The dwarf and warrior were blasted by multiple eye beams, including a death ray that miraculously only did 2 points of damage. The wizard kept running back and forth from the top to the bottom of the stairs, fighting for control of his body. That's when the polymorph rays hit. The warrior was zapped and transformed into a mouse. The cleric finally decided to intervene. He ran to the mouse and tried to grab it and failed. He decided to keep a tight grip on his bag of loot instead of concentrating on the mouse that was running circles around his feet. The mouse bolted for the exit. Then the next ray hit, polymorphing the gorilla-thief into a pony. The pony charged at the cleric and lifted him onto his back without losing momentum. Half the cleric's treasure spilled out onto the floor as he held onto the mane for dear life, but the gorilla-thief turned pony wasn't done. He picked up the mouse with his teeth and galloped through the exit.

The poor wizard was still stuck in the vault as the floor collapsed and the ceiling caved in, and still dominated. With his last act, he spellburned every remaining ability point to invoke his patron, Azi Dahaka, and rolled a natural 20 on his spell check. Azi Dahaka sent a spectral hydra to aid his doomed follower. As the wizard, titan, and hydra fell into the Abyss, each of the hydra's seven heads breathed fire. The wizard saw Shigazilnizthrub's guardian obliterated just before entering eternal slumber.

PLAYER HANDOUT B



PLAYER HANDOUT C



PLAYER HANDOUT D



PLAYER NOTES

WHERE IS HANDOUT A?

This adventure also includes several notes designed to be passed to players. We suggest the judge photocopy these before play. They appear on the following pages: 8, 9, 10, and 11.

See next page - bottom left corner of the map!

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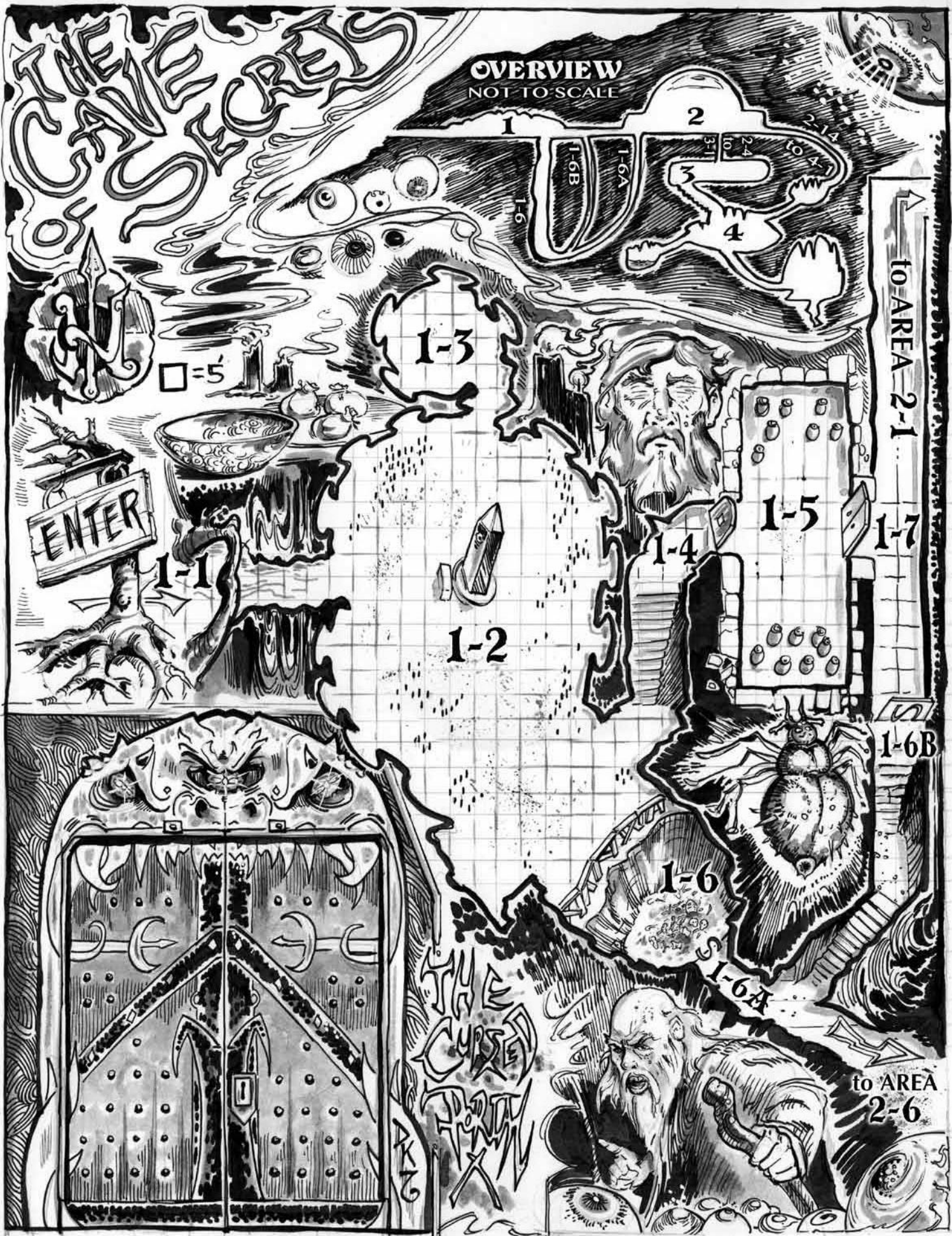
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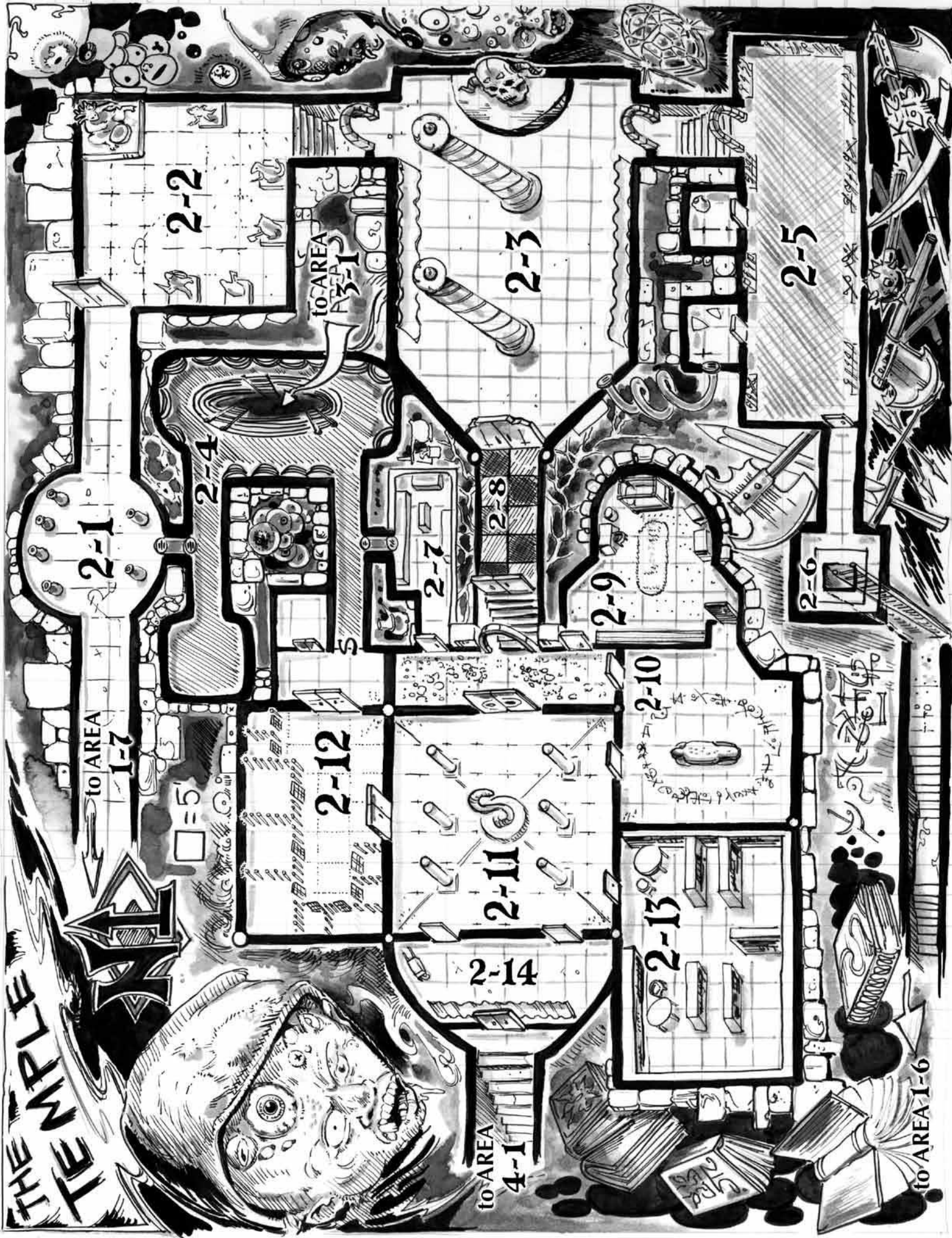
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