

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

THE MAKING OF THE GHOST RING

#85: A LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE
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HANDOUT A



THE MAKING OF THE GHOST RING

A LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION

The Making of the Ghost Ring is a *Dungeon Crawl Classics* RPG adventure designed for six 4th-level characters. As the adventure unfolds, the PCs find themselves in the unique situation of participating in the creation of an enchanted ring and—should all go well—gaining ownership of the newly-minted magical object at the conclusion of the adventure's events.

Over the course of this adventure, the PCs encounter the ghost of a wizard whose soul hangs between salvation and perdition. In order to save her, the PCs must finish the final three stages in the forging of a mystical ring. These steps pit them against a curious band of kidnappers, send them to the blistering desert to pry a gemstone from the brow of an ancient pharaoh, and conclude—as far as the players know—with a battle against a titanic beast that once threatened the very world.

The Making of the Ghost Ring is also an instructional adventure, one the author hopes is an enjoyable lesson for the judge. Creating magical items in *Dungeon Crawl Classics* is never a simple matter of expending time and money and making a few skill checks. Given the unpredictable and mysterious nature of magic in *Dungeon Crawl Classics*, fabricating magical objects should be a quest unto itself. *The Making of the Ghost Ring* demonstrates just one possible means of creating a mystical item, and the adventure can be used as an outline for detailing the enchantment process in your own campaign.

BACKGROUND

ifthrasir the Enchantress, like most of her spell-casting ilk, spent her life in the pursuit of power, pillaging forgotten ruins for ancient incantations and delving into forbidden vaults to pry grimoires from their previous owners' long-dead hands. But unlike many of her brethren, Lifthrasir was driven by the urge to create rather than destroy, and pursued arcane lore so she might inscribe her legend in the annals of history. She dreamed of crafting an object of magical power that would persist after her death and carry her name down the long roads of history.

Unfortunately for Lifthrasir, dreams do not always come true and the required knowledge to create such an artifact long escaped her. As is wont to occur with wizards, her goal became a drive, and her drive became an obsession, leading her to take measures best avoided by rational beings. Calling up a potent infernal power, Maalbrilmorg the Hell Smith, Lifthrasir bargained with the evil crafter to acquire the incantations she required. Lifthrasir was not completely overwhelmed by her obsession, however, and succeeded in inserting a loophole in her contract with the Hell Smith: If she accomplished her goal before a year and a day passed, Maalbrilmorg could lay no claim upon the sorceress. Unbeknownst to Lifthrasir—but known by the demon-smith

who sensed the illness growing—Lifthrasir was dying, the victim of a subtle, but highly malignant magical cancer the sorceress had unwittingly acquired as spell corruption. Maalbrilmorg easily agreed to the condition, knowing the sickness would claim Lifthrasir before she could finish her task.

What Maalbrilmorg could not predict was Lifthrasir's tenacity. The cancer killed the enchantress eleven months from the day of their agreement and the Hell Smith arrived to claim his due. The demon was nonplussed to discover Lifthrasir's soul still determined to complete her work. Now lingering as a ghost, Lifthrasir cannot be reaped by Maalbrilmorg until the time limit of their bargain expires. For now, the demon lingers below, planning a multitude of tortures for the enchantress once her debt comes due.

Predictably, Lifthrasir is desperate to finish her crafting before that time arrives, but is severely hindered by her ghostly state. Unable to leave her secluded hut and with only a few spells available to her, she requires assistance to complete the final steps necessary to finish her work: the enchantment of the ring that will bear her name. Lifthrasir has already employed two separate groups of adventurers to fulfill her task, but both perished horribly before the enchantment process was complete. Now, with just days remaining before Maalbrilmorg claims her, she calls out to one final band of potential servants to finish the enchantment's last three steps. The PCs hear her pleas and, if they agree and triumph, can both save Lifthrasir from eternal torment and win a potent magical artifact in the process.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

he judge can begin *The Making of the Ghost Ring* anytime the PCs are close to a fire, be it a campfire, the warm hearth of an inn, or even the fireplace of the party's own home. As the party relaxes around its warmth, the fire's flames suddenly roar aloft, tripling in size. Read the following:

The unexpected conflagration of the fire takes you by surprise, but even more puzzling is the wavering form visible within the flames. A mousy-looking human woman dressed in flaming wizard's regalia stands unharmed in the center of the fire. Your grasping for blades and preparing incantations is abruptly arrested when the form speaks, her soft voice audible above the crackle of the flames.

"Heroes," the voice speaks, sounding tired but determined, "I am in need of your assistance. Perdition awaits me and flames much fiercer than from those I now speak hunger for me unless stalwarts come to my aid. In return for your service and my eternal salvation, I offer you the fruits of a lifelong labor: a mystical ring possessing powers never before seen in this world. If the tales of your fierceness and bravery are true—or if mere avarice drives you, for I care not your motives—seek out Lifthrasir the Enchantress in the Stink Pools. Travel to the solitary tree at the marsh's heart and all your questions shall be answered."

With those final words, the flames die leaving nothing but a bed of coals and unanswered questions in their wake.

The Stink Pools are a sulfurous marsh located a day’s journey on foot from the PCs’ present location (unless the judge deems otherwise). Locals testify it is a small but potentially deadly morass of reeking water, thorny weeds, and quicksand visited by few, and rumored to be home to the wizard, Lifthrasir. According to the locals, Lifthrasir is one of the better wizards in that she keeps to herself and leaves “honest folk” alone. Inquiries about the solitary tree reveal that a great swamp oak tree grows in the center of the swamp and is one of the few landmarks visible by those who dare the marsh. Additional information about Lifthrasir or what she might need hired adventurers for is not forthcoming and, if the PCs wish to learn more, they have no choice but to travel to the Stink Pools and seek out the enchantress themselves.

ENCOUNTER TABLES

Event	Type	Encounter
1-1	C	Har-Strough & 2 Fell-hounds
1-3	C/T	The Sinister Syndicate/Cargo net trap
2-1	C	Forge-Burned Demon
2-2	T	Tumbling Trap
2-6	T	3 Bacteria Mummies
2-7	C	Spirit-inhabited Skull, hands, and staff
3-1	C	The Odontotyrannus
Demonic Interruption	C	3 Slag Demons

MEETING LIFTHRASIR



he Stink Pools are a marsh covering 25 square miles and comprised of sulfurous pools, saw-toothed grass, boggy mires, and the ever-present threat of snakes, leeches, and other noisome swamp creatures. Travel through the Pools is a cautious, slow, and po-

tentially dangerous affair. Reaching the center of the morass takes four hours, regardless of whether the party walks or rides, as the winding pathways through the mire are just as hazardous to mounts as their riders. The judge should check once per hour to determine if the party has a random encounter in the marsh. Roll 1d6 and on a 1 or 2, a random encounter occurs. Use the chart below to determine the nature of the encounter. Regardless of dice results, the party shouldn’t have more than two random encounters on their journey through the Stink Pools.

At the center of the Stink Pools and visible from a few miles away is a large swamp oak that towers over the malodorous landscape. Once sighted, the PCs can easily travel to it. Upon arrival, read the following:

Growing from a hummock of dry land amongst the foul pools stands a lonely tree. Rising 45’ from roots to tip, the swamp oak is massive in girth and eight men could easily link hands around the giant’s circumference. Thirty feet above the ground, the tree forks in twain. Resting in the center of the division is a round hut crafted from woven saplings and animal hides. The light breeze stirs the ragged hides like pennants, giving you the impression that the structure is beckoning you like the arms of a winsome lover. A circular doorway, lacking portal or curtain, pierces the hut’s side. A wooden ladder tacked to the tree provides access.

Hailing the hut from below provokes no response, requiring the PCs to climb the ladder to investigate further. At the top of the ladder, the hut’s interior is visible through the open doorway.

A small room fills the hut’s gloomy interior and you spy a worktable covered with crucibles, alembics, and other arcane glassware. Twisted bundles of herbs hang suspended from the hut’s sapling rafters and a bed of soft animal furs lies against one wall. The hut smells much fresher than the sulfurous air of the Stink Pools. The pleasant odor of fragrant herbs, heady but unknown spices, and the delicate scent of jasmine hangs in the air. The hut appears unoccupied.

Once one or more PCs enter the hut, Lifthrasir, who’s been observing them from an incorporeal state, manifests besides the worktable.

STINK POOL RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll 1d5	Encounter
1	Quicksand: Each PC must make a Luck check or stumble into a treacherous, sucking bog. Escape requires a rope or other handhold extended to the sinking victim and a DC 12 Strength check by the rescuer. This check can be attempted multiple times if failed, but if the check fails three consecutive times, the victim slips beneath the mire and drowns.
2	Giant Leeches: The party is attacked by 1d5 Colossal Leeches (See DCC RPG p. 420) while fording a fetid creek.
3	Insect Swarm: A terrible, stinging Insect Swarm (See DCC RPG p. 419) is drawn to the party by the scent of their blood.
4	Alligator Ambush: A group of alligators waits in ambush just below the surface of a stagnant pool. PCs must make an Intelligence check against the alligators’ stealth check (1d20+10) or be surprised. There are 1d4 alligators (stats as Lizard, Giant on p. 420 of the DCC RPG rulebook).
5	Boa Constrictor: A Giant Boa Constrictor (See DCC RPG p. 428) grabs a PC or his mount as they pass beneath the serpent’s treetop lair.



What seems to be a wisp of smoke rises from beside the worktable, leaving you searching for an overlooked fire amidst the clutter. The smoke twists and widens, transforming into a translucent form of a slightly-built woman dressed in rough-spun robes stained by a hundred mystical workings. The ghostly woman's face is identical to that which you glimpsed in the fire: short, fair hair frames a plain, unassuming face sporting a dusting of freckles, giving her a youthful appearance. The spirit's eyes, however, belie her innocence. Each amber-colored orb is set in deep sockets ringed by worry lines and fatigue, and they bear an earnestness that hints at both determination and despair. With a familiar softness, the spirit addresses you, "I am Lifthrasir. I bid you welcome to my former abode. Thank you for coming, my would-be champions."

TO ENCHANT A RING

Lifthrasir reassures any PC present that, despite her un-dead appearance, she holds no threat and requests that all PCs not in the hut join them. Once done, she makes her appeal, telling them the circumstances of her life, her quest, and the fate that awaits her if she cannot complete the enchantment of the ring. Lifthrasir alternates between a forceful desire to create her magical legacy and self-chastisement for being foolish enough to bargain with Maalbrilmorg.

The enchantress offers the party this: Should they complete the three final steps necessary to finish the ring's enchantment, it is theirs to keep. Having completed her life's goal and foiled Maalbrilmorg's claim upon her, Lifthrasir has no use for the object and desires nothing more than eternal rest and escape from perdition. The PCs are free to claim any incidental treasure they might acquire during their exploits to finish the ring.

If the PCs attempt to negotiate further payment, she has little to offer them. Although she was a potent wizard in life, Lifthrasir paid one of the previous adventuring groups with her grimoire of spells (lost when that band perished). Her paltry monetary wealth was also given to the adventurers that preceded the party, leaving her with only the ring to offer. Should the party ask that Lifthrasir give them the means of crafting their own magical rings, she sighs deeply and attempts to dissuade them, telling the PCs that, although she could pass along the incantation necessary for creating enchanted rings, such knowledge would only bring them woe. The cost of that knowledge is too great and the only means she knows will damn them in return (**Author's Note:** If the judge would like to use Lifthrasir as a means for the PCs to learn how to craft magical rings, he can ignore her reluctance. Please refer to the first DCC RPG Annual for more information about creating magical rings).

If the party agrees to aid Lifthrasir, she tells them the following:

"My friends and champions, time is of the essence, for I have but four days remaining before Maalbrilmorg claims his due. You are my last hope. The enchantment process is a long one and requires many steps to successfully create the potency that I seek for the ring. It is in our favor, however, that most of the task is done and there remain but three last steps to finish the enchantment.

"The first is that the ring must be inscribed with mystical sigils to house the ring's enchantment and rein in its power. For this, the hand of a master jeweler is required, one who has bound himself by contract to the task. The second step is the acquisition of a gemstone unique enough to serve as a focus for the ring's power. Lastly, the ring must be tempered in the fluids of a terrible beast to seal its power within the band. Each step must be done in order or the enchantment will fail.

"Each stage requires a great journey on your part, as the locations of each task's labors are separated by vast distances. It is fortunate that I have not bartered away all my magic, for I have means by which you can span these distances in an instance. I shall transport you to the sites, but your return will be by a different method."

If asked, Lifthrasir reveals to the party that the completed ring will bolster its wearer's intellect and charisma (+1 to Intelligence and Personality), repair broken objects with a touch (*mending spell*), befriend foes it touches (*charm person spell*), and absorb a single spell cast upon the wearer once per week at his or her choosing. She does not reveal the ring's weakness as even Lifthrasir is unaware of what its limitation will be (she subconsciously imparts this loophole during the enchantment process).

The ghostly sorceress points to the cluttered tabletop, indicating a pewter bell of nondescript workmanship half-hidden among the mess. She states, *"This is the Journey Chime, a potent object of yore. Ringing the bell will instantaneously transport each of you, your possessions, and either another person or human's weight in additional material back to my home. Its en-*

chantment is fading, mind you, and I cannot guarantee that more than five uses of its power remain. Only employ the Chime when you've completed your task or your demise is imminent."

Examining the Chime reveals the bell lacks a clapper, but nevertheless creates a musical tone when rung with the intent to use its power. The Chime has five uses remaining.

Should the party decline employment, Lifthrasir is distraught, and pleads with the party to reconsider. She lacks additional material wealth to reward them, but can offer useful information (the location of mystical or treasure-bearing sites, knowledge of the infernal planes, or other miscellaneous intelligence of the judge's choosing the party might find interesting) in return. Lawful characters or those with good-inclination may suffer Luck penalties if they deny the enchantress' request. Should this all fail to convince them, Lifthrasir's soul is eventually claimed by Maalbrilmorg and the party loses the opportunity to acquire the ring.

Lifthrasir's stats are as follows, should they be required. Note that her *planar step* spells always work when transporting PCs to the various locations of this adventure.

Lifthrasir (ghost): Init +3; Atk paralyzing touch +6 melee (special) or spell; AC 12; HD 2d12+7d4; hp 27; MV fly 40'; Act 2d20; SP spells (+9 to spell check; *charm person, detect magic, magic shield, magic missile, mending, read magic, invisible companion, mirror image, dispel magic, planar step*), banshee scream, paralyzing touch, turn invisible, un-dead traits, immune to non-magical weapons; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +10; AL L.

FIRST TASK: AGAINST THE SINISTER SYNDICATE



ifthrasir informs the party their first task is the rescue of Nikademos Phedge, a halfling jeweler magically contracted to inscribe the ring. The arcane agreement, made before Lifthrasir's death, binds the jeweler to the enchantment process, requiring his hand to inscribe the ring. No other craftsman can perform the work, and without Nikademos, the ring cannot be completed. Lifthrasir stresses the importance of keeping the halfling alive. She also reveals that Nikademos is a rare breed of halfling known as a "woe-touched." This uncommon condition manifests as a highly unpredictable fluctuation of that race's innate luck talent. Whereas most halflings spread good-fortune, woe-touched halflings unconsciously cause misfortune when agitated—usually, but not always to themselves. This extraordinary condition makes Nikademos an unusual participant in the enchantment process and will boost the ring's potential considerably.

LIFTHRASIR'S KNOWLEDGE

Lifthrasir has a lot of information to dispense before the adventure begins. The judge should familiarize himself with the events that occurred before the party's involvement, but the following bullet points are provided for easy reference.

- Lifthrasir's lifelong dream was to create a magical object of lasting beauty and power. Lacking the necessary knowledge to produce the item, she bartered her soul with the demon, Maalbrilmorg to obtain it. She regrets the decision.
- Maalbrilmorg required she create the ring within a year and a day of their compact. The demon knew she was dying from a magical cancer and would not live to complete it.
- Lifthrasir's dedication to the goal was so strong she persisted as a ghost after her death. As a spirit, she technically still has time to finish her enchantment, but time is short. She has only four days before the demon claims her soul.
- Two previously-hired parties completed the bulk of the tasks needed to finish the enchantment, but perished or otherwise failed Lifthrasir. She has little material wealth or magic to offer in return, but hopes the party agrees to help. In return, they will be rewarded with the completed ring.
- Three goals remain:
 - o Rescue the woe-touched halfling jeweler, Nikademos Phedge, from the Sinister Syndicate. He is contracted to inscribe the ring's band and only he can finish the task.
 - o Obtain the Eye of the Sun, an exquisite fire opal, from the tomb of the Bronze-Handed Pharaoh. The stone will serve as a focus for the ring's power.
 - o Acquire the brain fluid of the Odontotyrannus, a fabulous and terrible beast currently slumbering beneath a ruined keep. This fluid will temper the ring.
- Lifthrasir will transport the party to each site and provide a magical bell known as the Journey Chime so they can return once the tasks are completed. The Journey Chime has five uses remaining, and they may keep the bell after the ring is enchanted should any uses remain.
- If the ring is enchanted before the four days pass, her spirit will be released and she escapes the grasp of Maalbrilmorg. Otherwise she is doomed.

Unfortunately, Nikademos has run afoul of a weird cabal known as the Sinister Syndicate. This bizarre coalition of thieves, clerics, and wizards is renowned for their inexplicable crimes and strange demands, regularly stealing items of no material value, but which serve their ineffable goals. The Syndicate, operating out of Nikademos' home city of Oolvanvar, has seized the jeweler and is demanding five precious stones (a pearl, a peridot, a sapphire, a ruby, and an emerald, each of 500 gp value or more) and a full-grown, unblemished sow pig for his return. Lifthrasir believes Nikademos' capture is the result of his own constant misfortune and not a direct attempt to thwart her own goal (she is correct). The enchantress cannot meet the Syndicate's demands and is leaving it up to the party to negotiate, outwit, or overcome the cabal and secure Nikademos' freedom. She believes the Syndicate, despite their grandiose title, is comprised of no more than ten members and intends to transport the party directly outside the cabal's den in Oolvanvar. Once there, the PCs must acquire Nikademos, ensuring he remains alive. The party can then use the Bell to return to Lifthrasir with the jeweler. Once they are ready, Lifthrasir *planar steps* the party to Oolvanvar.

THE HIDEOUT

The PCs arrive in Oolvanvar, a rough-and-tumble riverside city of some 5,000 citizens. They appear in one of the city's many filth-strewn back alleys in a neighborhood known as "The Dregs." This semi-slum is home to some of Oolvanvar's most wretched and desperate souls—drunks, two-bit thieves, lepers, beggars, and a few honest, struggling laborers.

You arrive in a flash of emerald sparks and a brief gust of wind, stepping into a filthy alleyway and barely avoiding an effluent of human waste running down the grim path's center. Nearby, you hear the calls of merchants hawking their wares, the piteous supplications of beggars, and the angry shouts of some drunken argument. Before you, at a distance of some fifty feet, is a modest two-storied warehouse, its second floor seemingly added as an afterthought and covering only half the building's lower floor. The brick structure is painted in chaotic stripes of green, blue, yellow, and red, now grime-covered and faded. A few small windows are visible on the ground floor, but stout iron bars and shutters cover them. A door of bound oak, bearing a small judas window, appears to provide the only entrance. Judging from its strange decoration, this must be the lair of the Sinister Syndicate.

DEALING WITH THE SYNDICATE

It is unlikely (but not impossible) that the PCs possess the objects the Syndicate demands as Nikademos' ransom, but crafty adventurers might attempt to deceive the weird thieves into believing otherwise or use mind-control magics to win their way into the sanctum.

PCs calling out to the building or knocking upon the door cause the small judas window to open and Har-Strough's grizzled face to appear in the tiny opening. He gruffly



asks the party to state their purpose and, if the PCs claim they've come to pay Nikademos' ransom, demands they produce the jewels and pig. If the PCs display these items (or illusions masquerading as them), his eyes widen and he bids them to wait a moment while he gets his superiors. Minutes later, the door opens and Har-Strough, accompanied by Miklos and Gnashrilda, conducts the party within, bringing them to area 1-2 to inspect the ransom.

There, Miklos casts *detect magic* on the purported ransom to reveal illusions or other magical fabrications. If he is satisfied the ransom is real, Gnashrilda appraises the items (both stones and pig) to determine their value and condition. Only after both are satisfied does the Syndicate release Nikademos.

During the inspection, Ugulh, Heggles, and Jeggles observe the party via the peepholes in the wall between areas 1-2 and 1-3, ready with crossbows and spells in case of treachery. Any obvious attacks or spellcasting of any kind results in the trio unleashing a barrage of bolts and *magic missiles* into the room. Due to their cover, the three have an effective AC of 25 and gain a +4 bonus to Fortitude and Reflex saves. Miklos, Gnashrilda, and Har-Strough, along with the fell hounds, engage the party in direct combat.

THE BUILDING



he ground floor windows are narrow (2' in width and 3' tall), shuttered, and protected by iron "burglar bars." A DC 15 Strength check bends or breaks the bars and a second DC 12 Strength check will break open the windows' shutters. The main door is both locked (DC 12 to pick) and barred (DC 15 Strength check to break down) and a failed attempt at either alerts Har-Strough in area 1-1.

Climbing the brick exterior requires either a DC 10 Strength or climb sheer surfaces check. Two dirty skylights pierce the roof above area 1-3 and lack burglar bars or shutters. Clever PCs can spy on the room below from this vantage point and inflicting 8 or more points of damage breaks the leaded glass to allow entrance, albeit 25' above the floor.

Area 1-1 – Foyer: *A long antechamber lies beyond the hide-out's door. Old, dark walls bearing tattered tapestries stolen from noble villas and temples alike form a rectangular space measuring 20' long and 15' wide. A sputtering oil lamp hangs from the ceiling, providing scant light. Dirty rushes cover the floor and a small bronze gong hangs from a stand by the east wall. Two doors, one in the west wall and one in the north, exit the chamber. The air here bears the smell of unwashed bodies and fetid animal fur.*

This room is occupied by Har-Strough, Syndicate warrior and hound-master, and his animal charges: a pair of ferocious dogs known as fell-hounds. He keeps the silent beasts on chains, ready to unleash them at intruders.

Har-Strough (5th level Warrior): Init +6; Atk mace +1d7+2 deed melee (1d6+2+deed); AC 16; HD 5d12+5; hp 46; MV 25'; Act 1d20/1d14; SP crit range 18-20, Mighty Deeds of Arms (d7); SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; AL N

Har-Strough is a burly, bald, unshaven human male dressed in chainmail and gnawed leathers. If intruders breach the front door, his first actions are to release the fell-hounds and to strike the alarm gong with his mace, alerting his fellows in area 1-3 of infiltrators. He then wades into combat, using his Mighty Deed of Arms to knock enemies prone for his hounds to assail. He flees to area 1-3 if both hounds perish and he suffers more than 30 hp damage.

Fell-Hounds (2): Init +2; Atk bite +3 melee (1d6) or overbear +4 melee (no damage, but target must make a DC 10 Fort save to avoid being knocked prone); AC 14; HD 3d8; hp 15 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP immune to mind-affecting spells; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will NA; AL N.

Fell-hounds are large mastiffs that have been fed a steady regiment of rare drugs from the distant south, making them extremely vicious and nearly mindless. As a result, fell-hounds are immune to mind-affecting magic. Resembling over-muscled dogs, the fell-hounds' vocal cords are surgically severed, transforming them into silent assassins for the Syndicate. They prefer to knock opponents prone before attacking, gaining a +2 bonus to hit.

There are eight tapestries here, each worth 1d4×10 gp and weighing 25 lbs.

Area 1-2 – Salon: *Shabby and obviously-stolen finery and furnishings adorn this meeting room. Pilfered chairs and divans are arranged around the room's perimeter and a begrimed rug covers the floor. Dusty paintings depicting long-dead nobles and wanton tavern wenches hang from the walls. A candelabrum holding looted and lit temple candles rests atop a centrally-placed table.*

This room is usually unoccupied, used only when the Syndicate meets outsiders they don't trust. Three small peepholes pierce the north wall, concealed by hanging portraiture. Narrow cuts in the paintings' canvas allow onlookers in area 1-3 to observe this room and attack from cover if necessary (see above for details if combat occurs here).

There are eight paintings in total, each worth 1d6×10 gp.

Area 1-3 – "Treasure House": *This cavernous room was once the warehouse's central storage area, but it now resembles a madman's junk heap. Arranged in teetering rows are a myriad of odd, stolen goods. Statues missing heads, decrepit sarcophagi, aging furnishing, and even a noble's carriage are positioned in ramshackle patterns creating a warren of twisting aisles. A pair of skylights in the high ceiling above illuminates the room with dirty sunlight and a wooden, balustrade-lined walkway circles the chamber 15' overhead.*

This space is where the Syndicate hoards their strange booty, most of it worthless but nevertheless desired by the cabal for ineffable purposes. The winding aisles lead to a central clearing amongst the bric-a-brac containing a large trestle table surrounded by eight chairs. A wooden ladder leads up to the walkway overhead and a locked trapdoor (DC 10 to pick) beside the table grants entrance into the sewers beneath Oolvanvar's streets.

The room is occupied by five Sinister Syndicate members when the PC's arrive. Show the players Handout A, which depicts Ugulh, Miklos, and Gnashridla. The remainder of the cabal is currently away engaged in nefarious business, giving the party a good chance of overcoming the cabal. Present in the room are:

Ugulh (4th level Wizard): Init +1; Atk short sword +1 melee (1d6) or short bow +2 ranged (1d6); AC 11 (plus *magic shield*); HD 4d4+4; hp 15; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP spells (spell check +5; *choking cloud, force manipulation, magic missile, magic shield, spider climb, ward portal, knock, levitate*); SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; AL C.

A wiry human male dressed in silken robes, Ugulh waxes his bristly black hair into weird, horn-like arrangements. He is ostensibly the Syndicate's leader, directing his underlings in battle while engaging enemies with spells. Ugulh has 11 cp, 27 sp, and 10 gp.

Miklos the Mendicant (3rd level Cleric): Init +0; Atk flail +3 melee (1d6+1); AC 13; HD 3d8+3; hp 22; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP spells (spell check +4; *blessing, darkness, detect magic, holy sanctuary, word of command, cure paralysis, divine symbol, neutralize poison or disease*); SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3; AL C.

A filthy friar dressed in crimson vestments bearing the dirty hand of Nimlurun the Unclean, Miklos' face is smeared with grease and his walrus-like mustache bears the crumbs of many past meals. Miklos alternates between bashing enemies with his flail and bolstering his comrades with his prayers. He owns studded leather armor, 14 cp, 30 sp, and 6 gp.

Gnashrilda Foul-Mouth (4th level Warrior): Init +4 (1d16 initiative die); Atk axe +1d6+2 melee (1d10+2+deed); AC 15; HD 4d12+4; hp 37; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP crit range 19-20, Mighty Deeds of Arms (d6); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

A berserker warrioress from the West, Gnashrilda seeks only to slay enemies with her axe. Her chainmail bears the scars of a hundred battles and her leather skirt is cut high to allow free movement in battle. Bearing her blood-red hair in dreadlocks, Gnashrilda spews a constant stream of obscenities in combat. Gnashrilda uses her Mighty Deeds to topple objects onto enemies (see below) and to destroy enemies' armor (see DCC RPG rulebook p. 92). She possesses 20 gp and a garnet nose-ring (25 gp value).

Heggle and Jeggle (two 3rd level Thieves): Init +2; Atk crossbow +4 ranged (1d6) or dagger +2 melee (1d4); AC 14; HD 3d6; hp 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP backstab +2, sneak silently +9, hide in shadows +7, climb sheer surfaces +9, d5 Luck die (Luck score 11); SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +1; AL C

These twin brothers are slimy weasels at heart and their personalities are reflected in their ferret-faced features. Wearing black leather armor and wielding crossbows, the two prefer to attack enemies from their perch on the room's walkway, using their thief skills to hide themselves in the gloom and shoot enemies in the back. Each has 17 cp, 20 sp, and 15 gp.

Combat Strategies: If Har-Strough struck the alarm gong in area 1-1, the Syndicate prepares to defend their lair, taking the following actions:

- Ugulh casts magic shield and Miklos casts blessing on himself (possibly affecting Ugulh if the spell check is high enough.
- Gnashrilda moves to the peepholes to watch area 1-2. If the door to area 1-3 opens, she then moves down the aisle to just around the last turn leading to the clear area before the door to area 1-3. There she prepares to charge once Heggle and Jeggle act.
- Heggle and Jeggle position themselves on the walkway with a large rope cargo net. Once two or more intruders are visible below, they drop the net atop them (+4 to hit; attacks made on all PCs in a 20' square). Struck PCs must make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid being entangled. Entangled characters cannot move or attack and attacks rolls against them gain a +1d bonus. Entangled PCs can break free with a DC 11 Strength check or cut themselves free with a sharp weapon in 1d4+1 rounds.

First Round of Combat: Ugulh casts levitate on himself. Gnashrilda charges to attack any PCs entangled in the net or the most obvious threat if no one is entangled. Miklos heads towards the room's entrance at double speed to aid Gnashrilda with spells and weapons. Heggle and Jeggle snipe at PCs below.

Second Round of Combat: Gnashrilda continues melee, perhaps toppling objects on opponents if the opportunity presents itself (see below). Miklos arrives at Gnashrilda's location. He uses word of command ("vomit!") on any spellcaster or lays hands on Gnashrilda if she's grievously injured. Ugulh levitates up to where he can see the party and unleashes *magic missile* upon them. Heggle and Jeggle continue to snipe at the party.

Subsequent Rounds of Combat: As the judge sees fit.

The teetering junk partitions around the room can be used as improvised attacks against opponents. Warriors and dwarves (including Gnashrilda) can topple objects onto ad-

COMBAT AND THE WOEFUL HALFLING

Once combat begins in area 1-3, Nikademos in area 1-4 hears the sounds of battle and grows agitated, uncertain of what the conflict portends. The stress activates his woe-touched condition and there is a 50% chance each round the halfling unwittingly expends Luck to the detriment of anyone in areas 1-3 or 1-4. On a roll of 1-3 on a d6, Nikademos spends that many Luck points to affect random combatants. Luck spent in this manner does not receive the typical +2 halfling bonus. Use the table below to determine the effect of his unconsciously-spread misfortune.

D10 Roll	Misfortune Effect
1-2	All attacks by Syndicate members suffer a -1 penalty per Luck point spent for one round.
3-4	All attacks by PCs suffer a -1 penalty per Luck point spent for one round.
5-6	All spell checks by Syndicate members suffer a -1 penalty per Luck point spent for one round.
7-8	All spell checks by PCs suffer a -1 penalty per Luck point spent for one round.
9	All saving throws by Syndicate members suffer a -1 penalty per Luck point spent for one round.
10	All saving throws by PCs suffer a -1 penalty per Luck point spent for one round.

Nikademos can spend up to 12 Luck points in this manner. A roll resulting in more spent Luck than the halfling has remaining expends only the amount of Luck still possessed by the jeweler. Once Nikademos' Luck reaches zero, no more misfortune occurs.

jacent opponents with a successful Mighty Deed of Arms vs. AC 11. Other characters can knock precarious goods onto foes with a DC 13 Strength check. Targets are allowed a DC 10 Reflex save to dodge aside, taking 1d8 damage on a failed save.

If the battle turns against the Syndicate (losing more than three members), Ugulh will either (50/50 chance) flee through the trap door into the sewers, *warding* the door behind him or dash to area 1-4 and attempt to bargain for his life using Nikademos as a shield. Once Ugulh leaves the battlefield, all remaining Syndicate members will also attempt to escape, only surrendering if no avenue of flight is available.

The accumulated junk here is largely that—everything from pieces of furniture, empty coffins, barrels of moldering foodstuffs from distant ports of call, and any other ordinary object the judge desires comprise the bulk of the Syndicate's strange booty. However, if the PCs carefully examine the bizarre collection (requiring an hour's work and a successful Luck check per searcher), they locate an object of some value. Possibilities include a finely-made statuette, a suit of half-plate armor bearing archaic decorations, a crate of rare spices in sealed containers, or similar items. Each item is worth 1d3x100 gp, but weighs 3d10x10 lbs., possibly making transportation back via the Chime impossible.

Area 1-4 – Makeshift Prison: *Pigeon-holed shelves along the walls of this chamber hold rolled maps, inventory lists, and other assorted paperwork. A hulking desk littered with parchment and ledgers stands against the far wall, with an oil lamp burning steadily atop it. A disheveled halfling is tied to a high-backed chair in the center of the room, his face a mask of fear.*

Unless Ugulh fled here, the bound halfling is the room's sole occupant. He is, of course, Nikademos, who, after his initial fear fades, is extremely glad to see the PCs. He can be easily untied and readily agrees to flee his prison and fulfill his agreement with Lifthrasir.

The paperwork in this room is a mixture of floor plans to public and private buildings, detailed ledgers of recent heists, strange collections of esoteric poetry meaningful only to the Syndicate, and any other written oddities the judge may wish to add. Although none of it has any intrinsic value, larcenous PCs might find some of the floor plans useful should they ever wish to commit burglary in Oolvanvar. The judge can detail these potential crime scenes as desired.

COMPLETING THE TASK

he PCs return to Lifthrasir's hut with Nikademos to receive high praise from the ghostly enchantress. The halfling also extends his further gratitude for his rescue, offering each of the PCs an item of jewelry from his shop (50 gp value each) should they ever return to Oolvanvar and seek him out.

With thanks now extended, Lifthrasir instructs Nikademos towards a small wooden box on her worktable. The halfling opens the container, revealing a simple band of gold resting in woolen batting. Although unassuming in physical appearance, the ring seems to possess an ineffable aura of power, as if great potential lies within the ring. Gesturing to a number of delicate tools amongst the worktable clutter, the enchantress politely asks Nikademos to begin his work, a task that will take a full day to complete. The PCs are free to recuperate, eat and rest, but Lifthrasir advises them to prepare themselves for the next stage of the enchantment process and plan to depart no later than next morning.

TASK TWO: THE JEWEL

aving successfully rescued Nikademos, Lifthrasir readies the party for their next task: the acquisition of the Eye of the Sun, a fabulous gemstone owned by the Bronze-Handed Pharaoh of old. Lifthrasir describes the stone as a small fire opal possessing immaculate clarity and of pristine cut. Although the stone is the size of a pea, the Pharaoh considered it his prized jewel and for good reason—the stone has the power to focus mystical energy unlike any other gemstone. The Pharaoh was so proud of the stone he had his physicians permanently affix it to his body, drilling a small hole into his skull and inserting the stone there to serve as his mystical “third eye.” It was left in place after his death, interred with his mortal body. The party must now breach the Pharaoh's tomb and recover the Eye of the Sun.

Lifthrasir's scrying has deduced the location of the Pharaoh's tomb deep in the Great Desert, and the signs point to the Eye of the Sun still within the sepulture. As before, she will transport the party to the crypt and from there the PCs must overcome whatever obstacles lie between them and the stone to recover it. If they have no further questions or preparations, her ghostly hands gesture and the party is whisked away.

THE PHARAOH'S TOMB

Area 2-1 – An Unexpected Threat: *The emerald sparks of Lifthrasir's sending fade, replaced immediately by the unrelenting heat of the desert sun overhead. You stand on a small ledge overlooking a barren, rocky gorge. The landscape is harsh and plain – dun-colored sands and rust-hued rocks carved into weird shapes by the eternal desert winds surround you. Before you, located in the face of the gorge's wall, is the mouth of a gloomy tunnel descending into the earth. Strange hieroglyphics adorn the lintel above the tunnel and a shattered stone slab – perhaps once a door – lies in pieces on the ground.*

Suddenly, a hellish howl erupts and a ghastly figure silhouetted against the scorching desert sun descends upon you! In a voice that resembles the crackling of flames, the creature shouts, “Maalbrilmorg sends his regards, worms!”



Maalbrilmorg has been alerted to Lifthrasir's attempt to deny him his due and, although unable to take direct action to stop her, has sent one of his demonic underlings to test her champions. Anticipating their plundering of the Tomb, the Hell Smith dispatched a minor demon to ambush the party at the entrance. It is this creature they now face.

Forge-Burned Demon (Type I): Init +2; Atk hammer-hand +2 melee (1d8+1); AC 13; HD 4d12; hp 27; MV 30'; Act 1d20/1d14; SP infravision, *darkness* (+4 to spell check); suffers ½ damage from non-magical attacks and fire; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C.

The Forge-Burned are vaguely humanoid, resembling muscular, horned men with fire-blackened skin erupting with gore-dripping fissures. In lieu of hands, they possess two massive, stone hammers etched with a litany of their mortal sins and streaked with blood. Maalbrilmorg does not expect this demon to defeat the party, but simply gauge their strength. Desperate to placate his master, the demon fights until destroyed.

The hieroglyphics above the tunnel read "Swift death awaits those who enter here" in a nearly forgotten desert language, decipherable with magic or a DC 10 Read languages check.

Area 2-2 – Rolling Agony: *Beyond the tunnel's entrance is a sloping passageway hewn from the surrounding stone. Great efforts have been taken to plane the rock smooth and the stone bears faded paintings depicting strange gods and great cities along a fertile river. The air is dry and dusty, but pleasantly cooler than the hot sun-baked world outside.*

The passage slopes at a 20° angle and is largely free of sand and other desert debris. It is also trapped. Twenty feet past the entrance, a 10' square portion of the floor rests atop stone rollers. When stepped upon, the section slides forward abruptly and PCs in the front rank must make a DC 10 Reflex save or tumble down the passage. When activated, the trap also causes a 5' high stone barrier lined with bronze spikes to spring up at the bottom of the tunnel to greet the falling intruders. Slamming into the barrier results in 1d4+1 spikes "attacking" each PC colliding with it (+4 to attack; 1d4 damage each). A DC 10 Find traps check notices the moving section of floor or the concealed spiked barrier. Either can be disabled with a DC 10 Disable trap check or by driving spikes into position to wedge the moving section(s) in place.

Area 2-3 – Entrance Chamber: *The walls of this chamber bear painted scenes from the life of an important figure. From a boyhood filled with venerating supplicants to scenes of grisly combat to the crowning of a potentate, the images can only be that of a pharaoh. The floor is littered with smashed ceramic amphorae, broken wood caskets, and slashed woven baskets, indicating you are not the first to plunder this tomb.*

The painted images depict the life of the Pharaoh from his noble-born boyhood to his eventual death and interment. A careful inspection reveals several images of note.

- One shows the Pharaoh fighting a fierce battle against an invading army, piles of slain soldiers at his feet. In a subsequent scene, the Pharaoh's arms are severed at both elbows by a giant foe wielding a cruel kopesh sword. The Pharaoh is shown defeating his enemy by tearing out the giant's throat with his teeth.
- Another image depicts robed physicians attending to the Pharaoh's wounds. In the following scene, a metalworker presents the Pharaoh and his caretakers with a pair of prosthetic arms. They are fashioned from bronze and resemble skeletal limbs of superior workmanship. The physicians and an attending wizard attach the artificial arms to the Pharaoh's stumps. In every subsequent image, the Pharaoh is shown with the brazen skeletal arms and seems to utilize them as normal limbs without disadvantage.
- A third image shows the Pharaoh attending his court, a serpent-headed staff in his hands. Rays or shafts of light are depicted emanating from the stave.
- Another image represents the surgical process of affixing the Eye of the Sun to the Pharaoh's skull. Gaunt-faced surgeons drill a hole in the Pharaoh's forehead, his features twisted in agony, and insert a small, gleaming stone of bright red-orange coloration. A wizard stands by, preparing incantations.
- The last scene shows the Pharaoh being mummified and interred. His bronze arms, serpent-headed staff, and the Eye of the Sun are all visible amongst the linen wrappings. The Pharaoh is placed in his sarcophagus and born away by a large congregation of weeping mourners. They enter a tunnel identical to the Tomb's entrance.

The broken amphorae, baskets, and coffers once held grave goods, but were looted by tomb robbers long ago.





Area 2-4 – The Altering Idol: *This chamber is dominated by a stone statue depicting a 10' tall cobra-headed humanoid figure dressed in archaic robes and bearing a serpent-shaped rod in its scaly hands. The statue rests atop a 2' high platform of simple dressed stone, causing its serpentine head to brush the room's ceiling. An open archway to the west leads out of the chamber.*

The statue depicts an aspect of Serbok, the Slithering Shadow (see *Dungeon Crawl Classics* #77.5 *The Tower Out of Time*), an entity revered during the Pharaoh's dynasty. It is also the key to accessing area 2-7, but it might be misinterpreted as a trap. The statue radiates both magic and evil if detected for.

Anyone touching the serpentine rod held by the statue must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be *polymorphed* into a 6' long desert cobra. The PC can choose to waive the saving throw and automatically submit to transformation if desired. The altered PC retains his mental abilities but is otherwise treated as having the following stats:

Desert Cobra: Init +1; Atk bite +2 melee (1 point + poison); AC 12; HD as PC; HP as PC; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP infravision, poison (as Cobra per *DCC RPG* p. 446); SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; AL as PC.

The transformation lasts for 6 rounds (1 minute) after which time the PC should return to his normal form. However, there is a 5% chance the change is permanent and the PC must roll a d20 when the duration elapses. On a natural "1," he is trapped in cobra form, barring magical restoration of the judge's choosing.

A PC in cobra form can easily slither through the holes in the sealed door leading to area 2-7 and, assuming he returns to normal shape, open the door from within.

Area 2-5 – The Sealed Door: *The walls of this room were once decorated by elaborate paintings similar to those previously seen in the tomb. Unfortunately, the images are now damaged beyond recognition by the frenzied attacks of pick, chisel, hammer, and pry bar. No surface has been spared by some tomb robber's quest for hidden treasures. An open archway in the north wall exits the room.*

The western wall of the chamber is dominated by an archway containing an imposing stone door. A regal and somewhat sinister human face once decorated the door, but it too has suffered the predations of looters. A trio of small hemispherical holes pierce the base of the door, appearing to lead beyond the massive valve.

The stone door weighs several tons and is beyond normal physical efforts to open (both of brute strength and thieving ability). A waning enchantment of old also protects the door from arcane opening and imparts a -10 penalty to any spell check of *knock* or similar spells. A DC 30 Strength check by a PC with magically-enhanced strength can open the door.

Each of the three door holes measures 2" wide and 2" high and leads 4' through the stone door to area 2-7 beyond. Only a PC in cobra-shape or one reduced to miniscule size (*enlarge spell* with a spell check of 32+, for example) can fit through the holes. Crafty PCs may concoct other schemes, however, and the judge must adjudicate the possibility of success.

If the PCs dawdle too long in this room (a minute or more), they attract the attention of the "mummies" in 2-6 who float into the room to spread their spores.

Area 2-6 – The Wives' Crypt: *This 20' square chamber seems undamaged by tomb robbers, and the walls bear paintings depicting domestic tranquility. Three women dressed in finery attend to the needs and wants of the Pharaoh with utter devotion. A trio of sarcophagi rest in the center of the room, each one open with its cover resting beside it.*

Floating 5' in the air above the empty caskets are three bandage-wrapped humanoid figures. The mummies drift toward you with sinister intent!

The mummies are not un-dead, but the by-product of bacteria found in arid crypts. This bacterium consumes flesh, both preserved and fresh, dissolving skin and muscles with a virulent infection. This feeding produces copious amounts of odorless, buoyant, and flammable gas that becomes trapped in the linen wrappings, causing the mummified remains to become lighter than air. Able to hibernate when food is scarce, the bacteria have been awakened by the presence of living creatures in the tomb and now seek to spread their spores. The bacteria colonies can expel jets of gas to move towards potential food sources at a speed of 20'.

The floating bacteria colonies "attack" by coming into physical contact with the PCs. They have a -1 initiative modifier and a +2 bonus to attack rolls for combat purposes and are treated as AC 10. The colonies have 4 hit points each, but are only affected by slashing or piercing weapons.

Reducing a “mummy” to zero hit points causes it to deflate and drop to the ground, unable to attack and dispersing its trapped gas. They automatically fail all Fortitude and Reflex saves and are unaffected by spells that allow Will saves. They cannot be turned.

Any PC struck by a mummy must make a DC 10 Fortitude save to avoid infection. This infection slowly eats away at the victim’s flesh, inflicting 1d3 points of Stamina damage each day until cured or the victim reaches zero Stamina and dies. The colonies’ real threat, however, is explosion. Any fire-based attacks on the colonies cause the gases to ignite in a 20’ radius fireball doing 1d6 points of damage per mummy. A DC 8 Reflex save reduces the damage to ½. Due to the mummies’ proximity, igniting one causes all three to explode.

The sarcophagi are empty and the paintings on the wall convey no useful information.

Area 2-7 – The Pharaoh’s Crypt: *The air in this chamber is dusty and stale, hinting at centuries of undisturbed existence. A 7’ long, sealed sarcophagus of exquisite craftsmanship rests atop a 5’ high platform in the room’s center, surrounded by painted walls glorifying the life of its inhabitant: the Bronze-Handed Pharaoh, himself. An archway in the south wall is the room’s only open exit. A massive stone door in the east wall seals the chamber from the rest of the tomb. Two bronze levers, one in the up and the other in the down positions, are set into the wall to the left of the stone door.*

The levers open and close the great door, as well as lock it in place. Moving the “down” lever up opens the door to area 2-6, causing it to rise up into the archway overhead. Throwing the “up” lever down locks the door (increasing the DC to open the door with magical strength to DC 35) and prevents it from opening or closing until thrown into the “up” position once again. The bronze arms can operate the levers if needed to trap and seal the party inside this area.

The sarcophagus is closed and contains only a portion of the Pharaoh’s mummified remains, for the sorcerer-king’s power lingers beyond death, encased in his bronze limbs, enchanted staff, and the very treasure the party seeks: The Eye of the Sun. These four objects, roughly positioned to their placement in life, lurk beyond the threshold in area 2-8, floating ominously in the air. Unless invisible or otherwise concealed, living creatures entering the tomb (whether in normal or cobra form) cause the evil quartet to drift into the chamber to attack.

Pharaoh’s Skull: Init +3; Atk searing beam +3 ranged (40’ range; 2d4+1) or spell; AC 16; HD 4d8; hp 26; MV fly 40’; Act 1d20; SP spells (+6 to spell check; *charm person, choking cloud, fire resistance, mirror image, scare*), suffers ½ damage from slashing and piercing attacks, un-dead traits; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; AL C.

Bronze Arms (2): Init +2; Atk claw +2 melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 3d6; hp 13 each; MV fly 30’; Act 1d20; SP suffers ½ damage from slashing and piercing attacks, immune to

mind-affecting magic, un-dead traits; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will N.A.; AL C.

Staff: Init +3; Atk bash +1 melee (1d4+1) or spell; AC 11; HD 4d8+2; hp 24; MV fly 40’; Act 1d20; SP spells (+6 to spell check; *chill touch, flaming hands, force manipulation, detect invisible, ray of enfeeblement, shatter*), immune to mind-affecting spells; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will N.A.; AL C.

The Pharaoh’s spirit occupies all four items equally. Destroying the skull has no effect on the arms or staff, and they continue to attack normally. Each object is treated as an individual un-dead for turning attempts.

If the skull is destroyed, it shatters and the Eye of the Sun lies loose among the fragments for the PCs to collect.

Area 2-8 –Treasure Chamber: *Beyond this archway, you glimpse the sheen of gilded ornaments and the luster of exotic woods. A great chariot, gleaming statuary, verdigris-covered bronze arms and armor, and other wonderful things entice the eye with their beauty and value.*

The various components of the Pharaoh drift here when the Tomb is first entered. The four pieces emerge to attack as soon as it detects intruders in area 2-7.

The Pharaoh was entombed with the bulk of his mortal treasures, which have remained untouched until now. A veritable king’s ransom in booty awaits the PCs, but unfortunately for the party, most is too heavy or cumbersome to be transported from the Tomb via the Chime.

The treasure chamber contains:

- A golden war-chariot (6,000 gp value; 800 lbs.)
- Four electrum statues of animal-headed humanoids (each 5,000 gp value; 500 lb weight)
- Bronze breastplates, helmets, shields, and spears of exceptional craftsmanship for fifty soldiers (Double normal value; weight as per DCC RPG pp. 71-72)
- Four gold coffers (50 gp value each; 20 lbs. weight) containing 10 gold ingots (300 gp value; 30 lbs. each), 20 silver ingots (30 gp value, 30 lbs. each), 30 jade tablets (75 gp value, 10 lbs. each), and 60 ivory plaques (25 gp value, 5 lbs each).
- Twenty-four pieces of lavish furniture (chairs, chests, tables, etc.) crafted from rare woods (2d10×10 gp value each; 1d4×10 lbs.)
- Spear with hieroglyphic-inscribed head of meteorite iron. Although non-magical, the extra-terrestrial origin of the iron allows it to affect extra-planar creatures as if magical.
- A copper scroll tube (15 gp value) containing a sheet of papyrus. It is a scroll of fire resistance. The archaic language of the scroll imparts a -2 penalty to the reader’s spell check when used.

COMPLETING THE TASK

The party returning to Lifthrasir bearing the Eye of the Sun receives the enchantress' lavish praise. She states that, for the first time in weeks, she's confident the ring's enchantment will succeed and her soul saved. Nikademos is absent from the hut, sent back to Oolvanvar by Lifthrasir once the engraving was finished.

Lifthrasir asks for the jewel, collecting it in cool, ephemeral hands. The uncompleted ring rises from its resting place on the table and drifts into her hands. There is a brief flash of radiant yellow light and a blaze of heat, and the Eye and ring are joined, the brilliant gem scintillating in the ring's four prongs. The ring's intangible aura of power has become noticeably stronger. Lifthrasir allows the party to recover from their sojourn to the Tomb, stating she intends to send them off on the final task first thing in the morning.

TASK THREE: TEMPERING THE RING

The chore remains to complete the enchantment: the tempering of the ring in the cerebral ichor of the great abomination known as the Odontotyrannus. A hundred years ago, Lifthrasir explains, the Odontotyrannus, a bloated creature seemingly born from nightmares, laid waste to a kingdom. Its rampages threatened to annihilate the entire region and only through great sacrifice did a devout knighthood manage to chain the Odontotyrannus. Luring it to a forbidding mountain fortress, the knights and a cabal of wizards engaged the Odontotyrannus in desperate combat. Nearly all perished in the struggle, but the last wizard was able to bind the Odontotyrannus in a sorcerous prison and force it into magical slumber.

The Odontotyrannus' cerebral ichor will temper the ring, preparing it for the final enchantment. Lifthrasir anticipates this task to be an easy one, as the Odontotyrannus remains imprisoned and its slumber undisturbed. The party must pierce the Odontotyrannus' skull and draw forth a pint of ichor and bring it back to her. She gives the party a brazen vessel to collect the fluid. After giving them time for any final preparations, her incantations send them on their way.

Area 3-1—The Broken Fortress: Lifthrasir's spell deposits you in the ruined courtyard of a decrepit fortress. Broken curtain walls and shattered towers outline the castle's former boundaries. Wind-blown weeds grow up through cracks in the courtyard's flagstones, rustling in a cold mountain zephyr. The broken slabs hold another harvest as well: the bleached bones of nearly six score men still encased in rusting armor and holding corroded weapons in their boney grips.

Gaping in the courtyard's center is a great open pit measuring some 80' in diameter and 40' deep. The pit's sides are ringed with exposed, broken rooms and collapsed tunnels, suggesting the



sinkhole broke through the fortress' dungeon, shattering its undercroft in its wake. The pit's bottom is rubble-strewn and a thin layer of debris covers a heaped form in its debris. The massive pile slowly rises and falls, the rhythmic cycle of a mighty, slumbering creature's breathing.

A dim glow of eldritch purple seeps from gaps in the debris pile around its circumference in a circle of pallid, unearthly light.

The battle with the Odontotyrannus culminated in the fortress' courtyard, and the cataclysmic damage of combat collapsed the central yard, dropping the Odontotyrannus through the keep's cellars to the bottom of the great pit. Momentarily trapped beneath the debris, the knights and wizards gave their all to bind the Odontotyrannus within a sorcerous prison, its boundaries described by a circle of violet light. The Odontotyrannus sleeps in the pit, buried beneath a century of fallen debris.

THE FAILING PRISON

The prison's magic has decayed over the past century and is close to breaking. So fragile is the imprisoning circle that a living creature passing through its perimeter has a chance of shattering the prison and freeing the Odontotyrannus. The prison's perimeter is hemispherical in shape (as shown on the map), and a living creature descending directly down from above via magical levitation or similar means passes through the border and potentially causes it to fail. Being magical in nature, spells breaching the perimeter can also cause it to collapse.

Each living creature crossing the prison's boundary has a cumulative 10% chance per HD of shattering the prison. Thus, a 4th-level warrior advancing alone has a 40% chance of breaking the bounds, but if accompanied by a 4th-level thief or followed shortly by another PC of equal level for instance, the chance increased to 80%. A third PC crossing the barrier would immediately cause it to fall. Small, normal animals can move through it without incident.

Spells originating from outside the barrier that cross the border have a 10% chance per spell level of collapsing the prison. This chance is cumulative both with additional spells and with living creatures moving across the border. In addition, while the prison is intact, its magical matrix hinders the effectiveness of spells passing through it, granting the Odontotyrannus a +20 bonus to all saving throws. A spellcaster attempting to neutralize the Odontotyrannus while it sleeps will not only likely fail to do so, but may inadvertently free the creature in the attempt!

If the prison fails, the purple glow dissipates and the Odontotyrannus stirs, awakening swiftly with both great hunger and a desire to destroy. It bursts from the rubble, attacking anyone in the pit first before leaping out of the sinkhole to devour the rest of the party.

THE ODONTOTYRANNUS



The PCs can achieve the pit's bottom by rope, magic (but see above), or by climbing down the depression's sides. Due to the number of broken stones and half-destroyed rooms and corridors lining the pit's walls, climbing requires either a DC 5 Strength or Climb sheer surfaces roll to succeed. These ruined rooms and corridors are bare, their former contents buried in debris below, destroyed by weather and time.

A 2' deep layer of broken masonry and other debris covers the Odontotyrannus, the product of a century's worth of continuing collapse of the fortress. This solid layer grants the creature an AC of 25 while it sleeps. Three successful DC 10 Strength checks can clear a 3' square hole to the Odon-

totyrannus, allowing attacks against its normal AC. When the Odontotyrannus awakens, it automatically throws off the debris, negating the AC increase.

The Odontotyrannus: Init +3; Atk bite +2 melee (1d8+1) or claw +1 melee (1d6+1) and see below; AC 12 (but see below); HD 10d10+3; hp 70; MV 40' and jump 50'; Act 1d20 (but see below); SP growing formidability, acidic blood; SV Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +12; AL C.

The Odontotyrannus is an earthy abomination, a hulking monstrosity measuring 25' in length and 15' high at the shoulder. Its face is a horrible mixture of human, bat, and iguana bearing a slaving maw; its body appears bloated with blood, giving it a bruised greenish-black coloration. The Odontotyrannus moves with a speed belying its gorged appearance and can spring up to 50' to attack foes. At the height of its power, the PCs would have little chance of defeating the Odontotyrannus, but its long imprisonment has atrophied its power. The Odontotyrannus will quickly regain its formidability if not defeated, so the party must act quickly to triumph.

The Odontotyrannus' bite and claw attack bonuses, and AC increase by +1 each round it is active as its power returns. Damage bonuses and saving throws are unaffected. Also, after three rounds of combat, the Odontotyrannus gains a second action die starting at d14, which increases one step on the die chain every additional two rounds until it becomes a d20. The Odontotyrannus then gains another action die. Use the table below as a quick reference to these changes, checking off the rightmost box as each combat round ends to better keep track of the fight and the Odontotyrannus' power.

Odontotyrannus Power Chart By Combat Round

Combat Round	Attack Bonus	Armor Class	Action Dice	Mark Box When Round is Over
1	Bite +2/claw +1	AC 12	1d20	☐
2	Bite +3/claw +2	AC 13	1d20	☐
3	Bite +4/claw +3	AC 14	1d20	☐
4	Bite +5/claw +4	AC 15	1d20 + 1d14	☐
5	Bite +6/claw +5	AC 16	1d20 + 1d16	☐
6	Bite +7/claw +6	AC 17	2d20	☐
7	Bite +8/claw +7	AC 18	2d20 + 1d14	☐
8	Bite +9/claw +8	AC 19	2d20 + 1d16	☐
9	Bite +10/claw +9	AC 20	3d20	☐
10	Bite +11/claw +10	AC 21	3d20 + 1d14	☐
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

The Odontotyrannus' blood is highly acidic and close combat endangers its opponents. A PC striking the Odontotyrannus in melee combat with a slashing or piercing weapon must make a Reflex save with a DC equal to the damage inflicted or suffer 1d5 acid damage. A "natural 1" on the save indicates the PC's weapon or armor (judge's decision) is destroyed by the acid. Magical objects are immune to this destruction.

Collecting its cerebral ichor is easily done once the Odontotyrannus is slain, but reckless PCs might attempt to do so during battle. A Mighty Deed of Arms with a piercing weapon against AC 20 holes the Odontotyrannus' skull and the vital fluid begins oozing forth. The wound produces 1d4+1 oz. of ichor per round. Unfortunately, the Odontotyrannus is unaffected by the loss and continues to battle until slain, but a crafty plan might allow the party to collect the fluid before this occurs and escape.

The battle with the Odontotyrannus is a challenging one, but unless the fight takes too long, the PCs should triumph. Some parties will be tempted to meta-game this encounter, thinking that this is the "big boss fight" of the adventure and spellburn wildly or otherwise throw caution to the wind. These players are about to have a nasty surprise.

Area 4-1: Infernal Interruption: Ichor in hand, the party uses the Chime to return to Lifthrasir, proud of their achievement. Unfortunately, Maalbrilmorg lies in wait. The Hell Smith, anticipating their magical travel and now desperate to keep the enchantress from completing her task, has set a trap in the magical pathways traversed by teleporting entities. His insidious power wrenches the PCs out of the mystical realm, dropping them into the middle of a fiery volcano's caldera far from their intended goal. The party must now fight Maalbrilmorg's minions to complete their return to Lifthrasir.

As the Chime's enchanted tolls fade and you feel your bodies grow light, something goes horribly wrong. Nausea threatens to overcome you and your bodies are wracked with pain. Suddenly, instead of the cozy confines of Lifthrasir's hut, you're slammed against a ragged, cracking surface. Great heat surrounds you, baking off the blackened ground below and broiling you from the air above. Astounded, you find yourself prone on a great sheet of cooled lava in the heart of a volcano's caldera. Gouts of liquid fire erupt from holes in the sheet's black surface, throwing towers of lava high into the air. Three horrific figures soar overhead on hellish wings, cackling with glee. They dive to attack!

The figures are demons, sent by Maalbrilmorg to finish the party once and for all.

Slag Demon (Type I; 3): Init +3; Atk claws +4 melee (1d6+2) or shrapnel blast +3 ranged (30' range; 2d4+1); AC 14; HD 3d12; hp 20 each; MV 20' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP infravision, darkness (+6 to spell check), immune to fire, suffers ½ damage from non-magical attacks; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; AL C.

Slag Demons are winged creatures seemingly fashioned from blacked, jagged fragments of congealed slag. Their

eyes glow with a furnace-like blaze and they can expel a gout of razor-sharp shrapnel from their mouths to attack opponents at a distance. The Slag demons swoop down on the PCs to attack, then retreat out of range, hoping to lure the party into the lava geysers or onto thin patches of crust.

Most of the cooled lava is thick enough to support the party's weight, but several spots are a thin crust that easily breaks. Any PC moving across the lava crust has a 1 in 4 chance of treading upon a thin section. A DC 7 Intelligence check spots these treacherous areas if the PC states he's keeping an eye out for danger (dwarves gain their racial underground skill bonus on this check), allowing the character to avoid the danger. Any PC stepping onto the thin crust must make a DC 10 Reflex save (modified by armor) to avoid falling into the lava 10' below and suffering 5d6 points of damage each round (DC 15 Fortitude save reduces damage to half). A PC who perishes in the lava is lost forever, along with his possessions—which might include either the ichor or the Chime, dooming the PCs to failure and the enslavement of Lifthrasir's soul.

Several open holes in the crust sporadically vomit forth geysers of lava that soar 1d4×10' in height before collapsing, splashing a 10' radius area around the hole. There is a 1 in 4 chance each round a PC is caught by a geyser's sudden splash. Such unlucky souls must make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid taking 3d6 damage (DC 15 Fortitude save for ½ damage). The demons are immune to the lava's heat.

While the demons live, the Chime does not function, inhibited by Maalbrilmorg's infernal power. Using the Chime during this time produces no effect, but does not count against its remaining uses. After the last demon is defeated, the Chime functions normally.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Hopefully, the party survives their sudden abduction and returns to Lifthrasir with the ichor. The enchantress weeps ghostly tears of gratitude when the PCs produce the vial and a look of long-denied relief floods across her face.

"My champions," she exclaims, "never has one such as myself been so honored and touched by your dedication to fulfilling my dream and saving my soul in the process. Had I another life yet to live, I could not repay the kindness and virtue you've displayed. Know that even in the next world, you have my gratitude."

Lifthrasir takes the vial in her ghostly hands and pours the liquid into a crucible on the worktable. Speaking loud, determined incantations, the ichor transmutes into an effervescent ivory solution, upon which she slips the ring gently into the liquid. Read the following:

An incandescent brilliance erupts from the crucible, throwing dancing shadows around the rustic hut. The molten radiance is that of a bright star coming into existence in the dark curtain of night. Ethereal sounds, gentle chimes that sooth the soul, ring



through the gleaming air. The ghostly figure of Lifthrasir assumes a physical solidity, her spectral features bearing the glow of something beyond mortal life. Somewhere, on some horrific plane, a demon howls, robbed of his due. A smile of triumph and joy transforms the enchantress' plain face into a wondrous countenance. All too suddenly, the light vanishes, taking the glowing solution with it to leave the ring lying in the now-empty crucible.

Lifthrasir, now solid and still glowing with celestial brilliance smiles a final time at the PCs, gesturing to the ring as she does so. "Your reward awaits you, my champions. I hope my life's work is worth the struggles you overcame on my behalf. My time in this world is done, but I hope your own spans are long and fruitful. Take the ring with my blessing and my gratitude, and I hope we meet again in some distant place free of worldly strife."

The enchantress' physical body vanishes, erased by celestial hands, leaving a rainbow-hued smear in the air which swiftly dissipates. The PCs have successfully granted Lifthrasir her rest and the ring is theirs. As an additional benefit of laying the enchantress to rest and thwarting Maalbrilmorg's claim on her soul, each PC receives a +2 bonus to their Luck scores.

THE END?



he PCs may have successfully completed the adventure and gained Lifthrasir's Ring, but this doesn't necessarily mean the foes they've overcome are done with them. A judge wishing to continue using the events of *The Making of the Ghost Ring* as the catalyst for future adventures has several options.

The Sinister Syndicate, although crippled by the PCs' attack on their headquarters, still endures. Members absent from the warehouse during the attack return to find the aftermath and devote themselves to seeking vengeance on the intruders. PCs returning to Oolvanvar to collect their reward from Nikademos will find the Syndicate lying in ambush, their ranks bolstered with new (and strange) recruits.

It is likely that the party claimed only a fraction of the Bronze-Handed Pharaoh's treasure before departing the Tomb. A literal fortune remains beneath the sands and avarice-minded PCs might desire the remaining riches. This endeavor requires a long journey to the Great Desert, locating the Tomb (without Lifthrasir's help, they don't know its exact location), and overcoming any number of desert hazards to reach the site. Once there, they may find that other tomb-robbers have beaten them to their goal, requiring them to either dispatch their rivals to claim their due or walk away empty-handed.

Lastly, and more dangerously, Maalbrilmorg the Hell Smith has been thwarted by mere mortals and smolders in anger in his infernal abode. Having proved themselves competent adversaries in dispatching his minions, Maalbrilmorg may launch a more aggressive campaign against the party, seeking their lives and souls to replace Lifthrasir's in his collection. From clandestine assassination attempts by fell cultists to direct attacks by the Hell Smith, himself, potent enemies now stand against the party and life for them is about to get much more interesting...but such is the way of the world in *Dungeon Crawl Classics* RPG!

APPENDIX A: LIFTHRASIR'S RING

This ring appears to be a simple band of gold etched with miniscule symbols resembling complex mathematical formulae. A brilliant fire opal adorns the ring, held in place by four small prongs. The ring produces a ghostly pale-white glow when exposed to moonlight.

Lifthrasir's ring has four special properties, usable by the wearer regardless of class. The ring's powers are:

1. The wearer gains +1 to Intelligence and Personality. These increases only apply while wearing the ring and fade immediately if removed.
2. The wearer can repair a broken or damaged item by touching it. This effect mimics a *mending* spell with a spell check result of 18. This power can be used once per day.
3. The wearer can magically influence the mind of another creature. Using this power requires the wearer to physically touch the target. Once done, the wearer can attempt to influence the target's perceptions of the wearer as if casting a *charm person* spell with a spell

check result of 18. The effect lasts as per the spell description and this power can be used 3 times per week.

4. The wearer can absorb a single spell directed at him, negating its effect entirely. This power dispels any single spell specifically targeted at the wearer (area of effect spells are unaffected) with a spell check result of 18 or less. Spells with a higher spell check are unaffected and manifest as normal. This power can be used once per week.

Note that powers #2 through #4 always manifest at the indicated "power level" (i.e. the given spell check result). The wearer cannot raise the potency of these effects by spell-burning or spending Luck.

Weakness: Lifthrasir imparted a limitation on the ring during its enchantment to protect herself from her own creation and to ensure she'd be remembered as its enchantress down through history. As a result of this, the ring cannot use its spell-absorption or mental domination powers against a female of any species, refusing to function on such targets.

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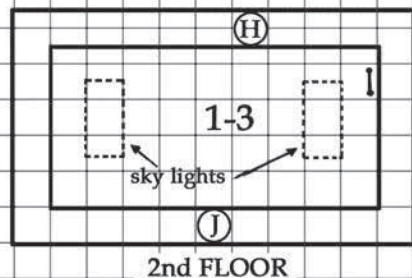
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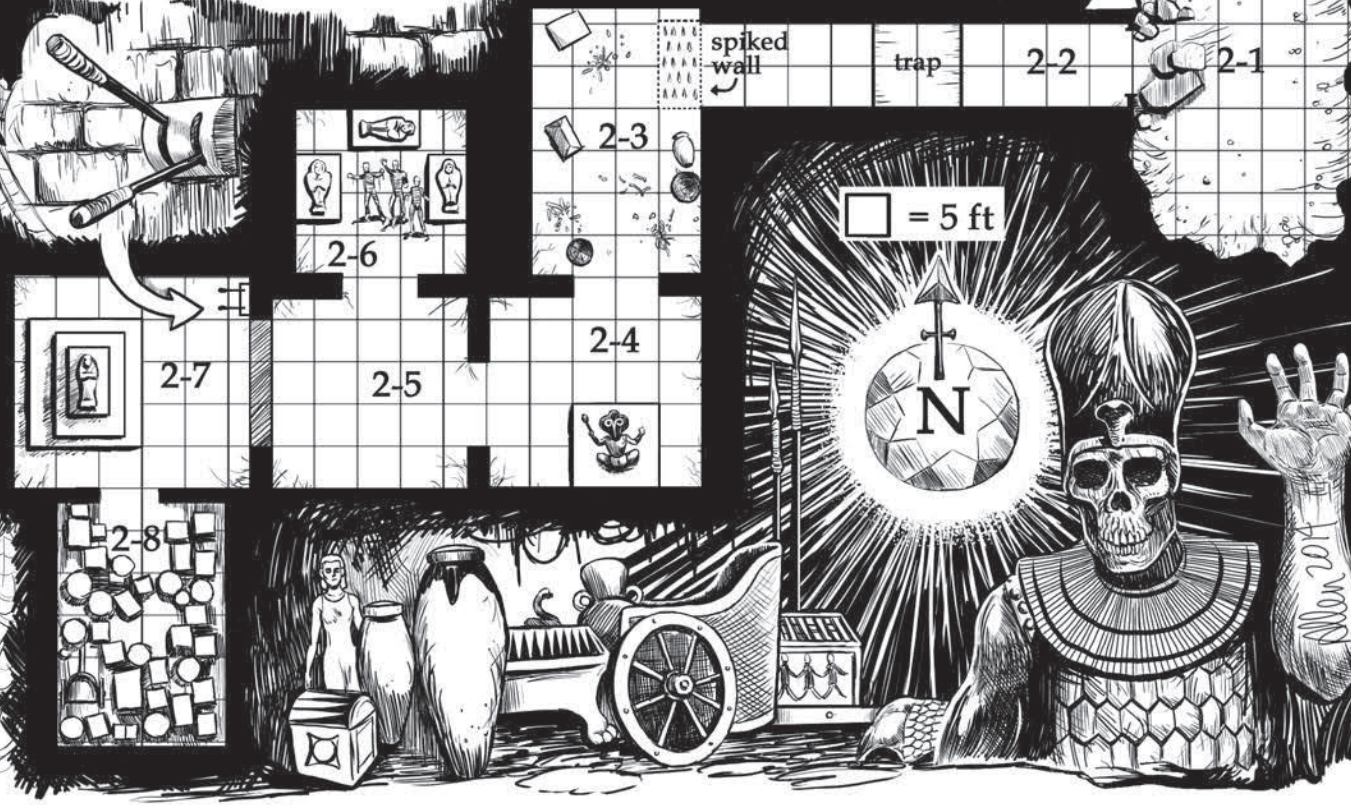
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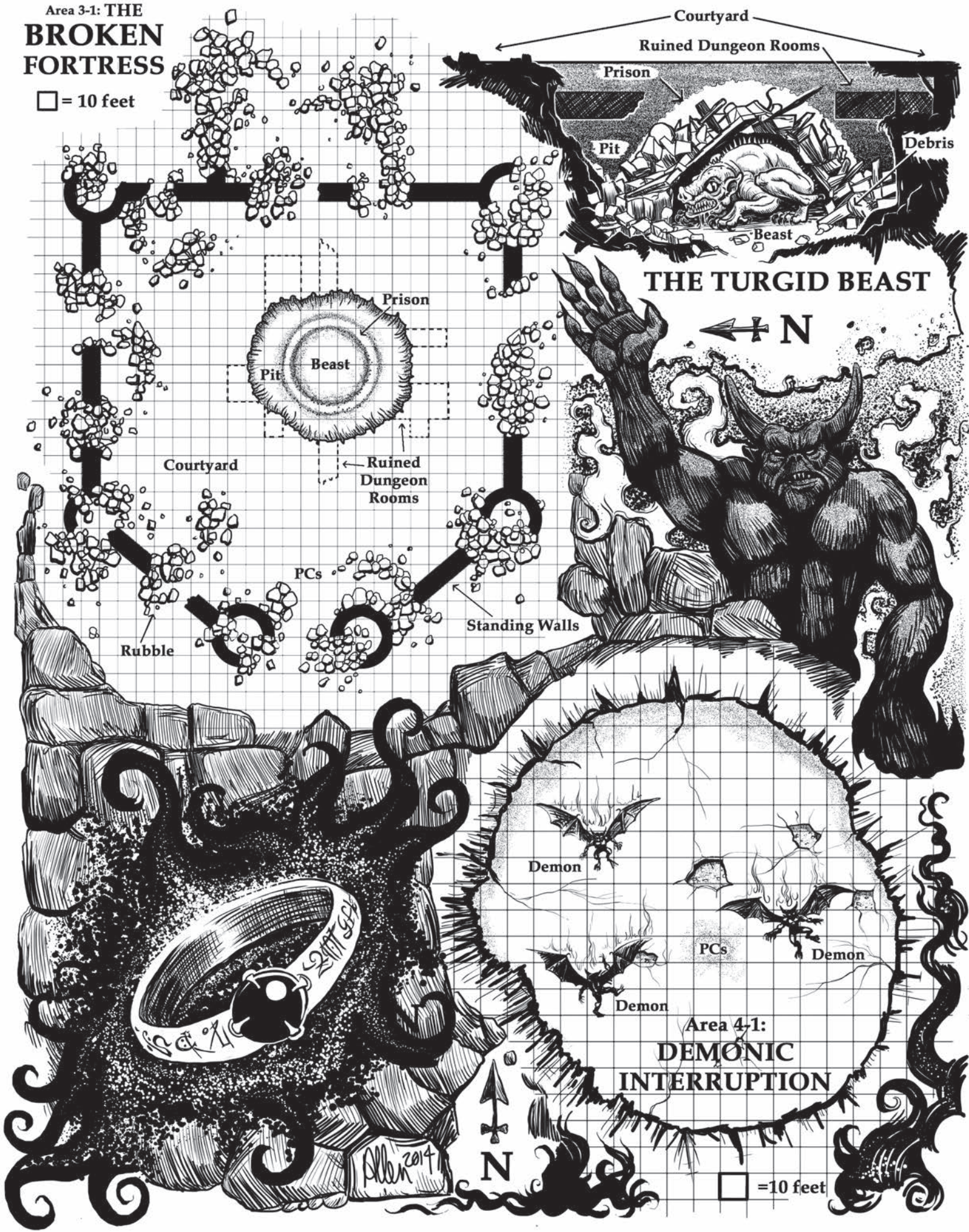
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Area 3-1: THE BROKEN FORTRESS

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THE TURGID BEAST



Area 4-1: DEMONIC INTERRUPTION

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