

Quests of Doom 4

Nightstone Keep

By Ed Greenwood



Swords
& Wizardry



FROG GOD
GAMES

Quests of Doom 4

Nightstone Keep

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Nightstone Keep

Nightstone Keep is a location-based, *Swords & Wizardry* adventure for characters of 4th to 6th level, centered on a ruined, long-disused stone keep in a temperate wild forest area (possibly not far off a caravan road or forest trail). If you are using the **Lost Lands** campaign setting, Nightstone Keep is located in the northeastern extent of the Unclaimed Lands where they extend between the southern reaches of the Forest Kingdoms and the Glimmroll Run. The Unclaimed Lands are detailed in *LL5: Borderland Provinces* by **Frog God Games**.

Aside from the carrion graw initial encounter, and any forest encounters or scuttling oversized spiders the Referee wishes to add for cosmetic interest as player characters cautiously explore the ruins, this is a foray into a plant colony. Characters encounter and fight various plant creatures spawned and controlled by their parent arauglyd, a gigantic sentient fungus wrapped around the main treasure of the adventure: a *gem of vitality*. This magic item is powering growth of the arauglyd, so the giant fungus wants to keep it.

The GM/Referee should seed the adventure by having several NPC encounters (at inns, taverns, shops, or firesides in wayside peddlers' camps) in which the characters are told lurid tales of the various battles and lost treasures and rumored hauntings of "ruined Nightstone Keep" and how it got to its present state, a history summarized hereafter.

Adventure Background

Nightstone Keep is a stoutly built stone stronghold atop extensive cellars stores and an extensive armory. Legend holds that the keep was built more than two centuries ago by Arhel Roodhond — "King Redhand" — a self-styled local ruler.

Redhand was a successful mercenary warrior and adventurer who made his fortune slaying dragons. He brought home a long caravan of wagons groaning under the weight of coins and gems and built Nightstone to be the seat of his new realm.

The farming fiefdom of Roodhondyn flourished while its founder lived but was torn by civil strife when the Redhand died at a ripe old age. Factions led by his hot-tempered, young second queen, his three grown sons, and his lord marshal of the guard in the name of Redhand's oldest child (the Lady Ismrelle) all drew swords and fought for the Redhand's throne. Soon, the contested throne was black with blood. When the struggle finally ended, Queen Ismrelle was a scarred wreck attended by a handful of faithful retainers on a lone farm near Nightstone Keep. The forest had taken over all of the deserted farms that now stood in what had once been Roodhondyn — for everyone else was slain or fled.

Then, the sickness came. A brown, fuzzy growth crept along the walls, ceilings and finally the floors of the keep's cellars, making folk cough and choke, leaving them ultimately unable to draw deep breaths. They ended their days as feeble shufflers.

In the end, Ismrelle and her few attendants packed a last wagon and departed for lands to the south, abandoning Nightstone to bandits, roaming beasts, and the elements. The bravest woodcutters and foresters explored the keep from time to time, finding large caches of coins and keeping alive the rumors of huge dragon riches still to be found, but no one tried to live in the keep.

These days, locals warn of giant birds that swoop from atop Nightstone's crumbling ramparts, snatching up and carrying off victims, so that now no one goes near it.

Those still alive who have explored the keep say the ruins aren't safe and that nothing worth taking is left aboveground save the stones.

Nightstone Keep

From a distance, the ruined keep looks like a stout, square black shaft rising out of trees and clinging vines, with crumbling crenellations featuring sharply pointed merlons that look like cracked and missing teeth. This unlovely tower is 80 feet square and roughly 120 feet tall. Its ground floor is windowless, with three floors above.

The vines are widespread but won't support the weight of even a child; they break off and crumple to the ground if any climber mounts them. None of the tree branches reaching close to the keep walls is large enough to support human weight; they bend and then crack and dangle in splintered ruin if any PC seeks to use them to reach windows or higher points on the keep's walls. The walls themselves are deep black and polished smooth, even after the passage of so many years, and can't be climbed.

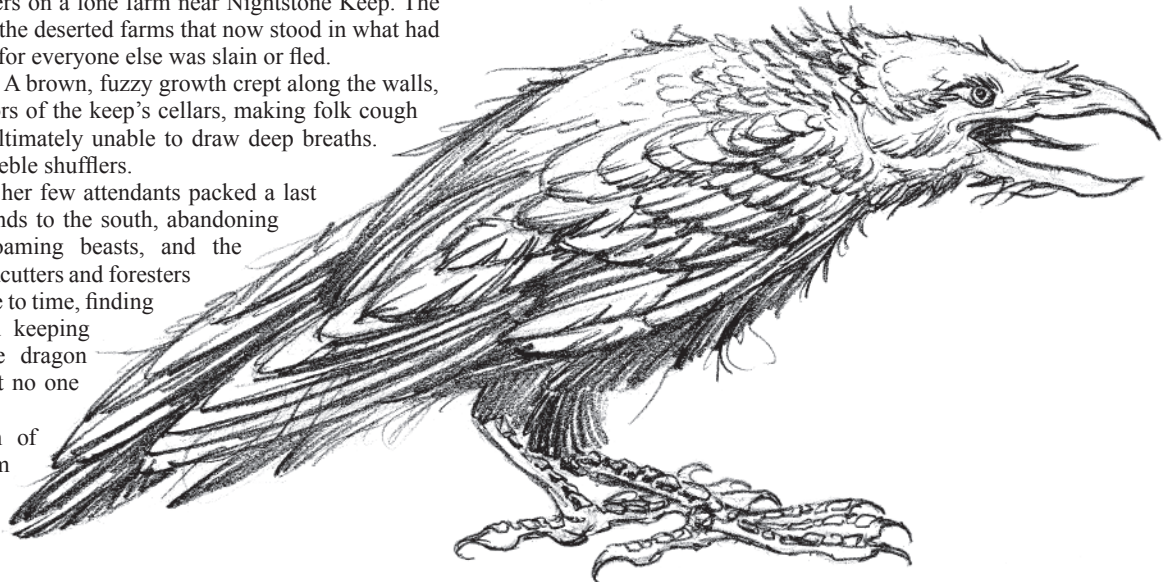
The keep's once-stout wooden doors collapsed into ruin long ago, and lie in spongy rotten heaps on either side of the opened entrance. There's a second open doorway on the facing wall of the keep that leads into a stone-walled, flagstone courtyard where wooden stable buildings long ago collapsed and vanished under the onslaught of trees, bushes, and vines.

The way between both doors is a curving route, because squarely in the center of the keep, blocking the direct way, is a massive central pillar of fitted stone blocks.

Death from the Skies

A mated pair of **carrion graw** nesting atop the keep see any characters approaching. The graw can't immediately be seen from below, as they lie on its roof with wings spread and heads down, peering out through the gaps where merlons have fallen away. The graws will swoop to attack as soon as any character moves into the open. A mated pair of **carrion graw** (giant predatory birds) nesting atop the keep see any character character him

The graw have learned to keep clear of the plant growths in the courtyard and in the castle cellars, and now ignore them. They wait until characters enter the keep before pouncing, but then seek to disable



NIGHTSTONE KEEP



as many characters as possible, snatching them and flying them aloft to impale them on the battlement spikes to create a larder for later. Though they attack fearlessly, heedless of damage, the graw are neither stupid nor suicidal. A graw will fly away if it takes more than half of its hit points in damage, but may lurk nearby and attack again later as the characters leave.

The graw will attack with their beaks, but will attempt to grab any characters in heavy armor, or bearing weapons. Grabbed characters will either be dropped, taking 1d10 points of damage for each 10ft fallen, or be dropped upon the spiked merlons of the keep. As described under the graw monster entry below, characters dropped on the spikes must roll under their Strength on 4d6 or take 4d4 points of damage and be impaled. Once free, the characters can move onto the roof of the keep.

If a graw is damaged by an attack while carrying characters, it drops its target down the hole in the courtyard adjacent to the keep. The hole opens into the arauglyd-coated Main Cellar below, inflicting 12d10 points of damage. They toss the bones of past meals into the same pit.

Carrion Graw: HD 6; AC 3[16]; Atk: 2 claws (1d6), beak (1d8); Move 12 (flying 24); Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; Special: grab.

Inside Nightstone

The reason for the keep's name is obvious: as it is fashioned of closely fitted, massive blocks of hard black volcanic stone mortared with a mud, lime, and salt solution scorched with fire to fuse the mortar and create a seamless surface. A typical block is two 2feet wide and high, and four 4feet long, and is heavy enough to take two strong humans to shift, and three to lift and carry. The walls are very solid.

Ground Floor

The western half of this vast open room (its stone ceiling is 50ft up) is given over to the curving wagon-way between the two large doors, a way that bends around the central stone block pillar. On this level of the keep only, the stone stairs upward do not wind around the pillar; they climb around the inside of the east wall, up to the feasting hall above. Under their loftier reaches, there's a hole in the ground floor where a smooth, wide, and not very steep stone ramp descends into the Main Cellar, underground. Nothing much is left of the stout wooden trestle tables (which very much resemble modern real-world picnic tables of massive construction) and guards' benches that formerly furnished this level. These rotted into the ground long ago, to be replaced by now-shriveled toadstools and creeper vines. (It takes some time to rake through this refuse, but nothing of value is found except a lone, long-lost copper coin.)

Feasting Hall

The keep's central stone support pillar, and the stone-block stair that ascends around it, dominate this large open room (20-foot-high ceiling). The tables and benches that formerly filled the rest of the room (with a "high table" surrounded by six magnificent high-backed chairs, the grandest two at either end of the table) are all now mere rotten traces on the floor. Nothing of value is here.

Unstable Floors

The floors, however, are far less sturdy. They are made of flagstones laid atop boards resting upon once-stout timbers thrust into cavities in the keep walls, and running to rest on crossbeams supported by a central stone-block pillar (around which the keep's central stone-block stair spirals). Unfortunately, damp running down the central stone pillar and the walls rotted the ends of the timbers, and collapses can now readily occur.

The GMReferee should have collapses happen whenever characters dig, throw or drop anything heavy (such as a loose building stone or flagstone from the keep), unleash damaging magic that comes into contact with keep floors, or when two or more characters charge and crash together into a monster, in the same 10ft-square area.

Collapse Effects: All creatures in contact with the floor area affected by the collapse (a 10ft-square expanse or larger, as the GMReferee decrees) must make a saving throw. If successful, they leap clear or up high to grab something or otherwise slow their fall, depending on the situation. If the save fails, the creature points of suffers 4d10 points of bludgeoning damage from the fall and from being struck by tumbling flagstones, fellow falling creatures, furniture, and debris from the floor structure.

Any creature underneath a collapse (i.e. in an open area or room below) when it occurs must also make a saving throw; if successful, they get clear with only 1d6 points of damage, and end up either outside the area of the collapse, or in it but entirely unencumbered by the fallen debris. If the points of save fails, they take 5d10 points of bludgeoning damage and are pinned under the rubble; if they have to dig themselves free without assistance, this takes 1d4+1 rounds, and in every round roll a die; for every odd result, they take 1d2 points of bludgeoning damage from shifting rubble during that round.

A groaning roar loud enough to echo through the surrounding forest accompanies each collapse of protesting and then falling stone. Clouds of dust swirl up, and smaller wedge stones crack and tinkle down in the wake of the main collapse.

Chain Reaction Collapse: When on the three upper floors and battlements (roof) of Nightstone Keep, any collapse down onto a lower floor has a 4-in-10 chance of collapsing that lower floor.

This same 4-in-10 chance applies to every collapse, so it's quite possible that a character falling through the roof could fall into the royal bedchamber below, face the full possible damage, then have the floor of that level give way and spill him into the throne room below (face full damage again). Then, that floor in turn could collapse and dump him into the feasting hall (facing full damage yet again), then plunge into the ground floor, facing full damage one more time — and then have the ground floor give way and drop him into the main cellar for yet another round of damage.

Throne Room

The keep's central stone support pillar, and the stone-block stair that ascends around it, dominates this big, open room (20-foot-high ceiling). Centered along the east wall is the feature that was intended to dominate the room: a tall, narrow stone throne blackened with old bloodstains that stands at a lean, facing west down the room but listing to the south. The floor underneath its southern side hasn't collapsed yet, but is well on the way to doing so (7-in-10 chance if any character comes within 10ft of the throne without their weight being supported off the floor in some way) thanks to earlier adventurers pulling out some stones under the throne in search of hidden treasure. Which they found and took, leaving nothing of value behind in this room.

Royal Chambers

This floor is the only level of the keep divided into rooms. Stone walls box in the stair around the central pillar so climbers can't see into the rooms around. The stair landing is part of this central room. A door — now sagging open, well on its way to collapse and easily broken through — separates it from a receiving room running the length of the southern wall of this floor.

The Receiving Room holds two long toadstool beds along the south wall that are home to slithering, hissing **snakes** and scuttling **spiders**. These creatures are harmless. The toadstool patches were once long, overstuffed couches, but long ago sagged to the floor and rotted to become rectangular festering lumps. Three candle-wheel lanterns spaced down the room hang on rusty chains from the ceiling. characters .These toadstool patches ,-spaced down the room

Two once-grand but now spongy-rotten closed doors open off the north walls of this room. The one to the west of the central stair gives into a Robing Room (wardrobe) that now contains racks of hanging black tatters of decay and stools that disintegrate if sat on. The chamber is home to many dead, shriveled-up spiders the size of human heads. The door to the east of the central stair opens into the royal bedchamber.

When the bedchamber is entered, no matter what the characters do, a trap springs: a grid array of rusty sword blades plummet from the ceiling on a chain to slam down to the floor inside the door, filling the entire 10ft-square area there. Luckily for the characters, the blades, grid, and chain are all on the verge of disintegrating, and fly apart in a cloud of dust and rust flakes upon impact, doing no damage but possibly, at the Referee's discretion, triggering a floor collapse.characters

The door faces the ruins of a huge and once very grand four-poster bed that now lies in rotten collapse atop a crushed human skeleton (an unfortunate adventurer killed by the falling bed when it collapsed atop her as she was crawling under the bed to reach a coffer behind a chamber pot). Two skeletal legs, still clad in a few scraps of leather that were once boots, protrude from under the foot of the bed.

Quite useful and still sturdy, the chamber pot miraculously survived uncrushed, and is a human-head-sized brass pot with two handles and a rim "seat" cast of solid brass, worth at most 25sp. The coffer was roughly chopped open by a subsequent searcher and whatever it held carried off.

Battlements

The stair up to the keep's roof once ended in a wooden trapdoor sheltered by a wooden-hood "weather shed" over it that kept rain and snow at bay, but both trapdoor and hood are now crumbling husks that let in everything. The carrion graw haven't disturbed either, but have covered the rest of the roof with their foul-smelling white droppings, and small bones from meals that began as creatures smaller than human size.

A human-waist-deep tangle of branches and twigs that serve the carrion graw as a nest cover the east end of the roof. Clambering around atop this is a slow struggle. Many of the pointed, fanglike merlons of the keep's crenellations have broken off and fallen, but those that remain are quite sturdy. Characters can use them to anchor ropes and climb down without them cracking and giving way — though climbing down the outside of the keep while either of the carrion graw can still fly is suicidal. The carrion graw delight in attacking such exposed targets.

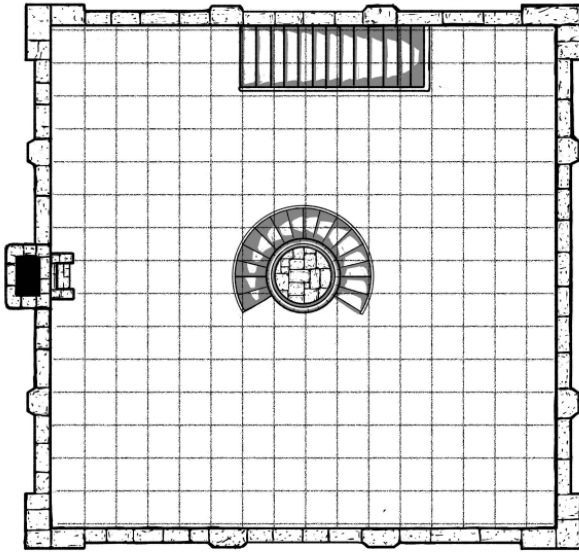
Anyone falling from the keep's roof to the ground takes 12d10 points of damage. If the PCcharacter instead falls through the existing hole in the courtyard to the floor of the Main Cellar, the landing instead does 14d10 points of damage.

The Keep Courtyard

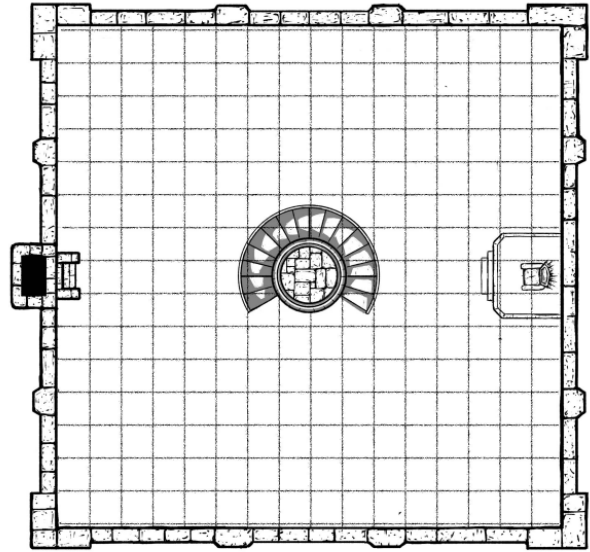
This overgrown, desolate unroofed area has a flagstone surface that has heaved upward in some places due to winter frost and tree roots in other seasons, and is missing — revealing dark holes down into depths below (the Main Cellar) — in others. Its rambling curtain wall isn't as black as the keep tower, and is in far worse repair. Trees have forced open several gaps, and in other places, the wall slumps over into untidy heaps of stone blocks.

NIGHTSTONE KEEP

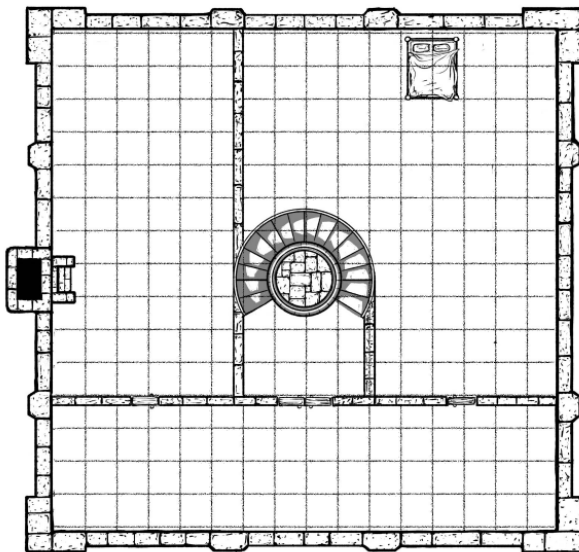
Second Floor: Feasting Hall



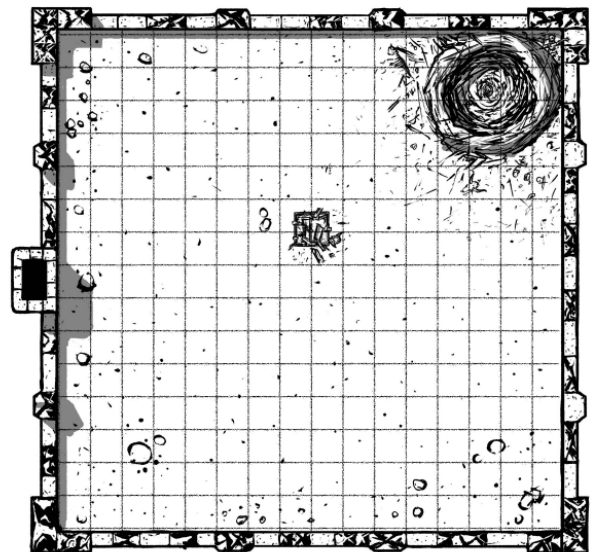
Third Floor: Throne Room



Fourth Floor: Royal Chambers



Fifth Floor: Battlements



Nightstone Keep

Upper levels

Interior wedge buttresses located at intervals around the inside of the curtain wall also seem to have collapsed. If examined more closely, it can be seen that they all incorporate stone chimneys connecting to underground areas in the Mainmain Cellarcellar beneath. Vandals in search of treasure pulled the stones from out stones in these shafts, causing the chimneys to either fall out into the courtyard, or to fall in, collapsing down into themselves and choking off the chimney shafts. Dead, gnarled trees thrust up through some of the “fallen out” chimney gaps, their bare branches reaching for the sky like the finger bones of a giant skeletal hands.

Character movement around the courtyard, especially near any of the existing holes, may well cause collapses, as more of the flagstone courtyard floor gives way and crashes down to the floor of the underlying Main Cellar (3-in-10 chance most places, but 5-in-10 within 10ft of any existing hole). The courtyard floor is 4ft thick, and the cellar room is 16ft high, so a collapse deals any falling character 2d10 points of damage.

There are **5 giant-mushroom-like glaur pods** standing in the courtyard, clustered around a huge stone treasure chest. Two of the pods have intact, spread-eagled human skeletons (off which the pods absorbed all the flesh and tissue) stuck to their outsides.

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The oversized “treasure chest” (a tall stone box with massive stone handles on either end, and a dome-topped lid) is actually a collective burial coffin for multiple people (the dead royals of Roodhondyn). It contains their tangled, intermingled bones and no treasure. The lingering remnants of a failing preservative spell cause some of the bones to levitate and move together in midair as one skeleton tries to reassemble itself in an upright stance, shedding bones that aren’t part of it. But none of the five skeletons crammed into the coffin is undead, and if the standing skeleton isn’t disturbed, the magic fades and it silently drifts downward back into a heap of bones again.. Bis ss

Glaur Pods (5): HD 6; HP 42, 40, 38x2, 35; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 spores (1d8); **Move** 9; **Save** 11; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** spit spores (20ft range). (see **New Monsters**)

Nightstone Below

The following areas are found underground beneath the keep.

Main Cellar

This large, irregular subterranean space has stone-block walls and 16-foot-high vaulted ceilings, but a floor 16 of fairly smooth solid bedrock. The air is dry rather than damp thanks to the ongoing moisture absorption of the fuzzy brown coating that is inches thick across the walls, floor, and ceiling — the “net” of arauglyd). The smell here is like very faint burnt toast (the smell of the arauglyd) rather than the more usual scent of earth or stone. All subterranean areas leading off the Main Cellar were carved out of solid rock, so their walls are relatively smooth stone, not stone blocks.

This cellar underlies the keep and part of the courtyard immediately west of it. There is a *Ahole* in its ceiling where a collapse occurred in the courtyard, flagstones and earth plummeting in the past to litter the floor after a latticework of timbers that held up the flagstones rotted (eaten by the expanding arauglyd). Character activities may well cause other collapses to occur precipitously (effects as described in the “Inside Nightstone” and “Keep Courtyard” sections).

The stone ramp descends into the Main Cellar from the ground floor of the keep, into a large open area. Around the walls of the room stand the stone benches and fire-blackened but long-cold hearths of the keep kitchen. Above the hearths are collapsed chimneys that formed part of the buttresses of the courtyard wall.

The “net” coating the walls, floor, and ceiling of the Main Cellar is a layer of fuzzy brown fungus, a carpet composed of star-radiating threads of mycelium emitted by the parent arauglyd. It now serves as a sensory net (through this extension, the main fungus can sense vibrations, see, smell, and hear).

Non-fire damage to the net in the Main Cellar, North Pantry, and South Pantry doesn’t harm the parent arauglyd. If set aflame, the net melts away very slowly, producing thick, opaque purplish-brownish-white and evil-smelling (“like wet unwashed puppy stink”) smoke that does a breathing creature 1 point of damage per round of inhalation (no saving throw). Characters can’t stop the burning except by dousing it with water, urine, or wine, or by cutting and scraping channels through the net so the burning part consumes up to the edge of the channel and then dies away rather than continuing on to burn the rest.:It. When it reaches the ceiling, ssslf characters

If the burning continues, and reaches the Deep Cavern, the parent arauglyd eventually suffers 3d4 points of fire damage per round. However, if the characters don’t take fire directly to the Deep Cavern, but leave the net to burn, the parent arauglyd is perfectly capable of sundering itself and withdrawing from the burning mass to let the fire “burn out” without extending farther. It can and does this repeatedly if necessary, and directs its spawn to concentrate attacks on the specific sources of fire attacks (i.e. particular characters).

Three glaur pods stand like giant mushrooms in widely separated spots in the main cellar. They do nothing unless attacked.



Glaur Pods (3): HD 6; HP 45, 40, 36; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 spores (1d8); **Move** 9; **Save** 11; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** spit spores (20ft range). (see **New Monsters**)

The Tentacle-Spider

On the ceiling of the Main Cellar, in the extreme northwestern corner but reaching out with its tentacles for 30 ft in all directions, is the dead, desiccated husk of a gigantic dead tentacle-spider of some sort. Its tentacles are suspended from the ceiling by rather elastic threads of mycelium that the parent arauglyd can extend and retract at will, to make the tentacles ripple and writhe, seeming to “crawl” along the ceiling toward the intruding characters.

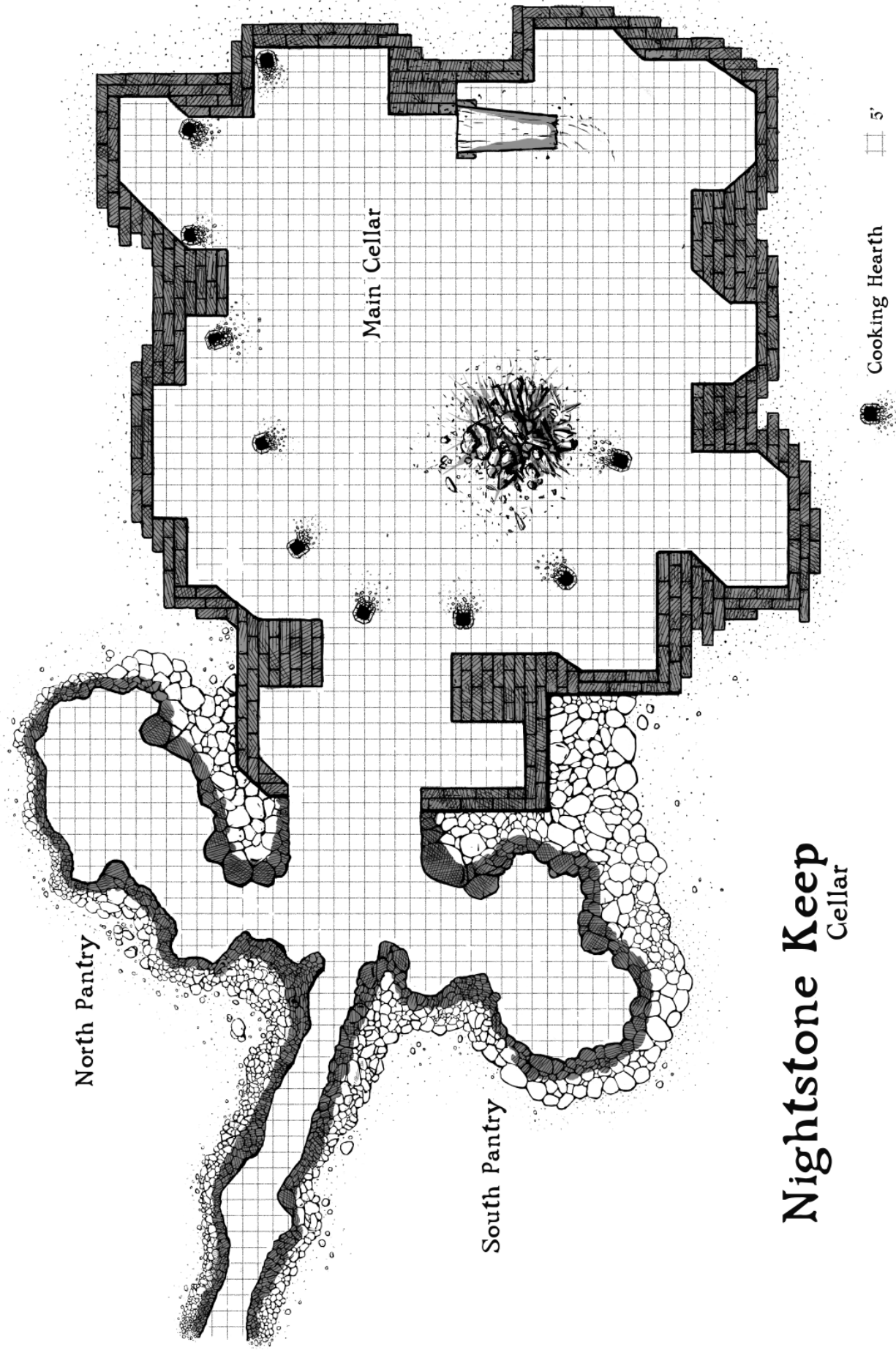
The main body of the spider is similarly suspended, so the entire creature can move slowly forward as if responding to the presence of the characters. The arauglyd is able to control this corpse like a marionette to try to scare off numerous or formidable foes — or in the case of groups of humans likely to unleash magic to “draw their fire.” The tentacle-spider corpse is very light (not much more than dust) and won’t even burn readily; if it falls on characters, it may hamper their vision and movement for a round or two, but does no other damage.

North Pantry

This cavern was stripped of useful contents before Queen Ismrelle fled; just one large split and leaking wooden ale cask was left behind in its cradles. It’s now a sad, rotting ruin. But behind its wreckage lurks a flight of **12 speartongues**. They dart up into the air in a dozen different directions, scattering, before all turning and racing to attack characters, forming four trios, so 3 speartongues assault a single target at a time. The speartongues are under orders to concentrate on anyone using magic first, then anyone making use of fire (open flame, then any light source), then anyone using missile weapons. They fight to the death, pursuing until destroyed or all intruders are dead.

Speartongues (12): HD 2; HP 15x2, 14, 13x2, 12x3, 10x2, 9x2; AC 6[13]; Atk spear tongue (1d2), tail slash (1d4); **Move** 9 (flying 18); **Save** 16; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** none. (see **New Monsters**)

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South Pantry

This cavern contains a neat row of seven sealed, 50-gallon wooden barrels standing on end, their widest hoops just touching. The moment any intruder enters the room, **3 speartongues** soar up from behind the barrels and swoop to the attack (fighting to the death). The **tendriledtendrilled maw** then thrusts through the center of the row, sending heavy, spoiled-ale-filled barrels rolling in all directions. Characters can avoid them with a saving throw; a character struck by a barrel takes 3d4 points of damage. The tendriledtendrilled maw moves as quickly as it can to the lone entrance to the room, trying to get to that entrance and block it as it turns to fight any characters in the cavern. The maw also fights to the death.

Speartongues (3): HD 2; HP 15, 13, 11; AC 6[13]; Atk spear tongue (1d2), tail slash (1d4); **Move** 9 (flying 18); **Save** 16; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** none. (see **New Monsters**)

TendriledTendrilled Maw: HD 6; HP 45; AC 8[11]; Atk 4 tendrils (1d6), bite (2d6); **Move** 6; **Save** 11; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 7/600; **Special:** tendrill sweep (2 hits on victim, sweep to mouth for automatic bite). (see **New Monsters**)

Long Passage

A **glaur guardian** hovers 60 feet down this passage. It slowly advances to meet and fight any intruders (other spawn of the arauglyd aren't "intruders"). Forty feet beyond is a second **glaur guardian** that follows the first and joins in any fray. These guardians fight to the death in the passage, but won't leave it; characters who retreat out of the passage or who reach the Armory, Oubliette, or the Wine Cellar are left alone, though the guardians watch them and attack anew should they re-enter the passage.

The passage ends in an oval chamber dominated by the stone statue of a human in plate armor, wearing a helm and gauntlets, who stands with his left hand upraised in greeting, and his right hand on the hilt of his scabbarded broadsword. The brown fuzzy "net" of the arauglyd entirely covers this likeness of King Redhand. Hiding behind it is a **tendriledtendrilled maw** that lashes out at anyone approaching the statue, and thereafter emerges to fight (to the death).

Three archways open off this chamber: from the viewpoint of someone proceeding along the passage from the Main Cellar, the archway on the left opens into the Armory, the archway in the center opens into the Oubliette, and the archway on the right opens into the Wine Cellar.

The stone statue of King Redhand has a head that unscrews to reveal a storage hollow inside its torso. A decaying canvas sack was thrust into this hiding place and contains 148gp.

Glaur Guardians (2): HD 8; HP 56, 51; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 tendrils (1d8), spores (1d4 plus sap); **Move** 9 (flying); **Save** 18; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 8/800; **Special:** spit spores (30ft range), sap (save or being held, -2 to hit until washed off). (see **New Monsters**)

TendriledTendrilled Maw: HD 6; HP 45; AC 8[11]; Atk 4 tendrils (1d6), bite (2d6); **Move** 6; **Save** 11; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 7/600; **Special:** tendrill sweep (2 hits on victim, sweep to mouth for automatic bite). (see **New Monsters**)

The Armory

This small chamber was emptied long ago of everything of value. What remains are spongy-rotten wooden racks all around the walls that once held multiple spears, swords, and quivers of arrows or crossbow bolts. In the center of the room lie two tilted rectangular piles of ruin that are the remnants of central tables where daggers, shields, and helms once lay, oiled and ready. These and the walls, floor, and ceiling are all overgrown with the fuzzy brown net of the arauglyd — and fist-sized brown spores (fuzzy brown balls with spikes sticking out of them in all directions) drift lazily in midair in this room. They are harmless, but the arauglyd senses if any are moved or damaged, and readies its defenders and traps.

If characters rake through the overgrown wrack on the floor, they find dozens of scurrying, harmless copper-hued beetles, both tiny and the size of an adult human palm, and three rusty links (hammered-flat iron rings, now orange-brown and crumbling) of chainmail.

Oubliette

Here, the net of arauglyd is particularly thick, for it fed on years of grease, dead pets, and human waste that had been tossed over the waist-high stone wall that crosses this room, into the pit beyond. This refuse disposal is an irregularly walled natural hole down into the depths of the earth (GMReferees wishing to expand this adventure could connect it to deeper caverns beyond), but the human inhabitants of Nightstone Keep never cared to explore it.

The arauglyd entered the ruined keep up the walls of this natural underground cavity. Now, **3 tendriledtendrilled maws** lie hidden on the pit side of the wall, clinging to the stone verges of the shaft. They fling their tentacles up over the wall to lash out hungrily at any intruder.

The maws fight aggressively until reduced to 6 hit points or fewer, whereupon they'll tug themselves to where they'll topple down the hole, and fall out of sight (presumably to recuperate below, or perish and be absorbed by the arauglyd).

Any character flung into the shaft by the maws falls 60ft onto stone ledges partway down the shaft, ricocheting off the rough angled walls of stone to get there (6d10 points of damage, save for half damage). points of The walls are slick with arauglyd; any non-thief character trying to climb out without the aid of comrades letting down ropes from above has a 7-in-10 chance per 10ft climbed of slipping 10 (1d3 points of damage). he 7-in-); points of 10If the arauglyd is burned or physically scraped off the stone walls of the shaft, the chance of slipping goes from 7 in 10 per 10ft to 2 in 10. he es

TendriledTendrilled Maws (3): HD 6; HP 42, 40, 36; AC 8[11]; Atk 4 tendrils (1d6), bite (2d6); **Move** 6; **Save** 11; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 7/600; **Special:** tendrill sweep (2 hits on victim, sweep to mouth for automatic bite). (see **New Monsters**)

The Wine Cellar

This cavern once stored many rundlets (small kegs) of wine to slake the thirsts of the Roodhonds, but they were all taken away, either when Queen Ismrelle abandoned Nightstone or by brave foragers since. Only the stone niche shelves that stored the kegs and kept them cool remain (around every part of the cavern except a stretch of its eastern wall), and they are thickly coated in the brown fuzz of the arauglyd.

A **glaur guardian** floats in this cavern, centered in front of the east wall and about 10 ft out from it. It guards that section of east wall. It watches characters who investigate the shelving, but does nothing. However, it fights any who try to get past it to reach what it is guarding: a natural spring of clear, potable water that trickles out of the east wall near the ceiling, into a carved-out stone basin, then drains away into the depths of the earth. The basin cut out of the floor was enlarged until the seepage rate out of the floor exactly kept pace with the flow of the spring, so the basin is always full. Almost 20 rotten wooden buckets stand on the floor here adjacent to the basin. They were once used to ferry water wherever it was needed in Nightstone, but have long since moldered, abandoned.

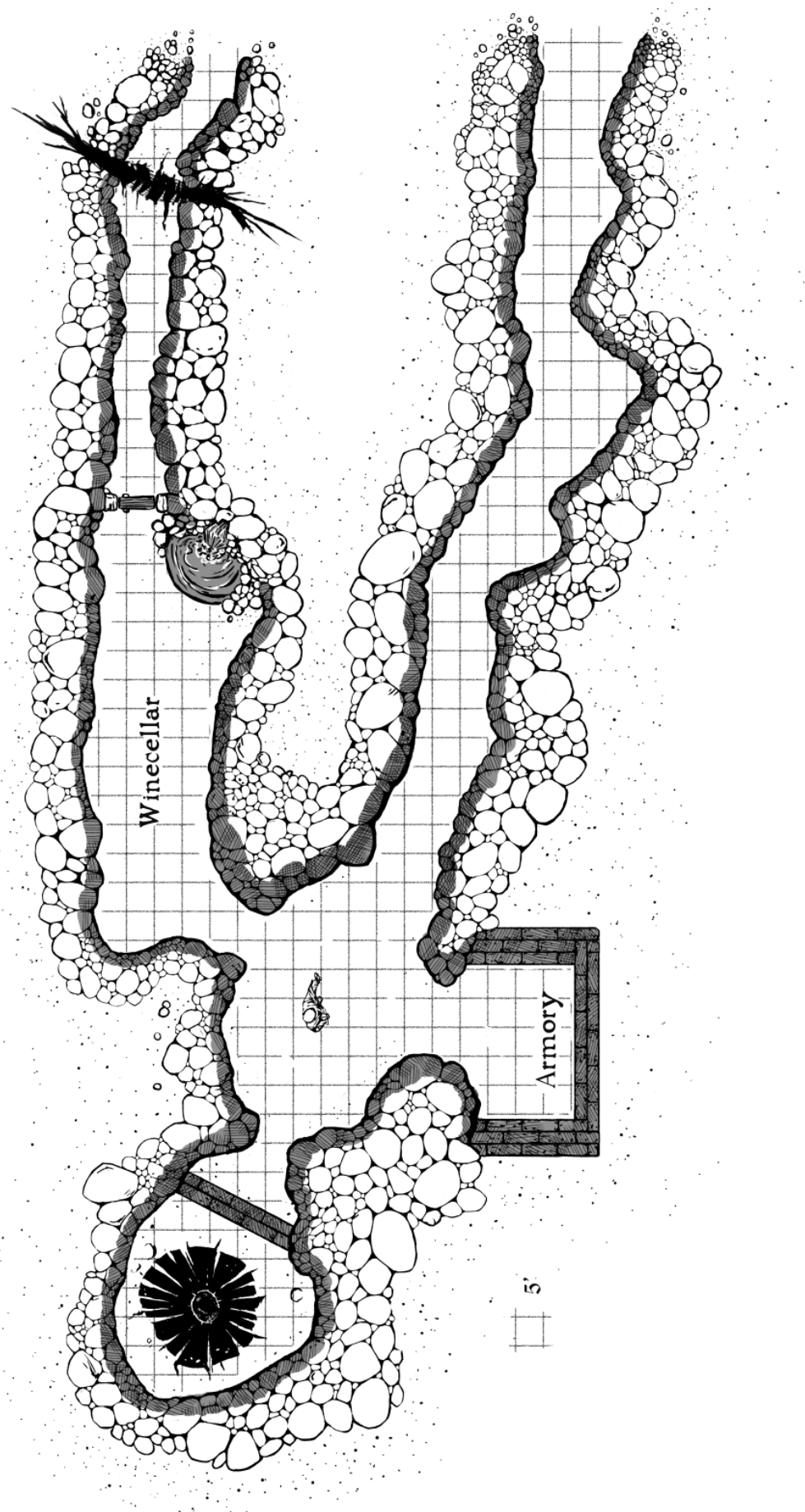
A plain, unlocked wooden door set in a frame is on the east wall beside the spring.

If characters open it, they discover that the door is concealing (and controlling access to) a natural rent or fissure in the stone wall where the Wine Cellar cavern was naturally connected to deeper caverns beneath the earth. From the Wine Cellar, the way leads on (via a damp, sloping natural passageway).

Glaur Guardian: HD 8; HP 50; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 tendrils (1d8), spores (1d4 plus sap); **Move** 9 (flying); **Save** 18; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 8/800; **Special:** spit spores (30ft range), sap (save or being held, -2 to hit until washed off). (see **New Monsters**)

Nightstone Keep

Oubliette



Descending Passage

Sixty feet from the Wine Cellar, the rough-walled natural passage descends about 10 ft, and crosses a fault in the rock, a 4in-wide crack crossing the passage. The ceiling of the passage fell away along the fault long ago. Someone subsequently cleared away the rubble, so that what is left now is a 4in-wide crack crossing the passage floor and in either wall — and a half-conical cavity in the passage ceiling, its “straight” wall being the deeper side of the fault (the direction the passage is descending, away from the Wine Cellar). This cavity is 20 ft high and only inches wide at its top, but down where it meets the passage ceiling, it is 20 ft across, which is plenty of room for a **glaur guardian** to hover here, up in the half-cone above the passage, waiting to attack intruders in the passage beneath it. es

Glaur Guardian: HD 8; HP 47; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 tendrils (1d8), spores (1d4 plus sap); **Move** 9 (flying); **Save** 18; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 8/800; **Special:** spit spores (30ft range), sap (save or being held, -2 to hit until washed off). (see **New Monsters**)

Upper Cavern

Forty feet deeper than its floor at the cleft, the Descending Passage opens out into this large, irregularly shaped natural cavern. The rock is limestone, and the floors and ceiling are hundreds of long, slender, fanglike stalactites and stalagmites, hundreds of them. The thick, brown fuzziness of the arauglyd coats all of them.

In the many clefts among the stony fangs lurk **36 speartongues**. They remain motionless, looking like tiny stalactites among all the real ones, until the foremost intruding characters are near the center of the chamber (unless only one character ventures forward to explore; in that case, they’ll wait until two or more have passed the midpoint of the cavern). All of them then dart down to attack in unison, swarming intruding characters from all sides, and fighting until they or all intruders are destroyed (they pursue retreating characters all the way to the surface and beyond, if need be).

In some places, the arauglyd arranged its net in a double layer, so intruders who enter the wrong area and disturb the mycelium threads hidden in the brown carpet beneath their feet trigger a fall of thick, clinging layer of fungus in which fragments of broken-off stalactites are imbedded. This plummets onto their heads, instantly blinding them, rendering them unable to wield weapons or tools, or to use their limbs, and hampering breathing. Comrades outside the net must free trapped characters. Creatures caught in the net must make a saving throw each round or take 2d4 points of damage from the the point arauglyd dust searing their lungs, throat, nostrils, eyeballs, and inner ears as if subjected to a hot, direct fire. points of The arauglyd coats dead, immobilized or trapped creatures in its net, and slowly (over a period of days) drains their bodily fluids, causing them to end up as shriveled empty skin over bones, and then just bones.

In other places in this cavern, the floor falls away in deep cavities, but the arauglyd has spread itself to cover these pits — and even shaped false up-jutting stalagmites of itself. Any intruder stepping into these areas of the ever-present brown fuzzy carpet of fungus falls through the fuzzy brown fungal carpet into the pit — the bottom of which is furnished with natural stalagmite “spikes” — so they’ll suffer 2d10 points of falling damage plus 2d10 points of piercing damage.

From the Upper Cavern, a narrow, winding passage descends steeply into the dDeep cCavern.

Speartongues (36): HD 2; HP 16x3, 15x4, 13x5, 12x3, 11x6, 10x4, 9x5, 8x2, 7x4; **AC** 6[13]; **Atk** spear tongue (1d2), tail slash (1d4); **Move** 9 (flying 18); **Save** 16; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** none. (see **New Monsters**)

The Deep Cavern

This cave lacks stalactites and stalagmites. It does have several pits in the floor, but these are hidden under the brown fuzzy net (see “Sucking

Pits,” below.) The main **arauglyd** thickly carpets everything here — walls, floor, and ceiling — up to 4ft in depth, for this is its main body.

In the center of the cavern is a natural pool of upwelling water that the arauglyd absorbs as it needs moisture. If faced with fire, it thrusts as much of itself underwater as it can, displacing a wash of water over much of the rest of the floor that lessens any fire damage it takes.

The arauglyd fights to the death, extending pseudopods of itself from the ceiling and floor behind characters for its initial slam attacks (it has room to launch its full six slams, in every round). It fills the air with swirling spores, making vision difficult beyond 10ft (-1 to hit, save avoids), and ripples itself underfoot constantly (save every round or fall over).

If the characters do not threaten the arauglyd with fire or lightning, it manages to spontaneously spawn a **glaur guardian** in the sixth round of combat, and another **glaur guardian** in the twelfth.

Sucking Pits: The arauglyd conceals four pits in the cavern floor. Whenever a character steps into one, the arauglyd surges up around him like a fist and yanks the character down (saving throw to avoid being dragged down), immediately covering him over and causes the victim to suffocate.

The arauglyd has a tactic to lure characters to particular locations (such as the sucking pits), and to spread them apart so they can be overwhelmed separately. It can thrust bits of itself up out of its net that are shaped like people, bits it can move and manipulate so these fake “entirely coated in brown fuzziness but straining to get free” people wave limbs wildly and seem to struggle, reaching for characters in desperate but silent entreaty before being dragged back down. If a character is fooled and tries to lock hands with one of these ruses to pull it to safety, that character is automatically hit by the s arauglyd’s slam attack.

The arauglyd keeps the part of itself that’s firmly wrapped around the *gem of vitality* submerged in the pool. Only after it is reduced to half of its total hit points will it be thinned enough that the glow of the gem becomes visible, glimmering up through the water.

This particular *gem of vitality* is mounted in a silver-alloy-coated harness of steel that holds it securely without gripping it hard, in a cage that has multiple rings built into its frame through which chain “straps” have been threaded (and bolted, to prevent them being pulled out of the rings). It can be worn by a human on chest or back, or strapped to them as they lie wounded on the ground or in a bed or litter.

The arauglyd is wrapped around the *gem of vitality*, and is drawing on its magic in a unique arauglyd manner to grow and expand itself, so it has no intention of surrendering the magic stone.

The arauglyd can regenerate, and learns from its experiences. If it’s sorely wounded by an initial battle against adventurers and thinks survivors may soon return with reinforcements, it raises barriers, increases traps, and retreats behind layers of its own guardian spawn. However, it will not abandon the caverns beneath Nightstone, for it considers them an ideal lair.

If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, it vibrates what’s left of itself to pump air through itself that it shapes and reverberates to haltingly form human speech, deep-pitched whistling words such as “Go back!” and “Terrible mistake!” and “You bring the curse upon you!” and finally “Mercy!”

If at any point a character is engulfed but gets free, or falls asleep in contact with any part of the arauglyd net, the GMReferee may elect to have a few stealthy spores of arauglyd creep into the character’s ears and be carried along inside his body. It is expelled with human waste when it is in a locale it desires to spawn new colonies of itself — traveling characters can unwittingly spread scores of future foes to fight — foes that expand and grow remembering them, and planning for their doom.

Arauglyd: HD 11; HP 78; AC 7[12]; Atk 6 pseudopods (1d8); **Move** 6; **Save** 4; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 13/2300; **Special:** engulf (if 2 pseudopods hit, victim engulfed and suffocates; save avoids), regenerate (3d4 hp/round), spawn (fire or lightning attacks spawn 1d4 glaur pods or 1 glaur guardian in next round). (see **New Monsters**)

Appendix A: New Creatures and NPCs

Araunglyd

Hit Dice: 11
Armor Class: 7[12]
Attacks: 6 pseudopods (1d8)
Saving Throw: 4
Special: engulf, regenerate, spawn
Move: 6
Alignment: Neutrality
Number Encountered: 1
Challenge Level: 13/2300

Araunglyd resemble fuzzy mottled brown carpets or heaped masses adhering to walls, floors, and ceilings. They grow to massive size, and spread sentient colonies connected by a hive mind. They attack by slamming with pseudopods they raise up from their amorphous body mass. If an araunglyd hits a single creature with at least 2 pseudopods, the target must make a saving throw or be engulfed. An engulfed creature begins to suffocate from the thick mass. Araunglyd can spawn various protectors, including glaur pods and guardians, and speartongues, and summon them to its side if needed. An araunglyd regenerates 3d4 hit points per round. If an araunglyd is hit by fire or lightning, it frantically spawns 1d4 glaur pods or 1 glaur guardian in the next round. They communicate via telepathy to warn creatures away.

Araunglyd: HD 11; AC 7[12]; Atk 6 pseudopods (1d8);
Move 6; **Save** 4; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 13/2300; **Special:** engulf (if 2 pseudopods hit, victim engulfed and suffocates; save avoids), regenerate (3d4 hp/round), spawn (fire or lightning attacks spawn 1d4 glaur pods or 1 glaur guardian in next round).

Carrion Graw

Hit Dice: 6
Armor Class: 3[16]
Attacks: 2 claws (1d6), beak (1d8)
Saving Throw: 11
Special: grab
Move: 12/24 (flying)
Alignment: Neutrality
Number Encountered: 1 or 2
Challenge Level: 6/400

Carrion graw, despite their name, prefer to kill and eat prey; their name derives from their croaking call (“Graw! Graw!”) and their habit of descending (like vultures) on battlefields to gorge themselves on the wounded, dying, and dead — and of leaving corpses to dine on later. They are burly, broad-shouldered birds that look like giant crowshawks. Graw have keen eyesight, are always alert, and react quickly. If a carrion graw hits a single target with both claws, it grabs the victim. The target can break free by rolling beneath its strength on 4d6. If the check fails, the carrion graw slams the victim down on any impaling spike, weapon or branch for 4d4 points of damage.

Carrion Graw: HD 6; AC 3[16]; Atk: 2 claws (1d6), beak (1d8);
Move 12 (flying 24); **Save** 11; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** grab.

Glaur Guardian

Hit Dice: 8
Armor Class: 4[15]
Attacks: 2 tendrils (1d8), 2 spores (1d4 plus sap)
Saving Throw: 8
Special: sap, spit spores, telepathy
Move: 6 (flying)
Alignment: Neutrality
Number Encountered: 1 or 1d4+1
Challenge Level: 8/800

Glaur guardians hang in the air like giant jellyfish. They are large, flat-headed blobs of a mottled yellow-brown hue, with the rough shape of an inverted cone, blistered all over with irregular pimple-like bulges. A “tail” of half a dozen stalk-like tentacles or tendrils of the same hue, with long, narrow leaf-shaped flattened ends, hang down from the central body. They fire spores up to 30ft, and raise a random pair of tendrils to lash out. They can communicate via telepathy, but this is usually to assail intruders with a relentless repetition of “go away.” A glaur guardian fires round, spiky brown globes of dust up to 20ft that burst to reveal a sticky core. Any creature hit by a spore must make a saving throw or be covered in the sticky sap (–2 to hit). The sap can be washed away with water, alcohol or lamp or fish oils.

Glaur Guardian: HD 8; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 tendrils (1d8), spores (1d4 plus sap); **Move** 9 (flying); **Save** 18; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 8/800;
Special: spit spores (30ft range), sap (save or being held, –2 to hit until washed off).

Glaur Pod

Hit Dice: 6
Armor Class: 5[14]
Attacks: 2 spores (1d8)
Saving Throw: 11
Special: spit spores
Move: 9
Alignment: Neutrality
Number Encountered: 1 or 1d4+1
Challenge Level: 6/400

Glaur pods are mottled brown giant mushrooms covered in a fuzzy coating of sensory hairs. They sway as they drag themselves along on dozens of small, root-like tentacles. A glaur pod fires round, spiky brown globes of dust up to 20ft that burst into a fine mist when they strike a creature. The mist is harmless, but the globe hits with great force.

Glaur Pod: HD 6; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 spores (1d8); **Move** 9; **Save** 11; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** spit spores (20ft range).

Speartongue

Hit Dice: 32
Armor Class: 6[13]
Attacks: tongue spear (1d42), tail slash (21d44)
Saving Throw: 146
Special: none
Move: 9/18 (flying)
Alignment: Neutrality
Number Encountered: 1, 2 or 2d6
Challenge Level: 32/630

Speartongues are flying plants with cylindrical bodies and needle-thin tails, fins, and eyes on either side. Their mottled brown bodies can shift hue to match their surroundings. Speartongues dart about aggressively, behaving like animals (for which they are often mistaken). Speartongues attack with a tongue spear and a vicious tail slash.

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Tendriled Maw**Spear****tongue**: HD 32; AC 6[13]; Atk spear tongue (1d42), tail slash (21d44); **Move** 9 (flying 18); **Save** 146; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 32/630; **Special**: none.

Tendrilled Maw

Hit Dice: 6

Armor Class: 8[11]

Attacks: 4 tendrils (1d6), bite (2d6)

Saving Throw: 11

Special: tendrill sweep

Move: 6

Alignment: Neutrality

Number Encountered: 1, 1d2+1

Challenge Level: 7/600

A tendriled maw is a large amorphous blob of plant matter that oozes along the ground as a cylindrical mass with an open, oval mouth surrounded by protruding lips. When it attacks, the lips expand to reveal themselves as 20ft-long tendrils rooted in pairs around the vicious mouth. If a tendriled maw hits a single victim with 2 tendrils, it sweeps the creature into its mouth to automatically bite with its bone-like fangs.

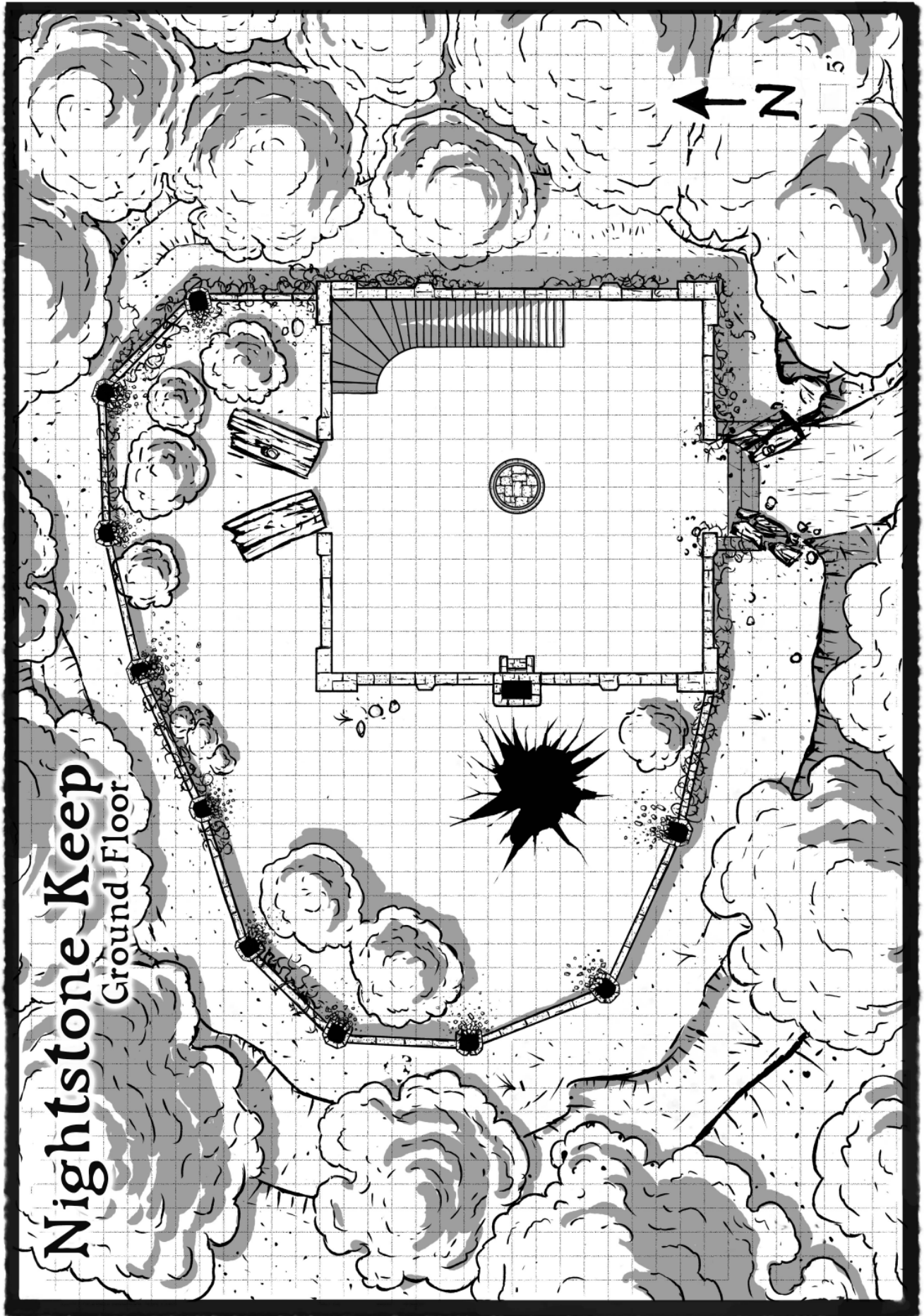
TendriledTendrilled Maw: HD 6; AC 8[11]; Atk 4 tendrils (1d6), bite (2d6); **Move** 6; **Save** 11; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 7/600; **Special**: tendrill sweep (2 hits on victim, sweep to mouth for automatic bite).

Appendix B: New Magical Item

Greater Miscellaneous Magical Item

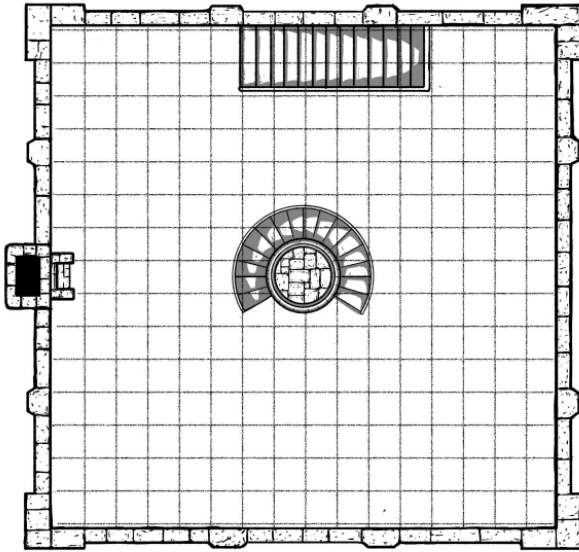
Gem of Vitality

This human-head-sized, trillion-cut-faceted gem emits a soft white radiance that pulses with a slow, steady rhythm. Upon direct contact with flesh, it cures any disease or poison, and instantly ends unconsciousness and deafness. It restores 1d4+3 hit points every round. Contact with a *gem of vitality* cures blindness in 1d4+1 rounds, causes organ and limb regeneration (full regrowth in 1d6+4 rounds), and over time (5d20 days), can bring a dead creature it is in continuous contact with back to life.

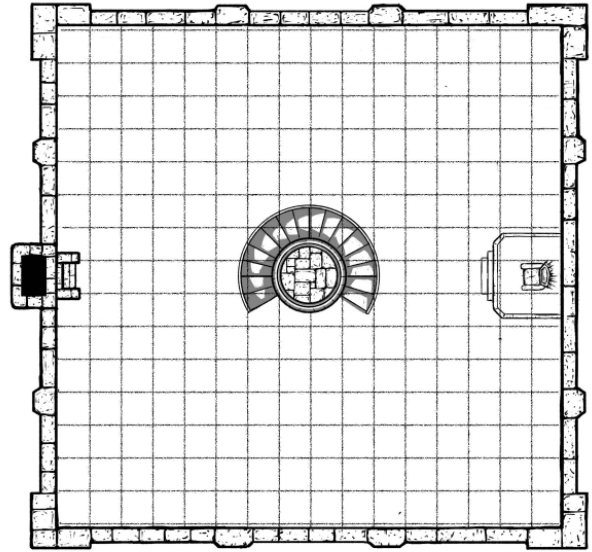


NIGHTSTONE KEEP

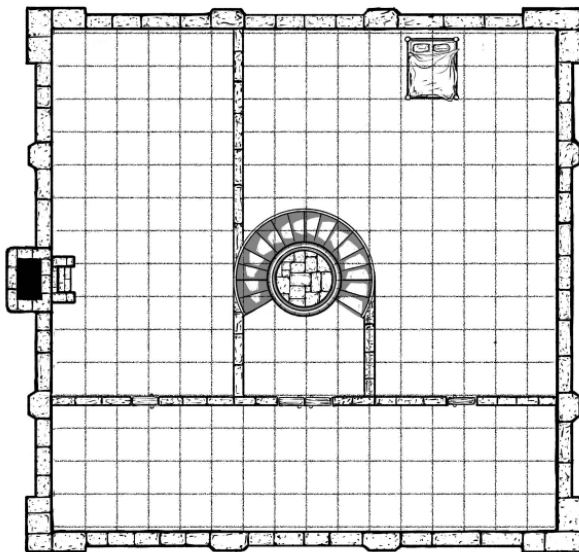
Second Floor: Feasting Hall



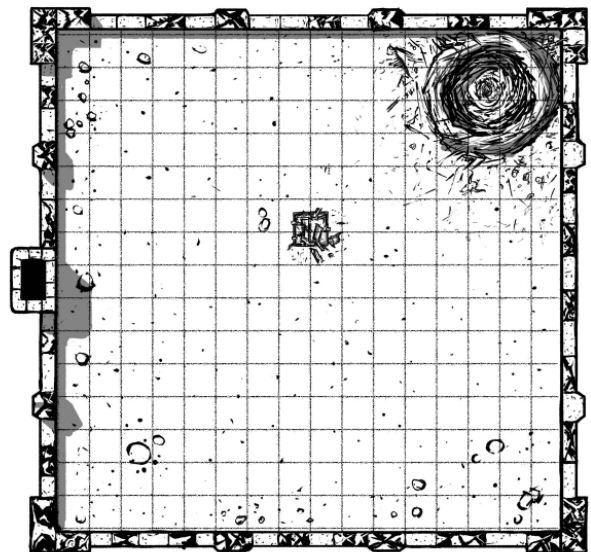
Third Floor: Throne Room



Fourth Floor: Royal Chambers

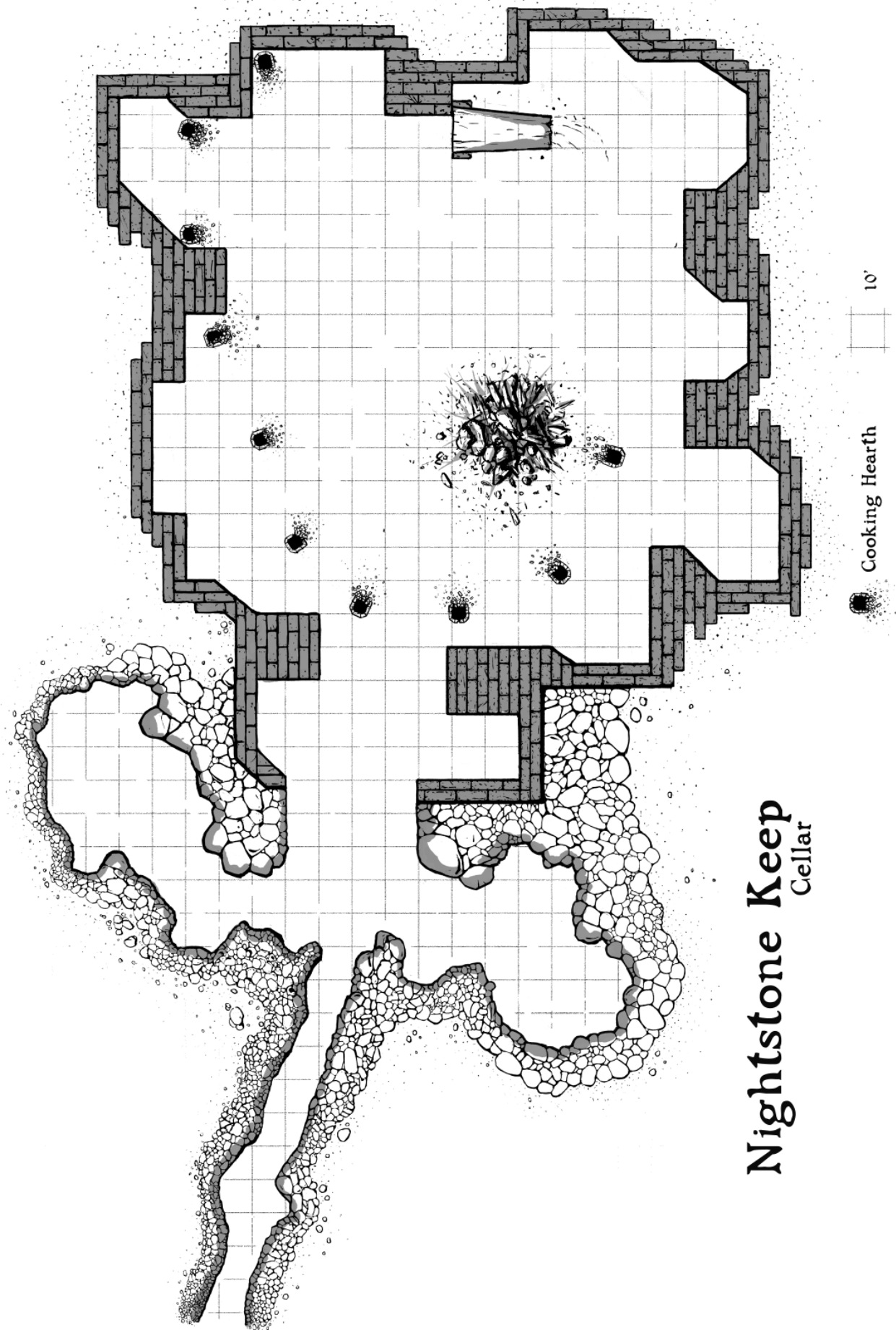


Fifth Floor: Battlements



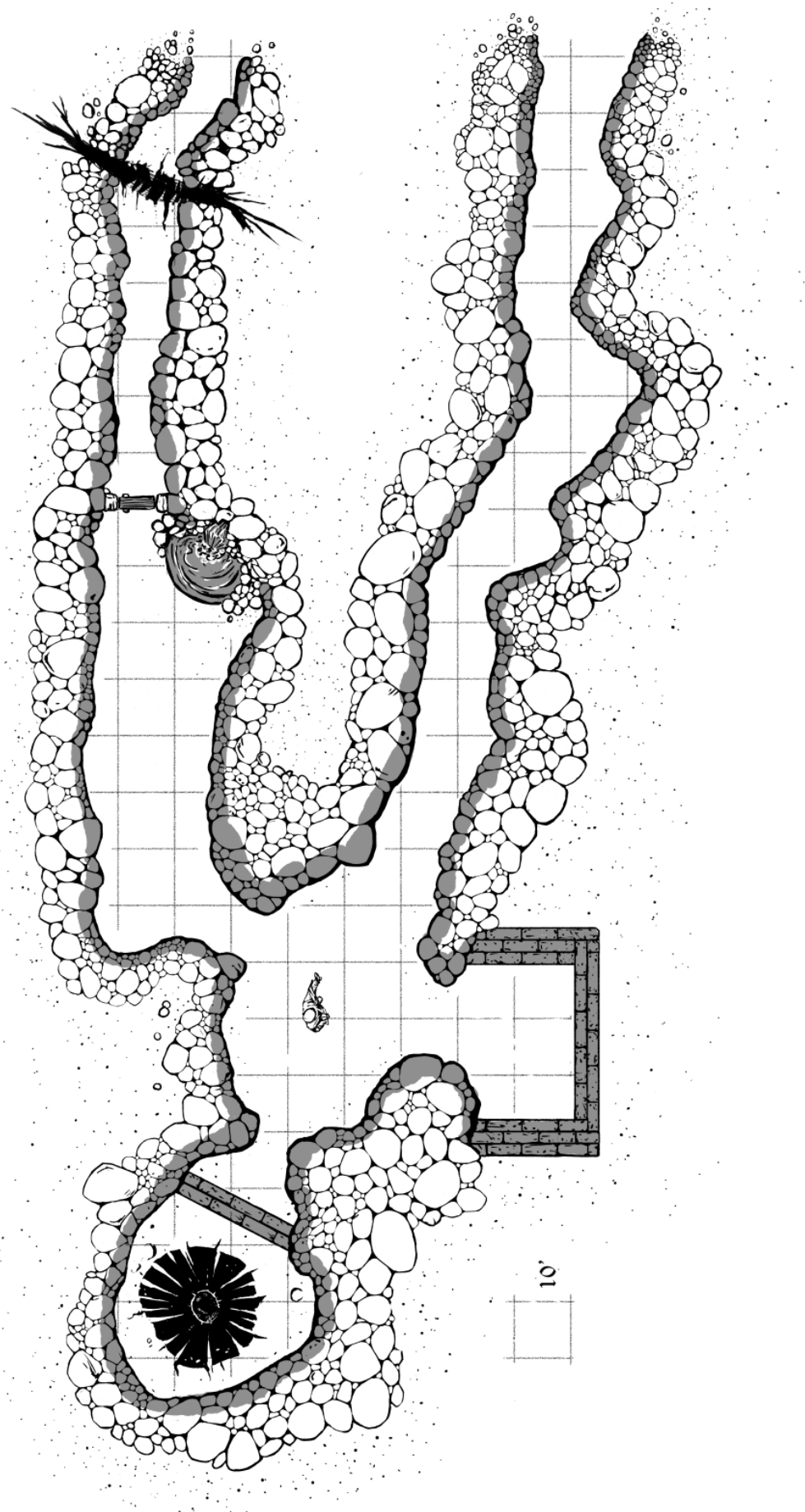
Nightstone Keep

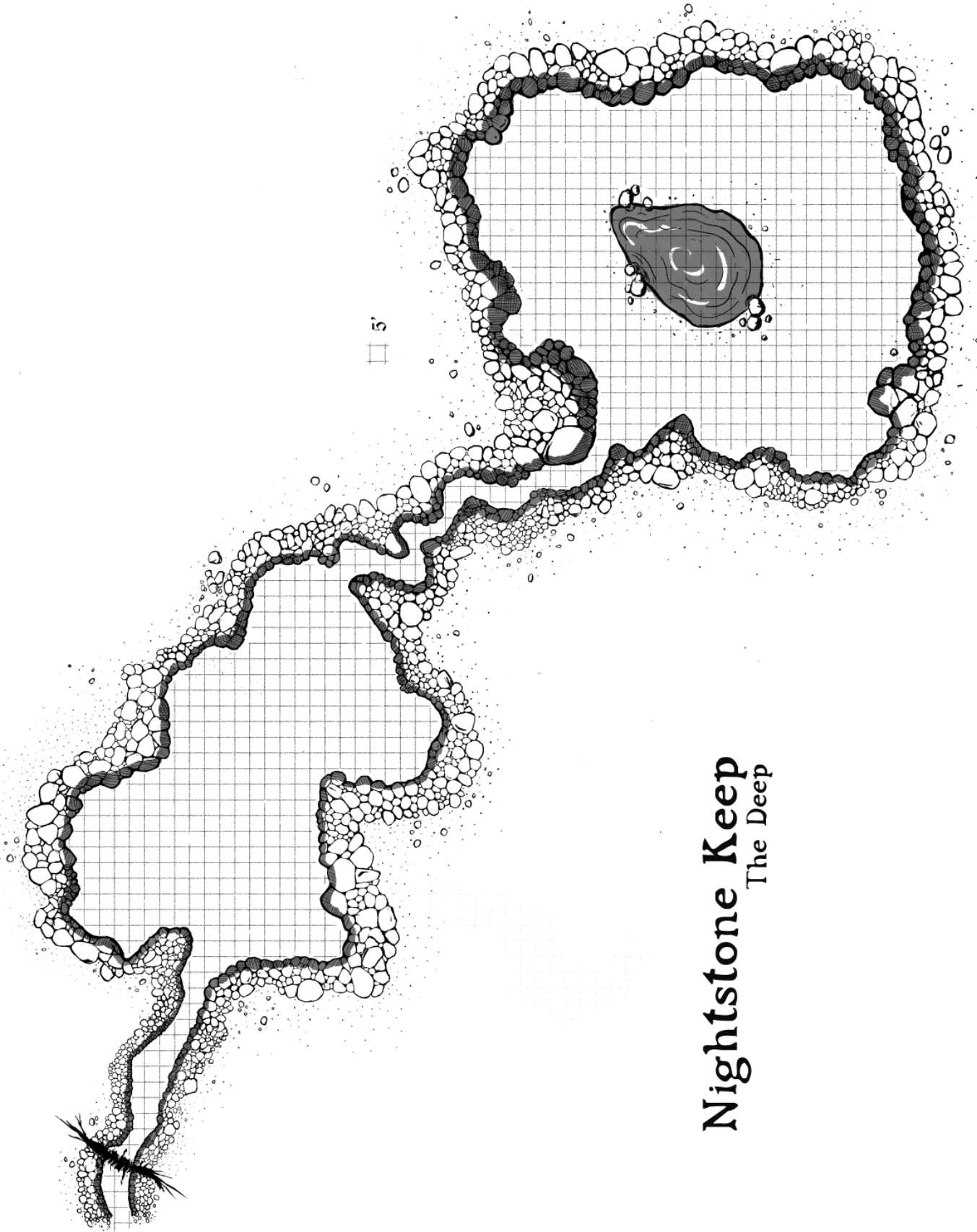
Upper levels



NIGHTSTONE KEEP

Nightstone Keep
Oubliette





Nightstone Keep
The Deep

NIGHTSTONE KEEP

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QoD 4h

Quests of Doom 4

Nightstone Keep

Nightstone Keep is a location-based, Swords & Wizardry adventure for characters of 4th to 6th level, centered on a ruined, long-disused stone keep in a temperate wild forest area (possibly not far off a caravan road or forest trail). If you are using the Lost Lands campaign setting, Nightstone Keep is located in the northeastern extent of the Unclaimed Lands where they extend between the southern reaches of the Forest Kingdoms and the Glimmerrill Run.

The Unclaimed Lands are detailed in *LL5: Borderland Provinces* by Frog God Games.



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ISBN 978-1-62283-411-2

