

SW 1 - An adventure for characters of 3rd to 4th Level
Compatible with the Swords & Wizardry game

The Monastery of Inexorable Truth



David Pryzbyla



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Charred Corpse

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The Monastery of Inexorable Truth

A Swords & Wizardry adventure for characters of 3rd to 4th Level

Long ago the monks of the Order of Veracity retreated from civilization and carved a monastery from the rock of the northern mountains. Here the seasons are mainly distinguished by the severity of the cold and snow. Few visitors troubled the monks, and most years, only supply caravans and a few new acolytes reached the monastery.

The monks prayed, mortified their flesh, practiced their physical arts, and studied their holy books. They sought knowledge untainted by the opinions or interpretations of men. They beseeched their god, Ket the Unbroken, for Truth.

Decades passed and the monks' faith never wavered. Well satisfied, Ket provided that which they desired, in the form of the magical *Codex of Inexorable Truth*. The monks were overjoyed, but soon learned that truth does not always provide peace and solace. Truths can also be secrets that should never be told, and the Codex exposed facts that many monks regretted learning. Some of these truths set monk against monk. Many died in outbursts of rage brought on by the words they read in the Codex. A few escaped to civilization and renounced allegiance to Ket. Ket transformed the remaining monks into guardians that are neither alive nor dead.

Myths soon surrounded the *Codex of Inexorable Truth*, a book that would truthfully answer any question. Adventurers dreamed of what they might achieve with such knowledge and trekked north in search of the Codex. Many found the monastery, as its location was no secret. Rumors claim that some adventurers returned and achieved wealth, power, or fame. These are just rumors, but rumors are enough to send a man into the frigid northern mountains.

For the Referee

The adventure assumes that the monastery is located in a cold and rocky place far from the urban centers of civilization. The referee should determine how difficult it is for the characters to reach the monastery and whether other adventurers are also simultaneously seeking the *Codex of Inexorable Truth*.

Inhabitants of the settlements nearest the monastery will certainly know its location, and may warn travelers to avoid the place. Few adventurers that journey to the monastery ever return, and those that do survive often become haunted and withdrawn shells of their former selves. The Referee should provide these settlements, as they are not included as part of the adventure.

Using The *Codex of Inexorable Truth*

The Referee must prepare for the characters' use of the Codex. This is a magical item of immense potential, reminiscent of the fabled *Wish* spell. Characters can ask questions that result in the acquisition of vast wealth or power. The questions they ask, however, are always balanced by an additional answer to a question they do not ask. This second answer is often a consequence of the first question and something that may be very difficult to accept. The Codex itself is described fully in a later section of the adventure.

For example, a character may first ask: How can I loot King Cedric's treasury? The *Codex* will provide an answer that describes how to successfully complete this task. But it will also answer a second unasked question, such as: What personal cost will be associated with looting the treasury? The answer might be the death or ruin of family members or a best friend, which will inevitably come to pass if the treasury is looted. Additional ideas for the second answer are included in the description of the Codex.

The Codex is an unusual item that can be difficult to adjudicate, but offers outstanding hooks for future drama and adventure. For this

reason, this adventure works much better as part of a campaign rather than a one-shot. In a campaign, the repercussions of using the Codex can inspire future adventures and play out over many game sessions. The Referee should try his utmost to learn ahead of time what questions the characters may ask; otherwise, it could be difficult to provide answers on the spur of the moment.

Adventure Hooks

The Referee should find it easy to introduce rumors regarding the Codex. There are many reasons characters might wish to ask questions of the *Codex of Inexorable Truth*.

1. The characters wish to accomplish some impossible task, ranging from a daring theft to raising a friend from the dead, and the Codex is a possible solution to the problem.
2. An employer or superior sends the characters with a question for the Codex. Perhaps the question is sealed and should not be read until they reach the Codex. This option makes the Referee's job of answering the question much easier, and works well if no character would be willing to ask a question of his own.
3. Followers of Ket hire the characters to learn the true fate of the monastery. The followers may not reveal that they hired other adventuring parties that never returned.
4. Adherents of a rival god want the Codex so that they can destroy it and weaken Ket's remaining power.

Ket the Unbroken

Ket usually attracts Lawful worshippers that pursue a contemplative or monastic way of life. For this reason, Ket has remained obscure and has never gained a large number of adherents. However, the followers of Ket tend to be more dedicated than the worshippers of most gods. They usually live in groups devoted to meditation and physical training. The monks of Ket, styled the Order of Veracity, believe their god earned his name when he would not break under torture by a cabal of rival gods. Ket's symbol is an addition sign in a perfect circle.

Ket believes that the collapse of the monastery was the fault of the monks. They could not handle the Truth they sought and thus engendered their own demise. Ket wants others to find and use the Codex, although he will not allow it to be removed from the monastery. Ket finds mortal reactions to the truth fascinating, and wishes to maintain both the enticement of the Codex and the obstacles to reaching it. For the latter reason, the monastery's guardians sometimes absorb fallen adventurers into their ranks.

Monastery Interior

The first monks were ingenious builders as well as devout worshipers. They tapped into subterranean magma channels and used magical means to transport the heat throughout the monastery. Battles during the monastery's fall damaged the heating system and circulation of the magma. Now, the temperature within the monastery varies widely: some sections are below freezing while other areas range from warm to very hot. The magma itself is only visible from three places: areas 8, 16, and 22.

Lantern and torch brackets are mounted on the walls of all rooms and corridors; the Referee should decide whether any brackets still hold lanterns or torches. Unless stated otherwise, all ceilings are about 12 feet high. The doors are made of wood. If an area has no number, there is nothing of intrinsic interest except that devised by the Referee.

About fifty monks inhabited the monastery before it was destroyed. Some of the bodies are still inside, while others are buried in the snow on the mountainside; the latter corpses are not described in this adventure. Adventurers have looted most areas of the monastery, although the treasury remains intact.

All corridors are considered to be 10 ft. wide.

4

Wandering Monsters

Check once every three turns for wandering monsters, with a 1 in 6 chance per check. Note that magma men will not venture into areas with below freezing temperatures. The agonized monks may take unconscious adventurers to the worship hall (area 23) for conversion to agonized initiates.

1. 1d3 Agonized Monks: HD 4; AC 6 [13]; Atk weapon or strike (1d8) or cry of anguish; Move 15; Save 12; AL L; CL/XP 5/240; Special: cry of anguish (+2 save or flee in terror 1 turn), alertness, deflect missiles, +2 weapon damage bonus.

2. 1d6 Charred Corpses: HD 2; AC 8 [11]; Atk strike (1d8) + 1d4 heat damage; Move 18; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; Special: immune to sleep and charm spells.

3. 1d3 Magma Men: HD 6; AC 4 [15]; Atk strike (1d8); Move 6; Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Ignite materials, ooze through cracks and move along any stone surface, vulnerable to cold.

4. 1d3 Ice Spiders: HD 2+2; AC 6[13]; Atk bite (1d6) or ice shell; Move 18; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; Special: ice shell (+1 save or immobilized), surprises 1 in 5

1. Monastery Entrance. *An archway carved from the mountain rock frames an open doorway. Blown snow forms drifts that extend a few feet into the corridor.*

Climate: Very cold.

Archway: The symbol of Ket the Unbroken is carved at the apex of the arch: a plus sign circumscribed by a circle.

Door: Open. The heavy wooden door is banded with iron and can be barred from the inside. The bar is missing.

Lever: A large iron lever protrudes from the stone to the left of the door. Pulling the lever moves a chain that rings a bell in the anteroom (area 2). The sound of the tolling can be heard through much of the monastery.

Adventurer Corpse: Just inside the doorway, the snow-covered body of a halfling adventurer

rests against the east wall. The snow has drifted high enough that the outlines of the corpse will not be obvious. The halfling's face is blistered from the heat touch of a charred corpse and his leather armor has been rent by claws. He still grips a worn short sword coated in dried blood.

Treasure: Fleeing companions looted the halfling but did not find a blue sapphire hidden in a hollow boot heel (900 gp).

2. Anteroom. *A long wooden bench lines the east wall. A dead man sits on the bench. Light from above illuminates the center of the room.*

Climate: Very cold.

Doors: North door closed but unlocked. West door is open.

Skylight: A 2-foot square shaft carved through the stone of the mountainside provides illumination.

Floor: The skylight shines upon a large symbol of Ket the Unbroken carved into the floor at the center of the room.

Bell: A large metal bell hangs from the ceiling near the skylight. A chain runs from the bell into a hole in the south wall. The chain connects to the lever at the monastery entrance (area 1).

Adventurer Corpse: The frozen man has clearly been looted of valuables. He wears leather armor and an empty sword sheath. An overturned backpack lay on the floor behind his feet. Closer inspection shows that the fingers of his right hand are broken, which occurred when his sword was taken. Odd spider web patterns of frost cover his exposed skin, evidence that a creeping chill killed him (see New Monsters).

3. Cloak Room. *Three bodies lay upon the floor, arranged in a crude triangle. At least a dozen cloaks hang from hooks upon the east wall. Boots are stationed beneath some of the cloaks.*

Climate: Above freezing due to warmer air drifting in from the north.

Doors: South door closed but unlocked. North

door is open.

Monk Corpses: Three monks fought and killed each other after questioning the *Codex of Inexorable Truth*. One monk still holds a sword he thrust through the chest of a second. The mouth of the second has bitten into the calf of the third. The foot of the third is tangled with the legs of the first. All wear brown robes and boots.

Hanging Cloaks and Boots: The brown cloaks and sturdy winter boots show obvious signs of decay.

4. Room of Reflection. *A square column of stone extends from floor to ceiling in the northeast portion of the room. Wide passages exit from the northeast and southwest corners. The northeast corridor is illuminated by a reddish glow.*

Climate: Warm as a pleasant spring day.

Door: South door open.

Column: Monks carved words into all four faces in a dialect of the Common Tongue. These are prayers beseeching Ket for clarity of thought and action before entering the exercise hall (area 17).

Illumination: Light from the magma bridge (area 16) spills from the northeast corridor.

5. Damaged Column. *A floor to ceiling stone column occupies the northeast portion of the room. It has clearly been damaged and large sections are missing. Chunks of stone surround the column.*

Climate: Above freezing due to warmer air drifting in from the northeast.

Doors: South door closed but unlocked. West door closed and locked.

Column: This column was originally similar to the column in the room of reflection (area 4). Crazy monks desecrated the stone, smashing the words after learning horrific truths from Ket. With some effort the chunks of stone may be partially deciphered. The words were prayers beseeching Ket's aid in finding the path towards truth and understanding.

6. Penitent Monk. *Frigid air wafts through the doorway. A robed man kneels in the center of the room, head bowed to the floor. This room feels much colder than the room with the damaged column.*

Climate: Very cold, sharply colder than area 5. The chill emanates from Ket's ire and does not abate even if the door is left open.

Door: Closed and locked.

Kneeling Monk: This monk felt deep shame after defacing the column in area 5. He ran into this room to hide from his fellows and pray for Ket's forgiveness. Ket rejected his pleas and froze him in place. Icicles hang from the corpse's eyebrows and beard. The brown robe is brittle and will shatter if touched, triggering a cold trap.

Cold Trap: Anyone touching the monk's robe must make a saving throw as the garment shatters. A failure causes 2d6 points of damage as icy shards of robe pummel the defiler; in addition, the character feels a deep chill that causes him to move and attack at half speed for 3 turns. With a successful save, the character takes 1d6 points of damage and feels a lesser chill that causes him to move and attack at half speed for 1 turn.

Treasure: The monk flung a well-crafted hammer and chisel into a rear corner. The monk also wears an *amulet of protection +1* with the symbol of Ket in relief upon the surface.

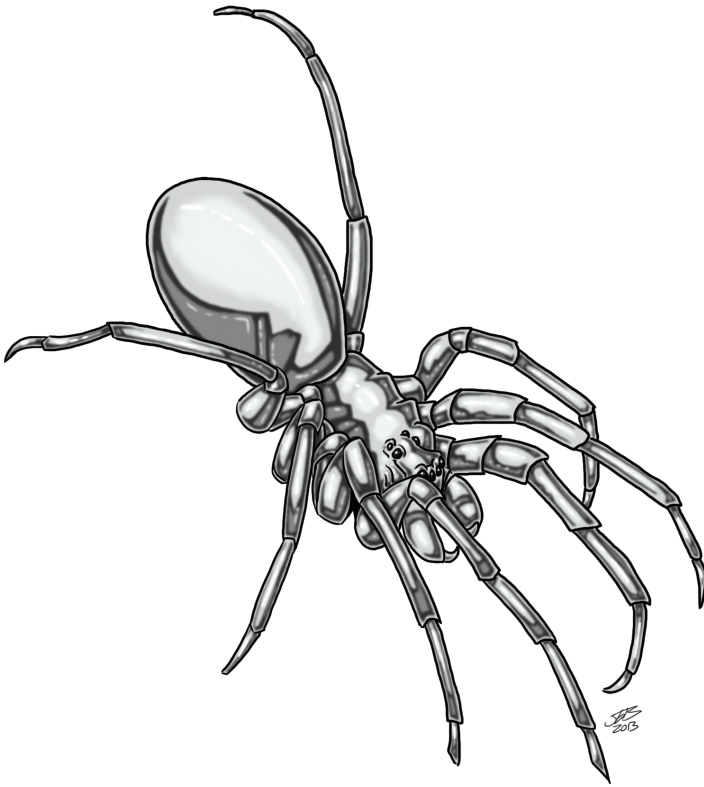
7. Ice Spider Lair: *Frost crystals coat the walls of this frigid corridor.*

Climate: Very cold.

Doors: North and west doors are closed but unlocked. East door is open.

Bones: The bones of ice spider victims are piled in the western end of the area. Most bones are from animals such as rats and wolves, but a few are from the humanoid races.

Creatures: A colony of ice spiders (see New Monsters) occupies the eastern end of the corridor, near the door to the anteroom (area 2). They hide along the ceiling in their frosty webs and wait for prey to enter the corridor.



Ice Spider

Ice Spiders (3): HD 2+2; HP 18, 11, 8; AC 6 [13]; bite (1d6) or ice shell; Move 18; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; Special: ice shell (+1 save or immobilized), surprise.

Treasure: A thorough search of the bones uncovers the following items.

- 97 gp, 123 sp, and 57 cp.
- A brass belt buckle with geometric designs carved into the surface (3 gp).
- An amber die with eight faces and black enamel pips (50 gp).
- A thick silver ring with the dwarven word DUNEDIN etched into the outer surface (300 gp).

8. Magma View. *The corridor ahead is illuminated by a dim red light.*

Climate: The eastern end of the corridor is cool, but grows hot nearing the portion that passes above the magma. The western end of the corridor is very warm.

Doors: Both doors are closed but unlocked.

Corridor: A magma pool passes a few feet below the corridor, heating the walls and floor just above, which are very warm to the touch.

Windows: On both the north and south walls of the corridor, round windows about 2 feet in diameter look out over the magma pool. The windows are comprised of transparent disks of some crystal set into the stone. While tough, the crystal is not impossible to shatter.

9. Warning Chamber. *The room appears to be empty.*

Climate: Above freezing.

Doors: Northwestern door open. Northeastern door closed and locked. Southern door closed but unlocked.

Warning on Northeastern Door: Large words are scrawled in white chalk on the northeastern door in the Common Tongue. Nearly illegible, the two lines must have been written in a hurry: DO NOT ENTER-BROTHERS NO MORE.

The warning refers to the ghouls locked in the kitchen (area 10).

Dried Blood: An irregular patch of dried blood darkens the stone floor in front of the northeastern door, left by the wounded monk that wrote the warning.

10. Kitchen. *This room obviously is a kitchen. Iron stoves, wooden worktables, bowls, dishes, and cutlery are scattered about. A dead man sits atop one of the stoves.*

Climate: Slightly below freezing.

Doors: Both doors are closed and locked. Ket's symbol is inscribed on the inside of each door, and prevents the ghouls inside from unlocking the doors and escaping.

Monk Corpse: A dead monk sits atop one stove, desiccated lips grinning widely. A cleaver with dark stain upon the blade rests in his lap. Closer inspection shows that he must have sat upon the stove while it was still very warm, as the portion of his robe between his buttocks and the stove is burned. Ket has not allowed the ghouls to desecrate the monk.

Chimneys: Pipes run from the two stoves into holes in the ceiling. The holes are shafts that exit the mountainside.

Food: All foodstuffs have rotted or gone bad, though some spices may still be edible.

Barrels: Three untapped barrels rest against the south wall. All contain ale. In addition, one barrel holds the pickled body of a dead monk with a missing left arm. The ghouls do not know that this preserved body exists.

Creatures: Eight ghouls occupy the kitchen, unable to leave due to the symbols of Ket carved into the doors. If they hear noise outside the room, the ghouls will congregate at the door nearest the noise.

Ghouls (8): HD 2; HP 13, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 5, 3; AC 6 [13]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d4); Move 9; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Immune to charm and sleep spells, paralysis.

Treasure: The monk in the barrel has a thick gold belt (600 gp) wrapped around the stump of his left arm as a crude but failed tourniquet.



Creeping Chill

Creeping Chill (1): HD 5+5; HP 29; AC 6 [13]; Atk touch (1d4+1 + frost shell); Move 18; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; Special: frost shell (save, or move and attack at half speed for 3 turns), vulnerable to heat and fire.

11. Dining Hall. *Two rows of wooden tables and bench seats occupy the center of the room, accommodations enough for at least two score monks. Dishes and cutlery are scattered over the tables and floor.*

Climate: Very cold.

Doors: Both doors are open.

Frost Covered Table: The surface of one of the tables is coated with frost, evidence of the creeping chill attached to the underside.

Scattered Blood: Spots of dried blood are evident on the floor, walls, and tables, but no bodies are present. Many monks battled here, and some became the ghouls in the kitchen.

Ceiling: A 5-foot diameter symbol of Ket the Unbroken has been carved into the center of the ceiling.

Creature: A creeping chill clings to the underside of the frost-covered table, and will attack anything warm and living that comes near.

12. Acolyte Monk Quarters. *Broken wooden furniture is scattered throughout the room. There is no clear path through the wreckage.*

Climate: Very cold.

Doors: None.

Broken Bunk Beds: Originally, fifteen bunk beds were arranged perpendicular to the east and west walls, with two footlockers set before each pair of beds. The beds were broken apart as monk fought against monk. Now, sections of wood frames, old and frozen bedding, and damaged footlockers provide an obstacle to movement.

Ceiling: A 5-foot diameter symbol of Ket the Unbroken has been carved in the center of the ceiling.

Monk Corpses: The corpses of two monks lay beneath the wreckage. They clearly died in agony.

Treasure: A thorough search may uncover a few items of note. Sewn into one mattress is a pouch containing 35 gp, 13 sp, and a platinum ring (1100 gp) etched with a geometric design of overlapping circles. One overturned footlocker has a false bottom hiding two items: a sky blue *potion of healing* labeled FOR WOUNDS and a +1 *hand axe* with a gold-banded haft and red enamel heraldic symbols upon the head. The axe also returns to the hand when thrown.

13. Assistant Abbot's Quarters. *A single bed rests against the wall opposite the door, a dresser along the wall to the left and a desk on the wall to the right. A painting hangs above the desk.*

Climate: Very cold.

Doors: None.

Desk: Disorganized stacks of papers sit upon the desk, old and frozen. The paper will shatter if roughly treated. Most papers contain boring tabulations of monastery life written in the Common Tongue, but one on the right side of the table is of interest. Here, the assistant abbot describes excitement building within the monastery because decades of prayers have been answered. Ket the Unbroken has provided a miraculous book that will reward the faithful with Truth. Surely the abbot will then spread the Word by sending monks to all nearby lands.

Painting: About 3 feet high and 2 feet wide, this oil-based painting depicts a busy harbor filled with ships. Signed "Annimus Clem" in the lower left corner. The assistant abbot brought the painting to remember his boyhood home.

Ceiling: A large symbol of Ket the Unbroken has been carved in the center of the ceiling

Treasure: Other organizations that worship Ket might find the papers of interest. The painting was not considered worth stealing by adventurers because of its size and fragility. It is a valuable work by Annimus Clem, an artist well known to collectors and worth 5000 gp if sold at the proper venue. The painting will only earn this price if undamaged and in the original

frame.

14. Monk Quarters. *Wooden beds are arranged in two rows perpendicular to the eastern wall of the room.*

Climate: Very cold.

Doors: None.

Beds: There are two rows of seven beds for a total of fourteen. The bedding is old and frozen. A footlocker sits at the foot of each bed; all have been thoroughly looted.

Adventurer Corpse: A female dwarf in leather armor lay face down across one of the beds, head crushed by a blunt object. A short sword is on the floor near her hand. Members of her adventuring party killed her after questioning the Codex and then stole her gear.

Ceiling: A 5-foot diameter symbol of Ket the Unbroken has been carved in the center of the ceiling.

Treasure: A broken silver necklace (75 gp) rests in the northeast corner of the room. The man that struck the deathblow ripped it from the dwarf's neck and flung it away in rage.

15. Abbot's Quarters. *An overturned dresser and desk partially block the doorway. Torn papers are scattered on the floor around them.*

Climate: Very cold.

Doors: None.

Secret Door: Closed.

Dresser: Though the dresser was damaged in the fighting, it is still ornate and obviously crafted by a master. The legs end in elaborate clawed feet, and arms rise from the back to hold a missing mirror.

Statue: In the northeast corner sits a bronze statue of boy carrying an urn above his head. It weighs about 200 lbs.

Bed: A bed rests against the west wall.

Ceiling: A large symbol of Ket the Unbroken has been carved in the center of the ceiling.

Papers: Torn and mutilated papers cover the floor. The paper is brittle and will break apart if handled roughly. All are written in the Common Tongue. Careful examination of the papers

reveals a few passages of interest.

Ket has written the Truth that verifies what I always suspected: Varinus only pretended to be my friend, and to serve. He covets what I earned through piety and diligence and will do anything to gain my position. I may have to kill him.

The acolytes have turned against me. They gather outside. Soon, it will be time to show them why I am abbot.

The abbot barricaded this room but was eventually overwhelmed and fled to the escape route (area 28), where a creeping chill killed him.

Creature: A creeping chill hibernates upon the wall above the doorway.

Creeping Chill (1): HD 5+5; HP 25; AC 6 [13]; Atk touch (1d4+1 + frost shell); Move 18; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; Special: frost shell (save, or move and attack at half speed for 3 turns), vulnerable to heat and fire.

Treasure: Even in its damaged state, the dresser would still be worth 1,000 gp if returned to civilization. The statue could bring about 500 gp.

16. Magma Bridge. *A reddish light leaks through large gaps in the corridor walls. The passage is uncomfortably hot.*

Climate: Very hot.

Doors: None.

Corridor Damage: When the monastery's heating system failed, the magma altered course to flow beneath the corridor. The intense heat has weakened the stone. Cracks crisscross the walls and pieces of the walls have fallen into the magma below. On each side of the corridor, from roughly knee to head height, a half dozen jagged holes look out over the bubbling red magma. The magma illuminates the corridor and nearby portions of the adjacent rooms. The bubbling magma randomly projects *magma blobs* through the holes.

Burnt Spots: The floor and walls are dotted with black spots where magma blobs struck the surface. This discoloration may provide a clue to the origin of similarly blackened surfaces around the heating center (area 22).

Magma Blobs: Whenever someone moves through the corridor, there is a 2 in 6 chance of being struck by a magma blob for 2d6 damage. A successful saving throw reduces the damage by half. Magic can protect against magma damage.

17. Exercise Hall. *Stacks of exercise mats and piles of wooden practice weapons line the long west wall of the room.*

Climate: Hot in the southern section, cooling to merely warm in the northern section.

Doors: East and west doors are closed but unlocked. North door is open.

Illumination: The southern quarter of the room is illuminated by the reddish glow emanating from the magma bridge (area 16).

Monk Corpses: A half dozen rotted corpses in tattered brown robes are scattered throughout the area. Only shreds of skin are still attached to the bones, while the robes are so decayed they will break apart if disturbed. The bodies were killed by a variety of means and have no loot.

Ceiling: The ceiling of this room is slightly arched and a few feet higher than the other rooms of the monastery. Four 5-foot diameter symbols of Ket the Unbroken have been carved in the ceiling at regular intervals.

Worn Floor: For decades, the monks ran around the perimeter of the room as part of their training, wearing a clear path into the stone.

Creatures: There is a 3 in 6 chance of encountering wandering agonized monks in this area.

Treasure: An adventurer lost a longbow in the southeast corner of the room. Near the bow is a magic-user's scroll of *dispel magic*.

18. Storage Room. *Rotted exercise mats, practice weapons, and towels are heaped in a deep pile that covers the floor.*

Climate: Warm.

Door: Closed but unlocked.

Contents: The items stored here are in various states of decay and of no particular value. Looters have sifted through everything.

19. Laundry. *Large wooden tubs are arranged around a hole in the ground. A waist-high wall of stone surrounds the hole.*

Climate: Above freezing.

Door: Open.

Secret Door: Well-hidden, reduces chance to find secret doors by 1.

Well: The hole in the ground was a well that went dry after the magma flows shifted. The well descends about 100 feet to a lava tube. The pit trap in the treasury (area 20) also ends up at the lava tube; thus, there are two shafts leading upward from the lava tube. The Referee should decide whether the lava tube goes anywhere interesting or is a dead end.

Washing Implements: Scattered about the room are soap, beating sticks, water pitchers, clothes presses, etc.

Adventurer Corpse: The battered and rotted corpse of a man rests at the bottom of the well. It is difficult to tell whether a battle or the fall killed him. He has not been looted.

Treasure: The adventurer has the following items of note.

- 50 gp, 60 sp, 100 cp
- +1 *Leather Armor*
- *Ring of Fire Resistance*
- 5 scrolls of *Cure Light Wounds*

20. Treasury. *Chill air wafts from the corridor as a thick slab of stone swings aside.*

Climate: Very cold, although the room will warm to above freezing if either of the two secret doors is left open.



Agonized Monk

Secret Doors: Both are well hidden, reducing the chance to find secret doors by 1.

Adventurer Corpses: Four dead adventurers lay in the corridor leading to the exercise hall (area 17), about halfway between the door and the room. The agonized monks killed them.

Pit Trap: A pit trap activated by a pressure plate occupies a 10-foot square at the center of the room. The plate opens on a steeply inclined shaft that descends 100 feet to end up below the well in the laundry (area 19). The springs attached to the plate are corroded and the plate will not close automatically. The central bronze knob on the control pedestal in the heating center (area 22) can deactivate the trap.

Creatures: When either secret door opens, agonized monks will move toward the sound. Two of the agonized monks carry battered short swords (1d6).

Agonized Monks (4): HD 4; HP 22, 20, 20, 13; AC 6 [13]; Atk weapon or strike (1d8) or cry of anguish; Move 15; Save 12; AL L; CL/XP 5/240; Special: cry of anguish (+2 save or flee in terror 1 turn), alertness, deflect missiles, +2 weapon damage bonus.

Treasure: Acolytes pledged their wealth to Ket when joining the monastery. Most of their personal goods were sold for coin before making the arduous journey north; it was not economical to ship large or heavy luxury items. The monastery was expensive to supply, so this wealth was very important to continuing the worship of Ket. The small amount of accumulated treasure has not been looted.

- Two small chests of coins: 2547 gp, 3256 sp, 1257 cp.
- Miscellaneous jewelry (3500 gp)
- Jade idol (350 gp)
- 4 silver braziers (475 sp)
- 12 decayed white wolf pelts
- *Bag of holding*
- *Horseshoes of speed*

The dead adventurers also carried some items of interest.

- 130 gp, 154 sp, 87 cp
- *Rope of climbing*
- *+1 light mace*
- *Potion of healing*
- *Potion of levitation*

21. Sloping Corridor. *The corridor has a noticeable, but safely navigable slope.*

Climate: Hot.

Door: East door closed but unlocked.

Corridor Slope: The corridor slopes down from the exercise hall (area 17) to the heating center (area 22). The total descent is about 5 feet. The slope was designed to contain magma if there was an overflow from the pool in the heating center. There have been occasional overflows, and the floor and lower walls of the western end of the corridor show noticeable discoloration.

22. Heating Center. *A low stone railing surrounds a large hole in the floor. Reddish light emanates from the hole.*

Climate: Hot.

Doors: None.

Magic Aura: The residual magic of the heating system permeates the room.

Magma Pool: The only magma visible within the room occupies the central pool. The magma surface is about 2 feet below floor level.

Although there is more magma to the north of the room, the walls block access.

Burnt Floor: Adventurers have occasionally fiddled with the control pedestal and caused the magma pool to overflow. The floor, walls, stone benches, columns, and control pedestal are blackened to a depth of about 3 feet. Combined with the fact that both exit corridors slope upward, the discolored stone is very suggestive.

Stone Benches: Two long stone benches occupy alcoves in the southern portion of the room. The monks would sit here and bask in the heat.

Columns: Two chipped and cracked columns flank the magma pool at the north end of the room. They are carved with mystic symbols that maintained the magic of the heating system. Any magic-user would recognize the magical nature of the symbols.

Tapestries: Behind each column a tapestry depicts a contemplative man sitting cross-legged. This represents Ket. The tapestries have not been damaged by the magma because Ket protects them.

Control Pedestal: Centered between the columns and immediately north of the magma pool, a waist high pedestal of black stone sits upon a circular dais. The combined height of the pedestal and dais is about 6 feet. The symbol of Ket has been carved into the top of the pedestal. Brass knobs are positioned at each of the four “ends” of the plus symbol. At the center of the plus symbol is a larger brass knob, for a total of 5 knobs.

Markings are etched about the circumference of each knob, and the grooves produced by the etching are filled with black enamel to make them clearly visible. There are 20 evenly spaced markings about each knob. If turned, the knobs produce an audible click as each mark engages some spring like mechanism.

The center knob activates or deactivates the pit trap in the treasury (area 20). If turned one full rotation to the left, the trap is active; if

turned one full rotation to the right, an active trap becomes inactive.

The four smaller brass knobs once controlled the flow of heat throughout the monastery. Now they only cause a malfunction. If any of the smaller knobs are rotated even one click, the magma in the pool begins to rise. In 3 rounds the magma overflows the pool and continues to rise. Once the magma begins to fill the room, the level rises more slowly, 1 foot every 6 rounds, as the volume of the room is much greater than that of the pool. The magma flow stops once its depth within the room reaches about 3 feet. After a day, the magma recedes to its former level within the pool.

Uncovered skin that merely contacts the magma will be burned for at least 1d6 points of damage per round. The magma will ignite flammable objects. Magical fire resistance will protect against magma damage.

Creatures: If the control pedestal is touched, magma men emerge from the magma pool, ooze up and over the stone railing, and attack the intruders. After the magma men engage, charred corpses enter the room from the direction that has not yet been explored: either the western or eastern corridor.

Charred Corpses (4): HD 2; HP 9, 8, 8, 7; AC 8 [11]; Atk strike (1d8 + 1d4 heat damage); Move 18; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; Special: immune to sleep and charm spells.

Magma Men (2): HP 33, 33; HD 6; AC 4 [15]; Atk strike (1d8); Move 6; Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Ignite materials, ooze through cracks and move along any stone surface, vulnerable to cold.

23. Worship Hall. *Two rows of kneeling humanoids occupy the far end of the room.*

Climate: Below freezing.

Doors: None.

Kneeling Humanoids: Two rows of 5 frozen humanoids face the hallway leading to the Sanctuary of the Codex (area 25). Most were monks but three were clearly adventurers. Ket assembled these bodies to serve as future

agonized monks. One of the monks holds a short sword and one of the former adventurers carries a long sword. Agonized monks will bring unconscious intruders here so that Ket may begin their transformation into agonized monks; the new recruits will join the kneelers until the ranks of the agonized monks must be replenished.

West Alcove: Stacks of rotted prayer mats.

East Corridor: A torn drapery partially blocks the entrance. About halfway down the corridor, a dead adventurer lies in a fetal position, having died from a gut wound inflicted by a comrade that questioned the *Codex of Inexorable Truth*. His boots and weapons are gone, and an empty pack rests nearby. Hair and skin were embedded in his fingernails as he attempted to resist his attacker.

Creatures: The kneeling humanoids will not animate or disturb intruders that enter the room. However, depending on events in the Sanctuary of the Codex (area 25), Ket may activate them as agonized initiates that have all the capabilities of agonized monks except the cry of anguish.

Agonized Initiates (8): HD 4; HP 29, 22, 20, 18, 16, 15, 11, 11; AC 6 [13]; Atk weapon or strike (1d8); Move 15; Save 12; AL L; CL/XP 5/240; Special: alertness, deflect missiles, +2 weapon damage bonus.

Treasure: None. The adventurers and monks were looted long ago.

24. Holy Items. *Shelves line the walls of the room, holding a variety of haphazardly arranged objects: books, small statues, icons.*

Climate: Above freezing.

Doors: None.

Monk Corpse: A dead monk clutches a painted clay statue to his chest. The statue depicts a serene man sitting cross-legged; one of the arms has been broken off.

Treasure: The room has been picked over many times, and the remaining items are only of value to a collector or worshipper of Ket the Unbroken.

- Various stone and clay statues depicting Ket sitting cross-legged or reading a book.
- Painted icons of a man in monk's robes holding a book. The books do not resemble the *Codex of Inexorable Truth*.
- Damaged books and scrolls that are very brittle. Most of the writings are in the Common tongue, and describe ascetic pursuits designed to prepare Ket's adherents for ultimate truth.

25. Sanctuary of the Codex. *A ragged drapery hangs across the corridor and obscures a descending flight of stairs.*

Climate: Very cold, much colder than the nearby rooms and hallways. Ket keeps this place cold.

Doors: None.

Codex of Inexorable Truth: The Codex rests in the center of a stone table along the west wall. Both the table and book are free of any dirt or dust. The book is closed. For more information on the Codex, see the section *Codex of Inexorable Truth*.

Other Tables: Two dust covered wooden tables sit near the north wall.

Creatures: If the book is removed from the table before a question has been asked, the agonized initiates in the worship hall (area 23) will rise and block the corridor leading from the Sanctuary to the worship hall. They will not allow anyone to leave before at least one question has been asked. Note that the agonized initiates will not attempt to prevent removal of the book from the room (since it can't be removed from the monastery), but only want to make sure a question has been asked once the book has been handled. The agonized initiates will fight until destroyed.

26. Winter Gear Storage. *Wooden crates are stacked along the walls. Shelves line two alcoves.*

Climate: Very cold.

Door: Open, with broken hinges as if it had

been subjected to great force.

Secret Door: Closed. The monks knew that brigands might find their isolated monastery a tempting target, so they made sure to include a hidden exit.

Wooden Crates: Contain a variety of items that would be useful in cold weather: socks, gloves, coats, leggings, etc. Some of it might still be usable.

Shelves: Hold foodstuffs in boxes, pottery jars, and metal containers. Most were dried items that would travel well, such as jerky and fruit, but are no longer edible.

27. Preparation Room. *Wooden benches and racks line the walls of this cold room.*

Climate: Very cold.

Door: Open, with broken hinges as if it had been subjected to great force.

Small Southern Room: Contains racks with skis, poles, and snowshoes. Gear is fragile from long exposure to the cold.

Creature: The creeping chill that killed the abbot in the escape route (area 28) moved into this room and then entered hibernation. It has been waiting in the southern room for many decades.

Creeping Chill (1): HD 5+5; HP 40; AC 6 [13]; Atk touch (1d4+1 + frost shell); Move 18; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; Special: frost shell (save, or move and attack at half speed for 3 turns), vulnerable to heat and fire.

28. Escape Route. *Frost coats the dark stone of this rough tunnel. A body clothed in a brown robe lays face down upon floor.*

Climate: Very cold.

West Exit: An opening in the mountainside blocked by rocks, bits of wood, and blown snow. From the outside, this is considered a secret door.

Abbot's Corpse: The abbot fled a group of rebellious acolytes, only to be killed by a creeping chill before he could escape; the creeping chill now hibernates in the preparation

room (area 27). A knife sticks out of the abbot's shoulder but clearly was not the cause of his death. His robe is frozen to the ground.

Treasure: The abbot wears a pendant bearing the symbol of Ket in relief upon a small silver disk (50 gp). A belt pouch stuck between his body and floor contains 15 gp and 33 sp. Two bottles are also lodged between the body and the floor: one contains a light blue invisibility potion and the other a dark blue healing potion.

Codex of Inexorable Truth

This magical book is a treasure of surpassing beauty that any man would covet. Two hand spans wide and twice as high, the Codex has a cover of gleaming electrum. The words engraved upon the cover shift form to suit the language and culture of the reader. A rough translation of the cover proclaims: "One Question, Two Answers".

The Codex contains an indeterminate number of pages. In fact, the purpose of the Codex requires no particular page count. The Codex cannot be opened until it has been asked a question. Then the questioner may open the Codex to the first page and will find that the question has been answered wholly and with no ambiguity. The answer is always written in a language the questioner can understand; if the questioner cannot read the answer, it is instead imprinted upon his mind. Oddly, only the questioner can see the words of the answer.

The answer will use as many pages as necessary but no more. The questioner will also find that a second unasked question has been answered, and that he cannot stop reading until he reaches the end of the second answer. The second answer always provides information that would best remain unknown. Many successful questioners have returned to civilization broken men, shattered by the unwelcome knowledge forced upon them by the second answer.

The Codex cannot be permanently removed from the monastery. The moment it leaves the monastery, it disappears from the thief's possession and then reappears upon its pedestal in the Sanctuary of the Codex (area 25).

Creating the Second Answer

The second answer is what makes the *Codex of Inexorable Truth* both an intriguing magic item and a challenge to adjudicate. Devising the second answer can be very difficult. Keeping in mind that there is no way to fully catalog the possibilities for the second answer, here are a few examples to help spur creativity.

1. Carrying out the instructions of the first answer will inevitably cause friends or family to die.
2. The party's thief held back valuable treasure from the party in the last adventure.
3. Bounty hunters dispatched by a wronged employer or an enemy will reach the party in three days.
4. Someone killed in a recent adventure was actually the wrong victim, gaining the enmity of the intended target or the victim's allies.
5. That beggar snubbed in the capitol was actually the king in disguise, and he will not forget the rough treatment.
6. A valued contact actually hates someone in the party and has betrayed him.
7. Carrying out the instructions of the first answer will initiate a chain of causality that causes the party's home city to be destroyed by natural disaster.
8. A foe killed in a recent skirmish was actually a long lost brother or sister.

New Monsters

Agonized Monk

Hit Dice: 4

Armor Class: 6 [13]

Attacks: Weapon or strike (1d8) or cry of anguish

Saving Throw: 12

Special: Cry of anguish (+2 save, see below), alertness*, deflect missiles*, +2 weapon damage bonus*

Move: 15

Alignment: Law

Challenge Level/XP: 5/240

Ket arrested the lives of these men at a moment between life and death. Agonized monks wish to die but cannot. They possess sharp memories of

the final brutal moments of their mortal lives and wish for others to share their pain. With a failed saving throw, their anguished cry causes a single target to flee in terror for 1 turn. Anyone that flees has a 50% chance of dropping whatever he is holding. Agonized monks can use the monk abilities listed under Special. *These are found in the *Swords and Wizardry Complete Rulebook*. If you do not wish to access those rules, agonized monks and initiates are never surprised, can negate one missile attack against them per turn, and gain +2 to weapon attacks, if they happen to have any.

Not all agonized monks were actually monks while alive. Sometimes agonized monks bring unconscious adventurers to the worship hall (area 25), where Ket transforms them into agonized initiates, and then full-fledged agonized monks.

Charred Corpse

Hit Dice: 2

Armor Class: 8 [11]

Attacks: Strike (1d8) + 1d4 heat damage

Saving Throw: 16

Special: immune to sleep and charm spells

Move: 18

Alignment: Chaos

Challenge Level/XP: 3/60

Charred corpses are mindless undead that were scorched to death by the defective monastery heating system. They exude a powerful odor of roasting flesh. Their skin is blackened and pitted and their touch causes burns; magic armor or *shield* protects against this heat. Charred corpses prefer to attack targets in metal armor.

Creeping Chill

Hit Dice: 5+5

Armor Class: 6 [13s]

Attacks: Touch (1d4+1 + frost shell)

Saving Throw: 16

Special: Frost shell (see below), vulnerable to heat and fire

Move: 18

Alignment: Neutrality

Challenge Level/XP: 6/400

A creeping chill resembles a patch of frost about

two or three feet across. This creature can hibernate for decades in the cold before a warm-blooded presence stirs it into activity. Its touch causes web like patches of frost to radiate from the point of contact. If the target fails a saving throw, he becomes coated in a thin shell of frost that hinders all motion, able to move and attack at only half speed for 3 turns.

The creeping chill will melt in temperatures above freezing and takes double damage from fire attacks.

Ice Spider

Hit Dice: 2+2

Armor Class: 6 [13]

Attacks: Bite (1d6) or ice shell

Saving Throw: 16

Special: Ice shell (+1 save or immobilized), surprise

Move: 18

Alignment: Neutrality

Challenge Level/XP: 4/120

Ice spiders are the size of human children, with bodies white as purest snow. Ice spiders inhabit webs comprised of icy tendrils. They shoot an icy liquid from their mouths that quickly spreads over a victim, freezing and immobilizing the target for 1 turn with a failed saving throw. Ice spiders can also hide in shadows and surprise on a roll of 1–5 on a d6.

Magma Man

Hit Dice: 6

Armor Class: 4 [15]

Attacks: Strike (1d8)

Saving Throw: 11

Special: Ignite materials, ooze through cracks and move along any stone surface, vulnerable to cold

Move: 6

Alignment: Neutrality

Challenge Level/XP: 7/600

The souls of men that die in enchanted magma often remain near the location of their death. These souls attract the liquid rock, aggregating the magma into a human shape. Magma men often ooze through cracks and tight spaces to end up in surprising locations, and they can move

without penalty along any stone surface, even walls and ceilings. The attacks of magma men cause flammable materials to ignite upon a failed saving throw (as determined by the Referee). Magma men take double damage from cold attacks and will not chase foes into areas with below freezing temperatures.



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