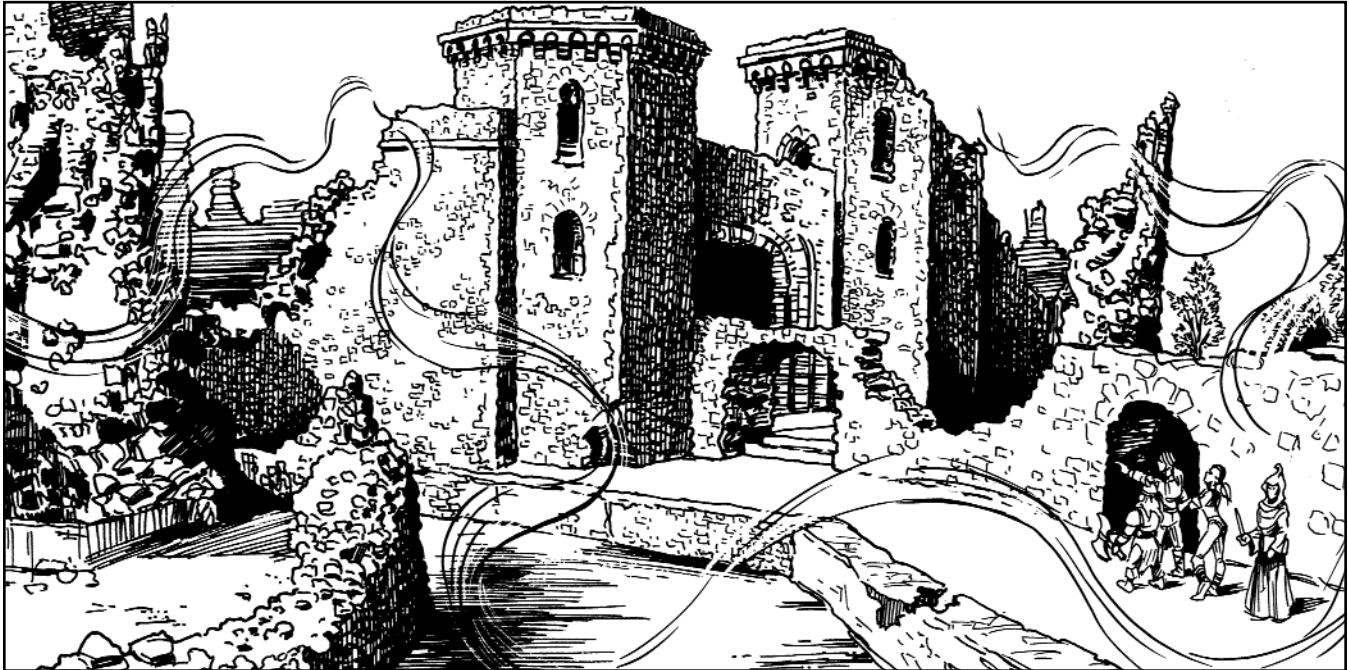


Dungeon Crawl Classics #39

The Ruins of Castle Churo

By Alex Anderegg
AN ADVENTURE FOR 1st LEVEL CHARACTERS



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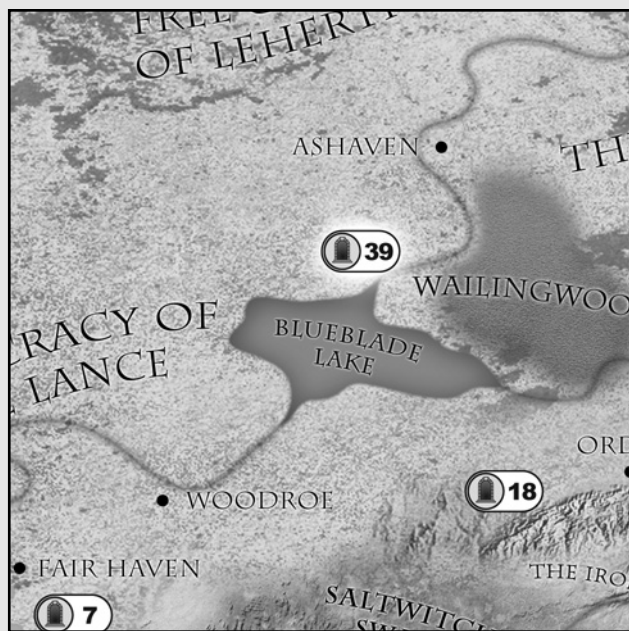
Introduction

Remember the golden days of role playing, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Well, those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics feature bloody combat, intriguing dungeons, and no NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know must be there somewhere.

The Ruins of Castle Churo is designed for four to six players of first level. We recommend 4 to 6 total character levels between party members. While the characters can be of any basic class, a good mix of characters is helpful. In particular, a rogue in the party will be advantageous. Note that many of the encounter levels are high for first level characters, but a smart party will be able to utilize the resources they find to overcome the difficulty. See the "Scaling Information" section to tailor this adventure to your particular needs.

DCC World

If you are using the world of Áereth from DCC #35: Gazetteer of the Known Realms, this adventure takes place in the town of Grozny. Found in the easternmost reaches of the Theocracy of the Lance, Grozny has always had to contest against the depredations of brigands raiding from the Freeholds. Once the demesne of the wizard Churo, Grozny and the surrounding lands were adopted into the Theocracy when the wizard obliterated himself and his solemn tower a mere thirty years ago. The ruins of the tower still watch over Grozny and its inhabitants, a constant reminder of the failures of Man.



Adventure Summary

A group of bandits, the Broken Knives, has stolen relics of significance from several temples in the town of Grozny. The bandits have made their base of operations in the ruins of Castle Churo, which is located in the middle of the town. From there they have tunneled into the vaults of the town's temples. The characters must investigate the ruins of the castle, exploring its basements and catacombs. They will discover that the magical accident that long ago destroyed the castle has left strange magical properties in the rooms that remain. The characters must overcome these challenges as they find and defeat the Broken Knives.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. Loc – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. Pg – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. Type – this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). Encounter – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in *italics* are classed NPCs. EL – the encounter level.

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-1	5	T/C	<i>Summon monster</i> trap (fiendish raven)	1
1-2	5	P	Babbling statues, <i>confusion</i>	2
1-3	6	C/P	<i>Smorl</i> , kobold Clr3, and magic fountain	2
1-4	7	C/T	4 kobolds, gravity effects	2
1-5	7	C/T	2 troglodytes, time effects	2
1-6	8	C	4 tiny hunting spiders	1
1-7	8	C	The living room	3
1-8A	9	P	Wind vortex	1
1-9	10	T	<i>Teleport</i> trap	1
1-10	11	C/P	Animated skull	1
1-11	11	P	<i>Thuelso's ghost</i> , animated grave goods	0+
1-12	12	C	<i>Gulag</i> , troglodyte Rog2	4
1-14	13	T	Fusillade of darts trap	1
1-16B	13	C	Troglodyte and 4 kobolds	2
Revenge of Kethos	14	C	Kethos, human Clr3	3

Scaling Information

The Ruins of Castle Churo is designed for 4-6 characters of first level, but may be adjusted to suit parties of different sizes or level. Consider adjusting the adventure as follows:

Weaker Parties (3 or fewer characters): Throughout the adventure change all of the unnamed troglodytes to kobolds. Remove a character level from Gulag. Reduce the living room's HD by one.

Stronger Parties (5 more or more characters or higher than first level): Double the number of kobolds in each encounter that calls for them. Add a class level to Gulag. Smorl does not begin *cursed*.

Getting the Players Involved

The adventure begins with the party in the town of Grozny. The characters may be brought into the adventure through a few different means. Here are some hooks they might involve them:

- The characters are in the town of Grozny and see a proclamation asking for volunteers to recover stolen temple relics with the promise of great reward.
- One of the characters is a cleric of a temple that has been raided. He organizes the rest of the party to regain the stolen goods.

Background Story

History of Castle Churo

Castle Churo was once the home of Churo the Too-Curious. Churo was the last in a long line of brilliant scholars and magicians. He experimented with magic, discovering amazing things and probing the unknown. But his investigations were his undoing. Churo delved into things mortals weren't meant to know. While working on a high-energy magic experiment, he catastrophically erred in his calculations, disintegrating himself and leveling Castle Churo into a mound of slag and rubble. Only the basement and catacombs remained. But even the underground area was not unscathed, marred as it was by the release of intense magics. Strange properties persist in many of the rooms, creating ambient magical effects.

Churo obliterated himself thirty years ago. Since that time a few brave explorers have ventured into the ruins chasing rumors of lost treasure. The few that have returned claim that what remains of Castle Churo is cursed by the gods. The local populace of Grozny shuns the castle and refuses to venture near it.

Recent Machinations

The town of Grozny has four established religions: an order dedicated to justice and law; an order of contemplative monks who probe the mysteries of the universe; a brotherhood that perform acts of charity and healing; and

the local druids, who oversee the agricultural life of the town. (The exact nature of each religion is left intentionally vague so they can be adapted to your campaign world.) In the last two years a new religion has moved into town, the Jovonists. The religion is an upstart and full of unorthodox ideas such as paying homage to the founder instead of any god. The Jovonists have gained popularity, but many townsfolk still worship the gods of their fathers and neighbors.

The head of Grozny's Jovonists, Kethos, hatched a plan to discredit the other religions and bring more worshipers into his fold. He believed he could steal the relics of Grozny's temples to show that the gods and their religions were weak. Kethos thought many of the townsfolk would not visit their former temples if they no longer had their mystical relics.

Kethos hired the Broken Knives to do his dirty work. After scouting the town, the bandits figured the best plan was to set up an operation out of Castle Churo, which no local would go near. From there they would use kobolds to tunnel to the nearby temples, to which the ruins are located advantageously close, and steal the relics from temple vaults.

In one night, the bandit gang launched a quick series of attacks on three temples. The town guard attempted to capture the bandits as they filched their third relic, but failed as a tunnel collapsed on them. The kobolds had rigged the tunnels to collapse behind them after they stole the relics. After this disaster, the town guard refused to fight the bandits anymore, especially since half their number were missing or killed. However, they did determine that the tunnels have originated from Castle Churo.

The only religions that had not been sacked by the bandits were the Jovonists and the druids. The druids would have been raided too, except that the kobolds ran afoul of the druids' ornamental temple pond, and needed time to shore up the mine before proceeding.

A council of Grozny's religious luminaries, including the Jovonists' leader Kethos, has gathered and demanded that something be done. Most of the religious sects have no military force, and the knightly order is out on patrol, not due back for days. In desperation, the clerics have elected to hire adventurers on commission to retrieve the relics.

Kethos, meanwhile, has told the Broken Knives hurry up on their last target and get out of town before his plot is ruined.

The Broken Knives

The Broken Knives is a large criminal syndicate of thieves and mercenaries. For the right inducement they will perform nefarious services. The Jovonists have connections with the syndicate; the gang performs less-savory deeds with which the sect would prefer not to be associated. Higher-ranking members and officers, such as Smorl and Gulag, have identifying tattoos on their arms.

Player Beginning

After the characters are hooked into the adventure, they are brought before the religious emergency council. Kethos is there along with a representative from each of Grozny's major religions. Read or paraphrase the following:

You are ushered into the sacred gardens of Verditus the druid. The head of each of Grozny's major temples is here. Their leader is Lenim, a cleric of an order dedicated to justice and law. Also present is Kethos, head of the new order calling themselves Jovonists, as well as the monk Kylind, and the high priest Pygon. Lenim steps forward and clears his throat.

"Welcome, brave adventurers," Lenim says. "As you are aware, we are in need of your assistance. Bandits have stolen important relics from the temples of Grozny: a prayer rug, a stone idol, and a golden censer.

"Our efforts to stop the bandits have been a disaster, with several of the town guardsmen killed in the latest raid. We, and the people of Grozny, are in desperate need of your help.

"The town guard has determined that the cowardly thieves are hiding in the accursed ruins of Castle Churo. We implore you to go in there, vanquish the vile villains, and come back with the religious artifacts.

"Unfortunately, we cannot pay you much right now, as our treasures have been robbed. But you can keep whatever you find that the bandits have stolen, as long as you retrieve the relics."

Lenim will answer questions as he can. If the characters ask about the bandits, he says that the town guard thinks troglodytes and kobolds were involved. As for the nature of Castle Churo's curse, he claims to know nothing except that the former occupant, Churo the Too-Curious, trifled with things man wasn't meant to know. He also knows that a few local farm boys have ventured into the ruins on dares, but their stories are too wild to be believed.

Lenim offers any basic provisions the party needs, such as food, water, and lodging. Then he urges the characters to hurry – the bandits may have already made their escape.

During this exchange, Kethos hangs back and says nothing. He gives the characters a few appraising glances, but is otherwise unreadable. Kethos is currently under the effects of an *undetectable alignment* spell.

As the meeting closes each of the clerics, including Kethos, offers their prayers. The clerics then say that they will stay in the gardens and pray for the party's safe return. Kethos, however, will excuse himself, claiming that tonight there is an important conjunction of planets and he has to prepare for a ceremony.

The Artifacts: Three relic are missing: a stone idol, a golden censer and prayer rug. The stone idol is hidden in area

1-6, while the golden censer and prayer rug are in 1-14. Each relic belongs to one of the local temples.

Gathering Information: If the characters take a few hours to ask around town, they can attempt a Gather Information check on Castle Churo. A skill check reveals the following:

DC 5: "Aye. That place is cursed. Once, on a dare, I went to the entrance, which was a portal to the underworld. I could hear the voices of the damned coming from below."

DC 10: All above, plus: "A magician named Churo once lived in that castle. My grandda' was his stablehand. Churo was pretty smart, and was always figuring out new things. My guess is that was what blew him and his castle up."

DC 15: All above, plus: "You don't wanna go there, friend. Some years ago a few brave souls went in there to grab Churo's treasure. Only one man came out. He said the dungeon itself ate his buddies. He also said don't go grabbing piles of treasure just lying around. But I dunno, he was mad by then."

DC 20: All above, plus: "Yesterday, I was coming home from a night at the tavern when I passed by the ruins. I thought I saw a ghost come from the rubble. But it was just Kethos. He said he was scouting the entrance, but lost his nerve. I don't blame him."

Town Guards: As the party prepares to enter Castle Churo, a pair of town guards asks to join the party. They feel that it's their duty to help. The characters can refuse if they want. The guards know nothing about the interior of Castle Churo, but they will be loyal compatriots.

Corporal Cale, human War2: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 13; Init +0 Spd. 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk short sword +4 melee (1d6+1); AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +4, Sense Motive +1, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

Possessions: Chain shirt, short sword.

Private Obirt, human War1: CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +0 Spd. 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk short sword +3 melee (1d6+1); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

Possessions: Chain shirt, short sword, 5 torches.

The Ruins of Castle Churo

The basements and catacombs are all that remain of the castle. The entrance can be easily found and there is a path, recently used, that leads to it. The rest of the castle is tumbled stone and melted slag. In the dungeon area all walls are reinforced masonry. The doors, unless otherwise noted, are wooden and in good working order.

Masonry Wall: 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; break DC 35; Climb DC 15.

Wooden Door: Hardness 5; hp 15; break DC 18.

Wandering Monsters

In Castle Churo, there is a 25% chance every 30 minutes that the characters will have an encounter with a kobold patrol. The chance increases by 25% if the characters have been making a lot of noise such as fighting and breaking down doors. Once all the kobolds have been encountered there are no further wandering monsters.

Kobolds (4): CR 1/4; Small humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +1; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3) or light crossbow +3 ranged (1d6/19-20); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Light sensitivity: dazzled in bright sunlight or within radius of a daylight spell.

Possessions: Leather armor, spear, light crossbow, 10 bolts.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Entrance (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

Amongst the rubble of the ruined Castle Churo stands a stone-rimmed doorway. The doors have fallen from their hinges and rampant weeds wreath the opening. Strangely, the doorway is filled with a thick mist, which almost hides the bones scattered just inside the threshold. A pair of baleful humanoid skulls seems to eye you, eager and waiting. Very faintly you can hear voices coming from the mist; it's impossible to understand them, though the words do not stop.

This is the entrance to the basement and catacombs of Castle Churo. The magical accident created a permanent *obscuring mist* in this area. The mist will return the following round if dispersed.

To scare the locals away, the Broken Knives decorated the entrance with bones scavenged from the catacombs. The voices that the characters hear come from area 1-2. They have no effect in this area and are incomprehensible.



To further scare the locals and would-be heroes, Smorl has created a magical trap that triggers once a character has moved 10 feet down the stairs. The fiendish raven will concentrate its attacks on the foremost character.

Summon Monster I trap: CR 1; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; spell effect (*summon monster I*, 3rd-level cleric, fiendish raven); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26. Cost: 150 gp, 12 XP.

Fiendish raven: CR 1/6; Tiny magical beast (extraplanar); HD 1/4d8; hp 1; Init +2; Spd. 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -13; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee claws (1d2-5); reach 0 ft.; SA smite good (1/day, +1 damage); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., fire/cold resistance 5, low-light vision, SR 5; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +7; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Area 1-2 – Room of Ancestors (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

When you open the door, a cacophony assaults your ears. Along the walls stand several statues in the likeness of scholars and wizards. The noise seems to come from them – you can see their lips moving, though otherwise they are immobile.

You think you can catch a snatch of what they say; individual words are sometimes understandable, but nothing seems to make sense. And after just a few seconds you have a headache from the babbling.

There are two obvious exits: a wooden door and a

stone door. The stone door has no handles or hinges. Two statues flank the stone door, dressed in armor and holding spears point-up. Written on the lintel above the door are the words, "Let there be peace beyond this portal."

Statues of Churo's famous relatives through the ages decorate the Room of Ancestors. The magical accident gave limited animation to these statues. The statues are immobile and can only speak, albeit without making much sense. They respond to no questions or prompting. However, information can be gleaned from the mad babble, for their magical nature has also connected their speech with events in the area. Each round the characters hear one of the following quotes:

1d6 roll or pick:

- 1 "The spiders worship the idol."
- 2 "What you can't see is the key."
- 3 "Beyond the prisoner you will travel."
- 4 "Someone wants their skull back, don't hurt it!"
- 5 "Beware! Earth under water is unsteady."
- 6 "Such an inviting couch, but so hungry."

Staying for too long in this room will negatively affect the characters. After 3 consecutive rounds in the room a character must make a DC 11 Fortitude save or become nauseated. This effect ends as soon as the character leaves the room. Any character who spends more than 6 consecutive rounds in the Room of the Ancestors must make a DC 16 Will save or become *confused* as if the spell were cast by a 7th level wizard. Characters who successfully save are immune to the effects of the Room of Ancestors for 24 hours. Characters who take precautions, such as plugging their ears, gain a +2 circumstance bonus to their saves.

The western door is wood. The southern door is stone and leads to area 1-4. It slides open when the spears on the flanking statues are turned to point down. A DC 15 Search check will indicate that the spears are meant to be rotated.

Stone Door: 1 ft.; hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35.

Area 1-3 – The Chapel (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

A pale light, with colors shifting through the hues of the rainbow, illuminates this room. The source comes from a fountain in the middle of the room. The kaleidoscope light reveals this to be a chapel dedicated to a god of magic. Scrawled graffiti in an alien tongue decorates the altar and the walls.

A small reptilian humanoid sits next to the fountain. Several vials of water, a notepad, and a cage of rats lie on the ground next to him. The creature looks up, angry at the interruption.

Churo's accident magically enchanted the fountain in this chapel. The water has assumed a constantly-changing color and an associated magical effect,

though the magical effect only works if the water is drunk directly from the fountain. If removed, the water loses its magic.

Smorl, the kobold cleric, is here trying to determine the nature of the fountain. He has discovered some of the magical properties by using rats. However, some of the properties eluded Smorl, so he decided to test them himself. Unfortunately, he has just drunk the *bestow curse* water.

Smorl has a scrap of paper, represented by handout A, next to the fountain on which he has made notes in Common about the water's properties.

The fountain's spell effects vary each round according to the color of the water. Use 1d6 to determine the color of the water each round; it cycles randomly. All effects are as if cast by a 5th level caster:

1d6 Color and Effect

- 1 Red: *Charm* (imbiber is *charmed* by first person they view, DC 12 Will save)
- 2 Orange: *Bull's strength*
- 3 Yellow: *Blur*
- 4 Green: *Bestow curse* (DC 14 Will save, -4 to attack rolls, skill checks, and saves)
- 5 Blue: *Reduce person* (DC 12 Fort save)
- 6 Purple: *Cure light wounds*

Smorl's experimental rats are no threat. Spellcraft checks show that one is under the effects of *blur* (DC 22) and another is affected by *reduce person* (DC 21).

A secret door (Search DC 20) connects this room to area 1-5. Smorl is unaware of this door.

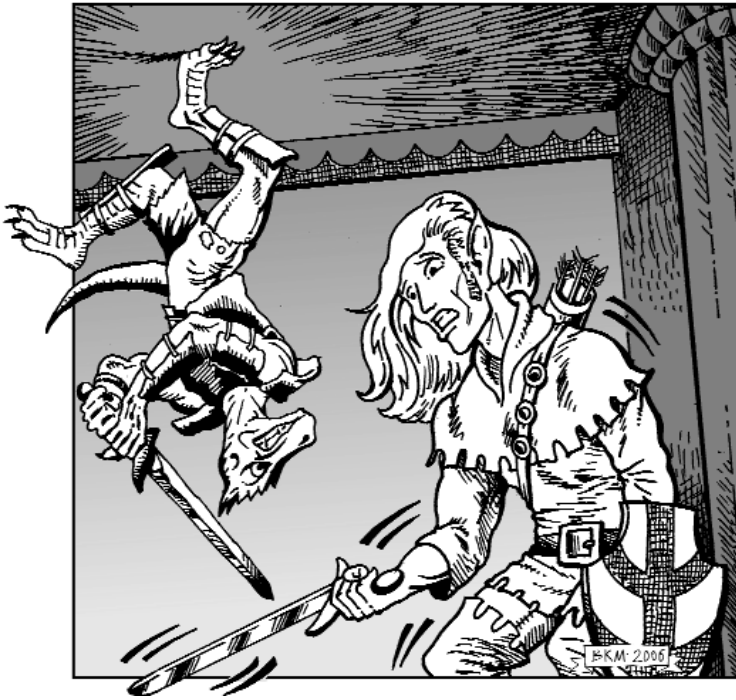
The graffiti is in Draconic. It is gibberish and has no intelligible meaning.

Tactics: When the characters arrive, Smorl prepares as much as possible. He casts *invisibility* and prepares himself by drinking water from the fountain or casting *protection from good*. If captured, Smorl attempts to pass himself as off as a slave kept by Gulag, the leader of the Broken Knives. Smorl falsely gives directions to area 1-7 to find Gulag and says that any treasure can also be found there. At the soonest opportunity Smorl will try to escape, get to the *remove curse* scroll that he has left in area 1-5, and leave the ruins.

Secret Stone Door: 1 ft.; hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Search DC 20.

Smorl, kobold Clr3: CR 3; Small humanoid; HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +1; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp -5; Atk/Full Atk masterwork light mace +1 melee (1d4-3) or light crossbow +4 ranged (1d6/19-20); SA Command undead 4/day; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 4, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Note: The effects of Smorl's *curse* are not includ-



ed in the stat block above. Be sure to apply the effects as given above.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Craft (trapmaking) +4, Diplomacy +3, Hide +2, Intimidate +4, Profession (miner) +5, Search +3, Spellcraft +8; Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll.

Light sensitivity: dazzled in bright sunlight or within radius of a daylight spell.

Spells (4/4/3, DC 12 + spell level): 0—*detect poison, mending, read magic*; 1st—*cause fear, command, cure light wounds, protection from good**; 2nd—*augury* (x2), *invisibility**. *Domain spell.

Domains: Evil, Trickery.

Possessions: Chain shirt, light steel shield, masterwork light mace, holy symbol, light crossbow, 20 bolts, scroll (divine; caster level 3; *delay poison, find traps, hold person*), key to Rulic's manacles (see area 1-9).

Languages: Draconic, Common.

Area 1-4 – Gathering Room (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The sound of yipping echoes from the walls. The noise comes from four small reptilian humanoids merrily kicking a ball around the room. One last kick sends the ball through the air; it must have incredible spin on it, because at one point the ball drifts up before resuming its downward arc. Actually... no, you realize it's not a ball. It's a severed elven head.

The activity in the room stops for a moment as the creatures regard you. The silence lasts a heartbeat, then the creatures howl, draw their weapons, and prepare for battle.

The gathering room was a place for viewing the deceased before they were taken to the catacombs,

but now the Broken Knives use it for a common room. Four kobolds, who are on break, are playing a game of kick-the-severed-head (the head being from one of the fallen town guard).

The magic accident altered the nature of gravity in this room; either it is strengthened or reversed. Refer to the key for effects. Firing missile weapons into or through affected squares nets a –2 circumstance penalty for each square the missile enters. The kobolds are aware of the affected squares and avoid them.

Trash and dust is on the ceiling in the reverse gravity squares; a DC 15 Spot check notices this oddity.

Gravity effect key: The map keys are as follows.

R: Reverse gravity, DC 15 Reflex save avoids, 1d4 falling damage.

C: Crushing gravity, DC 15 Reflex save avoids, victim becomes prone, DC 15 Strength check to move out of the square or stand.

Tactics: The kobolds form ranks on their first round. The two wielding melee weapons are in front, and two wielding crossbows are in the rear. The crossbows begin unloaded. If half of their number are killed, the remaining kobolds flee to area 1-5 to get help from the troglodytes.

Treasure: A crude 10-foot ladder, used to harvest spiders in area 1-6, rests in the corner of this room

Kobolds (4): CR 1/4; Small humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +1; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp –4; Atk/Full Atk spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3) or light crossbow +3 ranged (1d6/19-20); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will –1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Light sensitivity: dazzled in bright sunlight or within radius of a daylight spell.

Possessions: Leather armor, spear, light crossbow, 10 bolts.

Area 1-5 – Preparation Room (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

The smell of old alchemical concoctions and basil assaults your nose. Some fresher stench, oily and pungent, is here too. Two reptilian forms lie prone on the ground, wrapped in blankets. A pile of garbage rests in one corner.

Strangely, a haunch of roast goat floats in mid-air, unmoving.

Formerly this was a room to prepare bodies for entombment. The magical accident created instability in the flow of time in parts of this room (see the key for game effects). In one spot time has slowed down so

much that it is in effect an area of stasis. The bandits have used this to their advantage, storing some food here so it doesn't spoil.

Two troglodytes sleep in this room. They occupy squares of accelerated time so they can get back on the job quicker. Unless already awakened by fellow bandits, the troglodytes are sound asleep, and only wake on a successful Listen check as the characters enter the room.

Smorl has a stash of supplies and treasure in this room. A DC 10 Search check finds the cache amongst the pile of garbage.

Time effects key: The map keys are as follows.

H: Creature in this square is *hasted*. Effect does not continue outside the square.

S: Creature in this square is *slowed*. Effect does not continue outside the square.

St: Creature in this square has entered a stasis. They are affected as if *paralyzed*. Missile attacks into or through the square are impossible. Items and creatures may be retrieved from this square from an adjacent one with a DC 15 Strength check.

Tactics: If awakened in time or alerted, the troglodytes remain in the *hasted* squares to fight unless they need to engage characters with missile weapons. If they are presented with the opportunity, they bull rush a character into the stasis square. These bandits fight to the death, as will any kobolds who have retreated from area 1-4.

Treasure: Smorl's stash of supplies consists of a scroll (divine; caster level 5; *remove curse*, *cure moderate wounds*), 85 sp, and a sack with 10 gems (5 gp each).

Secret Stone Door: 1 ft.; hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Search DC 20.

Troglodytes (2): CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init -1; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk club +2 melee (1d6), claw +1 melee (1d4), or light crossbow +0 ranged (1d8/19-20); Full Atk club +2 melee (1d6) and claw -1 melee (1d4) and bite -1 melee (1d4); or light crossbow +0 ranged (1d8/19-20); SA Stench; SQ Darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +5 (+9 underground or rocky setting), Listen +3; Multiattack, Weapon Focus (club).

Stench: Range 30 ft., Fort DC 13 (poison), sickened for 10 rounds, on a successful save character cannot be affected by the same troglodyte for 24 hours.

Possessions: club, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts.

Area 1-6 – The Spider Corral (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

As you enter this room you have to catch yourselves from falling. On the other side of the portal, the entire room drops down ten feet. Rags and bones rest on the floor, scattered about. Holes bore into the walls below you, all big enough to insert your arm, but too small to crawl into. A strange greasy shine covers every surface of this room.

The Broken Knives turned this room into a corral to house one of their favorite delicacies, monstrous hunting spiders. The kobolds dug a pit in the room and made little cubbyholes for spider dens. If anyone descends into the pit the spiders will come out, anticipating a meal.

Most of the spiders are harmless, too small to do any damage to characters; they crawl on the characters but don't attack. However, four of the spiders have grown big enough to be a threat. Two rounds after a character descends into the pit the harmless spiders swarm out in large numbers; after three rounds, the larger spiders emerge to feast.

The accident created a permanent *grease* effect on all surfaces, helping to contain the spiders (one of the reasons this room was chosen by the kobolds to become the spider corral).

One of the stolen treasures, the Stone Idol, is hidden in a cubbyhole. A DC 15 Search check of the room will find it and a DC 10 Appraise check will identify it as a religious relic. Otherwise it just appears to be a stone with a funny shape.

Tiny Monstrous Hunting Spiders (4): CR 1/4; Tiny vermin; HD 1/2d8; hp 2; Init +3; Spd. 30 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk/Full Atk bite +5 melee (1d3-4); SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., termsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 3, Dex 17, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11 (spider may always take a 10 on Climb checks), Hide +15, Jump +6, Spot +12; Weapon Finesse.

Poison: Bite, Fort DC 10, 1d2 Str/1d2 Str.

Area 1-7 – Churo's Living Room (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

The door to this room is open. Inside is a comfortable-looking room painted in warm pink tones. A soft brown carpet covers the floor and two couches invite you to rest your feet for a while. The room is a little bit warmer than the corridor. A mound of coins, gems, and equipment rests on the floor in the middle of the room.

There is a heavy iron door set in the opposite wall. You can hear a slight whistle, like wind gusting in a bitter storm, on the other side of that door. There

is an occasional scratching noise too. Then, suddenly, there is a loud bang on the door.

When Churo's magical calamity enchanted this area, the entire room became a living creature. The living room disguises its nature and ambushes unwary creatures. After each meal it regurgitates the indigestible materials, often coins and armor, which it uses to lure prey closer to its maw.

The living room has the ability to mimic an ordinary room. A few things give away its true nature. The carpet is actually hair, and there is a very slight motion of breathing. A DC 22 Spot check gives a hint that this room is not innocent.

The living room's mouth is a toothy maw in the center of the floor, beside the mound of gems. The mouth is well concealed by the carpet until it opens. The room also has a long tentacle that resembles a tightly woven braided carpet, which it can unwind from around the edges of the room.

Tactics: The living room waits for a creature to come within 5 feet of its mouth before launching an attack. If the characters decided not to enter the room, the creature attacks when they try to leave – the living room's tentacles can reach 20 feet into the corridor to chase the characters. Unless someone has made a successful Spot check to penetrate its disguise, the living room gains a surprise round.

Characters that attack any part of the living room except for a tentacle or its mouth gain a +4 bonus to hit.

Treasure: The mound of treasure contains an *elixir of swimming*, 500 sp, 1000 cp, and 45 amber tokens. The amber tokens are ancient coins with the likeness of a gnomish king carved on one side; a merchant or moneychanger will offer 1 gp for each, but with a DC 15 Appraise check a character knows that a collector will pay 10 gp for each token.

Living Room: CR 3; Huge aberration; HD 5d8+15; hp 37; Init -1; Spd. 0 ft.; AC 10, touch 3, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +14; Atk/Full Atk tentacle +4 melee (drag) or bite +4 melee (1d4+3); Reach 5 ft. (20 ft. with tentacle); SA Drag, improved grab, swallow whole, tentacle; SQ Disguise self, immune to critical hits, tremor sense 20 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref -4, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 1, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Disguise +16; Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Disguise).

Drag: If the living room hits with a tentacle, it latches onto the foe's body. This does no damage; instead, the opponent is pulled 5 ft. closer to the mouth each following round unless it breaks free, which requires a DC 16 Strength or Escape Artist check or the destruction of the tentacle. If the living room drags a creature within 5 ft. of its mouth, it may attack with its bite in the same round with a +4 attack bonus.

Improved Grab: To use this ability a living room



must hit with its bite attack. It may then initiate a grapple attack without provoking an attack of opportunity as a free action. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to swallow the victim the following round.

Swallow Whole: The living room may attempt to swallow an opponent it has successfully grappled the previous round by making a further grapple check. If successful, the opponent is swallowed and takes 1d4 acid damage per round. The living room may hold up to 1 Large creature, 4 Medium creatures, or 16 Small creatures in its stomach. A swallowed creature may cut its way out with light slashing or piercing weapons, dealing 5 points of damage to the stomach (AC 10). Any hole closes after the character escapes.

Tentacle (Ex): Once per round as a move action the living room may create a tentacle. A tentacle has 5 hp, AC 10 and can be damaged with a sunder attack. The living room may have only one tentacle at a time.

Disguise Self (Ex): A living room may manipulate its flesh to assume the shape of an interior room and furniture.

Area 1-8A – Churo's Workshop (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

As you open this door you are buffeted by an intense wind. Inside there is a vortex of air. Debris flies around and around in pieces no bigger than splinters; most are mere motes which have an uncanny ability to get in your eye. The walls are

smooth from years of abrasion. For a moment you see a metal chest the size of your head, still intact, aloft in the turbulence, then it whirls away back into the dust.

Churo used this basement room as a retreat for arcane research. His horrendous accident created a permanent vortex in the room, which has destroyed nearly everything in it.

The winds in this room are powerful. Creatures within must make a DC 18 Fortitude save each round they are in the room. Small creatures that fail this save are blown into a wall and take 1d4 nonlethal damage, Medium creatures are knocked prone, and Large creatures are checked. Ranged attacks are impossible. All skill checks suffer a –2 circumstance penalty.

Each round there is a 50% chance the metal box hits a randomly determined character. The box attacks at +0 and does 1d2 bludgeoning damage. If the characters wish to catch the box, only someone targeted by it may make an attempt. A character must make an unarmed attack against AC 15 to succeed in catching it.

The box is crumpled shut. A DC 25 Strength is required to open it. Inside is the key to the secret door, as well as some of Churo's notes, which describe the experiments leading up to his unfortunate demise. The notes are written in a code which requires a DC 15 Decipher Script check to understand. A DC 15 Spellcraft check shows that the notes deal with high-energy chaotic magic and fundamental arcane forces.

There is a secret door to Churo's closet in this room. The effects of the wind vortex, eroding the seams, have made it a little less hidden.

Iron Door: 2 in., hardness 10, hp 60.

Treasure: The chest contains the key to the secret door, and Churo's notes. A wizard who studies the notes for six months gains a +1 circumstance bonus on their Spellcraft checks relating to the effects in the castle. A wizard of 10th level or higher will pay 500 gp for the notes).

Locked Secret Stone Door: 4 in., hardness 8, hp 60, break DC 38, Open Lock DC 25, Search DC 15.

Area 1-8B – Churo's Closet: Read or paraphrase the following:

Small eddies of wind puff up the dust in this little closet. Time has ravaged the contents. All that's left are tatters of clothes and broken bits of wood. There is a smell of decay, likely from the kobold corpse in the corner of the closet. He was clutching something golden in his arms when he died.

This is Churo's closet, where he kept things from his younger days. A small ivory box can be found with a DC 10 Search check. Inside is a slim volume – Churo's spell book from his apprentice days.

The corpse is a formerly curious kobold that teleported here from area 1-9. Unable to find his way out, he died of thirst.

In the kobold's arms is a golden cow with the letters MU on one side. This is a trophy from the Moveable University, an institute of arcane learning. It was formerly given each year to the college in the university that won the applied magics competition – until Churo stole it during his senior year at the school.

A successful DC 20 Bardic Lore check tells a character that the trophy is stolen and belongs to the Moveable University. A character who makes a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check knows that MU stands for Moveable University. If the party returns the statue to the Moveable University, then they will be rewarded handsomely. The trophy absorbed residual magic over the years at the university. A *detect magic* spell show a weak aura of the universal school.

Treasure: Statue of a golden cow (100 gp), ivory box (25 gp), Churo's university spell book (contains every 1st-level arcane spell, worth 1,200 gp).

Area 1-9 – Storage (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

A tired voice greets you as you open the door. "No more work, I just want to sleep." This comes from a human dressed in the tattered and besmirched uniform of a town guard. He sits up amongst a pile of sacks where he has made his bed. The sacks are flour, you guess by the puff off dust when they are disturbed.

Piles of mining gear and food are stacked around the first half of this chamber. Deeper in, the room is barren, and there is nothing but a faint shimmer of the air. You watch as a bit of floor dust floats toward the shimmer. There is a tiny sparkle of light and the dust is gone.

A captured town guardsman, Rulic, is bound to the wall here; the key to his manacles is with Smorl in area 1-3. Smorl has *charmed* the prisoner (taking him to the chapel and having him drink the water) and used him for menial chores. Rulic is one of the guardsmen who followed a bandit tunnel from a plundered temple. A cave-in cut him off from the rest of his group, and he was taken prisoner.

He knows where the bandits have dug their latest tunnel and the location of the idol in area 1-6. But Rulic is reluctant to give any information while under the effects of the *charm* spell. The spell will last for another 2 hours.

A DC 12 Intimidate check or a DC 15 Diplomacy check gets him to talk. If Corporal Cale or private Obirt are with the party, there is a +2 circumstance bonus to these checks.

Rulic leaves if given the chance; he wants to let his family know that he's alive. Rulic won't betray the party, but neither will he assist them in thwarting the bandits; he wants to continue his "friendship" with Smorl. This could change as per the *charm person* spell, especially since the bandits have no problem attacking the prisoner if he is with the party.

Farther into the room, Churo's magical accident has created an area of teleportation. A character who ventures into or touches the shimmering area, even with a 10 foot pole, and fails their DC 17 Will save immediately vanishes in a flash of light, sent to a semi-random location in the dungeon. Rulic has some idea of what happens; he has tossed bits of garbage into the shimmering air and watched it disappear, and he knows that the bandits avoid it.

Teleportation effect: Will save DC 17. Roll 1d4 or pick for each character's destination:

Roll	Area
1	Area 1-2
2	Area 1-8B
3	Area 1-10
4	Area 1-7 (10 feet up from the floor)

Rulic's chains: hardness 10, hp 10, break DC 26, open lock DC 20 (key is held by Smorl in area 1-3).

Rulic, human War1: CR 1/2; medium humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +0; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk short sword +3 melee (1d6+1); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

Area 1-10 – Catacombs (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This area is impenetrably dark. The darkness is so deep it is unaffected by light or sight. Smell only tells you that a musty odor lingers in the area beyond. But something is in there. There is a far-off sound. A click and then another. Silence for moment, and then more of the same. Click-click-click. Silence.

These are the catacombs of Castle Churo. Churo's accident created a permanent *darkness* effect (caster level 3) in this area. The crypts have been raided by the Broken Knives, who took the treasure and used the bones to decorate area 1-1.

The source of the clicking is an animated, floating skull. It is the animated skull of Thuelso from area 1-11, which now wanders through the catacombs in area 1-10. It begins at the door to area 1-13. Each round the skull moves 5 feet. Roll randomly to determine the direction. If the direction is into a wall the skull bangs into the wall. A DC 10 Listen check gives the general location of the skull. If a character enters the same

square as the skull, it attacks. It remains aggressive until it is brought into area 1-11.

A secret trap door leads to area 1-14.

Locked Secret Stone Trap Door: 4 in., hardness 8, hp 60, break DC 38, open lock DC 25, Search DC 25.

Animated skull: CR 1/4; Tiny construct; HD 1/2d10; hp 2; Init +2; Spd. 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -9; Atk/Full Atk bite +2 melee (1d2-1); SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low light vision; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -5; Str 8, Dex 14, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Area 1-11 – Thuelso's Tomb (EL 0+): Read or paraphrase the following:

A translucent male human sits upon a throne in this room. His feet were propped up on a sarcophagus which dominates the middle of the room, but he sets them down when the door opens. Every surface of the room is covered in arcane symbols. Fine burial goods lie about the tomb. For a moment it seems as if some of them twitched. The figure on the chair sits up. "Not another interruption," he says with a sigh. "Fine, maybe you can be of some use."

This is the tomb of Thuelso the Thoughtful, one of Churo's ancestors. Thuelso became a ghost because he had a few more things to contemplate before moving on to the afterlife. The accident animated all of the objects in the room, including Thuelso's remains (not as *animate dead* but rather as *animate object*). The items in the room have been tamed by him. However, when the bandits investigated the room, Thuelso's skull escaped into area 1-10 before he could scare the bandits away.

Thuelso can't leave the tomb, as the enchantments that sustain him only work in this room. He bargains with the characters to retrieve his skull, unharmed, in exchange for a treasure. The treasure is a skeleton key, which is a combination of a *wand of knock* and masterwork thieves' tools; the downside is that the key is also an animated object, a feisty one, and will escape if given the chance. To use the key someone must first successfully grapple it.

If for some reason Thuelso needs to defend his tomb, he can make a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within the room must succeed on a DC 19 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by Thuelso's moan for 24 hours.

Thuelso is unaffected by corporeal weapons. Furthermore, the animated grave goods will attack the party at his command.

Treasure: Skeleton key, various grave goods worth

250 gp total. Thuelso's grave goods are protected by a curse; anything taken from the room gives a -2 penalty to attacks, skills checks, and saves to the possessor.

Animated Grave Goods (8): CR 1/4; Tiny construct; HD 1/2d10; hp 2; Init +2; Spd. 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -9; Atk/Full Atk bite +2 melee (1d2-1); SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low light vision; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -5; Str 8, Dex 14, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

The Skeleton Key: CR 1/8; Fine construct; HD 1/4d10; hp 1; Init +3; Spd. 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp -14; Atk/Full Atk bite +1 melee (1d2-2); SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low light vision, spell-like ability; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will -5; Str 6, Dex 16, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Spell-like ability: The key works as a *wand of knock*. It has 2 charges left.

Area 1-12 – Vacant Tomb (EL 4; increased due to fast healing effect): Read or paraphrase the following:

As you open the door you feel warmth and well-being radiate from inside. But the room's sole occupant, a large, long-bodied reptile-man sitting on an ornate rug, isn't so welcoming. He looks up from his work; he was carefully writing and deep in thought until you interrupted him. The reptilian growls when he sees you, and the smell of musk fills the room.

"Looks like he was right," the troglodyte says in Common before dropping his pen, drawing his sword, and standing in one graceful, practiced movement.

This is Gulag, troglodyte leader of the Broken Knives. This is an empty tomb which Gulag made into his personal room. The accident left a lingering effect of positive energy, which gives the occupants of this room fast healing 5. A DC 30 Spellcraft check identifies the exact nature of this property.

Gulag has taken a prayer rug and used it to decorate his chamber. This is not the religious relic the party is looking for. It is a fake that the monks use for display while the real one is kept in a vault. There is a pile of his treasure and gear in here, along with correspondence from Kethos. The characters have interrupted Gulag writing a note to Kethos. The incomplete message Gulag was composing asks an unnamed person for assistance when the Broken Knives leave Castle Churo. An unsigned message can be found, warning the bandits that a band of adventurers might be coming. Finally, there is a copy of a contract, which can be found with a DC 10 Search check, which outlines Kethos' agreement with the Broken Knives for the theft of religious relics in exchange for 1000 gp. This is signed by Kethos.

Tactics: Gulag has a basic understanding of the nature of this room and will use it to his advantage. If he can, he stands in the doorway and fights the party from there. Gulag attempts to force wounded opponents back into the catacombs. If knocked unconscious he feigns death until his wounds have fully healed, unless a character attempts a coup de grace.

Treasure: Prayer rug (50 gp, a DC 15 Appraisal check tells a character that this is not the religious relic), 500 sp, inlaid brazier (50 gp).

Gulag, troglodyte Rog2: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2d6+8; hp 24; Init +5; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk masterwork shortsword +5 melee (1d6+1) or claw +3 melee (1d4+1), or light crossbow +1 ranged (1d8/19-20); Full Atk club +5 melee (1d6) and claw +1 melee (1d4) and bite +1 melee (1d4); or light crossbow +1 ranged (1d8/19-20); SA Sneak attack (1d6), stench; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., evasion, trapfinding; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (traps) +4, Hide +12, Intimidate +7, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Search +4; Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

Stench: Range 30 ft., Fort DC 13 (poison), sickened for 10 rounds, on a successful save character cannot be affected by the same troglodyte for 24 hours.

Possessions: masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork shortsword, heavy crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts.

Languages Spoken: Draconic, Common.

Area 1-13 – Hall of the Gods: Read or paraphrase the following:

As soon as you push open the door, the portal fills with a swirl of intense blue light. Despite any resistance, an intense force pulls everyone through the portal. The blinding light ceases as you tumble into an octagonal room with a twenty-foot-high ceiling. Two tall marble statues face you. They are the gods of knowledge and magic. The god of knowledge holds a scroll in one hand while the other is upraised, palm up, as if holding up the heavens. The god of magic is posed in a moment of spell casting, but again with one hand upraised, palm up.

Between the two statues an ancient humanoid skeleton slumps against the wall underneath the writing. A coil of rope rests in its lap. Above its head are a few lines of graffiti written in a strange tongue.

With a quick glance around the room, you realize that there are no doors, not even the one you entered through. There is no obvious way out.

Give the players handout B.

Churo's accident warped the geometry of this room, erasing all sign of the original portals, except a trapdoor in the floor which leads to Bucho's crypt, area 1-14. Bucho had this room dedicated to the gods of knowledge and magic, and built his final resting place underneath it.

The trapdoor is hidden and locked. However, the Broken Knives gang has for convenience left the key in the room. The key is invisible, and is placed in the palm of the god of knowledge. The statues are nearly as tall as the ceiling, standing 18 feet tall. The statue's hand is 16 feet above the ground. The Climb DC for the slick marble statues is 25. However, a rope can be looped around the arm of the statue for easier climbing. Gulag has left a rope in the skeleton's lap for this very purpose.

Smorl has written a clue in Draconic, to remind himself or Gulag where the key is. The note on the wall reads:

*Of the mind is the key
You cannot see, but can find
In your hand*

The skeleton belongs to a human adventurer who was trapped in this room. The bandits have already plundered the corpse.

Locked Secret Stone Trap Door: 4 in., hardness 8, hp 60, break DC 38, open lock DC 25, Search DC 25.

Area 1-14 – Bucho's Crypt (EL 1): This area can be reached from the trap doors in 1-10 and 1-13. If the characters enter 1-13, they'll have to go through here to get out of the room. Once this area is entered, read or paraphrase the following:

The air in this room is stuffy and stale, and smells of decay. A stone sarcophagus with an inscription occupies the center of the room. A skeleton rests on the floor next to it. On the far side of the room, a ladder leads up to the stone ceiling.

Assume the ladder is at the opposite trap door from the one through which the characters enter.

This is the crypt of Bucho the Pious. Bucho's sarcophagus is being used by the bandits to store the bulk of their stolen treasure, including the golden censer and prayer rug. The relics can be identified as such with a DC 15 Appraisal check. The skeleton is Bucho, unceremoniously dumped out of his resting place to make room for plunder. The inscription simply reads, "Here lies Bucho the Pious."

The sarcophagus lid is heavy, requiring a DC 18 Strength check to lift. It has also been trapped by Gulag to dissuade curious kobolds. The trap is triggered by anyone attempting to lift the lid.

Fusillade of Darts Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 ranged (1d4+1, dart); multiple targets (fires 1d4 darts at each target in two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 14; Disable Device DC 20. Market Price: 500 gp.

Treasure: Golden censer (250 gp), prayer rug (250 gp), 300 gp, 1,050 sp, 2,500 cp, *potion of cure light wounds*, *everburning torch*, masterwork dagger.

Area 1-15 – Entrance to the Bandits' Tunnel: Read or paraphrase the following:

The temperature has dropped here somewhat. But you can see again, having reached the edge of the darkness. You can see the well-hewn stone walls give way to rough-cut mining. Further into the tunnel you can see side tunnels full of rubble.

The side tunnels once led to other temples, but have been collapsed and are impassable. Otherwise there is nothing of interest in this area.

Area 1-16A – The Mine Slopes Down: Read or paraphrase the following:

There is a slope that drops ten feet followed by a turn in the tunnel in front of you. You can hear the sounds of activity around the bend, metal biting stone and snatches of an unintelligible song.

As the characters approach this area, they can easily hear the sounds of work and mining, which could give them a surprise round if they don't alert the bandits. The miners in area 1-16B are at a –5 penalty to their listen checks.

Area 1-16B – Tunnel's End (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

A team of five reptilian creatures are mining the rock here. The larger creature lifts heavy rubble and his fellow thugs work picks into the wall. They chant a ribald song in some reptilian language, completely engrossed in their work.

You notice that this area contains more braces and shoring than the rest of the mine. Water drips from the ceiling and forms puddles at your feet. The air is cold and clammy.

The mining crew is here, digging to their last vault under the druid's gardens to steal his ornamental antler helmet. The bandits' calculations were a little off, and they dug too close to the gardens' ornamental pond. The bandits had to pause to shore up the tunnel. There are small leaks, but nothing unmanageable, and the mining has resumed with one final push to the druid's vault.

If the beams are knocked down or broken, there will be a cave-in and the ornamental pond will flood into the mine.

Tactics: When at least one bandit is killed, whoever is left alive will order everyone to attack the support beams. Given that they are in a dead-end and know that the pond is above them, the bandits would rather risk a cave-in in order to try to regroup to a better position rather than face what they believe to be certain death at the hands of the heroes.

Only three support beams need to be broken before

the ceiling collapses. Everyone in the area is pounded by rubble (Atk +0, 1d6 damage) and the floor fills with large rocks and stones so that movement is hampered. The first round after the collapse, the mine floods. At the end of that round there is water 2 feet deep in the area, and all non-magical light sources are extinguished. The water level rises a further 2 feet every round until it reaches the ceiling of area 1-16B. All Swim checks are DC 20.

The bandits will retreat to area 1-16A, where the water is ankle deep at worst, and attempt to pick off characters swimming out of the chaos.

Support Beams: Hardness 5; hp 15; break DC 18.

Troglodyte: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init -1; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk club +2 melee (1d6) or claw +1 melee (1d4), or light crossbow +0 ranged (1d8/19-20); Full Atk club +2 melee (1d6) and claw -1 melee (1d4) and bite -1 melee (1d4); or light crossbow +0 ranged (1d8/19-20); SA Stench; SQ Darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +5 (+9 underground or rocky setting), Listen +3; Multiattack, Weapon Focus (club).

Stench: Range 30 ft., Fort DC 13 (poison), sickened for 10 rounds, on a successful save character cannot be affected by the same troglodyte for 24 hours.

Possessions: club, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts.

Kobolds (4): CR 1/4; Small humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +1; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3) or light crossbow +3 ranged (1d6/19-20); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Light sensitivity: dazzled in bright sunlight or within radius of a *daylight* spell.

Possessions: Leather armor, spear.

Conclusion

As the party emerges from the dungeon, Kethos is at his temple contemplating the possible failure of his plans. If the characters go there first, they will catch him. Otherwise the priest will escape and hide out in a follower's house until morning.

The religious council waits at the druids' gardens. They warmly greet the characters and heal any wounds. They listen and nod knowingly if the party brings forth evidence that implicates Kethos. An immediate order for his arrest goes out. However, the town guard is unable to find him; he has fled town. If the party participates in the hunt, they can find him with a DC 20 Gather Information check.

If the party hasn't finished off the bandits in area 1-16B, then at this time they attack the druid's vaults. Everyone is

alerted by a scream, which is quickly cut off. A dash to the vault shows a pair of dead guards and a tunnel, which leads to area 1-16B. The party can catch the bandits there. The tactics of the bandits remain the same as before: collapse the tunnel and escape to area 1-16A.

If the party is successful in returning the relics and eradicating the bandit gang, the happy people of Grozny throw a celebration in their honor.

The Revenge of Kethos (EL 3)

If the party catches Kethos at his temple he fights to the death, consumed by anger that his plans were foiled. If the party doesn't catch Kethos, then the cleric attacks the party the morning after the celebration, hoping to kill the entire party in one quick fight.

Tactics: Kethos is a fierce and somewhat insane fighter. He hurls constant insults at the party. He prepares himself if he knows that a fight is coming, casting as many helpful spells on himself as he can before facing the characters.

1d4+1 rounds after the fight begins a group of four guardsmen arrives. They do their best to assist the party.

Kethos, human Clr3: CR 3; Medium Humanoid; HD 3d8+6; hp 23; Init +0; Spd. 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk masterwork morning star +4 (1d8+1); AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (religion) +2; Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Weapon Focus (morning star).

Spells (4/4/3, DC 12 + spell level): 0 – *detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*; 1st – *bless*, *doom*, *protection from good**, *shield of faith*; 2nd – *hold person*, *invisibility**, *undetected alignment*. *Domain spell.

Domains: Evil, Trickery.

Possessions: Half plate, large metal shield, masterwork morning star, scroll (divine, 3rd level: 3x *cure light wounds*), *potion of bull's strength*, 150 gp.

Guardsmen, human War1 (4): CR 1/2; medium humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +0 Spd. 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk short sword +3 melee (1d6+1); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

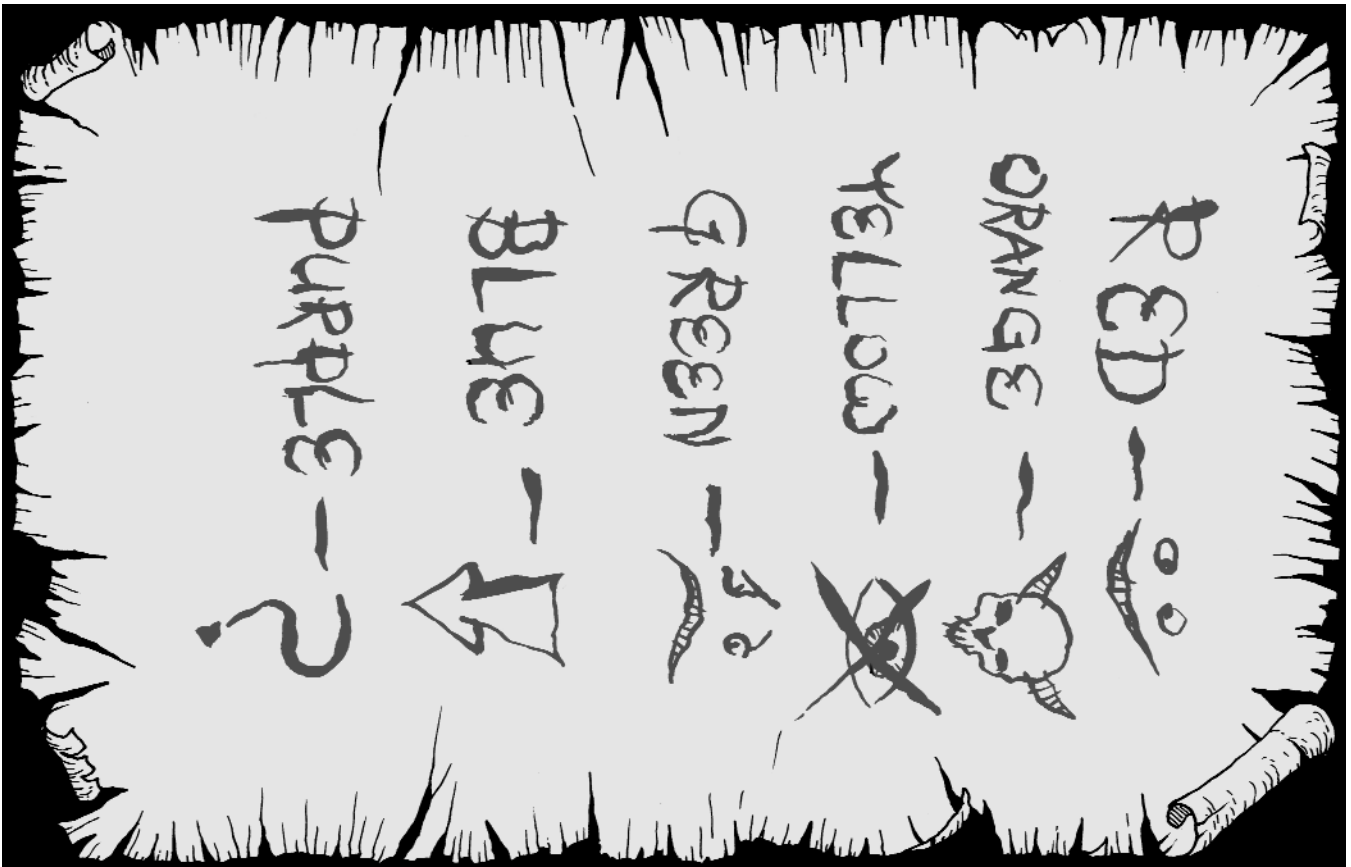
Skills and Feats: Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

Rewards

Give the characters additional XP rewards for completing the goals of the quest.

Each relic recovered	25 XP
Entire bandit gang captured or killed	75 XP
Rulic rescued	50 XP
Thuelso's skull recovered intact	50 XP
Characters present solid evidence of conspiracy	50 XP
Kethos captured or killed	50 XP

Players' Handout A

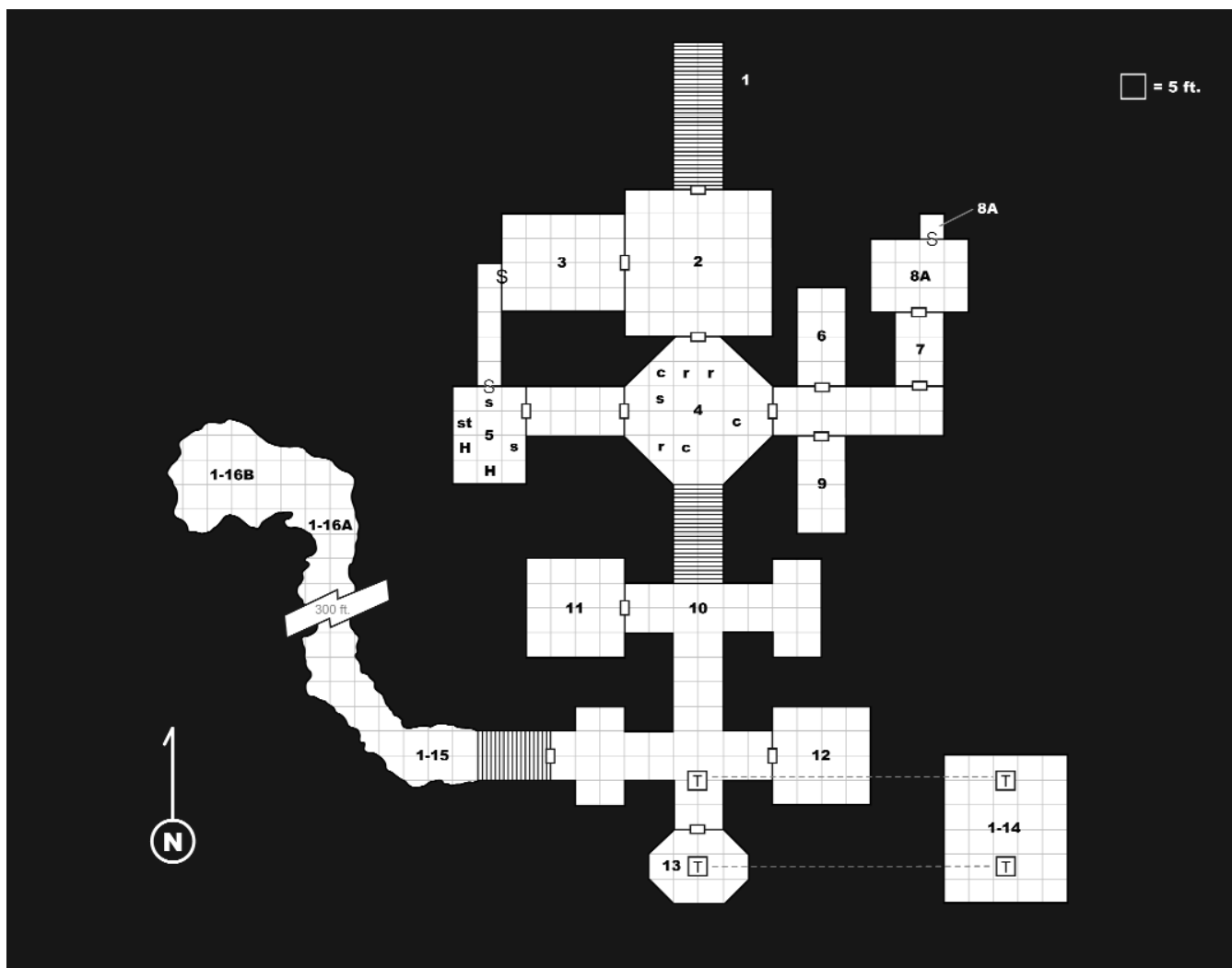


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Players' Handout B





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