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DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

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THE FORGOTTEN PORTAL

BY CHRIS DOYLE
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVEL 4





FORGOTTEN PORTAL

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 4-6

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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 *Forgotten Portal* is designed for five characters of 4th to 6th level, with a total of 20 to 25 total character levels between party members. At least one striker, two controllers, and one defender character are essential for good game play, and a varied mixture of different character classes is recommended. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group's unique style of play.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs are in the Xulmec City State of Anthua, seeking a hidden, fantastic location in the steamy jungles (see the Adventure Hooks below for ideas on what the PCs could be seeking). Their Xulmec guide has led them along the banks of the Tototl River to a majestic waterfall called the Atotzin that cascades nearly 1,800 feet off a plateau. The guide beckons to a hidden cave system that leads to the top of the plateau and high altitude jungles that conceal the location the PCs seek. The PCs pass through many natural chambers, battling giant-sized natural denizens, and discover a makeshift tomb to a long-forgotten Xulmec hero containing his undead body with his silver armaments. As they exit the caves on the plateau, they encounter a wounded tyrannosaur returning to its lair. With the aid of a wandering band of Xulmec warriors, the dinosaur is defeated. When the warriors see the silver armaments the PCs carry, they beg them to return to their nearby village, Teputzitoloc.



At the village, the elder explains to the PCs the significance of the silver weapons, and the terrible curse that has afflicted the village the past several months. A few months ago, the high priest began demanding sacrifices of villagers' blood, instead of crops or gold, a practice instituted centuries ago by an ancient savoir who gained favor from the gods themselves. The PCs are drawn into the plight of the village against their misguided high priest. They investigate a nearby shrine and discover the true reason for the shift to blood sacrifices. Unfortunately, there is a good chance the PCs further upset the natural balance if they slay one of the village's protectors, the evil feathered serpent Itzcoatl. Deep in the depths of the shrine, the PCs discover a recently activated portal, the source of the malignant force that has corrupted the high priest and spirited away the village's celestial protector.

GAME MASTER'S SECTION

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.

SCALING INFORMATION

The Forgotten Portal is designed for five characters of levels 4–6, but you may adjust it to suit parties of different sizes or level. If alterations to the adventure are performed, remember to adjust all treasure accordingly. Consider modifying the adventure as follows:

Weaker parties (4 or fewer characters, or lower than 4th level): Reduce Atocuetzpal by two levels in area 1–2. Reduce the wounded tyrannosaur's hit points by another 25 or even 50 in area 1–5, depending on the strength of your party. Remove two levels from Quahtlatoa in area 1–7. In area 2–9, make the living idol an elite monster rather than a solo monster. In area 2–18, replace the firelasher elemental with an elite wraith. Remove one of the glyphs of warding and one of the illusory rat swarms from area 2–22. Remove two levels from Itzcoatl in area 2–27. Remove one elite dire jaguar and two levels from Tlacocelot in area 2–28.

Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 6th level): The adventure should prove challenging for larger or higher-level parties, but if your group is especially capable, consider the following changes. In area 1–5, give the tyrannosaur full hit points. In area 2–18, make the firelasher elemental the standard 11th level version. In area 2–27, add one level to Itzcoatl, and have him fight to win. Add another elite dire jaguar and two more zombie rotters to area 2–28.



| Location | Pg | Type | Encounter | EL |
|----------|----|-------|---|--------|
| 1-2 | 8 | C | Atocuetzpal, advanced vicejaw crocodile | 5 |
| 1-3 | 9 | C | Five spitting frogs | 4 |
| 1-5 | 9 | C | Wounded tyrannosaur | 6 |
| 1-6 | 10 | T | Falling block trap | 3 |
| 1-7 | 12 | C | Quahtlatoa, male human mummy | 6 |
| 2-1a | 18 | C | Giant constrictor snake | 3 |
| 2-1b | 19 | T | 60-foot pit trap | 1 |
| 2-2 | 19 | C | Four xochatateo | 5 |
| 2-3 | 20 | C | Eight zombies | 5 |
| 2-4 | 21 | T | 40-foot spiked pit trap | 3 |
| 2-5 | 21 | C | Two elite dire jaguars | 5 |
| 2-6 | 22 | C/P | Three piranha swarms Secret door puzzle | 4 |
| 2-9 | 24 | C | Living idol | 6 |
| 2-14 | 26 | T/P | Spike trap Door puzzle | 2 |
| 2-16 | 27 | T/H | Javelin traps Sliding wall obstacle | 2+ |
| 2-17 | 28 | T | Pit traps Poison dart traps | Varies |
| 2-18 | 30 | C/T/P | Firelasher elemental Reverse gravity trap | 6 |
| 2-19 | 32 | T/P | Water torrent trap Chain puzzle | 4 |
| 2-20 | 33 | C/P | The Moon Crab | 6 |
| 2-21 | 34 | T | Maize maze trap | 4 |
| 2-22 | 35 | C | Pazuzu statue Glyphs of warding Illusory rat swarm | 7 |
| 2-23 | 36 | C/T | Two sloping pit traps Two viper swarms Poisoned javelin trap | 4 |
| 2-24 | 37 | T/P | Fire trap | 5 |
| 2-25 | 37 | C/P | Twelve animated wicker men The game | 7 |
| 2-27 | 39 | C | Itzcoatl, adult feathered dragon | 8 |
| 2-28 | 41 | C | Tlacocelot, male Xulmec Clr8 Two elite dire jaguars Six zombie rotters | 9 |

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The hook for this adventure is based on the PCs searching for a hidden location in jungles of Anthua. Exactly what the PCs seek, and how they arrived at the waterfall is up to the GM. Below are a few sample hooks, and the GM is encouraged to use the one that suits his home campaign the best, or create a new one. If using *DCC #55: Isle of the Sea Drake*, the clue in area 1-4 can also point to the majestic waterfall Atotzin, and hint at what lies beyond. Whether or not any of the fantastic locations listed below actually exists is at the discretion of the GM, and the focus of his campaign.

- The PCs are searching for a legendary city of Teocuitepetl, rumored to have avenues of paved gold. Perhaps the PCs or their patron is interested in material wealth, or they seek a powerful magic item hidden in the city, or an NPC claimed to reside in the city. All previous investigations have led to dead ends. However, the hired Xulmec guide provided stone tablets that speak of the legendary city beyond the gate of water. Perhaps the waterfall Atotzin is that gate.



- The PCs are hired by an aging wealthy merchant in Voltiguer to locate the fabled Fountain of Health. The merchant is terminally ill (or just wants to prolong his inevitable death), and offers the PCs hard coin (as determined by the GM) if they can lead an expedition to discover the site. However, a rival also seeks the fountain for his own gain, and has sent minions against the PCs in their quest. If this hook is used, the GM is encouraged to create an evil NPC party (with levels matching that of the PCs) that can provide an additional challenge during their journey.
- The PCs are searching for the hidden dinosaur graveyard, rumored to be secluded in the jungle expanse in the City-State of Anthua. Tales suggest that the dinosaur graveyard is a magical site of tangled bones that lures the great beasts to their final resting site. Perhaps the area was blessed by the gods or filled with wondrous treasures... or perhaps the adventures were simply hired by an eccentric archeologist. In any event, there are many factors that lure the PCs to this location.

BACKGROUND STORY

THE VILLAGE OF TEPUTZITOLOC AND ITS HERO CUAUHCUHTLI

The foundation of Xulmec society is based on regular sacrifices to appease their many gods. The village of Teputzitoloc, secluded on a plateau along the Tototl River, was no different. The village boasted its own feathered serpent ally, a black-scaled creature with purple plumage named Itzcoatl. The creature bestowed its wisdom on the villagers and guided them with astute leadership. But the feathered serpents, as speakers of the gods themselves, require payment in the form of sacrifice. Otherwise, the village would be consumed in a fiery devastation that would last for 26 days until the very soil was “cleansed.” In the past, these sacrifices were human in nature, sometimes enemies conquered in battle or rival villages raided for those destined for the altar. Itzcoatl, tainted with a fiendish heart, favored the crimson stain of human blood upon his altar. But often, if the village warriors failed to conquer, the village’s own people suffered the fate of the knife. Still, the village elders decided it was a price worth paying, and prosperous times continued.

Centuries ago, a great hero named Cuauhcuhltli (the eagle lord) vowed to put an end to the sacrifice of humans in Teputzitoloc to appease the gods. His vows were declared the ramblings of a heretic, and he was stoned. He escaped the full wrath of his brothers and fled into the wilderness, disappearing into the northern jungle. During the years that followed, he faced many trials of the gods. After 26 grueling years, he finally returned to Teputzitoloc an enlightened priest, but he was not alone. He returned with Mixcoatl, the celestial twin of Itzcoatl, and presented the magnificent rainbow plumed serpent to the village with the proclamation that all human sacrifices cease.

Itzcoatl was furious, and immediately attacked its good-aligned twin. The battle raged for a day and two hours, destroying much of the village. Alas, the combat ended in a draw. The pair of feathered serpents agreed to rule the village together, and retreated to the shrine located outside of the village. From that day forward, Cuauhcuhltli banned all human sacrifices, offering crops, gold, and livestock instead. Blessed by the gods for surviving their nine trials, Cuauhcuhltli ascended to the position of high priest and the village flourished for decades. After his death, it was said Cuauhcuhltli shared court with the gods themselves, and he was buried in the village’s shrine, rededicated in his honor.

TLACOCELOT’S RISE TO POWER

The village of Teputzitoloc prospered for many centuries, despite its isolation from much of the civilized world. But in recent years the village has fallen on many hardships, including poor crops, aggressive dinosaur predators encroaching on fertile hunting lands, and the premature death of a beloved elder. Throughout these dark years, the current high priest, Tlacocelot, has called for change, in an effort to regain the favor of the gods. A few months ago, Tlacocelot claims he was visited by the gods, and they once again demanded blood sacrifices from villagers. But Mixcoatl was as determined as ever not to concede to the ramblings of a single high priest. However, after three consecutive poor corn harvests, and the loss of the village’s best hunting band to a rampaging “thunder beast,” the village elder finally considered the new form of sacrifice. He sought the council of the feathered serpents, but only Itzcoatl responded with advice and urged the elder to embrace the new order.

With great lust and ceremony, Tlacocelot performed the blood sacrifices in the temple atop the great pyramid dedicated in Cuauhcuhltli’s honor. Tlacocelot’s early victims suffered greatly under the knife, but soon, the high priest became quite proficient at the blood letting of his own people. Subsequent corn harvests improved, and the hunting bands often returned with a bounty of meat, yet the general populace lived in fear. They lived in fear of becoming the next victim on the altar, and fear of their powerful high priest and his open association with jaguars – a violation of village taboo. Some villagers claim he has become tainted by the black jaguar god of the underworld (Ahpuchac) and can assume the form of one of the great cats, in which shape he spies on villagers destined for the blood-soaked altar. And during these dark times, Mixcoatl remains ever silent.

THE FORGOTTEN PORTAL

Tlacocelot spends most of his time sequestered in the Shrine of Cuauhcuhltli, awaiting the next sacrifice ceremony and receiving whispers of corruption from Itzcoatl. First, the high priest received visions from an ancient owl god, leading to an actual visit from this god months ago. Or so he believes. Two months ago, an inert magical portal in the lower level of the shrine awoke with shimmering effect. And out stepped a majestic creature,

with the powerful hindquarters of a lioness, the upper torso of a female human, and the feathered visage of an owl. She presented herself as the owl goddess of ill omens and promised Tlacocelot great power if he became her follower. The high priest accepted at once, and received a great gift in return for his loyalty: a magic mask that allows him to assume the form of a jaguar. Although he is not a true werejaguar, the simple villagers fear his shape-shifting ability regardless. The owl goddess said she was seeking something, and commanded Tlacocelot to escort her throughout the shrine.

It did not take her long to locate the object of her desire: the noble and good couatl Mixcoatl. With Itzcoatl's aid, she easily subdued the feathered serpent, and trapped him in a magic gemstone. Next, she commanded the high priest to guard the shrine against those who would seek to overthrow him. She was cryptic in this detail, but warned the high priest to fear those bearing silver armaments. She commanded him to repair the nine test chambers that guard the path to the lower level of the shrine and the location of the Forgotten Portal. With fervor, Tlacocelot recreated the nine trials with as much historical accuracy as possible — but with even greater lethality. Her final command was that Tlacocelot protect the portal with his life. Then she stepped through with the trapped form of Mixcoatl. Ever since, Tlacocelot has continued the blood sacrifices, and he heeds the advice of Itzcoatl. He steadfastly believes the owl goddess will return and continue the salvation of his people. Sadly, he is mistaken, and he is but a pawn in a cunning cultist's scheme.

THE “OWL GODDESS” GM'S EYES ONLY

Tlacocelot has been deceived by a cunning lamia named Maragnatha. The evil lamia is a powerful cultist that resides in the Ghetrian Desert, thousands of miles to the east. Her cult is dedicated to the demigod aspect of the Sphinx Queen Ankhet, but they recently suffered a terrible setback. The cult's leader, a mysterious creature known only as the Lamia Queen, was slain a few months ago by members of an opposing order. Maragnatha has struggled to maintain control of the cult during the resulting chaos, and she seeks a method to return her leader, believing that would stabilize the cult's ranks. She discovered that the tool she needed, a fabled *staff of resurrection*, was concealed in a pyramid tomb in the sandy wastes. Gathering her remaining loyal followers (mostly gnoll cultists), she located the tomb, and searched its dusty corridors for the item she sought. However, that was weeks ago, and the dangers within the tomb have since claimed the lives of many of her followers. She found treasures and historic artifacts, yet the staff eluded her. She knows it is likely hidden in the true tomb of the pyramid's owner, which despite all attempts, she has yet to locate. But in the lower chambers of the pyramid, she discovered an inactive portal.

After countless hours of research in the tomb, she deduced the portal's destination as a distant Xulmec shrine and the

method to activate the device. It was a simple matter to devise the owl goddess scheme (using a magic mask hidden in the tomb) to deceive any local denizens on the other side of the portal. Frustrated by her failure to locate the staff, she hoped that the Xulmec shrine contained either it or at least information regarding its true location.

As suspected, the disguised Maragnatha encountered Tlacocelot shortly after arriving at the lower level of the Shrine of Cuauhtli. He cowered immediately and his loose tongue gave her suitable information to plan her next move. Unfortunately, the portal was sealed on this side, and could only be activated by using couatl feathers. Not a problem, as she proceeded to capture Mixcoatl with a magic gem, then used its feathers to activate the portal. At a loss for next steps in her quest, she assumed that the feathered serpent, with its infinite wisdom, would know how to recover the staff from the other tomb. Or more likely, the serpent would be needed to recover the staff, much like the feathers were needed to activate the portal. And so she transported the captured serpent to the pyramid to continue her search.

In the meantime, Tlacocelot has bolstered the defense of the shrine at the behest of the “owl goddess” (as she too read tablets predicting the arrival of heroes clad in silver that would throw down the werejaguar high priest). With Mixcoatl gone, the centuries-long balance of good and evil that was maintained by the feathered serpents has tilted back into Itzcoatl's favor. The evil serpent demands more and more blood sacrifices to impart his wisdom and leadership on the high priest, who is desperate for direction now that his “owl goddess” remains silent.

ENTER THE HEROES

The PCs become embroiled in the plot when searching for another fantastic location. After recovering a hoard of silver weapons from an ancient hero's tomb and defeating a dinosaur that has plagued the village of Teputzitloc, the PCs arrive at the village. There, the village elder shows the PCs ancient tablets depicting heroes clad in silver, arriving to release the village from the shackles of a werejaguar priest's malevolent rule. The village elder begs the PCs to travel to the nearby shrine and confront the high priest and deliver the village from his evil reign. The offer of golden items could help persuade them.

As the PCs explore the shrine, they encounter many of the high priest's guards, and a host of recently reset traps. If they find the tomb of Cuauhtli, they can gather information from his spirit, and possibly a powerful weapon, to help overthrow Tlacocelot. However, they need to traverse the nine tests of the underworld — a dastardly series of puzzles, traps, and guardians — to penetrate the lower levels. There, the PCs encounter the evil feathered serpent Itzcoatl, who goads them on to defeating it (therefore forever ruining the chance for balance between the serpents). The final confrontation is with the “werejaguar” high priest, guarding the Forgotten Portal. The GM has several options regarding the portal's destination (see Wrapping Up).

PLAYER BEGINNING

Your band pushes its way through the thick underbrush of a steamy jungle game trail. For days, you have trekked to the east, following your Xulmec guide, a rugged bronze-skinned warrior named Tochel and a few loyal porters bearing supplies and clean water. Your goal is the plateau called Xiuhpetl that rises almost 1,800 feet over the jungle you now plod through. On this plateau, you hope to find the hidden location you seek. Tochel claims to know a hidden passage to reach the top of the plateau, and you have paid him handsomely for his knowledge and skill.

Long before you catch a glimpse of the magnificent waterfall Atotzin, you discern its thunderous crashing as water plummets nearly two thousand feet into the turbid sluggish waters of the Tototl River. Finally, you spy a ribbon of water, perhaps 200 feet wide bisecting the cliff side of the plateau. A few more minutes of picking your way through the thick jungle leads your party to the edge of a pool at the base of the waterfall. The air smells of sweet flowers as the cool refreshing mist of the falls creates curls of clouds that dance across the pool's surface. Tochel wordlessly points to the base of the falls, and a hidden passage behind the "watery gate"...

ENCOUNTER AREA 1 BEYOND ATOTZIN

Beyond the mighty waterfall Atotzin is a series of natural caves that eventually lead to the top of Xiuhpetl. Centuries ago, these caves were used by Xulmec explorers when the village of Teputzitloc was founded and then by traders from the village with other villages in Anthua. But they have not been used in decades, and few even know of their existence.

The lower caves (areas 1–2 to 1–4) are very damp and thus Athletics check DCs made to climb the walls are at +10 due to these moist conditions. The upper caverns (areas 1–5 to 1–7) are considerably dryer and all Athletics checks made to climb in these locations utilize the listed Athletics DCs for climbing. All passages are considered unworked stone. The corridors connecting the locations 1–2 to 1–3 are partially filled with water, ranging in depth from three to five feet. Passing through these corridors is considered difficult terrain. Due to the uneven bottom, running or combat in these locations requires a DC 10 Acrobatics check each round, or the PC falls prone. Ceiling heights vary tremendously based on the encounter area. There are no doors in these natural caverns, as area 1–7 is blocked by a simple stone.

Unworked Stone Wall: Break DC 43, Climb (Athletics) DC 10.

WANDERING MONSTERS

There is a 15% chance (1–3 on d20) for each hour the PCs explore the caves of encountering a wandering monster. This chance increases to 20% (1–4 on d20) if the PCs make excessive noise, except in areas 1–3 and 1–4 (due to the noise of the crashing falls). If an encounter is called for,

roll 1d6 and consult the following table or select a suitable encounter. Note that the table includes a range of areas in which the creature is likely to be encountered.

| 1d6 | Encounter | Areas Likely Encountered |
|-----|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1–2 | Dire bats (5) (EL 4) | 1–2 to 1–4 |
| 3–5 | Giant spitting frogs (2) (EL 4) | 1–1 to 1–4 |
| 6 | Gricks (EL 4) | 1–4 to 1–7 |

The following statistics blocks are provided for easy reference for the Game Master.

Dire Bat (5)

Level 4 Skirmisher

Large natural beast XP 175

Initiative +7 Senses Perception +8;
darkvision

HP 54; Bloodied 27

AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 17, Will 15

Speed 3 (clumsy), fly 8

↑ Bite (standard; at-will)

+9 vs.AC; 1d10+4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

↑ Flyby Attack (standard; at-will)

The dire bat flies up to 8 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during the movement. It does not provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Stealth +10

Str 18 (+6) Dex 16 (+5) Wis 13 (+3)

Con 14 (+4) Int 2 (–2) Cha 11 (+2)

Spitting Frog (5)

Level 4 Artillery

Medium natural beast XP 175

Initiative +6 Senses Perception +2

HP 46; Bloodied 23

AC 16; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 14

Speed 4, climb 4 (spider climb); see also leap

↑ Bite (standard; at-will)

+9 vs.AC; 1d6+2 damage.

⚡Venomous Spittle (standard; at will) ♦ **Poison**

Ranged 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d8+3 poison damage and the target is blinded until the end of the spitting frog's next turn.

Leap (move; recharge 5–6)

The spitting frog shifts 4 squares.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Athletics +9 (+14 jumping)

Str 15 (+4) Dex 18 (+6) Wis 11 (+2)

Con 16 (+5) Int 2 (–2) Cha 8 (+1)

Grick (3)

Level 7 Brute

Medium aberrant beast XP 175

Initiative +4 Senses Perception +10; darkvision

HP 96; Bloodied 48

AC 19; Fortitude 19, Reflex 14, Will 15

Resist 5 against effects that target AC

Speed 6, climb 4

↑ **Tentacle Rake** (standard; at-will)

+10 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Expert Flanker

The grick gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against an enemy it is flanking.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Endurance +11, Stealth +9

Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+5)

Con 16 (+6) **Int** 2 (–1) **Cha** 7 (+1)

Area 1–1 The Atotzin

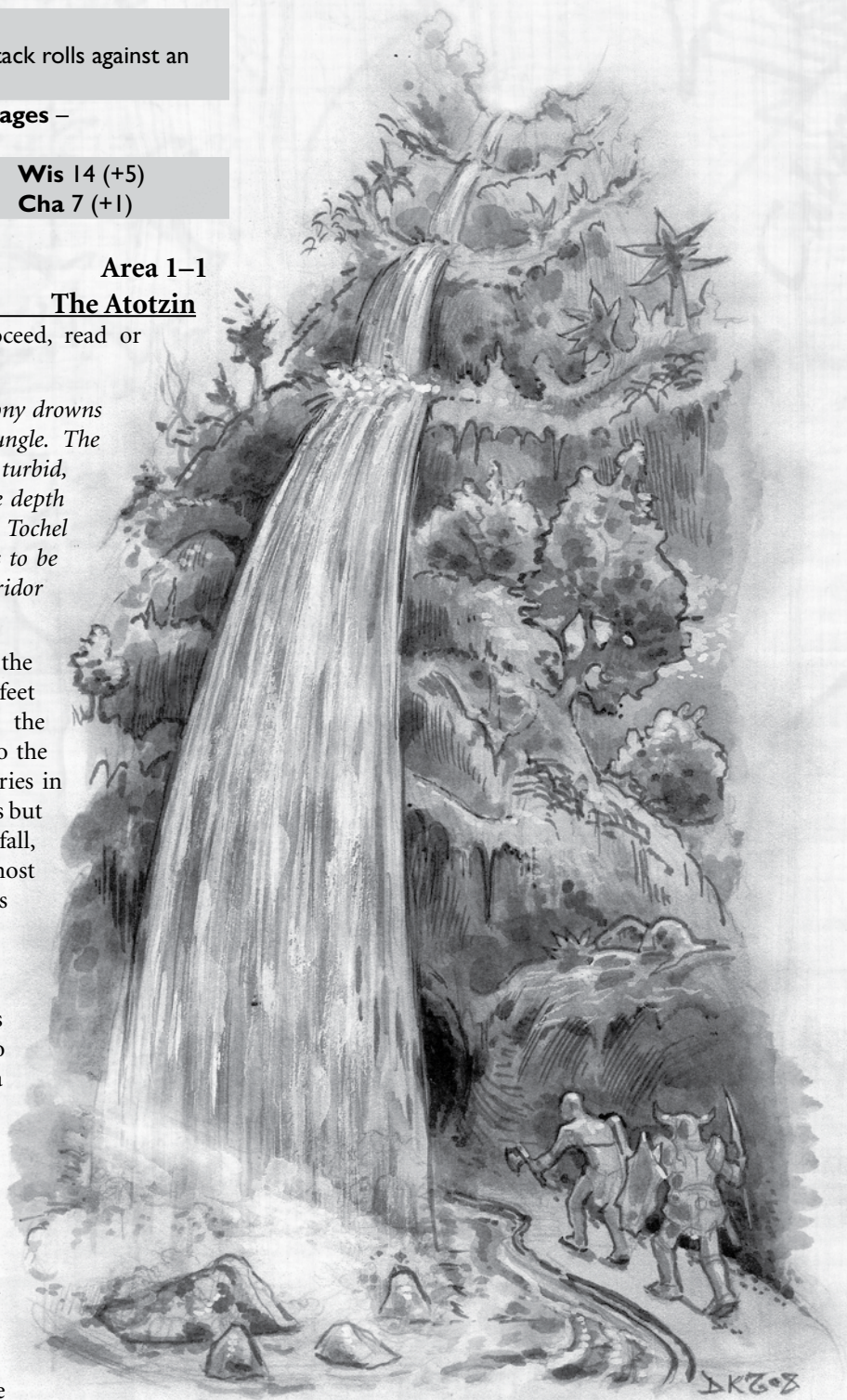
When the PCs are ready to proceed, read or paraphrase the following:

The waterfall's thunderous cacophony drowns out the natural sounds of the jungle. The swirling waters of the river are turbid, making it impossible to discern the depth of the pool. Peering at the location Tochel motioned to, you see what appears to be a natural shelf, and perhaps a corridor beyond.

The pool of water at the base of the waterfall is approximately 450 feet in diameter, before exiting on the southwest side and reforming into the Tototl River. The murky water varies in depth. Along the edges, the water is but 5 to 10 feet deep. Closer to the waterfall, the depth gradually increases to almost 50 feet. Nothing dangerous lurks in the water; however, the pool does attract a great deal of fauna, typically herbivores that ignore the adventurers. But where herbivores congregate, predators are sure to lurk nearby. If the PCs spend a significant amount of time at the pool (an hour or more, and against the recommendation of Tochel), feel free to toss a wandering encounter or two at the party. Dire jaguars, a small dinosaur, or river crocodiles would all be suitable.

Getting to the Shelf: The PCs need to get to the shelf and the

corridor beyond. Various types of magic can make this task easier, but most PCs will need to make a swim for it. Assuming the PCs get as close to the shelf as they can via the game trail, they still have a 210-foot swim. The first 150 feet of the swim is considered calm water, requiring a DC 10 Athletics check. The last 60 feet, the water is considered rough as the PCs approach the waterfall, and requires a DC 15 Athletics check. At this point, a DC 15 Nature check is required to discover a safe route by hugging the cliff side. Failure on this skill check, or missing any of the last two Athletics checks by 5 or more, results in 2d6 points of damage per round.



The Waiting Game: Tochel and his Xulmec porters cannot be convinced to accompany the PCs into the caves (with wide eyes, they claim, “It’s taboo.”). However, Tochel has agreed to wait for the PCs, but not at the pool. He moves his people to a secluded camp about an hour’s travel to the south. He says he will return to the pool each day at noon to meet with the PCs for the return trip. He is willing to continue this rendezvous for two weeks. If the PCs offer him a bribe (of at least 250 gp), he agrees to extend this arrangement for a third week. But if the PCs have not returned by then, the Xulmec guide departs, and the PCs are on their own.

A Bit of Advice: If the PCs have been particularly gracious to Tochel and the Xulmec guides (by increasing their pay, giving them extra food or water rations, or saving one of their lives during an encounter), Tochel warns the PCs to beware of Atocuetzpal, a massive beast of legend rumored to lair in the caves beyond the “watery gate.” Atocuetzpal refers to the giant crocodile in area 1–2. A DC 15 Diplomacy skill challenge (4 successes before 2 failures) can also get Tochel to reveal this warning.

Area 1–2

Atocuetzpal’s Lair (EL 5, XP 1,000)

When the PCs enter this cavern, read or paraphrase the following:

The wide corridor turns back to the east before opening into a large natural cavern, perhaps 100 feet in diameter. The ceiling is cloaked in the darkness above, but is at least 20 feet high. The floor of the cavern is likewise covered with murky water. A pair of eroded natural columns peak above the water about 5 feet, roughly in the center of the chamber. A 20-foot-wide partially water-filled corridor exits the opposite side of the cavern. In the distance, you can hear a faint, crashing roar of water.

The ceiling in this chamber is about 45 feet high. The water depth is indicated on the map. Note that it is mostly 5 feet deep, with the exception of a 10 foot deep hole beyond the columns, and a larger hole (nearly 15 feet deep) along the south wall. The latter is the lair of Atocuetzpal, a 25-foot-long giant crocodile. The scarred beast has lived here for decades, venturing into the Tototl River to hunt.

Slippery Refuge: The two columns are covered with bat dung and slimy stands of algae. To climb on top of one requires a DC 25 Athletics check, and a DC 15 Acrobatics check is required each round to remain on the perch. Note that the giant crocodile can easily reach PCs on one of the columns, and due to the slippery conditions, such a PC grants combat advantage to all enemies.

Discarded Loot: Over the years, Atocuetzpal has ingested many creatures, including quite a few Xulmec warriors who wandered too close to the banks of the Tototl. Although the giant crocodile doesn’t collect valuables per se, several valuable items have become deposited on the muddy bottom of his lair. For each round that any of the adventurers dive under the murky water and search the southern hole, have each PC make a DC 20 Perception

check. Success indicates the PC has located a unique item from the following list:

- A human skull with four golden teeth in jawbone (worth 45 gp each)
- An elephant’s tusk (worth 120 gp)
- A gold necklace set with obsidian (worth 335 gp)
- A finely made machete with an ivory handle (worth 308 gp)
- An emerald the size of a caltrop, but with a major flaw (worth 85 gp)

Tactics: Atocuetzpal begins the encounter submerged with only its eyes and nostrils exposed behind the southern column. This stance, the dim illumination, and the murkiness of the water grant the giant crocodile a +5 modifier to its Stealth check. Atocuetzpal waits for the PCs to blunder into the deep water beyond the columns, and then uses *surging bite* to attack with surprise. If successful, it drags a grabbed victim underwater and retreats to the deep hole along the south wall. It continues to inflict damage on a grabbed PC with *clamping jaws*, until the PC escapes or stops moving. If a PC “plays possum” to get the giant crocodile to release it, the PC needs to make a Bluff check opposed by Atocuetzpal’s Insight check. While partially submerged, Atocuetzpal is considered to have concealment (–2 penalty to attack rolls), if attacked by those out of the water.

Atocuetzpal

Advanced Vicejaw Crocodile

Level 5 Solo Soldier

Large natural beast (reptile) XP 1,000

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +8
low-light vision

HP 273; **Bloodied** 176

AC 23; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, swim 8

Action Points 2

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+12 vs.AC; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). Atocuetzpal cannot make bite attacks while grabbing a creature, but it can use *clamping jaws*.

↑ **Clamping Jaws** (standard; at-will)

If Atocuetzpal begins its turn with a target grabbed in its jaws, it makes an attack against the grabbed creature: +12 vs.AC; 2d8+4 damage. **Miss:** Half damage.

↑ **Surging Bite** (standard; recharge 5,6)

Atocuetzpal makes a charge attack: +13 vs.AC; 3d6+4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). A creature grabbed via surging bite suffers a –2 penalty on checks made to escape the grab.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Stealth +8

Str 18 (+6)

Dex 12 (+3)

Wis 13 (+3)

Con 20 (+7)

Int 2 (–2)

Cha 7 (+0)

Area 1–3

The Atomictlan (EL 4, XP 875)

When the PCs enter this massive cavern, read or paraphrase the following:

The corridor opens to a massive, mist-shrouded cavern, also covered with murky water. The sound of water crashing from overhead is deafening in this chamber, and you sense that its source is to the northeast. The ceiling is not visible due to your feeble light source and the omnipresent clinging mist. The cavern widens to at least 80 feet, and stretches on toward the source of the crashing water for at least another 60 feet. The shadowy silhouettes of three nearby rocky columns poke above the water's surface.

This chamber is indeed huge, about 100 feet wide and about 175 feet long. The ceiling height varies from 80 feet near the entrance all the way to nearly 1,300 feet at the waterfall. Water depth begins at less than five feet at the entrance, and gradually deepens to 35 feet at the base of the falls. Unless the north wall is closely examined, a DC 20 Perception check is needed to locate the shelf along the wall that leads to area 1–4.

The Atomictlan: The waterfall, dubbed the Atomictlan (the “under falls”) by the local Xulmecs is a tributary of the Tototl River. Over thousands of years, the water eroded the rocky walls and created this natural cave system. Although not nearly as impressive as the Atotzin, these falls are nearly 1,300 feet high, originating from an underground river up above. Thousands of normal bats (and even a few dozen dire bats) live among the nooks and crannies of the ceiling and walls in this chamber. However, they ignore the PCs unless disturbed or the GM calls for a wandering monster in this chamber.

What Did You Say? PCs in this chamber are considered deafened due to the nearby sound of crashing water magnified by the very stone walls that intensifies the sound. In game terms, PCs suffer a –4 penalty on initiative checks and automatically fail Perception checks made to listen. The GM is also encouraged to make his players role play these effects.

Where Do We Go From Here? The PCs need to get to the passage at the top of the waterfall. This fact should be obvious, since their goal is the top of the plateau. There are three methods the PCs can use. First, the use of magic (such as *levitate*) would be a great boon here. Second, they can try to scale the walls, although there are several disadvantages to this strategy. The Athletics check DC is 20 to climb the walls, due to the slick conditions, and due to the height of 1,300 feet, at least 44 Athletics checks would likely be needed. If the PCs attempt this route, the GM should have the climber disturb a few nesting bats, creating a swarm to discourage any further ascent.

The final, and by far the easiest route is a concealed stone staircase carved into the northern wall, called Cueurcueticopa (“the winding stair”) by the ancient Xulmecs. If the PCs just search for the stairs, it requires a DC 20 Perception check. If they find the Xulmec clues on the stone columns and the shelf, the DC for this Perception check is reduced to 10.

Xulmec Trail Markers: The Xulmecs wanted to keep the winding stair a secret from their enemies, and thus left several trail markers in this chamber. After further examination, the stone columns appear to be smoothed by tools and bear an engraved mark filled with flecking black paint. The first marker can be discovered with a DC 15 Perception check, but once the searcher knows what he is looking for, this DC reduces to 5 for subsequent markers. There is even a larger marker on the north wall, above the shelf. Each mark is a crude stairway, with an arrow underneath it. The arrow direction is different in each marker, always pointing toward the actual stairs. If the PCs locate one of these markers, show them Players Handout A. Of course, the PCs will need to deal with the cavern’s denizens before they can find these markers.

Spitting in the Mist: Three giant spitting frogs lair in this chamber, currently perched on the three stone columns closest to the entrance. These giant animals are about five feet long with drab green skin, mottled with gray and sickly yellow patches. Each sports a massive tooth-lined maw, and the ability to spit blinding poison at nearby targets. Normally, they fatten up on the numerous bats that inhabit the cave, but prey the size of the PCs would be welcome indeed.

Tactics: The giant spitting frogs have suction-cup feet, and thus can remain perched on the slippery rocky columns with no problem. Any PC who attempts to climb on one of the columns will find them to be slick and algae covered, requiring a DC 25 Athletics check to ascend, and a DC 15 Acrobatics check to remain on. PCs need to make a Perception check opposing the frogs’ Stealth check; otherwise, the frogs attack with surprise. The frogs spit poison at targets outside of their reach, and bite at adjacent targets. A PC that has been blinded by the frog’s poison suffers a –5 penalty on all Athletics checks made to climb. If a PC engages in melee with a frog while standing in the water, he needs to make a DC 10 Acrobatics check each turn, or fall prone.

DROWNING RULES REVISITED

A PC can hold his breath for three minutes before he risks drowning. After the three minutes are up, the PC must make a DC 20 Endurance check. If the check succeeds, the PC can hold his breath for another round without danger. However, the PC must make an Endurance check with an escalating DC every round thereafter (DC 25, DC 30, and so on). A failed check means the PC loses a healing surge and must continue to make checks. A PC with no healing surges left takes damage equal to his level on a failed Endurance check.

In strenuous situations, such as combat, a PC holding his breath underwater must make a DC 20 Endurance check at the end of his turn on any round where he takes damage.

Spitting Frog (5)

Level 4 Artillery

Medium natural beast XP 175

Initiative +6 Senses Perception +2

HP 46; Bloodied 23

AC 16; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 14

Speed 4, climb 4 (spider climb); see also *leap*

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs.AC; 1d6+2 damage.

⚡ **Venomous Spittle** (standard; at will) ♦ **Poison**

Ranged 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d8+3 poison damage and the target is blinded until the end of the spitting frog's next turn.

Leap (move; recharge 5–6)

The spitting frog shifts 4 squares.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Athletics +9 (+14 jumping)

Str 15 (+4)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 11 (+2)

Con 16 (+5)

Int 2 (–2)

Cha 8 (+1)

Area 1–4

Cuecueltipoca

When the PCs locate this concealed stairway, read or paraphrase the following:

You locate what appears to be a staircase clearly hewn into the very walls, yet it utilizes much of the natural stone surface as well. It appears to wind up along the north wall, and soon disappears into the mist.

The stairway is a small engineering wonder. The Xulmecs carved it into the rock wall to provide easy access to the passage above. The staircase winds to and fro, scaling the 1,300-foot chamber, yet – due to its winding nature – the route is almost 2,000 feet long. Although the ascent is tiring and slow, if the PCs proceed at a slow pace, there is little chance for a fall, and no chance of disturbing any of the thousands of bats that roost in the chamber.

The winding stair ends at a corridor to the left of the waterfall. The corridor is about 10 feet wide, with a ceiling height ranging from eight feet to just under 20 feet in locations. The corridor turns due north away from the underground river and winds its way for almost 1,500 feet while gradually sloping up. The corridor is noticeably dryer here, and a thick layer of dust covers the floor. Because of the passage's sinuous course, the Xulmecs named it the Coatlnal (which roughly translates to "Serpent's Pass"). Unless the GM desires a wandering monster encounter, the PCs eventually arrive in area 1–5.

Area 1–5

Tyrannosaur Lair (EL 6, XP 1,250)

When the PCs reach this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

The corridor finally ends at a large cavern at least 100 feet wide and perhaps 150 feet long. Bright sunshine filters in through a 20-foot-wide passage that leads to the outside. In the distance, the lush vegetation of the jungle can be seen. However, most of this cavern is piled five feet or higher with bleached bones. Most of the bones are broken or at least worn, but several intact bones are as thick as a man's leg, approaching lengths of 10 feet. The stench of death quickly assaults your nostrils. In addition to the sun-drenched exit, a small 5-foot-wide passage is situated along the southern wall.

Although the PCs might think they have located the dinosaur graveyard, they would be mistaken. This cavern is actually the lair of a tyrannosaur. Currently the thunder lizard is out hunting, but he'll return soon. The southern wall is streaked with white chalky deposits of sodium (salt) that bear ancient evidence of crude mining (see area 1–7, below). If PCs spend a good hour of scraping with a sharp object, they can collect 1d6 pounds of rock salt.

'Dem Bones: A casual inspection of the bones reveals they belong to large creatures, in excess of 20 feet long in most cases. The tyrannosaur prefers to consume large herbivores, and often hunts along the banks of the Tototl River. When he makes (or finds) a kill, he uses his massive jaws to remove large haunches of meat, and returns to his lair to dine at leisure and without fear of interruption. Closer examination, requiring a DC 15 Perception check, reveals large tooth marks on the bones that were created when they were picked clean of all the meat.

The bone pile ranges in depth from three to nine feet deep, and passage through the bones is considered difficult terrain. In addition, combat while standing on the bone pile is tricky due to its tendency to shift. During combat, a DC 10 Acrobatics check is needed each round with failure resulting in the PC falling prone. The area to the north is relatively free of bones, used by the tyrannosaur to sleep.

If the PCs spend a few turns searching the bone pile and make a DC 15 Perception check, they can find some incidental treasure once swallowed by the tyrannosaur's prey. The items include a jade figurine of a leaping jaguar (worth 225 gp), a gold javelin head (worth 35 gp), and two gems (a 50 gp bloodstone, and a chunk of amber with a preserved salamander in its middle, worth 275 gp).

Quahtlatoa's Tomb: The small corridor along the south wall leads to a makeshift tomb of an ancient Xulmec warrior. It is important to the progression of the adventure that the PCs find the tomb and recover the silver weapons inside. The GM should carefully (without railroading) convince the PCs to explore this route.

The Wounded Tyrannosaur: As the PCs depart the cave (via the east exit), the tyrannosaur is returning from an unsuccessful hunting trip. Actually, his tangle with a triceratops resulted in a few wounds, hence its rage. In addition, a Xulmec hunting band has tracked the wounded beast and watches the PCs fight with great interest. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs exit the cave:

As you step outside the cave, you are greeted with abundant sunshine, and humid yet fresh air. Outside the cave is a clearing, perhaps 80 feet in diameter, before the thick jungle encroaches toward the cave. Several game trails, some 10 feet wide with trodden vegetation, exit the clearing in numerous directions. The dried mud of clearing is riddled with large footprints. The jungle is oddly silent — but only for another instant as you hear the snapping of tree limbs and a thumping, c r a s h i n g sound rapidly approaching.

Pause for dramatic effect and allow quick-thinking PCs an action or two before continuing:

A few moments later, its source is revealed when a 30-foot-long, lizard-like creature bursts from one of the game trails. The beast walks on two massive legs and sports a head nearly the size of a man. Its toughened skin has been pierced in two locations, as blood freely oozes out of the wounds. In a rage, it bellows a thunderous roar, displaying dagger-sized teeth, before charging your band.

Note: Due to the reduced hit point total, the tactical advantage the PCs can gain from hiding in the corridors, and the fact the Xulmec hunting party (see below) might come to the PCs' aid, the Encounter Level for this encounter has been reduced to 6 (instead of 8).

Tactics: The enraged tyrannosaur uses simple tactics, at best. It opens combat with *gaping charge*, attempting to grab a single PC with its bite. A grabbed PC will be subject to *jaws of doom*, and the tyrannosaur focuses its attacks on the PC in its jaws until he or she stops moving. Once its initial target is dead, the tyrannosaur repeats the whole process of grabbing a single PC, and then grinding the unfortunate hero to paste between its massive jaws.

If the PCs flee back into the cave, the dinosaur follows. Due to its size, the bone pile is not considered difficult terrain for it. However, it needs to make a DC 10 Acrobatics check each round due to the shifting bones. Failure indicates it falls prone, suffering 2d6 points of damage as its weight and uncontrolled

thrashing cause bones to pierce its hide. If the PCs retreat into either of the corridors, the tyrannosaur can only push its head in about 10 feet. The PCs could use missile attacks, but after three or four futile rounds, the dinosaur backs away and waits for the PCs to come out.



Tyrannosaurus Rex

Level 10 Elite Skirmisher

Huge natural beast (reptile) XP 1,000

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +7
low-light vision

HP 212 (currently 145); **Bloodied** 106

AC 26; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 18

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8

Action Points 1

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +15 vs.AC; 2d6+6 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Gaping Charge** (standard; at-will)

The tyrannosaurus makes a charge attack: +16 vs.AC; 2d6+12 damage, and the target is knocked prone and stunned (save ends).

↑ **Jaws of Doom** (standard; at will)

Grabbed target only; automatic hit; 4d6+6 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Athletics +16, Stealth +13

Str 22 (+11) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+7)

Con 18 (+9) **Int** 2 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+5)

Area 1–6

Trapped Corridor (EL 3, XP 700)

When the PCs enter this corridor, read or paraphrase the following:

This 5-foot-wide corridor extends for just over 40 feet. The west wall is covered with crude cave paintings.

This corridor leads to an ancient makeshift tomb for a forgotten Xulmec warrior. The paintings on the west wall are tributes to his life and deeds. They begin about 15 feet from area 1–5, and continue in scenes until the end of a corridor. The scenes depict:

- Several smaller scenes depicting a violent game with two teams competing in a stone arena, trying to score a goal with a wicker-stuffed ball. One player with powerful muscles and black hair is depicted larger than the rest, and he triumphantly

stands over his opponents, who crouch in fear.

- The same large figure is depicted leading a band of hunters taking down a three-horned dinosaur. He wields an atlatl (spear-thrower) with white-tipped javelins.
- The heroic figure is now adorned in bone mail armor, and wields a white gilded macuahuitl (bone-tipped mace) against many human enemies. The backdrop is that of a village with clay buildings.
- The final scene features the same black-haired hero again beset by many enemies. This time he wields the macuahuitl in one hand, and a white gilded dagger in the other. The enemies include humans and jaguars, and even some jaguar/human hybrids. One of the enemies is crudely depicted assuming the form of a jaguar. The backdrop is a pyramid with nine steps.

The end of the corridor is actually a large rock that has been placed to seal the tomb beyond. It can be detected with a DC 15 Perception check, and moved with a DC 20 Strength check. If the PCs use a lever to assist with moving the boulder (any of the long bones from area 1–5 would work), they get a +4 bonus to the check. However, the designers of this makeshift tomb took the effort to create a simple trap to guard the contents of the tomb. If it's not disarmed, moving the stone boulder triggers stone blocks to fall into the two 5-foot squares in front of the door.

⚠ Falling Block Trap

Level 8 Elite Blaster

Trap **XP 700**

Perception

DC 26: The character notices that the stone blocks in the ceiling seem loose and do not fit together perfectly.

Trigger: When the stone is removed without disarming the trap, the trap attacks as an immediate reaction.

Immediate Reaction **Melee**

Targets: All creatures in target squares.

Attack +11 vs.AC

Hit: 4d8+4 damage, and the target is knocked prone and restrained (save ends).



COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 26 Thievery check.
- A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 1–7

Quahtlatoa's Tomb (EL 6, XP 1,250)

When the PCs bypass or trigger the trap in area 1–6 and penetrate the tomb, read or paraphrase the following:

With a puff of dust and the sound of stone grinding on stone, the chamber is unsealed. A blast of stale air, scented with a hint of decay and herbs, hits your face. You can see a small chamber beyond, perhaps 30 feet wide but only 20 feet long. A thick layer of dust coats the floor. To the right appears to be a crude altar, its surface covered with dust-clad items. Along the opposite wall appears to be an open pit, perhaps 15 feet long by 10 feet wide.

Centuries ago, a great Xulmec warrior named Quahtlatoa lived in a nearby village. Quahtlatoa was a skilled warrior and a gifted athlete who excelled at whatever task he attempted. Beloved by his people, the ebony-haired warrior was known far and wide for the unusual armaments he bore into battle. Weapons gilded with a mysterious white metal (silver), rumored to have their origin in a distant land across the ocean. This rumor was all too true, as there are no known silver deposits in the Xulmec lands, even though gold is quite common.

His final battle was against an evil cult of jaguar-worshipping priests bent on overthrowing the local deity. Quahtlatoa led the uprising against this cult, resulting in a costly civil war as brother fought brother for spiritual control of the village. Quahtlatoa's silver weapons were the difference in the final attack on the temple. Unlike the mundane weapons of his allies, his silver weapons cleaved the ranks of the lycanthropic cultists, who were able to assume the form of a jaguar or become a twisted hybrid of man and jaguar. The day was won, but the hero suffered grievous wounds and died less than a day later. The villagers were emotionally torn, as their hero had clearly saved the village, yet he was likely cursed with the evil taint and thus destined to stalk his people as a werejaguar himself. The elder commanded Quahtlatoa's loyal followers to deposit his body in the mighty Tototl River near the Atotzin, even though they felt it was not an appropriate burial for such a beloved hero.

His followers set out to perform the grim task without ceremony. But when they discovered the cave system (area 1–5), they decided to honor their leader in a more appropriate fashion. They hastily constructed a tomb, with a burial pit and crude altar. Using salt deposits collected from area 1–5, they packed his body and weapons into the pit, and chanted many blessings to Ilhuicatl, his patron deity. After leaving offerings of gold and slain enemies, they sealed the tomb with a large rock, constructed a simple ceiling trap, and painted the walls of the corridor to honor their hero's deeds.

As it turns out, Quahtlatoa was never tainted with the curse of lycanthropy. His spirit was at unrest, though, due to an improper burial and lack of respect for his corpse. For centuries, his body, preserved in packed salt, and spirit lingered and wallowed in the throes of evil, eventually animating as a mummy. (It's likely that Ahpuchac, the Black Jaguar, at least had a small hand in the animation as revenge against his cult.) But the mummy was nearly mindless and never figured out how to escape the tomb. Quahtlatoa's corrupted spirit has thus seethed for decades.

The pit is about 15 feet deep, but the last 5 feet are covered with chunks of rock salt. A fall into the pit causes 1d6 points of damage, and requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb out. Of course, the mummy Quahtlatoa might have something to say about that, as he hides under a thin layer of salt dust in the pit. At the bottom of the pit, located with a DC 15 Perception check are six silver javelin heads. The shafts have long since rotted, but it would be a simple task to mount the javelin heads on new shafts. The altar is very crude, and under a thick coat of dust are several items of interest, along with the powdered remains of feathers and a human few bones.

Offerings: Quahtlatoa's loyal men left a few valuable offerings to his patron deity. These include a silver-bladed dagger set with obsidian (worth 375 gp) and several gold trinkets (rings, buckles, and bracelets). There are 11 such golden items, each worth 20 gp to 50 gp (1d4+1).

Tactics: Quahtlatoa has waited a long time to vent his frustration on the living. He attempts to attack with surprise, by leaping up and initiating a grapple with a PC investigating the edge of the pit. To notice Quahtlatoa before he attacks, the PC needs to make a Perception check against the mummy's Stealth check with a –4 penalty due to the salt dust covering his body. If Quahtlatoa successfully grabs a PC, he pulls the victim into the pit, and begins to pummel him with *rotting slam*. Once the first PC is down, the mummy grabs his macuahuitl, climbs out of the pit, and attacks random PCs. He switches between weapon blows and *rotting slam* attacks (inflicting mummy rot), or simply attacks an unlucky PC with both. Quahtlatoa saves his action points to use when *double attack* recharges, making two *rotting slam* attacks and a macuahuitl attack against a single target in the same round.

Quahtlatoa, Mummy

Level 6 Solo Brute

Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 1,250

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
Despair (Fear) aura 3; enemies within the aura take a –2 penalty to attack rolls against Quahtlatoa.

HP 296; **Bloodied** 148

Regeneration 5 (if Quahtlatoa suffers radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function on his next turn).

AC 21; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Saving Throws +5

Speed 6

Action Points 2

↑ **+2 Magic Macuahuitl** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 +10 vs.AC; 1d8+4 damage.

↑ **Rotting Slam** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
 +9 vs.AC; 2d8+3 necrotic damage, and the target contracts level 8 mummy rot (see MM).

↑ **Double Attack** (standard; recharge 5–6)
 Quahtlatoa makes a macuahuitl and a *rotting slam* attack.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Xulmec
Skills Stealth +10

Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 18 (+7) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Equipment +2 *magic silver-edged macuahuitl* (acts as a mace), +2 *magic bone mail* (acts as chainmail)

WRAP-UP

As mentioned above, the PCs' battle with the tyrannosaur is observed by a Xulmec hunting band that was tracking the beast. If the PCs are having a difficult time with the dinosaur, the Xulmec leader, Huicton, orders his warriors to aid the newcomers. They prefer to hang back and pepper the dinosaur with javelins. The Xulmecs, who hail from the nearby village of Teputzitoloc, have been plagued by the tyrannosaur for many years. The hunting party would gain great prestige and respect if they had a hand in its defeat.

After the combat is over, Huicton approaches the PCs, introducing himself and his warriors with a smattering of Common. He is initially friendly, but if the PCs openly display any of the silver armaments from area 1–7, or offer to heal any wounded warriors, Huicton becomes helpful. In this case, he offers the adventurers several doses of healing salve, if they appear wounded. Huicton praises the PCs for their courage and prowess. He asks them to return with his party to his nearby village with proof that the tyrannosaur has been slain (bringing the creature's lower jaw would suffice). He claims his village elder would want to personally thank the PCs for their deed. If necessary, he hints of a reward in gold. If pressed about details regarding the fantastic location the PCs seek, he claims the village elder is wise and ancient, and likely has more

information. A successful DC 20 Insight check reveals Huicton is withholding information. In reality, Huicton believes the PCs might be the group prophesized on some ancient stone tablets, sent to aid in his village's salvation.

Huicton, male Xulmec Ftr5

Xulmec Warriors, male Xulmec Ftr3 (5)

THE VILLAGE OF TEPUTZITOLOC

The village of Teputzitoloc is about two miles to the northeast. Travel takes a few hours pushing through the underbrush along the Tototl River. A few times Huicton stops the group and backtracks for a different route, citing dangerous predators he cares not to tangle with. After a mile and a half, the band leaves the river and heads due north. Soon they approach the base of a short cliff, about 180 feet high. The cliff is riddled with many cave openings, a few of which spew thin coils of smoke. At the base of the cliff is a collection of clay buildings, mostly huts surrounded by a crude log wall with a spiked top.

Nearly 400 Xulmecs live in the village, although their population was almost double that just a few months ago. Several villagers tend to nearby corn fields, but most are hunters, fishers, or food gatherers. Food is abundant, but obtaining it is a hazardous duty left to the younger members of the village. Older villagers remain in the safety of the village, crafting clothes, weapons, and everyday items, in addition to food preparation. Everyone knows their role and carries it out efficiently for survival. Only a few of the caves are large enough to be inhabited, but several of the smaller ones (mere cracks in the cliff side) can be used to flee from large predators that enter the village from time to time.

MEETING WITH NAUYOTL

When the PCs enter the village, they are viewed with suspicion. Many of the Xulmecs fear looking at the PCs, and gasp in shock at their presence. The Xulmecs are quick to issue frantic prayers in their native tongue, and gather belongings to flee inside clay buildings. After many tense minutes of parading through the village, the PCs are guided to a narrow path that leads up the cliff to a cave. Inside the warm interior is a small chamber that smells of acrid incense and burning timber.

The village elder is an ancient withered man named Nauyotl. He wears an elaborate feathered headdress and bears numerous tattoos and body piercings adorned with oddly shaped bones. Nauyotl appears quite excited at the appearance of the PCs. With surprising agility, he jumps up to greet them. He takes great interest in examining them, with particular focus on their weapons and armor, especially any items either made of or covered with silver. Next he invites them to sit at his fire, and he serves them a pasty drink of root extracts, nectar, and mild fermented berry juice. The elder probes the PCs for information of their exploits, specifically their victory against the dreaded "thunder beast."

Then Nauyotl shares the village's history with the PCs. He



recites the tale of the founding of the settlement near an already-ancient pyramid shrine. He relates the history of the early blood sacrifices, and then the coming of the great hero Cuauhtli, his quests for the gods, and the arrival of the second feathered serpent. The balance restored, blood sacrifices were no longer needed, and the village enjoyed a lengthy period of prosperity, including the rededication of the shrine in their hero's honor. But then Nauyotl relates the rise of Tlacocelot and the return of blood sacrifices to appease the gods. Although the sacrifices apparently do work, the population has dwindled in a few short months to half its size. Nauyotl believes drastic action is needed to save his people.

But the sacred shrine of Cuauhtli is forbidden to the townsfolk on penalty of death. The PCs are not bound to such religious laws. Plus they bear the weapons of an ancient hero, coated in the mysterious metal called silver, forged in a distant land. Nauyotl describes the lycanthropic taint that the gods have clearly placed on Tlacocelot. With great zeal, he explains that the silver weapons will be Tlacocelot's bane, resulting in the PCs' victory and Teputzitloc's salvation. To support his point, he produces an ancient tablet with

pictograms depicting a band of warriors of pale complexion armed with silver weapons, releasing the village from the shackles of a werejaguar high priest.

The elder begs the PCs to travel to the shrine and explore its dusty depths. They are to confront the high priest Tlacocelot and defeat him with the silver weapons, releasing the village from his evil reign. Hopefully, the PCs agree to this quest on their own, but if they need further incentive, consider one of the following options:

- If the PCs are searching for a location, Nauyotl explains there is a vast wealth of knowledge hidden in the shrine. It is likely clues to this location will be found within. Alternatively, Nauyotl could have this information himself, but only agrees to tell the PCs if they save his village.
- For those PCs interested in material gain, the elder produces several items wrought with gold and precious stones. This treasure value should be determined by the GM, so as not to unbalance the campaign.



ENCOUNTER AREA 2

THE SHRINE OF CUAUHCUHTLI

The shrine is located to the north of the village in the jungle. A small game trail leads to an artificial mound clearing, atop which sits a nine-step pyramid. The structure is ancient, possibly thousands of years old, with eroded sides. Numerous plants, mostly vines and mosses, have become established on the structure. The base of the pyramid is 560 feet square, and it reaches a height of 280 feet. The top of the pyramid is an open air temple. Below are six lower levels, two of them below ground level. See Map #3 for a side view of the shrine and the location of all the levels. Maps # 4 to #8 depict all of the levels.

Ceiling heights vary per level, and in some instances per room description. But in general, area 2-1 is open to the sky, the entrance level and the Tomb of Cuauhcuhtli (areas 2-2 to 2-16) have 10-foot-high ceilings. The Eight Tests level (areas 2-17 to 2-24) average 20-foot-high ceilings, but these vary depending on each room. The stadium level (area 2-25) has a 40-foot-high ceiling, while the lower chambers (areas 2-26 to 2-28) have 20 foot ceilings. The walls are considered superior masonry, and unless noted in the text, all doors are constructed of stone, often covered with fanciful arches depicting Xulmec pictograms.

Superior Masonry Wall: Break DC 35, Climb (Athletics) DC 20.

Standard Stone Door: Break DC 25 (stuck), DC 25 (locked).

WANDERING MONSTERS

For each half-hour the PCs spend exploring the upper levels of the shrine (areas 2-1 to 2-9), there is a 5% chance (1 on d20) of encountering a wandering monster. This chance increases to 10% (1-2 on d20) if the PCs make excessive noise. If an encounter is called for, roll 1d6 and consult the following table or select a suitable encounter. There are no wandering monsters on any of the lower levels.

| 1d6 | Encounter |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| 1-4 | 3 dire jaguars (EL 3) |
| 5-6 | Huge deathrattle viper (EL 2) |

The following statistics blocks are provided for easy reference for the Game Master.

Dire Jaguar: These graceful cats are attracted to the magic of Tlacocelot's mask, and have come to serve their master. Although the high priest has two favored pets in area 2-5 and another two in area 2-28, he encourages others to prowl about the upper levels looking for food.

Dire Jaguar

Level 6 Skirmisher

Large natural beast XP 250

Initiative +9 Senses Perception +10; low-light vision

HP 71; Bloodied 35

AC 20; Fortitude 19, Reflex 19, Will 16

Speed 8, climb 6

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+11 vs.AC; 1d10+4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Rake** (standard; at-will)

Grabbed target only; +11 vs.AC; 2d6+4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

↑ **Leaping Pounce** (standard; recharge 5,6)

The dire jaguar shifts 8 squares and makes a bite attack. It deals an extra 1d6 damage on a successful hit.

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Skills Stealth +12

Str 19 (+7)

Dex 18 (+7)

Wis 14 (+5)

Con 15 (+5)

Int 2 (–1)

Cha 11 (+3)

Huge Deathrattle Viper: Tlacocelot was once obsessed with snakes of all kinds, until his recent fascination with jaguars piqued his interest. He would often capture these serpents for his own amusement, and occasional they would escape to wander about the shrine. This large specimen is hiding somewhere, waiting to strike with surprise.

Huge Deathrattle Viper

Level 7 Elite Brute

Large natural beast (reptile) XP 600

Initiative +8

Senses Perception +8

low-light vision

Death Rattle (Fear) aura 2;

enemies in the aura take a –2

penalty to attack rolls.

HP 198; Bloodied 99

AC 21; Fortitude 21, Reflex 21, Will 16

Resist 10 poison

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, climb 6

Action Points 1

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+10 vs.AC; 2d6+5 damage, and the huge deathrattle

viper makes a secondary attack against the same

target. *Secondary Attack:* +8 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+4 poison

damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Str 16 (+6)

Dex 20 (+8)

Wis 10 (+3)

Con 19 (+7)

Int 2 (–1)

Cha 14 (+5)

Area 2–1

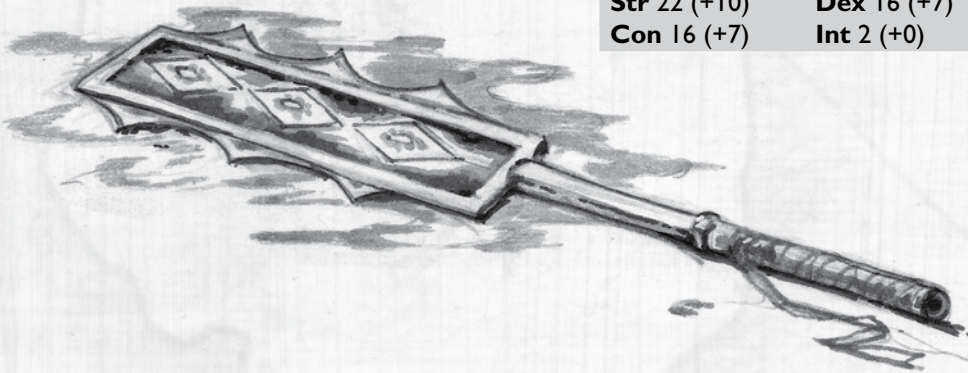
The Outdoor Shrine (EL varies)

When the PCs ascend the pyramid, read or paraphrase the following:

The grueling steps lead to the top of the flat pyramid, and an enclosed shrine. An elaborate archway is flanked by a pair of 12-foot-tall statues. The one on the right depicts a powerful Xulmec warrior brandishing a macuahuitl while shouting a war cry. The statue on the left depicts an eagle-headed warrior preparing to launch a javelin from an atlatl. Beyond is a shrine, enclosed by walls of thick fitted stone, but lacking a ceiling. The walls and interior are now covered with all manner of creeping vegetation, as the jungle attempts to reclaim the land.

The interior shrine is perhaps 50 feet square. Three pairs of vegetation-clad pillars create a passage to the opposite end of the temple. A 5-foot-high dais hosts another pair of statues and a crimson-stained stone block altar. Three short flights of steps, one in the middle and one each to the left and right, provide access to the elevated stage. The statue to the left depicts a majestic feathered serpent coiled around a stone column. The statue to the right depicts a similar creature, yet its head is missing.

The outdoor shrine is the main worship area for the village of Teputzitoloc. Unfortunately, it is now the site of many bloody sacrifices under the new regime of Tlacocelot. Sacrifices are performed on the altar, and after important body parts have been culled, the remains are tossed into a pit at the base of the stage. The statues flanking the archway represent Cuauhcuhtli: one as a warrior and the other as an eagle-hybrid warrior. The interior statues represent the twin couatl advisers to the village. Itzcoatl is the intact statue, and the defaced one depicts Mixcoatl. This area is divided into two encounter locations.



Area 2-1A

Main Floor (EL 3, XP 800)

The floor is fitted flagstones, similar to the walls. The columns are about three feet wide and 20 feet high. They are attached to the floor, and thus can't be toppled short of using magic. A giant constrictor snake lairs near the top of the first column on the right. Tlacocelot keeps it well fed, to encourage it to remain in this area, acting as a passive guard. It has not eaten in weeks, but sees the PCs as an opportunity to curb its appetite.

Tactics: The giant constrictor snake is hiding near the top of the column. Its green and gray mottled skin grant it a +4 bonus to its Stealth check. It attempts to attack with surprise, preferring a smaller target, if possible. Once it has hold of a target, it constricts, and then attempts to climb back up the column out of reach, while waiting for its victim to stop struggling. The giant constrictor snake fights to the death.

Giant Constrictor Snake

Level 9 Elite Soldier

Large natural beast (reptile) XP 800

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +12
low-light vision

HP 192; **Bloodied** 96

AC 27; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 22

Resist 10 poison

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, climb 6, swim 6

Action Points 1

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+15 vs.AC; 1d10+6 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Constrict** (standard; at-will)

Affects a target the giant constrictor snake has grabbed; +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+12 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the giant constrictor snake's next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +12

Str 22 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 17 (+7)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 2 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+4)



Area 2-1B

The Dais (EL 1, XP 500)

The altar is stained with dried blood. It conceals the stairs to the entrance level of the shrine (leading to area 2-2). There is a hidden trigger on the north side that can be located with a DC 15 Perception check. Flipping the trigger causes the altar to slide south, forcing any targets on that side into the pit trap (see below) unless they succeed on an Acrobatics DC 15 check. The altar remains open for 3 rounds before resetting. Underneath is another trigger (Perception DC 10 to locate) to operate the door from below.

The 10-by-10-foot section in front of the dais is a covered pit. It is activated by placing 30 or more pounds of weight on it. The steps leading to the pit are particularly caked with blood, as the high priest uses this pit to discard sacrificial victims' mutilated bodies. Falling into the pit deposits the target in area 2-2, after a 60-foot fall.

Concealed Pit Trap

Level 6 Elite Obstacle

Trap XP 500

Perception

DC 26: The character notices the small cracks in the stone floor concealing the trapdoor.

Trigger: The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the trap's squares.

Immediate Reaction Melee

Targets: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack +9 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls into the pit, takes 6d10 damage, and falls prone.

Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: After being triggered, the pit is no longer concealed.

COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 14 Thievery check (standard action).
- An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 27 Thievery check.
- A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 11, or DC 21 without a running start) can jump over the pit.
- A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 2-2

Refuse Chamber (EL 5, XP 1,000)

If the PCs enter this chamber via the pit in area 2-1b, they likely will be prone, wounded and without a light source. In this case, the undead that lurk in the niches will waste no time closing and attacking. When the adventurers are able to use illumination, read or paraphrase the following:

This long chamber is perhaps 15 feet wide and extends for 30 feet, before ending at a plain stone door in the opposite wall. The center of the room is occupied by a 10-foot-square basin with an unadorned, 2-foot-high stone lip. The basin lacks water, but is marred by numerous dried crimson stains. A pair of shadowy alcoves occupy the east and west walls. The stench of decay is strong here.

This is an antechamber with a simple purpose: to collect the dead bodies of sacrificial victims in the basin situated below the pit in area 2-1b. Directly over the basin is a 10-foot-square shaft that extends 50 feet straight up to the closed pit. A DC 25 Athletics check is required to ascend this smooth shaft, but the pit door is locked from the bottom. The basin is empty, aside from the bloodstains of many victims.

Each alcove is 5 feet square, and covered with dried blood and bits and pieces of flesh. Each alcove also contains 2d4 rotting hearts, among the other nameless stains, rags, etc. The door in the southern wall is unlocked.

When Tlacocelot began sacrificing victims, it took him many attempts to get the procedure right. The results of these failed attempts have generated the four undead creatures that lurk in the alcoves. The xochatateo are filthy ghoul-like undead creatures, forced to exist against their will. Tlacocelot despises the creatures, but he recognizes their value as inadvertent guards, and he can easily push them back with his turning power when he needs to pass through the chamber. Each solitary creature hides in its alcove with its hoard of rotting human hearts. If PCs fall into the basin from the pit trap, the undead scurry to claim the victim's heart. If the PCs enter the chamber cautiously via the stairs, it takes the undead a few rounds to approach before attacking.

Tactics: The xochatateo do not use coordinated attacks. Instead, they scramble over each other to reach the PCs. The undead attack with their filthy claws and seek to subdue targets with their weakening touch. Once a xochatateo enters *blood frenzy*, it focuses all its efforts on a single PC, attempting to tear the hero to shreds and devour his still-beating heart.

Xochatateo (4)

Level 6 Brute

Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 250

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision
HP 87; **Bloodied** 43

AC 18; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 6

↑ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs.AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

↑ **Flesh Ripper** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ **Healing**

A xochatateo make two claw attacks against a single target. If both attacks hit, the target takes an additional 5 damage and the xochatateo regains 5 hit points.

Blood Frenzy (only while bloodied)

The xochatateo gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Skills Stealth +10

Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 15 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+3)

Con 17 (+6) **Int** 8 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Area 2–3

Under Priest Chambers (EL 5, XP 1,000)

Note: There are four of these locations, all with similar features. When the PCs enter one location, read or paraphrase the text below. Refer to the key (a-d) for details on how many undead and what incidental treasure is in each room.

This 10-foot-square room has been ransacked. Smashed pieces of pottery, rotting food, feathers and smashed wooden furniture are jumbled in a mess throughout the small chamber. The smell of decay permeates throughout.

These chambers were the living quarters for several underpriests loyal to Tlacocelot. When the high priest embraced the new regime offered by the evil couatl, his first action was to slay these priests. He used his magic mask to assume the form of a jaguar, then slaughtered them while they slept. Thus, all the zombies bear horrific slash and bite wounds. (A DC 10 Heal check reveals death was inflicted by a powerful animal's talons and teeth.) However, he found a use for their broken bodies as undead thralls, and he raised them as zombies in order to terrorize the villagers and assist him with menial tasks.

Each area (a-d) contains a different number of zombies and a bit of incidental treasure. A DC 15 Perception check is needed to locate these items, due to the grisly mess.

- A. Two zombies. One zombie carries an *amulet of protection* +2 crafted in the shape of a feathered serpent. Also in the chamber is a small onyx statuette of a coiled snake (worth 55 gp).

- B. Three zombies. Buried under a smashed wooden table is a ceramic pot with a wooden plug. It holds two doses of a *potion of healing*.
- C. Two zombies. Under a pile of smelly, blood-stained robes is a fancy feather headdress studded with turquoise stones (worth 115 gp).
- D. One zombie. Discarded in the northwest corner of the room is a gold necklace adorned with animal teeth (worth 285 gp).

Tactics: When one of the four doors is opened, the zombies stir, and begin to attack. The following round, the remaining zombies burst forth from their respective chambers and close for melee.

Zombie (8)

Level 2 Brute

Medium natural animate (undead) XP 125

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +0; darkvision
HP 40; **Bloodied** 20

AC 13; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 9, **Will** 10

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 4

↑ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs.AC; 2d6+2 damage.

↑ **Zombie Grab** (standard; at-will)

+4 vs. Reflex; the target is grabbed (until escape).

Checks made to escape the zombie's grab take a –5 penalty.

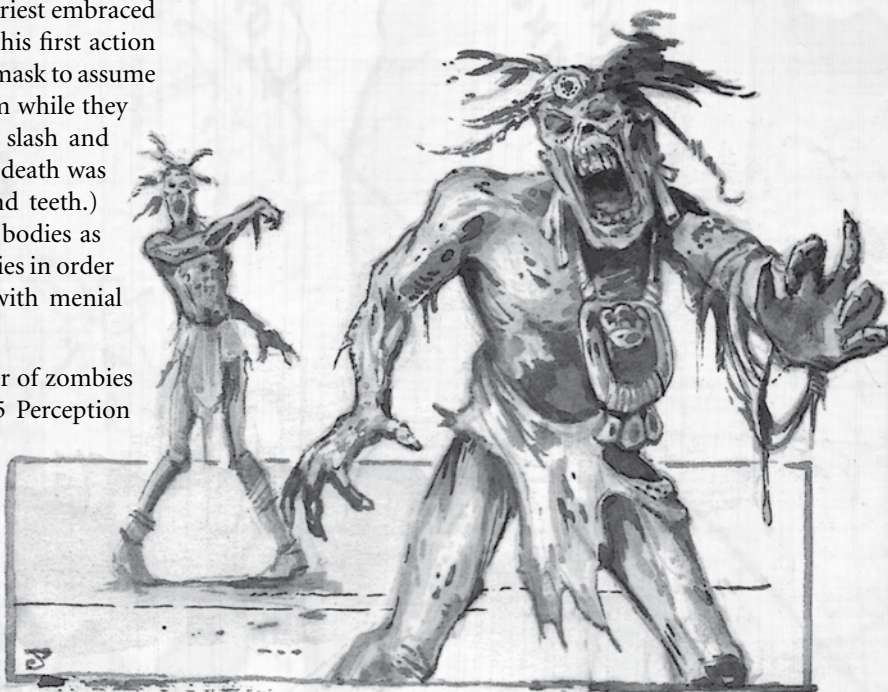
Zombie Weakness

Any critical hit on a zombie instantly reduces it to 0 hit points.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 6 (–1) **Wis** 8 (+0)

Con 10 (+1) **Int** 1 (–4) **Cha** 3 (–3)





Area 2-4

Trapped Corridor (EL 3, XP 800)

There is no read-aloud text for this encounter, so as not to tip off the PCs to the presence of a trap.

This 70-foot-long corridor ends at a plain stone door. A DC 20 Perception check reveals fine Xulmec runes carved into the floor as indicated on the map. The runes can be read with a DC 15 History check, revealing the single word: Danger. This is a clue to the trap in this corridor.

The pit trap indicated on the map will not be triggered until the door at the end of the corridor is opened. The door is false, opening easily to reveal a blank stone wall. On opening, it releases the safety on the pit trap. This trigger can be heard with a DC 20 Perception check. After the safety is released, more than 20 pounds of pressure on the pit causes it to open, dumping victims 40 feet down, into the basin in area 2-6. Although the water reduces falling damage, the target PC needs to contend with spikes and the denizens in the basin.

Concealed Spiked Pit Trap

Level 9 Elite Obstacle

Trap XP 800

Perception

DC 26: The character notices the small cracks in the stone floor concealing the trapdoor.

Trigger: The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the trap's squares.

Immediate Reaction Melee

Targets: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack +13 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls into the pit, takes 4d10 damage, and the pit makes a secondary attack against the target. **Secondary Attack:** +13 vs. AC; 2d10+5 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: After being triggered, the pit is no longer concealed.

COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 14 Thievery check (standard action).
- An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 27 Thievery check.
- A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 11, or DC 21 without a running start) can jump over the pit.
- A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 2-5

Gallery of Jaguars (EL 5, XP 1,000)

When the PCs enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

The short corridor ends in a chamber with a 20-foot-high ceiling. At the entrance, the chamber is only 5 feet wide, but increases to about 35 feet wide at the end, about 30 feet away. A hexagonal fountain is situated in the center of the room, full of pure water, gurgling through a statue of a pouncing jaguar's mouth. A short flight of steps along the north and south walls leads to a 10-foot-high shelf that extends around the second half of the room. On this shelf are seven larger-than-life sculptures of jaguars in a variety of poses. They appear to be carved from dried clay and painted in lifelike detail. The walls above the shelf are painted forest-motif murals, a natural habitat for the jaguar figurines.

Tlacocelot redecorated this room in the honor of his new favored beast, the jaguar. The fountain contains refreshing water that is safe to drink. The bottom of the basin is lined with smooth river rocks, each about the size of a coin. A minor enchantment re-circulates it from the basin to the statue and out the mouth. The occupants of the chamber use the fountain to quench their thirst. The figurines are indeed of hollow clay construction. However, only five of them are clay (as indicated on the map). The other two are dire jaguar pets loyal to the high priest.

The middle statue conceals a secret door, discovered with a DC 20 Perception check. Locating the door first grants a +10 bonus to the Perception check to find the trigger mechanism. However, the door has a delicate trigger mechanism. Examination (and a DC 25 Perception check) of the middle jaguar's gaping maw reveals an impression about the size of coin. If a rock (such as one from the fountain) or similar item is placed in the impression (such as a dagger tip that is manipulated with a DC 15 Thievery check), the secret door can be opened.

Hidden Gems: The clay figurine along the south wall has cat's eye agates as eyes (each worth 75 gp). However, each is painted and difficult to discover, requiring a DC 20 Perception check. The clay figurine along the north wall hides a stash in its hollow body, easily located if smashed. Inside is a lizard skin pouch adorned with feathers (worth 20 gp) that holds six matching zircons (each worth 100 gp).

Tactics: The two dire jaguars (named Cacama and Maxtla) are lying in wait on the shelf flanking the middle figurine on the east wall. A DC 15 Perception check is required to notice they are living creatures before they attack. Each one charges off the shelf with *leaping pounce*, hoping to surprise the party. If the dire jaguars manage to grab a PC from their initial attack, they spend an action point and *rake* the grabbed hero. These dire jaguars are loyal to Tlacocelot, and were placed in this chamber to guard the passage to the lower level. They fight to the death.

Cacama and Maxtla

Elite Dire Jaguars

Level 6 Elite Skirmisher

Large natural beast XP 500

Initiative +9 Senses Perception +10
low-light vision

HP 144; Bloodied 72

AC 22; Fortitude 21, Reflex 21, Will 16

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8, climb 6

Action Points 1

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+11 vs.AC; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Rake** (standard; at-will)

Grabbed target only; +11 vs.AC; 2d6+5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

↑ **Leaping Pounce** (standard; recharge 5–6)

The dire jaguar shifts 8 squares and makes a bite attack. It deals an extra 1d6 damage on a successful hit.

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Skills Stealth +12

Str 21 (+8) Dex 18 (+7) Wis 14 (+5)

Con 16 (+6) Int 2 (–1) Cha 11 (+3)

Area 2–6

Antechamber (EL 4, XP 875)

Adventurers arriving in this chamber via the pit trap in area 2–4 need to contend with the piranha swarms right away. For PCs who enter via the stairs and corridor, read or paraphrase the following:

The dark dusty staircase winds down with several twists and turns before ending at a large chamber. The room is at least 35 feet wide and 45 feet long. A copper brazier situated in each corner throws dim illumination throughout the chamber. Most of the chamber is occupied by a 15-foot-wide, 25-foot-long basin of water with a 5-foot-high stone wall covered with bas-relief fish designs. In the center of the pool, on top of a stone pedestal, is a green-tarnished copper statue of the eagle warrior preparing to launch a serrated javelin from his atlatl toward the corridor you are entering from. The walls of this room are covered with typical Xulmec pictograms involving hunting, farming, and the worship of many gods. Arched passages centered in the north and south walls provide exit from this room.



The braziers have been permanently enchanted to give off light. Each brazier is shaped like a toad; head tilted up and mouth agape. Each is worth 25 gp, but weighs in excess of 20 pounds.

Swim at own risk: Hidden in the fish bas-relief carved on the outside of the basin wall is a short Xulmec phrase. The phrase can be located with a DC 15 Perception check, and translated with a DC 15 History check if the PCs can't read Xulmec. It reads:

**Find Cuauhcuhtli's target,
to find your own way.**

The basin is full of clean freshwater, just over four feet deep. As indicated on the map, there is a 5-foot-square chute in the ceiling above the basin that leads to the pit trap in area 2–4. Concealed under the water in this square are 12 nasty spikes each over two feet long. The pool is home to a swarm of hungry piranhas, used by Tlacocelot to dispose of unwanted bodies following sacrifice. A DC 20 Perception check reveals numerous bones scattered about the pool's bottom.

Cuauhcuhtli: The statue in the pool represents the great Xulmec hero Cuauhcuhtli. With a DC 10 Perception check (by someone standing in the pool to get a close look), an adventurer discovers that the statue rotates counterclockwise. In addition, the javelin in the statue's hand has been painted green, but it isn't part of the statue and can be easily removed. It is a +2 *magic javelin* with an adamantine head, and was once the hero's own weapon. It can be used to trigger the opening mechanism of the secret door.

Secret Passage: The secret door in the west wall can be located with a DC 25 Perception check. If a PC specifically states he is looking for a wounded animal on the wall (from the clue on the basin), he gets a +10 bonus to this check. The wounded animal is a jaguar, and just below his right shoulder is a small slot. If the serrated javelin tip from the javelin on the statue is inserted, the secret door will slide open. If a rogue attempts to activate the trigger without the javelin, a DC 22 Thievery check is required.

Tactics: Any PC that enters the water, including those that fall into the pool via the pit trap in area 2–4, is attacked by the piranha swarms the next round. As blood enters the water, the swarms begin to frenzy. Adventurers can escape the hungry fish by climbing onto the statue, but they need to make a DC 10 Athletics check each round or fall off. Anyone who is fully out of the water and attacks the swarms from above is considered to have concealment from the piranha.

Piranha Swarm (3)

Level 6 Skirmisher

Medium natural beast (aquatic) XP 250

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +3
low-light vision
Swarm Attack aura 1; the piranha swarm makes a melee basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.
Frenzied Aura aura 2; the piranha swarm's swarm attack aura increase to 2 squares the first time an adjacent enemy becomes bloodied.

HP 73; **Bloodied** 36

AC 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 15

Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks;

Vulnerable 10 against close and area attacks

Speed swim 6

↑ **Razor Swarm** (standard; at-will)

+11 vs.AC; 1d8+4 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+3)

Con 16 (+6) **Int** 1 (-2) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Area 2-7

Library

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

A 15-foot corridor ends at a circular chamber about 20 feet in diameter. The floor is littered with the smashed remains of clay tablets.

This chamber was once a sacred library. Hundreds of clay tablets were stored here, detailing the history of Teputzitloc, the deeds of Cuauhtli, and other Xulmec chronicles. When Tlacocelot ascended to power, he destroyed the clay tablets recorded by his ancestors, fearing there was information hidden in the scriptures regarding the feathered serpents and their influence on the village. He was right, and wise to destroy these records. But before Tlacocelot performed this deed, Nauyotl managed to steal a tablet foretelling the PCs' arrival and describing the keys to defeating the werejaguars.

Useful Tidbit: There is one very important reference left in this chamber. A DC 25 Perception check is needed to locate and open a secret compartment on the north wall. Inside is a small book with a red leather cover. The book is written in Common, and contains a translation of Xulmec terms to the Common tongue. If used (requiring several minutes of time) in conjunction with a History check while reading Xulmec, the user gets a +4 bonus to the check. The book is worth 200 gp in a large city, such as Voltiguer.

Area 2-8

Tablet Preparation Chambers

These three chambers were designed for the creation and inscription of clay tablets used to record information important to the priests and the village. Read or paraphrase the appropriate description as the PCs enter these rooms.

Area 2-8A

Oven

This 10-by-10 foot chamber contains a metal table situated over a shallow fire pit, which appears unused in months. Next to the fire pit is a pile of crumbled wood riddled with insect damage. Against the wood are several rectangular wooden frames, each about one foot by two feet in size.

This chamber was used to create the clay tablets. Clay and water from area 2-8b was mixed, and then poured into a wooden frame mold on the metal table over the flames. When dried enough, the tablets were removed and placed in area 2-8b to finish drying.

Area 2-8B

Drying Room and Storage

This 15-foot-wide by 10-foot-long room contains a pile of clay in the southwest corner. Nearby are three large pottery urns with lids, plus several wooden racks holding flat clay tablets.

This chamber was used to store the materials used to make the clay tablets. The pile of clay has dried, and would require the addition of water and some labor to reconstitute. The pottery urns have lids and contain stale water. On the racks are six dried blank tablets.

Area 2-8C

Engraving Room

This 10-foot-square room contains a stone table littered with clay dust and small fragments. To the left of the table is a wicker basket, while to the right is a wooden rack holding two blank tablets.

This chamber was once used by scribes with specialized tools to carefully engrave the clay tablets with Xulmec pictograms. The tools are in a lizard-hide pouch on the table, covered with clay dust. The tools are high-quality stonemason tools and worth 100 gp. Included in the kit are several small sponges that would be useful in area 2-24. Under the table are 10 large sheets of parchment (3 feet by 6 feet) and a small wooden box full of charcoal pieces. These items were used to make rubbings of the clay tablets, and the PCs might find them useful in areas 2-11 to 2-13.

Area 2–9

The Inverted Pyramid (EL 6, XP 1,250)

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

A steep flight of steps descends about 25 feet before ending at another large chamber. This chamber is 35 feet wide and 45 feet long. However, the floor is a series of 5-foot shelves bordering the chamber and going down, with each rectangular ring narrower than the one before. This terraced affect grants the chamber the appearance of an inverted pyramid, although there are no steps to facilitate descent. At the bottom is a five-foot square area with a door in the north wall and a door in the south wall.

On the second step down on the other side of the room is a single statue, about nine feet tall. The statue depicts a blocky humanoid figure wearing the trappings of a priest adorned in an eagle mask and feathered cape.

This unusually shaped room blocks the route to the Tomb of Cuauhtli (to the south) and his nine trials (to the north). As such, the village's patron deity placed a divine guardian here to watch over the sacred tomb. The statue is a living idol, and attacks all who seek passage through one of the two doors. Tlacocelot has no control over this construct, and thus avoids this chamber. He uses the secret passage in area 2–27 to enter and exit the shrine.

An Athletics check is not needed to descend the terrace levels, but moving from level to level costs 10 feet of movement. Climbing back up the shelves requires a DC 5 Athletics check. The doors are stone, and each bears a complicated lock, requiring a DC 20 Thievery check to unlock. Even if the check is successful, unlocking the door still takes 5 rounds due to the complexity. For every 5 points that a PC succeeds on his Thievery check, reduce this time by 1 round. For example, if a PC rolls a 30 on the check, the door takes only 3 rounds to open.

Tactics: The living idol is aware of the PCs as soon as they enter area 2–9, thanks to its *vigilance* ability, and it attacks the moment they enter. The living idol begins combat with *menacing visage*, and then spends an action point to immediately use *castigate*. It then moves into melee, slamming foes with its heavy fists. It saves its remaining action point for use when *castigate* recharges. The idol fights until destroyed, focusing on targets trying to unlock the doors.

The living idol is a very tough opponent, thanks to its high AC and universal resistance. However, it does have one severe weakness, which can be discovered with a DC 20 Religion check. It cannot leave area 2–9, the area where it is *enshrined*. If the PCs can maneuver the idol outside of area 2–9, they can reduce its fighting ability severely.

Living Idol

Level 6 Solo Soldier

Large natural animate (construct) XP 1,250

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +2; darkvision
Suppressive Aura (Necrotic)
aura 2; enemies in the aura only
regain half the standard amount of
hit points from healing effects.

HP 304; **Bloodied** 152

AC 25; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20

Immune disease, poison, sleep; **Resist** 10 all

Saving Throws +5

Speed 6; can't shift

Action Points 2

↑ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +13 vs.AC; 1d10+5 damage.

↑ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)

The living idol makes 2 slam attacks. A target hit by both attacks is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

✱ **Castigate** (standard; recharge 5–6) ✱ **Psychic**
Close burst 3; +9 vs.Will; 3d8+2 psychic damage, and
the target is dazed until the end of the living idol's next
turn.

✱ **Menacing Visage** (standard, encounter) ✱ **Fear**
Close burst 5; +9 vs.Will; the target takes a –2 penalty
to attack rolls (save ends, but with a –2 penalty to the
roll).

Enshrined

A living idol is bound to a specific area, usually a temple or other sacred site. It does not pursue enemies beyond the boundaries of this area, nor does it voluntarily leave for any reason. If, however, a living idol is forced to leave its enshrined area, it is slowed, all its defenses are reduced by 5, and it takes 20 damage (not subject to the living idol's resistance) each round at the beginning of its turn for as long as it is beyond the boundaries.

Vigilance

A living idol is instantly aware of all creatures entering or leaving its enshrined area. It does not know the exact location of intruders, but is aware of their presence, making it all but impossible to surprise.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common

Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 9 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+3)

Con 20 (+8) **Int** 8 (+2) **Cha** 14 (+5)

Area 2–10

The Hall of History

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

A short flight of steps leads to this chamber, about 25 feet wide and 20 feet long. The second half of the room tapers in width to a single stone door. Two more doors, set on angles, are located in the southeast and southwest corners of the room. The walls of this chamber are covered with Xulmec pictograms.

Although this chamber may seem insignificant to the PCs, it actually holds several clues regarding the history of Teputzitloc and its hero. The pictograms relate the history of the village, beginning on the east wall proceeding to the right. The walls depict the following events:

North and East Walls: This wall depicts the founding of the village in the jungle, near an ancient pyramid shrine. More scenes depict an ebony feathered serpent hovering over the pyramid bestowing blessings to village in the form of bountiful harvests and successful hunting. The final scenes depict bloody human sacrifices to appease the gods while the serpent holds a fiery destruction at bay.

South Walls: The first scene depicts a great warrior adorned in a feathered cape and headdress. He wields an atlatl in one hand and a glowing macuahuitl in the other. A majestic eagle is perched on one shoulder. The warrior leads the village to many victories over other Xulmec tribes (who are slaughtered on the altars) and against great dinosaurs. The next scene displays the hero's great journey away from the village, where he is tested by the gods themselves. The trials last many years (26, to be exact), at which time the village continues to prosper. In the final scene, an aging warrior hero returns with another feathered serpent. This one has rainbow plumage and a soft radiance.

West and North Walls: The first scene depicts a mighty magical battle between the feathered serpents that starts at the shrine and continues through the village (leaving suitable destruction), before ending in a stalemate over a majestic waterfall. The next scene depicts both feathered serpents hovering over the pyramid, while the villagers now sacrifice small animals, art objects, and food crops on the altar. The final scene depicts a larger village during a very prosperous time. The warrior hero wears the trappings of a high priest, and rules the village with a benign hand while his two feathered serpents provide council.

Area 2-11

Cuahucuhli's First Three Trials

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is 15 feet wide and 10 feet long with a smooth stone floor, and ceiling 10 feet overhead. A corridor exits the room on the opposite side. The walls are covered with Xulmec pictograms.



This chamber (and areas 2-12 and 2-13) was created to record the nine trials of the gods that Cuahucuhli completed. The east, south, and west walls each describe one of the trials the hero endured. These provide useful clues for the PCs to use to overcome the trials in the lower level of the shrine. Each wall depicts a reoccurring symbol of the trial that can be noticed with a DC 10 Perception check. When examined, give the players Handout B.

East Wall: In this trial, Cuahucuhli had to cross a jagged range of mountain peaks, while a massive stone-like god watched from the sky. The hero found a hidden passage under the mountains to avoid the god's full fury. But the journey was still wrought with deadfalls and many battles with wretched beasts.

South Wall: In this trial, Cuahucuhli battled unseen hurricane-like winds that often swept him into the sky. Battered by the unrelenting winds, he had to avoid lightning bolts until he was able to snatch a magic feather from a passing eagle, ending the tempest.

West Wall: In this trial, Cuahucuhli was forced to swim across a turbulent ocean, fending off sharks. Finally, he discovered an island to rest on, where he was tempted by the water goddess Pelagia herself. To escape her clutches, he was forced to retrieve a perfect pearl hidden in one of three massive giant clams. He used guile (and his magic javelin) to retrieve the correct pearl and win the trial.

Area 2-12

Cuahucuhli's Second Three Trials

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is 15 feet wide and 10 feet long with a smooth stone floor, and ceiling 10 feet overhead. A corridor exits the room on the opposite side. The walls are covered with Xulmec pictograms.

This chamber (and areas 2-11 and 2-13) was created to record the nine trials of the gods that Cuahucuhli completed. The east, south, and west walls each describe one of the trials the hero endured. These provide useful clues for the PCs to use to overcome the trials in the lower level of the shrine. Each wall depicts a reoccurring symbol of the trial that can be noticed with a DC 10 Perception Check. When examined, give the players Handout C.

East Wall: In this trial, Cuauhtli traveled along a remote beach where he flipped over countless hermit crabs, seeking one that could speak and possessed great wisdom. He finally located the hermit crab, which tested his wisdom with cunning riddles, knowledge of lunar phases, and even physical prowess in combat. The hero eventually won the trial and received a magical conch horn as a reward.

South Wall: In this trial, Cuauhtli had to travel through a corn maze created by the god of agriculture. For years, the hero toiled through the passages, sustaining himself on nothing but corn and using his eagle companion to guide him through the maze.

West Wall: In this trial, Cuauhtli traveled through the underworld seeking a vulture-headed god. His route forced him through bone yards swarming with disease-ridden rats, but he used a variety of natural salves and poultices to stave off infection and ease the symptoms. Finally, he confronted the vulture-headed god and bested him in ranged combat with his javelin.

Area 2–13

Cuauhtli's Last Three Trials

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is 25 feet wide and 15 feet long with a smooth stone floor, and ceiling 10 feet overhead. A trio of stone doors lines the wall on the opposite side of the room. The walls are covered with Xulmec pictograms.

This chamber (and areas 2–11 and 2–12) was created to record the nine trials of the gods that Cuauhtli completed. The east, north, and west walls each describe one of the trials the hero endured. These provide useful clues for the PCs to use to overcome the trials in the lower level of the shrine. Each wall depicts a reoccurring symbol of the trial that can be noticed with a DC 10 Perception Check. When examined, give the players Handout D.

East Wall: In this trial, Cuauhtli faced a tangle of serpent foes. He used great leaps to avoid the venomous bites of the snakes, and outwitted serpent-like humanoids with guile and force to win this trial.

West Wall: In this trial, Cuauhtli was challenged by the fire god himself. He had to scale the tallest mountain, where he awaited a lightning strike that set a lone bush on fire. Then he had to deliver this flame to the bottom of the ocean. While waiting for the lightning, he crafted a magic draught. Using it, he swallowed the flame unharmed, and dived into the sea. At the bottom of the ocean, he found a secret cave. Inside, he belched forth the fire to light a gold brazier, ending the trial.

North Wall: In this trial, Cuauhtli was forced to play a violent game for the amusement of the gods themselves. Using the head of his deceased brother as a ball, the hero needed to force his way through a squad of wicker men to a goal area at the opposite side of the stone court. There were too many wicker men pulling and holding him, so he

was forced to throw the “ball” into a hoop mounted on the wall in the goal area. Once he scored this gruesome goal for the third time, the trial was complete.

Area 2–14

Trapped Doors (EL 2, XP 625)

When the PCs examine the three doors in area 2–14, read or paraphrase the following:

You stand before three stone doors, unlike any others you have encountered thus far. All three are surrounded by an elaborate archway with fanciful scrollwork. Each stone portal is covered with pictograms of eagles. The door to the left depicts a trio of eagles carrying the Xulmec hero Cuauhtli over a vast ocean. The middle door depicts a host of eagles attacking a massive vulture in flight. The door to the right depicts several eagles swooping into the refreshing waters of a lake to grab plentiful fish.

These three doors guard the entrance to Cuauhtli's Tomb. Two are trapped, and the third leads to his tomb proper. There is a clue to determine which portal is safe. Hidden in the elaborate scrollwork on the archway is a Xulmec phrase. It can be discovered with a DC 18 Perception check, and understood with a DC 22 History check. If the History check fails, the reader understands the word “three” (which appears twice), but not the rest of the inscription. Hasty readers may infer the wrong meaning and try the door on the left. The phrase reads:

**Three sets of three,
Follow to me.**

The riddle is simple: three sets of three refer to the number nine, a sacred number to the Xulmec people. The correct door has nine eagles on it. Three eagles bear Cuauhtli on the door on the left. The middle door has 19 eagles attacking the vulture. The door on the right appears to have only eight eagles, but a DC 15 Perception check reveals the ninth, concealed in the clouds. Thus the door on the right is correct. The other two doors are trapped.

If a trapped door is opened, spikes are fired into the 5-foot square in front of the door. If a PC states he is moving out of the way while opening the door, the trap automatically misses. Tlacocelot has recently added poison to the spikes for added effect.

⚠ Poisoned Spike Trap

**Level 5 Elite Blaster
Trap XP 400**

Perception

DC 24: The character notices the small holes in the doors from which the poisoned spikes are fired.

Initiative +6

Trigger: When the door is opened, the trap rolls initiative.

Standard Action Close burst 1

Targets: All creatures in burst

Attack +10 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d10+2 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check.
- A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 2–15

The Tomb of Cuauhtli

When the PCs finally reach the tomb, read or paraphrase the following:

After a short flight of stairs, the passage turns to the right, and then back to the right again. The air is stale, but dry. Finally, the passage ends at a circular chamber, perhaps 35 feet in diameter. The floor is pure white sand, and a scaled-down version of a step pyramid is situated in the center of the chamber. Its base is 15 feet on each side, and it reaches about 15 feet high, with nine steps. As you pause, a translucent figure materializes before the pyramid. He is a powerful Xulmec warrior, adorned with a feather headdress and feathered cape. A majestic eagle is perched on his shoulder. He appears to be unarmed.

The PCs have reached the final resting place of Cuauhtli, the Xulmec hero of Teputzitloc. The sand is about two feet deep, magically transported from the Ghetrian Desert to simulate the environment preferred by Mixcoatl, the feathered serpent the hero presented to the village. The pyramid is constructed of smooth stone, and serves as a sarcophagus for Cuauhtli's physical body. At the current time, the pyramid is sealed. The sarcophagus can be opened by locating a series of three buttons (Perception DC 20) and pressing them in the correct order. Inside are the hero's body and a few items he was buried with. These include a gold necklace (worth 1,200 gp), his feathered cape (worth 450 gp), his +2 magic bone mail armor (acts as chainmail), and his +1 flaming macuahuitl (acts as a mace).

Ghostly Assistance: The shimmering figure is the ghost of Cuauhtli, and he has traveled from the heavens to aid the PCs. His spirit was still bound to this world because his javelin (in area 2–6) was not buried with the rest of his prized possessions (by design). The ghost speaks and understands most Common, but occasionally misuses words or phrases. Cuauhtli has a wealth of information, and should be used as a tool to help the players by filling in any gaps in the history and plot of the adventure. Cuauhtli knows the following information:



- The history of the village and its sacrificial practices before and after Cuauhtli's deeds.
- Cuauhtli understands the balance of the feathered serpents has been broken somehow. He begs the PCs to restore the balance. He urges them to explore the lower chambers of the shrine, to discover what or who has corrupted Tlacocelot.
- In order to reach the lower chambers, the PCs will need to pass through the "Nine Trials." Cuauhtli explains these are nine chambers of cunning tests and puzzles, simulating the very nine trials he endured. He suspects (correctly) that Tlacocelot has increased the lethality of the trials. The hero tells the PCs to collect a feather from each trial; they might come in handy.
- Cuauhtli does not believe Tlacocelot is completely evil, just corrupted. If the PCs can discover the source of the corruption, perhaps he can be saved.

A Gift: If the PCs return the javelin (from area 2–6) to the tomb, Cuauhtli's spirit can finally rest. If the PCs offer the weapon freely, the ghost explains how to open the sarcophagus, and asks that the weapon be placed across his chest. Once this is done, the spirit begins to fade, but not before he begs the PCs to take his macuahuitl, to aid in their quest. Award the PCs XP for a level 4 encounter if they put Cuauhtli's spirit to rest.

Area 2–16

Passage to the Nine Trials (EL 2+, XP 600+)

When the PCs enter this chamber, give them Players Handout E, and read or paraphrase the following:

The chamber is 25 feet wide and 50 feet long. After 25 feet, the hall turns to the right, and continues. The ceiling is only 10 feet high. The walls are covered with Xulmec pictograms, depicting villagers, priests, and various animals in different poses, but all with open mouths, as if emitting silent screams. The floor is likewise covered with pictograms, each five-foot square occupied by another symbol.

This puzzle chamber guards the route to the nine trials. The walls conceal numerous javelin traps, all recently reloaded by Tlacocelot. There are nine safe squares (as depicted on the map) which can be used in any order. These squares depict the nine symbols related to the nine trials endured by Cuauhtli, and can be discovered in areas 2–11, 2–12, and 2–13. If a PC steps on one of the other squares, he triggers a javelin trap that targets that square. Each javelin trap is automatically reset one time. Squares adjacent to one another (even diagonally) can be easily stepped to. But squares separated by trapped squares need to be jumped, requiring a DC 10 Athletics check. Failure indicates the target square was missed (randomly determine which square is landed on), likely triggering a trap.

⚠ Javelin Trap

Level 1 Blaster

Trap XP 100

Perception

DC 20: The character notices the hole in the wall from which the javelin is fired.

Initiative +3

Trigger: When a character steps on a trapped square, the trap rolls initiative.

Standard Action Ranged 10

Targets: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack +6 vs.AC.

Hit: 1d6+3 damage.

COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check.
- A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

An Added Complication: If the PCs trigger three or more javelin traps in this chamber, a loud grinding noise originates from the northern part of the wall. A 5-foot-wide stone wall (as indicated on Map with a dashed line) begins to slowly descend from the ceiling. It takes 5 rounds to complete its descent, and it's easy to scoot under it while it moves. But the PCs need to contend with the javelin traps to get to it. On the first three rounds, no Acrobatics check is needed to pass under the moving wall. On the fourth round, a DC 15 Acrobatics check is needed to pass under safely. On the fifth round, a DC 20 Acrobatics check is needed to pass under the descending wall safely. Failing any of these checks may result in crushing damage (see below).

THE NINE TRIALS

The next nine chambers recreate the nine trials Cuauhtli endured at the hands of the gods. The chambers guard passage to the lower shrine and its forgotten portal, now the lair of Tlacocelot. The chambers were designed to test high priest candidates, rewarding the candidate with a feather. Upon presentation of nine feathers to the feathered serpents, the test was passed, and the high priest was accepted. However, in the old days, the lethality of the traps was much less severe. Tlacocelot was warned by Itzcoatl that strangers would come to defeat him, thus he was encouraged to redesign some of the traps, adding a degree of lethality. He is unaware that the feathers the PCs can gather by performing these trials are actually the key to activate the Forgotten Portal.

⚠ Sliding Wall Hazard

Level 6 Elite Obstacle

Hazard XP 500

Perception

DC 0: This trap is not hidden.

Initiative +3

Trigger: When a character fails one of the Acrobatics checks needed to pass under the descending wall, the hazard attacks as an immediate reaction.

Immediate Reaction Melee

Targets: A creature that fails an Acrobatics check.

Attack +9 vs. Reflex.

Hit: 3d6+4 damage, the target takes ongoing 5 damage, and is immobilized (save ends both).

Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied, and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: An immobilized target that makes its saving throw wiggles free from beneath the door and shifts 1 square to the other side of the wall (area 2–17).

COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can disable the hazard with a DC 25 Thievery check.
- A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the hazard.
- Once the wall has descended completely, it takes either a DC 25 Strength check to lift, or a DC 30 Thievery check to reset the trap and cause the wall to ascend.

Area 2–17

The Trial of Earth (EL Varies, XP Varies)

The door to this chamber bears a passage in Xulmec that can be understood with a DC 15 History check. It reads:

Sometimes you must fail,
before you can succeed.

When the PCs open the stone door to this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

This 15-foot-wide hall extends for 45 feet. The ceiling is 10 feet high, and the floor is made of smooth flagstones. The walls are covered with bas-relief mountain scenes. A similar stone door is situated on the opposite wall.

Cuauhtli traveled under the mountains via secret passages to best this godly trial. The first and last 5 feet of this hall are safe to stand on. Pit traps and blowgun traps riddle the remaining floor squares, as indicated on Map #7. The traps alternate between covered pits (most are 10 feet deep) and pressure plates that trigger poisoned blowgun darts into the target square.

The Trick: The first and last pits in the room are actually 20 feet deep (and a fall into one of these causes 2d10 points of damage). However, on the north wall at the bottom of the southern pit is a secret door, located with a

DC 20 Perception check. Opening this secret door reveals a 5-foot-high passage (the dashed line on the map) that leads to the other 20-foot pit located in the northern part of the hall. This passage can be used to avoid all the traps in the room, including the other pits, which are only 10 feet deep. In the northern pit is a wooden peg with a brown feather attached to it via a leather strap.

⚠ Concealed Pit Traps (10)

Level 2 Obstacle

Trap XP 125

Perception

DC 21: The character notices the small cracks in the stone floor concealing the trapdoor.

Trigger: The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the trap's squares.

Immediate Reaction Melee

Targets: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack +5 vs. Reflex.

Hit: The target falls into the pit, takes 2d10 damage, and falls prone.

Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: After being triggered, the pit is no longer concealed.

COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 14 Thievery check (standard action).
- An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 26 Thievery check.

⚠ Poison Dart Trap

Level 2 Blaster

Trap XP 125

Perception

DC 21: The character notices the hole in the wall from which the dart is fired.

Initiative +3

Trigger: When a character steps on a trapped square, the trap rolls initiative.

Standard Action Ranged 10

Targets: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack +7 vs. AC.

Hit: 1d4+3 damage, and the trap makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +5 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+3 poison damage.

COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 21 Thievery check.
- A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.



Area 2–18

The Trial of Air (EL 6, XP 1,300)

When the PCs open the door to this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is octagonal with a diameter of 35 feet. The ceiling is 40 feet high and shrouded in shadowy darkness. There do not appear to be any exits. Along the west wall is a plain wooden chest. A light blue feather rests in the middle of the room.

During the trial of air, the hero Cuauhtli was buffeted by hurricane-force winds while he sought a magic feather. In this reenactment, the PCs need to recover the feather as well. However, there are a few complications. One round after the door opens, a firelasher elemental is summoned into the room. It sweeps up the feather, which becomes trapped inside its fiery vortex. While the PCs attempt to recover the feather, which dances about frantically, they also need to contend with a hidden trap.

Up is Down: The shaded 10-by-10-foot section of the floor is a reverse gravity zone. Any adventurer who enters one of these squares is hurled up to the ceiling. Exiting the zone causes the target to fall back to the floor. The reverse gravity zone is permanent until the elemental is defeated or trapped (see below). Once deactivated, the trapdoor in the floor automatically opens (it was held in place by the reversed gravity), and the room can be exited. The door can be located with a DC 25 Perception check, but the target needs to be able to examine the floor while the reverse gravity is still in effect.

Centered on the ceiling in this zone is a ceramic pot attached to the ceiling via powerful glue generated from rubber trees. It requires a DC 20 Strength check to remove the pot from the ceiling. The pot is about 6 inches in diameter and bears swirling wind and fire patterns carved onto its surface. This ceramic pot is a magical device that can be used to trap a single elemental creature of level 9 or less. A command word written in Xulmec is carved along the side of the pot, and once spoken aloud, it immediately draws in any elemental creature of the appropriate level within 10 squares. However, to truly trap an elemental within the pot, a ceramic plug is needed, which is currently in the chest on the other side of the room.

The Chest: The chest is locked. It can be unlocked with a Thievery DC 25 check or smashed open. The outside of the chest is designed in a swirling wind and fire pattern. In the pattern is a Xulmec phrase that requires a DC 15 History check to comprehend. It reads:

**Capture the firestorm,
to win the feather.**

The chest holds a fine powdery gray dust. This dust can be hurled at the firelasher elemental as a ranged attack (ranged 5) against the elemental's Reflex defense. If the dust hits, the flames that make up the firelasher's body turn blue, and it suffers a –2 penalty to all its defenses. Hidden in the dust is a wooden stopper, used to seal the ceramic pot attached to the ceiling.

Getting the Feather: The PCs have several options to recover the feather. They can attempt to snatch it during combat. This is a standard action that requires a melee attack roll against the firelasher's Reflex defense. This provokes an opportunity attack, and if the opportunity attack hits, the feather cannot be grabbed. However, if a PC does manage to grab the feather and avoid an opportunity attack, he still takes 2d6+5 fire damage from the elemental's fiery vortex. The PCs can also simply defeat the elemental, which releases the feather upon its death. Or they can use the wooden plug from the chest and the ceramic pot. If this method is employed, the elemental is sucked inside with a puff of dust once the command word engraved on the side of the pot is spoken aloud, leaving the feather to float to the ground.

Tactics: The firelasher elemental prefers to avoid the party, flying up out of reach if possible. Its goal is to keep the PCs away from the feather, and it uses its speed and *whirlwind dash* ability to do so. If the PCs successfully engage the elemental in melee, it uses its attacks to keep them at a distance or push them into the reverse gravity zone. If reduced to half of its hit points, it uses its *wildfire cyclone* ability. The firelasher fights to the death.

Firelasher

Level 8 Elite Skirmisher

Large elemental magical beast (air, fire)
XP 700

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +4

HP 168; **Bloodied** 84

AC 24; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 16

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 20 fire

Saving Throws +2

Speed fly 8 (hover)

Action Points 1

↑ Fire Lash (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire**

Reach 2; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 damage fire damage.

☼ **Wildfire Cyclone** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ **Fire**
Close burst 2; +7 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 fire damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone. **Miss:** Half damage, and the target is neither pushed nor knocked prone.

Whirlwind Dash (standard; recharge 6) ♦ **Fire**

The firelasher can move up to twice its speed. It can move through spaces occupied by other creatures without provoking opportunity attacks. It must end its move in an unoccupied space. Any creature whose space the firelasher enters takes 10 fire damage.

Mutable Shape

The firelasher can squeeze through spaces as though it were a Medium creature.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Primordial

Str 11 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 11 (+4)

Con 12 (+5) **Int** 7 (+2) **Cha** 8 (+3)

⚠ Reverse Gravity Trap

Level 7 Elite Blaster

Trap XP 600

Perception

DC 25: The character notices that the dust in this area seems to swirl and dance in an odd pattern (rising and falling).

Initiative +6

Trigger: The trap rolls initiative when a creature enters one of the trap's squares.

Standard Action Close burst 2

Targets: All creatures in the burst.

Attack +12 vs. Fortitude

Hit: The target is hurled at the ceiling, takes 2d10 damage, and then drops to the floor, taking another 2d10 damage.

Miss: The target feels an odd sensation, a momentary lightheadedness, but nothing else.

Effect: The trap attacks every round while there are still creatures in trapped squares.

COUNTERMEASURES

- A character can disable the trap with a DC 27 Thievery check. However, the control panel is within the trapped zone, so anyone attempting to disable it is subject to the trap's attack.
- Flying creatures are unaffected by the trap.

Area 2–19

The Trial of Water (EL 4, XP 875)

When the PCs open the door to this chamber, read or paraphrase the following. Note that the door will shut after the PCs enter, unless they spike it open.

This hall is but 15 feet long and to the left only extends five feet, ending at a wall bearing many wicked spikes each several feet long. To the right, the hall extends for 35 feet before ending at a metal wall. Most of this direction is a steep slope, before leveling out in front of the wall. Three massive metal chains hang from the ceiling, 10 feet overhead. There don't appear to be any exits.

During the trial of water, Cuauhtli had to retrieve a pearl for Pelagia. In this room, the PCs must solve a simple puzzle to avoid a deadly trap, and open the secret door exit.

The spikes to the left are normal. The only danger they pose is if the PCs trigger the water trap at the other end of the room. The slope climbs 20 feet in elevation over the span of 25 feet. It can be climbed normally, without any checks. If combat were for some reason to occur on this slope, a DC 10 Acrobatics check would be required each round or the target would fall prone. The chains are thick iron rings, and disappear into the ceiling, perhaps triggers of some sort. The secret door can be located with a DC 30 Perception check, but can only be opened by pulling the correct chain.



The Clue: A Xulmec phrase is inscribed on the sloped portion of the floor. If translated with a DC 15 History check, it reads:

Started with a grain,
now a hidden gain.

The riddle refers to a pearl, which starts as a grain of sand, but turns into a treasure hidden in an oyster. Astute PCs could also recall that the pictograms in area 2–11 depicted Cuauhcuhltli retrieving a pearl for Pelagia.

Chain Reaction: A DC 10 Perception check reveals the last link of each chain (near the floor) is set with a different precious gemstone. From left to right, they are: a ruby, and emerald, and a white pearl. Each is worth 500 gp, and can be removed with a DC 20 Thievery skill test (2 successes before 1 failure). If the first check fails, the trap is triggered. If the first check is made and the second check is failed, the gem is gained, but the trap is triggered. The correct chain to pull is the pearl. Doing so deactivates the trap, releases a blue feather from the ceiling and opens the secret door. Should either of the other two be pulled (even simultaneously with the correct one), the water trap is triggered, which releases a torrent of water that can pick up and slam PCs into the wall of spikes.

The base of the spikes on the north hole are not watertight, so the water eventually drains into a reservoir under the room. The high priest would then summon a water elemental to collect the water back at the top to reset the trap.

⚠ Water Torrent Trap

Level 7 Elite Blaster

Trap

XP 600

Perception

DC 25: The character notices small rivulets of water on the floor, and that these rivulets seem to run down the slope, toward the spiked wall.

Initiative +6

Trigger: The trap rolls initiative when the incorrect sequence of chains is pulled.

Standard Action Close blast 2

Targets: All creatures in the blast.

Attack +12 vs. Fortitude

Hit: The target is pummeled by the torrent of water, takes 2d6 damage, is knocked prone, and then slammed into the spikes at the far end of the room for 4d6+4 damage.

Miss: The target manages to hold onto one of the chains and avoid being swept away by the water. The target still takes 2d6 damage from the pummeling water.

Effect: The torrent of water persists for 3 rounds, and makes an attack on all targets in its area of effect each round. A target that was missed on the first round must make a DC 15 Strength check each round to maintain his hold on the chain. Failure means he is swept away and slammed into the spikes as normal.

COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 27 Thievery check.
- A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.



Area 2–20

The Trial of the Crab (EL 6, XP 1,250):

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

This entrance to this chamber is an ornate archway depicting the eight phases of the moon. The chamber itself is a 25-foot-diameter circle with no apparent exits. The ceiling is domed as well, reaching 20 feet at its peak. The ceiling is painted black, with tiny white pinpoints simulating the night sky. The floor is white sand, and the chamber smells faintly of the sea. There are four square stone pedestals, each five feet high. On each pedestal is a large snail shell, about the size of a watermelon. Resting on the sand in the midst of the pedestals is a larger snail shell, over five feet long!

During the test of the crab, Cuauhtli searched for an ancient hermit crab of great wisdom. The hermit crab then tested his wisdom with riddles, knowledge of lunar phases, and prowess in combat. The adventurers now face this same hermit crab and its trials.

When the PCs enter, the large shell on the sand begins to move, and a bright red hermit crab pokes its head and large claw out of the shell. It addresses the PCs with the following passage (below) in an ancient dialect of Xulmec while motioning to the four shells (A-D) on the pedestals. The hermit crab will repeat the passage as many times as the PCs need. If a PC copies it down, it can be understood with a DC 25 History check.

**“I am the moon crab,
and have outgrown my shell.
It is now sunset,
so tell me which of the four will fit.”**

Shell Game: The PCs must solve the riddle of the shells, before they can test their physical prowess. When the adventurers examine the shells, give them Players Handout F, which depicts the four different shells from the underneath. There are several clues from area 2–12, the door archway, and the passage above that informs the PCs this riddle involves the phases of the moon. The PCs must select the shell that has an opening that resembles the moon phase after the current phase the moon crab is in. If they don’t see the moon pattern on the shell openings, a DC 20 Perception check can reveal them. The answer is shell B (waning gibbous moon, which follows the full moon). The PCs can deduce this by shapes (recall the archway depicts all eight phases), and the clue “it is now sunset” (the shape of the moon crab’s current shell, as the full moon rises at sunset). Below is a description of each shell:

- A. This squat shell has a circular opening representing the full moon.
- B. This squat shell has a three-quarter opening representing the waning gibbous phase in the southern hemisphere.

- C. This elongate shell has a half-circle opening representing the third-quarter moon in the southern hemisphere.
- D. This elongate shell with a short spire has a thin crescent-shaped opening, representing the waning crescent moon in the southern hemisphere.

Wrong Guess: If the PCs present the wrong shell to the hermit crab, he displays his anger, and tells them to choose again. Each time this occurs, a random PC is the target of a curse, gaining a –1 penalty to attack and damage rolls until the end of the encounter.

Correct Answer: When the PCs present the correct shell to the hermit crab (regardless of whether they guess, deduce the riddle, or use trial and error), read or paraphrase the following:

With a nimble move, the hermit crab switches shells. As it settles into its new shell, the crustacean and shell begin to grow to nearly 10 feet long. The shell sprouts jagged calciferous spikes, and the edge of its dominant claw becomes serrated and flat. With a shuffle, the crustacean attacks!

Tactics: Just like Cuauhtli, after answering the crab’s riddle the PCs now must prove their mettle in combat. The hermit crab attacks with its dominant claw, grabbing up a single opponent and crushing him to death. While grabbing a PC, the moon crab uses its spiky shell to impale its foes, either by charging into them or simply letting the spines jab the heroes when they come close enough to attack. The moon crab fights to the death.

The Feather: When the PCs deliver the killing blow, the hermit crab staggers back and retreats into its shell. The immortal beast then disappears (returning back to the gods to perform their next bidding). If the shell is examined by reaching inside with a DC 10 Thievery check, the PCs can recover a tan feather.

Upon the moon crab’s disappearance, a secret door opens in the southern half of the chamber, leading to a corridor roughly 30 feet long, which brings the party to area 2–21. The secret door can be detected with a DC 30 Perception check, but it will not open until the crab is defeated.

The Moon Crab

Level 5 Solo Soldier

Large natural magical beast (aquatic) XP 1,000

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +10
low-light vision

HP 264; **Bloodied** 132

AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16

Resist 5 attacks that target AC

Saving Throws +5

Speed 6, swim 6

Action Points 2

↑ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +12 vs.AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and a Medium or smaller target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Crushing Claw** (standard; at-will)

Affects a target the moon crab has grabbed; +10 vs. Fortitude; 2d8+10 damage, and ongoing 5 damage until the target escapes the grab.

↑ **Spiky Charge** (standard; recharge 5–6)

The moon crab makes a charge attack with its spiny shell: +13 vs. AC; 3d6+5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square. If the target is pushed against an immovable object, such as a wall, it is immobilized and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).

↑ **Spiky Shell** (immediate reaction, the moon crab is hit by a melee attack; at-will)

+10 vs. Reflex; 1d6+5 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Xulmec
Skills History +9, Religion +9

Str 20 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 16 (+5)

Con 18 (+6) **Int** 16 (+5) **Cha** 15 (+4)

Area 2–21

The Trial of the Maize (EL 4, XP 875)

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is 35 feet wide and 45 feet long with a 10-foot-high ceiling. The floor is covered with dried corn kernels in a dazzling array of yellows, oranges, reds and browns. A door is centered in the opposite wall.

During the trial of the maize, Cuauhtli was forced to negotiate a corn maze for a year before he escaped with the aid of his eagle companion.

Watch Your Step: The floor to this chamber is actually 20 feet below the doors. The path indicated on Map #7 is only two feet below the doors. It can be located via simple prodding with a long object, such as a 10-foot pole. If the PCs take their time and probe ahead, they can locate the path, and there is no chance of falling off the 3-foot-wide path. Moving through 2 feet deep of dried corn is considered difficult terrain.

Any PC who falls off the path disappears into the dried corn. Due to displacement, the target sinks to the floor, but the shifting kernels prevent swimming. However, the target is now subject to drowning (see drowning rules in the sidebar near area 1–2). In addition, the weight of all the kernels inflicts 1d6 points of crushing damage per round. Again, a long object (in this case at least 14 feet long) would come in real handy. But it takes a few rounds to randomly search the kernels for a missing target. The searching PC needs to make a DC 20 Perception check on the first round to find a missing ally. If he fails the check, the DC decreases by 3 each round, until the missing ally is located. Once located, a PC can be pulled to safety with a DC 10 Strength check.

A Feather in a Corn Stack: The PCs not only need to find their way through the maze, but they also need to locate the hidden feather. It rests in a small stone coffer on a circular platform roughly in the center of the room. Unless a searching PC is actively sweeping back and forth,

he needs to make a DC 20 Perception check to locate the safe route to the platform. The coffer is easily located under the kernels, but it is attached to the floor. The coffer is not locked, per se. To open the lid requires the flipping and pushing of several small levers. A DC 15 Thievery challenge (4 successes before 2 failures) is required to open it; alternately, the lock can be picked with a DC 30 Thievery check. Inside the coffer is a single orange feather.

Area 2–22

The Trial of Filth (EL 7, XP 1,325)

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the door is a 10-foot-wide hall that extends for 30 feet before opening into a circular chamber. The ceiling is 10 feet high, and the walls are covered with pictograms depicting disease-ravaged people and scenes of death. The floor of this chamber is a sea of brown and black rats bearing open, festering wounds and puss-filled boils. The vermin swarm ripples as the rodents climb over each other and clamber the walls. At the end of the hall, a 10-foot-tall statue of a vulture-headed humanoid dominates the chamber. It holds a stony feather in its outstretched talon.

During the trial of filth, Cuauhtli was forced to pass through disease-infested rat swarms to get to a vulture-headed god. The hero then defeated the god with ranged attacks while it was restricted in movement.

The Approach: The rat swarm in the hallway is an illusion. Unless a PC actively disbelieves, passing through a square triggers an attack (+8 vs. Will), and if the attack is successful, the PC believes the rat swarm is genuine and suffers damage normally. If an affected PC uses fire to scare the swarm, it seems to have no effect on the vermin. Witnessing the rats' ignorance of the flames warrants a saving throw with a +2 bonus to disbelieve the illusion. The illusory swarm hides a pair of *glyph of warding* traps that deliver necrotic damage and a fearful contagion. The glyphs are indicated on the map.

The Statue: The stone statue depicts the demon lord Pazuzu, a harbinger of disease according to the Xulmec culture. The feather the PCs seek is also stone. However, when any PC gets within 5 feet of the statue, it animates and attacks. The Pazuzu statue can't move from its square, but remains animated for 5 rounds, and then returns to statue form. If approached again, it reanimates (but does not regain lost hit points) attacking for 5 more rounds. If the PCs reduce it to 0 hit points, it releases the feather, and disappears in a puff of crimson smoke.

The Feather: When the statue animates, the feather becomes real and can be grabbed by a target in melee with the statue. A PC can grab the feather with a successful unarmed attack against the statue's Reflex defense. However, this draws an opportunity attack that, if successful, prevents the PC from grabbing the feather. If the feather is grabbed, the statue of Pazuzu becomes inert the next round. When the statue form reverts to stone, so does the feather.

Tactics: The first round, the animated statue uses its *screech* ability, and then spends an action point to attack a dazed PC in melee. If the PCs hang back to attack with ranged weapons, it uses and sustains *virulent cloud* to block their attack and force them into melee. When attacking with a bite and a talon, it can only use one talon, since it holds the feather in the other.

Animated Statue of Pazuzu

Level 7 Elite Brute

Large natural animate (construct) XP 600

Initiative +4 Senses Perception +4; darkvision

HP 200; Bloodied 100

AC 21; Fortitude 21, Reflex 19, Will 17

Immune disease, poison, sleep

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**

Reach 2; +10 vs.AC; 2d6+5 damage, and the target contracts filth fever (see MM).

↑ **Talon** (free; when the animated statue hits a target with its bite attack; at-will)

Reach 2; +10 vs.AC; 1d8+5 damage.

※ **Screech** (standard; recharges after each animation)

♦ **Thunder**

Close burst 3; +6 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+5 thunder damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the animated statue's next turn.

🔥 **Virulent Cloud** (standard; sustain minor; recharges after each animation) ♦ **Poison, Zone**

Area burst 2 within 10; the animated statue creates a zone of poisonous vapor that remains in place until the end of its next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the statue. Any creature entirely within the area is blinded (except the statue), and any creature that enters or starts its turn in the zone takes 5 poison damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –

Str 20 (+8) Dex 12 (+4) Wis 12 (+4)

Con 20 (+8) Int 10 (+3) Cha 10 (+3)

Illusory Rat Swarm

Level 2 Skirmisher

Medium natural beast (swarm) XP 125

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +6

low-light vision

Swarm Attack aura 1; the illusory rat swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its square in the aura

HP 36; Bloodied 18

AC 15;

Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 11

Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks;

Vulnerable 5 against close and area attacks

Speed 4, climb 2

↑ **Swarm of Teeth** (standard at-will)

+6 vs.AC 1d6+3 damage, and ongoing 3 damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 12 (+2)

Dex 17 (+4)

Wis 10 (+1)

Con 12 (+2)

Int 2 (–3)

Cha 9 (+0)

⚠ Glyph of Warding (2)

Level 7 Warder

Trap

XP 300

Perception

DC 28: The character notices the glyph.

Arcana

DC 24: The character spots the glyph and provides a +2 bonus to Thievery checks made to disable it.

Trigger: When a creature enters the square that contains the glyph.

Immediate Reaction Close burst 3

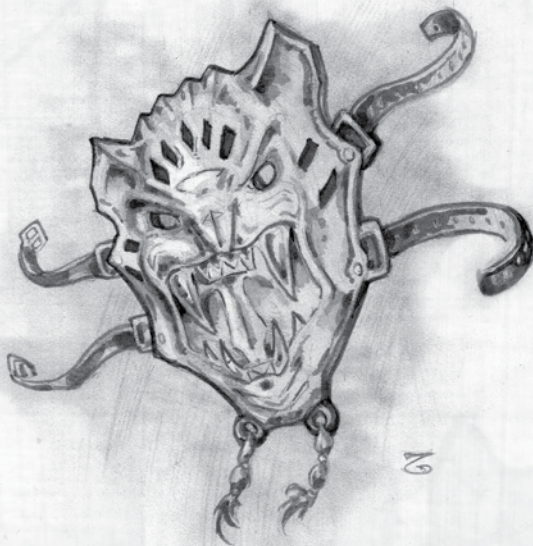
Targets: All creatures in burst.

Attack: +10 vs. Reflex.

Hit: 4d4+4 necrotic damage, and the target contracts filth fever.

COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can disable the glyph with a DC 28 Thievery check.



Area 2–23

The Trial of Serpents (EL 4, XP 900)

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

A 15-foot-wide hallway extends for 35 feet, before the chamber opens to a larger hall. The walls are covered with pictograms depicting a tangled mess of serpents, some as tiny as a man's finger, others as thick as a man's torso. The ceiling is 15 feet high.

When the PCs reach the larger hall, read or paraphrase the following:

The chamber opens to a hall 45 feet wide and 25 feet long. The ceiling here is 25 feet high, and there is a door centered on each the east and west walls. The center of this area is occupied by a massive statue of a snake-like humanoid. The 15-foot-tall creature has the scaled body of a serpent, but a pair of humanoid-like arms cradling a wicked spear. It has a human-like head, but with a flat nose, slits for nostrils, and a forked tongue. It faces the east wall.

In this trial, Cuauhtli had to pass through deadly serpent swarms and battle the serpent-like drakon. He succeeded by leaping over many of the serpent foes, a tactic that could spell doom for the PCs in this chamber.

On the floor is a phrase in Xulmec, which can be translated with a DC 20 History check. It reads:

Do not turn your back on your serpent foe

This is a clue to which door the PCs should take to exit this chamber.

The Snake Pits: There are two pit traps, as indicated on Map #7. Both are easy to locate, and only 10 feet deep, triggered when 20 or more pounds of pressure are placed on the cover. Falling into a pit causes no damage, because each is filled with a soft, squishy swarm of tiny vipers. To make matters worse, the three 5-foot squares on the opposite side of the pits are trapped. If twenty or more pounds of weight are placed on one of these squares, it triggers each to suddenly incline to a 45-degree slope, likely dumping unfortunate targets into the snake pits.

The Feather: An emerald feather rests on the tongue of the statue about 10 feet off the floor. Although dangerously close to the drakon's maw, the feather can easily be retrieved with a DC 10 Athletics check, or by pushing it off with a long pole-like object.

After the PCs get past the pit traps, they need to decide which door to exit through. The statue faces the east door, which is the correct exit. If the PCs try to open the west door (and thus "turn their back to their serpent foe"), they trigger a poisoned javelin trap that launches from the statue, targeting the squares in front of the door.

Viper Swarm (2)

Level 2 Skirmisher

Medium natural beast (swarm) XP 125

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +2
low-light vision
Swarm Attack aura 1; the viper swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its square in the aura

HP 36; **Bloodied** 18

AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13

Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks;

Vulnerable 5 against close and area attacks

Speed 6

↑ Plague of Fangs (standard at-will) ♦ **Poison**
+7 vs. AC 1d6+4 damage, and the viper swarm makes a secondary attack on the same target. **Secondary Attack:** +5 vs. Fortitude 1d6+1 poison damage, and ongoing 2 poison damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Stealth +10

Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 12 (+2) **Int** 2 (–3) **Cha** 10 (+1)

⚠ Sloping Pit Trap (2)

Level 5 Obstacle

Trap XP 200

Perception

DC 12: The character notices the crudely concealed pit traps.

DC 23: The character notices that the stones are loose on the squares with the pivoting stonework.

Trigger: The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the trap's squares (either the pit or the sloping stonework).

Immediate Reaction Melee

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +5 vs. Reflex.

Hit (Sloping Stonework): The target is knocked prone, is pushed 1 square, falls into the pit, and remains prone. The target takes no damage from the fall, but the viper swarms in the pit gain an opportunity attack against the target.

Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.

Hit (Pit): The target falls into the pit and falls prone. The target takes no damage from the fall, but the viper swarms in the pit gain an opportunity attack against the target.

Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: After being triggered, the pits are no longer concealed, but the sloping stonework reset to their normal (hidden) positions.

COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 14 Thievery check (standard action).
- An adjacent character can disable the sloping stonework with a DC 26 Thievery check, or disable the pit traps with a DC 22 Thievery check.
- A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 11, or DC 21 without a running start) can jump over the pit; however, he is likely to land in a square with pivoting stonework and be tumbled into the pit anyway.
- A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

⚠ Poison Javelin Trap

Level 6 Blaster

Trap XP 250

Perception

DC 22: The character notices the hole in the wall from which the javelin is fired.

Initiative +7

Trigger: When a character opens the west door, the trap rolls initiative.

Standard Action Ranged 20

Targets: 2d4 targets in range.

Attack +11 vs.AC.

Hit: 1d6+3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

COUNTERMEASURES

- An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 27 Thievery check.
- A character that moves more than 1 square on a turn gains a +5 bonus to AC against the javelin attacks.

Area 2–24

The Trial of Fire (EL 5, XP 1,000)

The stone door bears a passage in Xulmec that can be understood with a DC 15 History check. It reads:

**Quench the flames' thirst,
or suffer the worst.**

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is warm and smells of sulfur. It is 25 feet wide and 30 feet long with a 15-foot-high ceiling. A 10-foot-square pit is roughly centered in the room, filled with eager flames licking the charred edges of the stonework floor. Beyond the pit is a raised shelf about 8 feet off the floor that is 15 feet wide and 10 feet deep. Centered on this landing is a stone basin perhaps four feet in diameter with a lip about one foot high. The north wall is covered with Xulmec pictograms depicting bloody sacrifices to appease a fire god who holds back a fiery comet from striking a planet. There do not appear to be any exits.

During the trial of fire, Cuauhcuhtli had to carry a sacred flame to the bottom of the ocean. He accomplished this by crafting a magic elixir to protect himself, and then swallowed the flame. The PCs would be wise to heed the passage on the door, and recall the hero's trial to pass this test.

The Fire Pit: The pit is 10 feet deep (and thus causes 1d10 points of damage if a PC falls in). At the bottom of the pit is a stone coffer with a massive, fancy lock. A black metal key rests on the coffer. A PC entering the pit takes 10 fire damage per round. A secret door in the north wall of the pit can be located with a DC 20 Perception check, although this takes one round to accomplish.

The "Key" to the Trial: The skeleton key on the coffer indeed opens the lock. But it has been enchanted with an illusion to appear black. In reality it is red hot, and causes 2 points of fire damage per round it is held. The key is hollow, like a straw. It can be used to open the coffer, but due to a sophisticated system of metal loops and gears, this takes 4 rounds to complete. Thus, an unprotected PC will take 10 points of fire damage climbing into the pit, and 40 more points of fire damage to open the coffer. Once opened, the fire effect is dispelled. The coffer contains a crimson feather and a gold brazier set with lapis lazuli (worth 1,250 gp).

The Basin: The stone basin's outer edge is carved with flame designs. Inside the basin is perhaps 10 ounces of a fluid, certainly not enough to quench the flames in the pit. However, if a PC could collect this liquid and drink it, it acts as a magical elixir, granting resist 10 fire to whomever quaffs it; unfortunately, there is barely enough for one dose. The sponges from the tool kit from area 2–8c, or the hollow key (which can be used as a straw) are useful to collect the liquid. By using the potion, a PC can climb down the pit, open the coffer and dispel the flames without taking any damage.

Area 2–25

The Trial of the Game (EL 7, XP 1,500)

When the PCs enter this massive chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

After descending a stairway for about 80 feet, a noticeable chill envelopes your bodies. The stairs end at a stone door. Beyond is a mammoth chamber, at least 60 feet wide and 80 feet long. The ceiling stretches to a height of about 40 feet, and the north and south walls are terraced into stone benches extending to the ceiling. These stands are packed with ghostly forms of Xulmec tribesmen in varying types of dress. At your arrival, the packed stands erupt in a thunderous roar of anticipation.

The walls behind you bear complicated pictograms. The floor in front of you between the stands is 40 feet wide and 100 feet long. The floor in this area is grimy white, stained in many places with crimson splotches, especially near the walls. This area is occupied by no fewer than 12 wicker humanoid shapes, each about five feet tall. Beyond the white floor, the chamber opens up, and has a black glossy floor. On the opposite wall is a trio of wicker hoops mounted 10 feet above the floor.

The Xulmecs enjoyed a bloody game akin to rugby and basketball to appease their blood-letting tendencies. Although often played against slaves, the hero Cuauhtli was forced to endure this game as a final trial. However, he was forced to play the zombie remains of enemies he slaughtered in battle, and had to use the head of his brother as a ball.

If the PCs examine the wall behind them, they can get a graphic understanding of the game from another recounting of Cuauhtli's playing. At the base of this wall is a wicker-stuffed ball of dried human skin for each PC. The PCs need to score with each of their balls, either by carrying them into the scoring zone or by throwing them

through one of the hoops. The ghostly spectators berate and boo the PCs and shout Xulmec chants and cheers for the wicker men, but have no effect on the game.

The Court: The white area of the court is affected by a magical slow effect. A PC entering this zone suffers an attack: +6 vs. Fortitude, the target is slowed (save ends).

The Opposing Team: The wicker men are animated constructs. Their wicker hands inflict slashing wounds, but the constructs are easy to defeat and vulnerable to fire. The wicker constructs focus at holding the PCs at bay, to prevent them from scoring. PCs that make it to the scoring zone are ignored.



Scoring a Goal: There are two ways to score a goal. First, a PC can carry a ball into the black zone. When this occurs, the ball disappears, and when the last ball disappears, it is replaced by a single white feather that floats to the ground. The same PC can score more than once, and astute PCs will pass the balls between them (requiring a successful ranged basic attack against AC 15 to make an accurate throw, and a DC 10 Athletics check to make the catch). Second, a PC may attempt to throw a ball through a hoop mounted on the wall with a ranged basic attack against AC 22. A PC can attempt to shoot while grabbed with a –4 penalty to the attack roll. If a ball misses a hoop, it strikes the wall and bounces back 3d4 squares. If it ends up in the scoring zone (unlikely), a PC in the zone can simply pick it up to score. If it comes back into the white court, any nearby wicker men move to pick it up, if able to do so. Stripping a ball out of a wicker man's grasp requires an opposed Strength check.

The Way Out: There are two secret doors that exit this chamber on the east wall. Each one requires a DC 20 Perception check to locate.

Wicker Man (12)

Level 1 Skirmisher

Medium natural animate (construct) XP 100

Initiative +4 Senses Perception +0; darkvision

HP 30; Bloodied 15

AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 13

Immune disease, poison, sleep; **Resist 5** attacks that target AC; **Vulnerable 10** fire

Speed 6

↑ Slam (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ Clench (standard; at-will)

Affects a target the wicker man is grabbing; +4 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+6 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Athletics +8

Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+0)

Con 14 (+2) **Int** 7 (–2) **Cha** 11 (+0)

Area 2–26

Mixcoatl's Lair

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

A short flight of steps leads to another stone door. On opening the portal, you must shield your eyes from the radiant sunshine. The glare is intensified off the pure white sand that covers the ground. A dry intense heat buffets your chilled bones, but soon becomes too arid and stifling. A bright blue sky complete with lazy billowing clouds replaces the gray ceiling, and endless sand dunes go on in all directions. A 20-foot-high smooth pyramid can be seen in the distance.

The sand, sky, heat and landscape of this chamber are a powerful illusion created to grant Mixcoatl a suitable

surrounding environment. When the PCs enter the room, the illusion makes an attack on their senses (+8 vs. Will). If the attack is successful, the PCs believe the illusion and act accordingly. The only things in the chamber that are real are the doors and the smooth pyramid. It is important to inform the PCs that the architecture of this pyramid is not Xulmec design. It is actually based off Sphinx architecture, a tidbit that can be revealed with a DC 15 History check. The exit door can be located with a DC 15 Perception check.

The noble feathered dragon Mixcoatl was recovered by the hero Cuauhtli following the nine trials of the gods. Mixcoatl once made its lair here, but a few weeks ago, the feathered dragon was captured with the use of a powerful magical gem by the lamia Maragnatha masquerading as the owl goddess. The celestial creature has since been moved through the portal in area 2–28, to a pyramid thousands of miles away in the Ghetrian Desert.

Shifting Sands: When Mixcoatl was captured, a short battle raged here on the shifting sands. A DC 25 Perception check along the west side of the pyramid reveals a gold holy symbol, dropped by one of the cultists. It's a flat disk with a feminine face wearing a Khonsurian headdress and a jet-black crown. The holy symbol represents Ankhare's faith and is worth 125 gp. If a tracker searches for tracks in this chamber, he gains the following information based on the success of the Nature check (results are cumulative):

- Nature check DC 10: The tracks lead to the door in the northeast wall.
- Nature check DC 15: Several creatures (6 to 10) passed this way a few weeks ago.
- Nature check DC 20: The footprints are from humanoids clad in sandals, perhaps 6 to 7 feet tall. A few drops of dried blood indicate a battle took place here.
- Nature check DC 25: One set of tracks belonged to an animal with hooves.

Hidden Help: If the PCs search the pyramid, a DC 25 Perception check reveals a secret compartment. It was once heavily guarded by magical traps, but Mixcoatl's last action before capture was to dispel them, so others might recover the magic item stash for the use of good. Inside are 3 *potions of healing*, a *wand of ray of enfeeblement* +2, *bracers of defense* (level 7), and an *amulet of health* +2. These items are useful when confronting Itzcoatl in area 2–27.

Area 2–27

Itzcoatl's Lair (EL 8, XP 1,750)

When the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

A short flight of steps leads to a stone door, slick with condensation. Upon opening the portal, your nostrils are assaulted by the fetid stench of a swamp. Another short flight of steps leads into the mucky mire. The ceiling appears to be a night sky, and the room stretches endlessly to any direction. To the east, a vegetation-covered stone pillar reaches out of the swamp. It bears engraved pictograms, and it rises about 30 feet to a flat top.

When the PCs get a glimpse of Itzcoatl, continue:

A 15-foot-long serpent is entwined about the pillar. Its scaly hide is covered with deep purple and black feathers that form hawk-like wings.

This chamber is the lair of the wicked couatl Itzcoatl. Similar to area 2–26, the environment of this area is a powerful illusion. When the PCs enter the room, the illusion makes an attack on their senses (+8 vs. Will). If the attack is successful, the PCs believe the illusion and act accordingly. The only real components of the room are the doors, steps, and the pillar. The pillar is engraved with Xulmec pictograms depicting the glorious days before Mixcoatl's arrival, when the altars ran red with blood. Concealed in the west side of the hexagonal pillar is a secret door that can be located with a DC 20 Perception check. The passage winds for many hundreds of feet before exiting in the jungle, and is used by Tlacocelot to enter and exit the shrine.

If a PC disbelieves the swamp and looks in the southeast area of the chamber, a DC 15 Perception check reveals the exit door.

The Muck: If the PCs do not disbelieve the swamp, moving through the muck is considered difficult terrain. If the PCs discovered the illusion in area 2–26 already, they get a +4 bonus to this check. Each round there is a 20% chance of getting stuck in the muck. A stuck PC needs to make a DC 10 Strength check as a standard action to wrench free.

The Situation: Itzcoatl is invisible at the top of the pillar. He lets the PCs enter his domain, while he uses telepathy to learn of their purpose. Once he discovers their quest to defeat Tlacocelot, he panics. For some time after the departure of Mixcoatl, Itzcoatl believed he alone commanded Tlacocelot. But due to his bond with his good counterpart, he knows Mixcoatl is still alive. He also knows that Tlacocelot has rededicated himself to the mysterious owl goddess. He worries that she will return and, teamed with the high priest, defeat him and return Mixcoatl to serve as spiritual leader of the village. This will not do, so in his deluded senses, he provokes the attack on the PCs, hoping they will kill him. He even “holds back” some of his more powerful abilities, to give them a chance to win. Of course, if the PCs are goaded into slaying him, they disrupt the balance of the evil and good couatls permanently.

Tactics: Itzcoatl begins the combat invisible, likely meaning he surprises the party. He begins combat by swooping down via *flyby attack* and snatching up a PC with his tail slap. Then he hovers just out of range and constricts the grabbed hero, while using an action point to blast the rest of the PCs with his breath weapon. Itzcoatl lets the grabbed PC escape after one round of constriction, letting the unfortunate PC fall twenty feet or more to the ground. If a PC reaches the pillar, it takes a DC 15 Athletics check to scale the pillar. Itzcoatl generally stays out of reach, but swoops in each round to attack with his bite, poisoning climbing PCs. He uses his breath weapon as soon as it

recharges, focusing it on PCs scaling the pillar if possible. The GM should give the PCs a good fight, but pull a few punches, as Itzcoatl's goal is to be killed so the bloody sacrifices will continue forever.

Itzcoatl, Adult Feathered Dragon

Level 8 Solo Skirmisher

Large natural magical beast (dragon) XP 1,750

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision

HP 352; **Bloodied** 176; see also *bloodied breath*

AC 24; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21

Resist 20 poison

Saving Throws +5

Speed 4, fly 10 (hover), overland flight 15;

see also *flyby attack*

Action Points 2

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Reach 2; +13 vs.AC; 1d8+5 damage, the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

↑ **Tail Slap** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +13 vs.AC; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Constrict** (standard; at will)

Affects a target the feathered dragon has grabbed; +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+10 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the feathered dragon's next turn.

↑ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at will)

The feathered dragon flies up to 10 squares and makes a melee basic attack at any point during the move without provoking an opportunity attack from the target.

※ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ **Poison**
Close blast 5; +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+3 poison damage, and the target is weakened and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

※ **Bloodied Breath** (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Poison**

The feathered dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

※ **Blinding Presence** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Radiant**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +11 vs. Will; the target is blinded until the end of the feathered dragon's next turn. After effect: The target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Cloak of Invisibility (standard; recharge 5–6) ♦ **Illusion**

The feathered dragon becomes invisible until it attacks.

Alignment Any **Languages** Common, Draconic, Telepathy 10

Skills Arcana +13, Insight +11, Religion +13, Stealth +14

Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+6)

Con 16 (+7) **Int** 18 (+8) **Cha** 18 (+8)

Area 2–28

The Forgotten Portal (EL 9, XP 1,928)

When the PCs open the double doors to this last chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

At the double doors, this chamber is but 10 feet wide but it gradually increases to a full 30 feet wide and 30 feet long. The plain ceiling is 30 feet overhead. The right and left walls are covered with typical pictograms, but the opposite wall immediately gains your full attention. Situated on the raised dais is a massive iron semicircle about 10 feet in diameter. The smooth black iron frame is covered with engraved hieroglyphics, unlike the Xulmec pictograms observed throughout the shrine. The interior of the portal is a shimmering maelstrom of blue and green.

Kneeling in front of the portal is a single human adorned in a jaguar cloak. His tattooed arms are outstretched as he murmurs a deep chant using the dais steps as a makeshift altar. Scattered about the flat stone surface are religious regalia and odd effects. The figure pauses, stands and turns to face your band. His visage is covered by a metal jaguar mask, bearing teeth in a silent roar. Two massive black jaguars slink around the human, each looking quite eager to charge forward and rip you to shreds.

The PCs have discovered the Forgotten Portal, crafted by powerful Sphinx magic during an age that has long since passed. The pictograms on the wall have a distinct Sphinx theme. They recount the construction of the portal in this shrine, and depict the Sphinx teaching the Xulmec barbarians the art of stone masonry and pyramid construction. Additional scenes relate instruction in the arcane arts, other engineering feats, astronomy, and even religious pursuits. The final scenes recount several female Sphinxes departing through the portal.

The Forgotten Portal: The portal is an ancient device, recently reawakened by the lamia Maragnatha from the opposite side. Similar to other portals, a key is needed to activate this portal. This key happens to be nine feathers obtained from either couatl, Itzcoatl or Mixcoatl (or obtained during the nine trials). To pass through the shimmering surface, one simply needs to hold the feathers and pass through. The shimmering surface is akin to a stiff gelatinous film, pliable to the touch. Since Maragnatha carried Mixcoatl's body, this is how she activated the portal. If a PC activates it in this method, the feathers travel with that adventurer to the opposite side, along with any PCs whose hands are linked with the first hero's (otherwise, the remaining PCs need to recover more feathers from area 2–27). There is another way to activate the portal and keep it open from this side. A DC 20 Perception check focusing on the black metal surface reveals nine evenly spaced holes, each about an inch deep and 1/8th of an inch wide. The nine feathers obtained during the trials can be placed in the holes to activate the portal. If the PCs activate the portal and step through, see Wrapping Up, below.

The Portal's Guardian: Tlacocelot is the human high priest in front of the portal. Ever since his visit from the

owl goddess a few weeks ago, he has stood vigil awaiting her return or summons to her side. It is a futile action, but his misplaced dedication runs deep. When the PCs arrive, he wastes little time unleashing his fury in the owl goddess' honor.

Religious Regalia: There are several valuable items carried by Tlacocelot and scattered in front of the altar. The jaguar cape he wears is worth 450 gp. In his pouch are 6 blocks of herbal scented incense worth a total of 35 gp. On the dais steps is a prayer rug bearing geometrical shapes and interwoven with gold thread (worth 225 gp). In front of the rug is a ceremonial dagger carved from a dinosaur tooth, set with pieces of jade (worth 345 gp), and a gold incense burner shaped like a crude owl-headed humanoid (worth 115 gp).

Tactics: Tlacocelot was warned that the PCs would arrive, so he is prepared to fight to the death. Note that he is not a lycanthrope, so the silver weapons from area 1–7 are not actually more effective against him. As his dire jaguar pets attack, he blows the *conch horn of the Xulmecs*, summoning 6 Xulmec zombie rotters. Then he steps back while his allies engage the PCs and casts *searing light* on an obvious spellcaster. He follows this attack up with *spiritual weapon*, which he maintains until he is forced into melee. In melee, Tlacocelot uses *shielding strike* each round to increase his AC, and attempts to flank PCs with his allies to increase his chances of hitting. When Tlacocelot is finally bloodied, he activates his *jaguar mask*, assuming the form of a dire jaguar/man hybrid, and pounces on the closest target. He fights in this form to the death. When slain, he reverts back to his normal human form.

Tlacocelot, Human Cleric

Level 8 Elite Controller

Medium natural humanoid (human) XP 700

Initiative +4 Senses Perception +8

HP 172; Bloodied 86

AC 23; Fortitude 22, Reflex 18, Will 25

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

↑ +2 **Magic Macuahuitl** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+13 vs.AC; 1d8+7 damage.

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

Only after the *jaguar mask* has been activated: +13 vs.
AC; 1d10+12 damage.

↑ **Shielding Strike** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Divine, Weapon**

+13 vs.AC; 1d8+7 damage, and Tlacocelot and one adjacent ally gain a +1 power bonus to AC until the end of Tlacocelot's next turn.

⚡ **Searing Light** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Divine, Implement, Radiant**

Ranged 10; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6+7 radiant damage, and the target is blinded until the end of Tlacocelot's next turn.

⚡ **Spiritual Weapon** (standard, sustain minor; encounter) ♦ **Conjuration, Divine, Implement** Ranged 10; Tlacocelot conjures a ghostly macuahuitl in the target's square and attacks: +13 vs.AC; 1d10+7 damage. Tlacocelot's allies gain combat advantage against the target. Tlacocelot can move the macuahuitl up to 10 squares to another enemy's square as a move action. The weapon lasts until the end of Tlacocelot's next turn, but he can sustain the power as a minor action.

⚡ **Conch Horn of the Xulmecs** (standard, encounter) ♦ **Conjuration, Divine, Necrotic** Ranged 10; 6 zombie rotters appear in any unoccupied space within range. These undead minions take their turns immediately after Tlacocelot.

Cure Serious Wounds (standard; encounter) ♦ **Divine, Healing**

Tlacocelot or an adjacent ally regains hit points as if Tlacocelot or his ally had spent two healing surges.

Jaguar Mask (standard; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Polymorph**

Tlacocelot gains a jaguar-like head and a bite attack (see above) until the end of the encounter. In addition, Tlacocelot spends a healing surge and regains 43 hit points. He gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of his next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Xulmec **Skills** History +10, Religion +10

Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 11 (+4) **Wis** 18 (+8)
Con 14 (+6) **Int** 13 (+5) **Cha** 13 (+5)

Equipment hide armor, +2 magic macuahuitl, holy symbol, jaguar mask, conch horn of the Xulmecs

Elite Dire Jaguar (2)

Level 6 Elite Skirmisher

Large natural beast **XP 500**

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +10
low-light vision

HP 144; **Bloodied** 72

AC 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 16

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8, climb 6

Action Points 1

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+11 vs.AC; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Rake** (standard; at-will)
Grabbed target only; +11 vs.AC; 2d6+5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

↑ **Leaping Pounce** (standard; recharge 5,6)
The dire jaguar shifts 8 squares and makes a bite attack. It deals an extra 1d6 damage on a successful hit.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +12

Str 21 (+8) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 2 (–1) **Cha** 11 (+3)

Zombie Rotter (6)

Level 3 Minion

Medium natural animate (undead) **XP 38**

Initiative –1 **Senses** Perception –1; darkvision

HP 1 (a missed attack never damages a minion)

AC 13; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 9, **Will** 10

Immune disease, poison

Speed 4

↑ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs.AC; 5 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

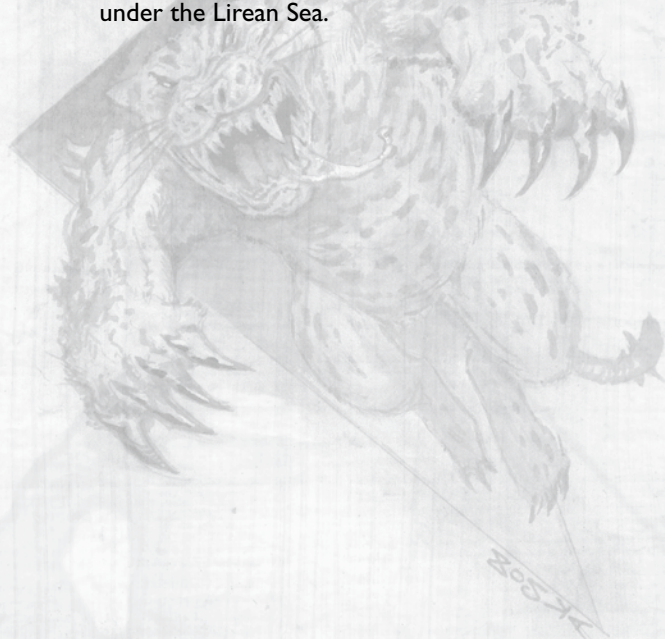
Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 6 (–2) **Wis** 8 (–1)

Con 10 (+0) **Int** 1 (–5) **Cha** 3 (–4)

WRAPPING UP

The adventure ends when the PCs defeat Tlacocelot and discover the Forgotten Portal. But where does it lead? If the PCs defeated Itzcoatl in area 2–27, this is very important if the PCs seek to restore the shift in balance unwittingly caused by their sword-arms. If this is the case, the PCs need to confront Maragnatha, and return Mixcoatl to the shrine. Use the first suggestion presented below. Otherwise, the Forgotten Portal can have any destination the GM desires. A few suggestions follow:

- The portal leads to an oasis deep in the heart of the Ghetrian Desert. The oasis is guarded by gnoll cultists working with Maragnatha, and who possess information on her location.
- The portal leads to the Far Garden (see DCC #51: *Castle Whiterock*, Level 8). The Far Garden is a fey realm in desperate need of a few heroes.
- The portal leads to an abandoned Nethergate secluded in the sewers below the city of Punjar. What guards the Nethergate (if anything) is left to the devices of the GM. This portal could lead to DCC #53: *Sellswords of Punjar*. Also see the 2008 Free RPG Day supplement *Punjar: The Tarnished Jewel*, for more information on this nefarious city.
- The portal leads to a flooded chamber in the ruins under the Lirean Sea.



APPENDIX I NEW MONSTERS

FEATHERED DRAGON (COUATL)

Feathered dragons, often called couatls or feathered serpents, are long sinuous wyrms with brightly colored plumage covering their scaly, serpentine bodies. They are typically found in deep jungles and rain forests, and typically have a deep connection with the land. Feathered dragons can be either good or evil, and the species seems to keep a fairly even balance between the noble and the wicked.

FEATHERED DRAGON LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Feathered dragons primarily inhabit jungles and rain forests, and are often called couatls by the indigenous humans living there.

DC 20: Feathered dragons count both good and evil individuals among their members. However, the two types of feathered dragons hold no animosity toward the other, believing that their diametrically opposed moral counterparts present a balance to their own good or evil actions. Good feathered dragons often form alliances with humans and other good-aligned humanoids in the area, acting as both a guardian and counselor for their allies. Evil feathered dragons seek to corrupt and despoil. They use their guile and influence to turn other creatures against one another, or wield simple physical might to reap destruction and horror.

FEATHERED DRAGON TACTICS

A feathered dragon begins combat with *blinding presence* and then spends an action point to immediately follow this attack with its *breath weapon*. It then enters melee while aloft, using *flyby attack* along with a tail slap to snatch up a target and constrict it in the air. A grabbed target will be repeatedly bitten and constricted until slain, or face a long drop to the ground if it does manage to escape the grapple.

Elder and ancient feathered dragons use *detect thoughts* and *ethereal step* to command the battlefield, using the information gathered from *detect thoughts* to immediately teleport to a more defensible position. Ancient feathered dragons use *serpent gaze* each round to keep particularly dangerous foes out of the fight, or to knock flying enemies out of the air.

Young Feathered Dragon

Level 3 Solo Skirmisher

Medium natural magical beast (dragon)
XP 750

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision

HP 184; **Bloodied** 92; see also *bloodied breath*

AC 19; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17

Resist 15 poison

Saving Throws +5

Speed 4, fly 8 (hover), overland flight 12; see also *flyby attack*

Action Points 2

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+8 vs.AC; 1d6+4 damage, the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

↑ **Tail Slap** (standard; at-will)

+8 vs.AC; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Constrict** (standard; at-will)

Affects a target the feathered dragon has grabbed; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+8 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the feathered dragon's next turn.

↑ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)

The feathered dragon flies up to 8 squares and makes a melee basic attack at any point during the move without provoking an opportunity attack from the target.

※ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge 5–6) ♦

Poison

Close blast 5; +4 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+2 poison damage, and the target is weakened and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

※ **Bloodied Breath** (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Poison**

The feathered dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

※ **Blinding Presence** (standard; encounter) ♦

Radiant

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +4 vs. Will; the target is blinded until the end of the feathered dragon's next turn. After effect: The target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Alignment Any **Languages** Common, Draconic, Telepathy 10

Skills Arcana +9, Insight +7, Religion +9, Stealth +10

Str 16 (+4)

Dex 18 (+5)

Wis 13 (+2)

Con 14 (+3)

Int 16 (+4)

Cha 16 (+4)





Adult Feathered Dragon

Level 8 Solo Skirmisher

Large natural magical beast (dragon) XP 1,750

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision

HP 352; **Bloodied** 176; see also *bloodied breath*

AC 24; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21

Resist 20 poison

Saving Throws +5

Speed 4, fly 10 (hover), overland flight 15; see also *flyby attack*

Action Points 2

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Reach 2; +13 vs.AC; 1d8+5 damage, the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

↑ **Tail Slap** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +13 vs.AC; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Constrict** (standard; at-will)

Affects a target the feathered dragon has grabbed; +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+10 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the feathered dragon's next turn.

↑ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)

The feathered dragon flies up to 10 squares and makes a melee basic attack at any point during the move without provoking an opportunity attack from the target.

※ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge 5–6) ♦ **Poison**

Close blast 5; +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+3 poison damage, and the target is weakened and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

※ **Bloodied Breath** (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Poison**

The feathered dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

※ **Blinding Presence** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Radiant**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +11 vs.Will; the target is blinded until the end of the feathered dragon's next turn. After effect: The target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Cloak of Invisibility (standard; recharge 5–6) ♦ **Illusion**

The feathered dragon becomes invisible until it attacks.

Alignment Any **Languages** Common, Draconic, Telepathy 10

Skills Arcana +13, Insight +11, Religion +13, Stealth +14

Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+6)

Con 16 (+7) **Int** 18 (+8) **Cha** 18 (+8)

Elder Feathered Dragon

Level 15 Solo Skirmisher

Large natural magical beast (dragon) XP 6,000

Detect Thoughts aura 10; a feathered dragon has a +2 bonus to all defenses against attacks originating from enemies within the aura. In addition, enemies in the aura cannot use the Stealth skill to hide from the feathered dragon, and it receives a +10 bonus on all Insight checks when opposing Bluff checks made by creatures in the aura.

HP 730; **Bloodied** 365; see also *bloodied breath*

AC 31; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 26

Resist 25 poison

Saving Throws +5

Speed 6, fly 12 (hover), overland flight 18; see also *flyby attack*

Action Points 2

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Reach 2; +20 vs.AC; 1d10+6 damage, the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

↑ **Tail Slap** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +20 vs.AC; 2d6+6 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Constrict** (standard; at-will)

Affects a target the feathered dragon has grabbed; +18 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+12 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the feathered dragon's next turn.

↑ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)

The feathered dragon flies up to 12 squares and makes a melee basic attack at any point during the move without provoking an opportunity attack from the target.

※ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge 5–6) ♦ **Poison**

Close blast 5; +16 vs. Fortitude; 3d6+4 poison damage, and the target is weakened and takes ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

※ **Bloodied Breath** (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Poison**

The feathered dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

※ **Blinding Presence** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Radiant**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +16 vs.Will; the target is blinded until the end of the feathered dragon's next turn. After effect: The target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Cloak of Invisibility (standard; recharge 5–6) ♦ **Illusion**

The feathered dragon becomes invisible until it attacks.

Ethereal Step (move; recharge 5–6) ♦ **Teleport**

The feathered dragon becomes insubstantial and teleports 12 squares. It remains insubstantial until the end of its next turn.

Alignment Any **Languages** Common, Draconic, Telepathy 10

Skills Arcana +17, Insight +15, Religion +17, Stealth +19

Str 20 (+13) **Dex** 24 (+14) **Wis** 17 (+10)

Con 18 (+11) **Int** 20 (+12) **Cha** 20 (+12)

Ancient Feathered Dragon

Level 22 Solo Skirmisher

Huge natural magical beast (dragon) XP 20,750

Detect Thoughts aura 10; a feathered dragon has a +2 bonus to all defenses against attacks originating from enemies within the aura. In addition, enemies in the aura cannot use the Stealth skill to hide from the feathered dragon, and it receives a +10 bonus on all Insight checks when opposing Bluff checks made by creatures in the aura.

Initiative +22 **Senses** Perception +20; darkvision

HP 1,020; **Bloodied** 510; see also *bloodied breath*

AC 38; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 33

Resist 30 poison

Saving Throws +5

Speed 8, fly 14 (hover), overland flight 18; see also *flyby attack*

Action Points 2

↑ **Bite** (standard; at-will) **Poison**

Reach 3; +27 vs.AC; 2d6+9 damage, the target takes ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).

↑ **Tail Slap** (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +27 vs.AC; 3d6+9 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Constrict** (standard; at-will)

Affects a target the feathered dragon has grabbed; +25 vs. Fortitude; 3d6+18 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the feathered dragon's next turn.

↑ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)

The feathered dragon flies up to 12 squares and makes a melee basic attack at any point during the move without provoking an opportunity attack from the target.

⚡ **Serpent's Gaze** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Charm, Gaze**

Ranged 10; +25 vs.Will; the target is stunned (save ends).

☼ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge 5–6) ♦

Poison

Close blast 5; +23 vs. Fortitude; 4d6+5 poison damage, and the target is weakened and takes ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).

☼ **Bloodied Breath** (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Poison**

The feathered dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

☼ **Blinding Presence** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Radiant**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +23 vs.Will; the target is blinded until the end of the feathered dragon's next turn. After effect: The target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Cloak of Invisibility (standard; recharge 5–6) ♦ **Illusion**

The feathered dragon becomes invisible until it attacks.

Ethereal Step (move; recharge 5–6) ♦ **Teleport**

The feathered dragon becomes insubstantial and teleports 12 squares. It remains insubstantial until the end of its next turn.

Alignment Any **Languages** Common, Draconic, Telepathy 10

Skills Arcana +22, Insight +20, Religion +22, Stealth +25

Str 24 (+18)

Dex 28 (+20)

Wis 19 (+15)

Con 20 (+16)

Int 22 (+17)

Cha 22 (+17)

Encounter Groups

Feathered dragons, both good and evil, are often encountered with monsters and humanoids native to their jungle homes. Evil feathered serpents often associate with nagas and other evil serpentine monsters.

Level 10 Encounter (XP 2,550)

- 1 adult feathered dragon (level 8 solo skirmisher)
- 2 crushgrip constrictors (level 9 soldier)

Level 24 Encounter (XP 29,950)

- 1 ancient feathered dragon (level 22 solo skirmisher)
- 1 dark naga (level 21 elite controller)
- 2 shadow snakes (level 16 skirmisher)





XOCHATATEO

Xochatateo are filthy undead humanoids, created from the sacrificial victims of particularly vile and bloodthirsty cults. Each bears a similar wound upon its chest, where its still-beating heart was cut from its body just before the death of its corporal form. For some reason, the xochatateo lives on – a tormented creature cursed to exist between the realms of life and death, constantly seeking the hearts of the living to replace the one that once beat within its chest. Lesser xochatateo usually collect the hearts from their dead victims, but greater xochatateo have been known to simply rip a victim's heart from his chest while he still lives.

Xochatateo are often mistaken for ghouls, as they have similar dietary habits and a tendency to haunt the same areas as the more common undead. However, as they retain some of their memories and intelligence, they may still attempt to contact living creatures that seem familiar from their former lives, and occasionally exhibit some semblance of humanity in their otherwise vicious behavior.

XOCHATATEO LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful Religion check.

DC 15: It is unclear as to exactly why the xochatateo are created. Some scholars argue that they are created when a sacrifice ritual is conducted incorrectly; others believe that they are created when the subject being sacrificed simply refuses to die. A few cynics even believe that xochatateo are nothing more than a cruel god's joke. Regardless of the reasons behind their creation, there is no disputing *how* they come into existence: During a sacrificial ritual, when the still-beating heart is ripped from a humanoid creature's chest, for some reason that creature does not die. Instead, it is reborn as a cruel, savage creature with a taste for mortal flesh.

DC 20: While exhibiting general cannibalistic behavior, the xochatateo are most infamous for their obsession with hearts. After a killing frenzy, they typically rip out the hearts of their victims and hoard them as treasure. Although the reason for this obsession is unclear, survivors of xochatateo attacks have reported that the creatures often place their new trophies inside their own chests, as if to replace the hearts that were torn out of them.

Xochatateo

Level 6 Brute

Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 250

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision

HP 87; **Bloodied** 43

AC 18; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 6

↑ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs.AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

↑ **Flesh Ripper** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ **Healing**

A xochatateo make two claw attacks against a single target. If both attacks hit, the target takes an additional 5 damage and the xochatateo regains 5 hit points.

Blood Frenzy (only while bloodied)

The xochatateo gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Skills Stealth +10

Str 20 (+8)

Dex 15 (+5)

Wis 10 (+3)

Con 17 (+6)

Int 8 (+2)

Cha 12 (+4)

Description *This horrific humanoid creature has a gaunt, almost skeletal body covered in withered gray flesh. Its arms are long and ape-like, ending in powerful hands tipped with ragged, filthy talons. However, the most ghoulish aspect of this creature is the wet, red hole in its chest, right where its heart used to be.*

Xochatateo Tactics

A xochatateo is a vicious undead predator that has little use for guile or tactics. It simply rushes into melee and attacks the nearest humanoid target with its ragged talons. It attempts to rip a victim to shreds, eagerly seeking the warm, beating heart.

Greater Xochatateo

Level 14 Brute

Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 1,000

Initiative +11 Senses Perception +9; darkvision

HP 170; Bloodied 85

AC 26; Fortitude 27, Reflex 24, Will 22

Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic;

Vulnerable 10 radiant

Speed 8

↑ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+17 vs.AC; 2d8+7 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends) and grabbed (until escape).

↑ **Heart Ripper** (standard; recharge 5–6) ♦

Healing

Grabbed target only; +15 vs. Fortitude; 4d8+7 damage, and the greater xochatateo regains 10 hit points. If this power reduces a target to 0 hit points or fewer, the greater xochatateo rips out the target's heart, killing it instantly.

Blood Frenzy (only while bloodied)

The greater xochatateo gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and can take an extra standard action each round.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Skills Athletics +19, Stealth +16

Str 24 (+14) **Dex** 19 (+11) **Wis** 14 (+9)

Con 20 (+12) **Int** 11 (+7) **Cha** 15 (+9)

Greater Xochatateo Tactics

A greater xochatateo rushes into melee and attacks a single humanoid target. It attempts to grab the target with its talons, burrowing into the target's chest, and then rip the heart away with one savage yank.

Encounter Groups

Both common and greater xochatateo can be found with other type of corporeal undead, usually ghouls, who are happy to feed on the heartless bodies the xochatateo leave behind.

Level 6 Encounter (XP 1,350)

- 3 xochatateo (level 6 brute)
- 3 ghouls (level 5 soldier)

Level 15 Encounter (XP 5,800)

- 3 greater xochatateo (level 14 brute)
- 2 abyssal ghouls (level 16 skirmisher)

APPENDIX II NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Jaguar Mask Level 8

This stylized mask is carved to resemble a snarling jaguar. It allows you to adopt some of the mighty hunting cat's strength and power for a short time.

Item Slot: Head 3,400 gp

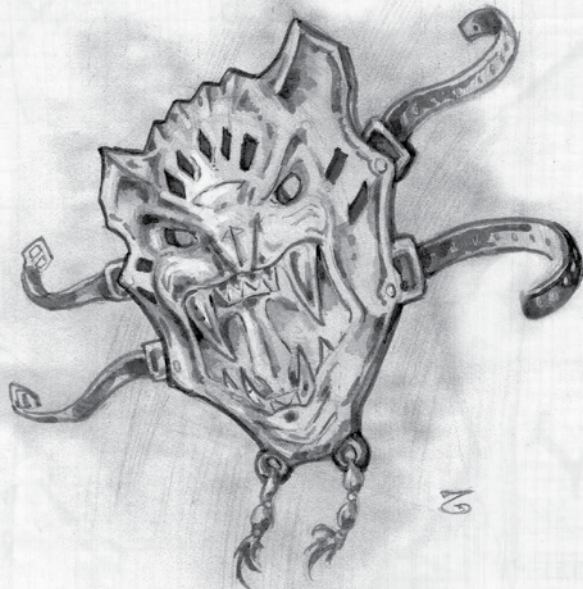
Power (Daily ♦ Polymorph): Minor action. Your head and face transform into that of a bestial, jaguar-like creature until the end of the encounter. You gain the ability to make a bite attack as a melee basic attack that deals 1d10 + Strength modifier plus an additional 5 damage. In addition, when you activate this power, you may spend a healing surge.

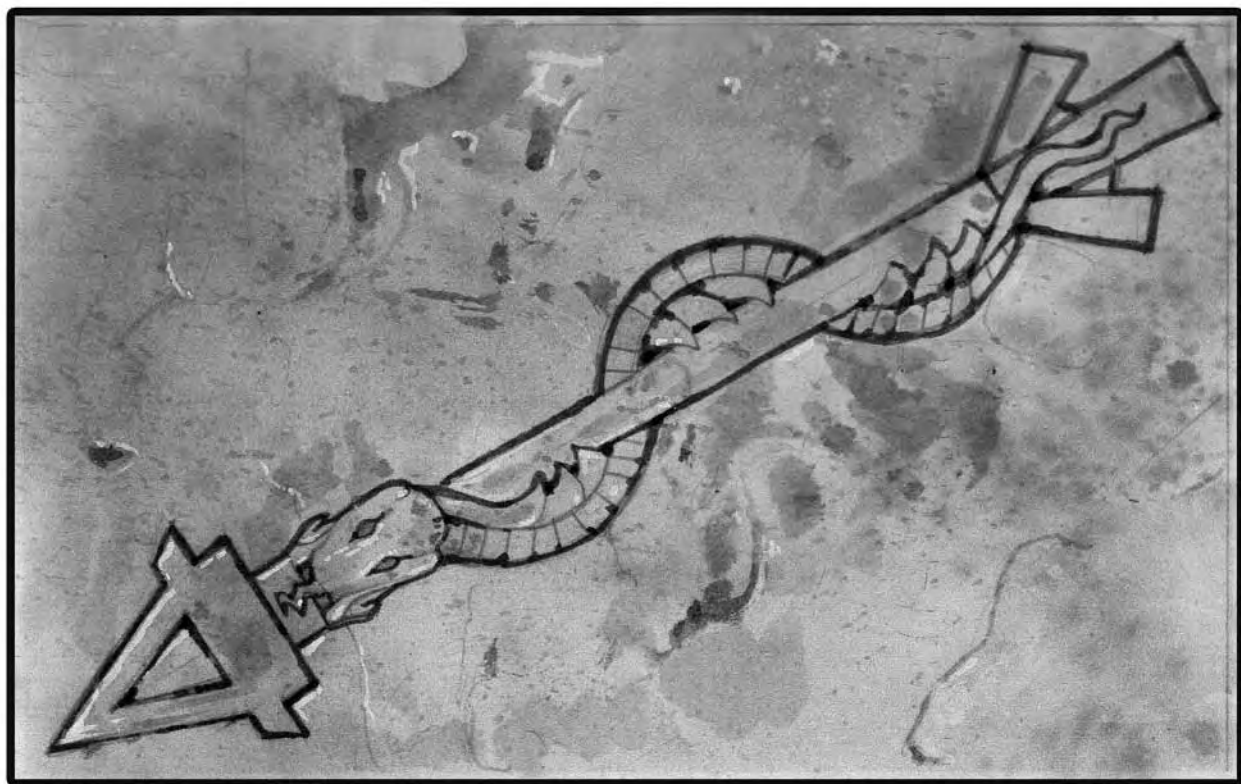
Conch Horn of the Xulmecs Level 10

This large conch horn is inscribed with the rune for death in the Xulmec language. It allows you to summon undead creatures to serve.

Wondrous Item 5,000 gp

Power (Daily): Standard Action. You summon six zombie rotters to serve you, which appear within 10 squares in any unoccupied square. These undead take their turns immediately after you do.

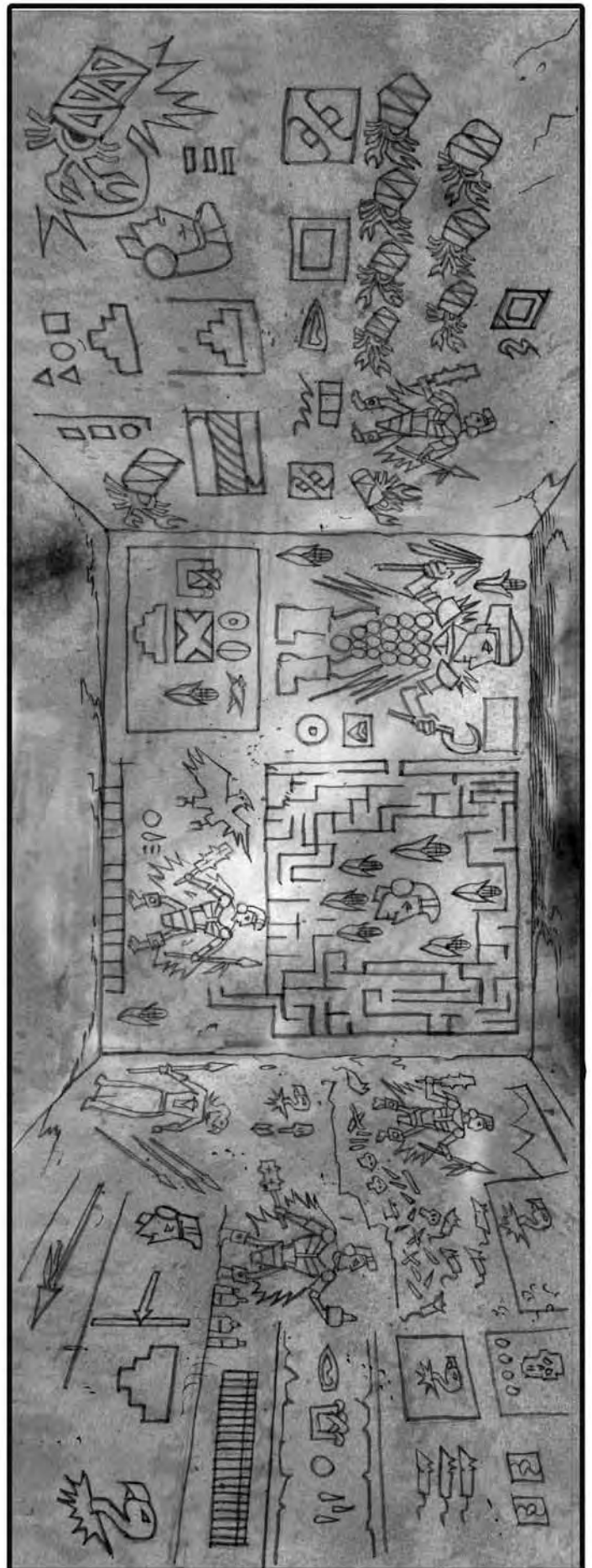




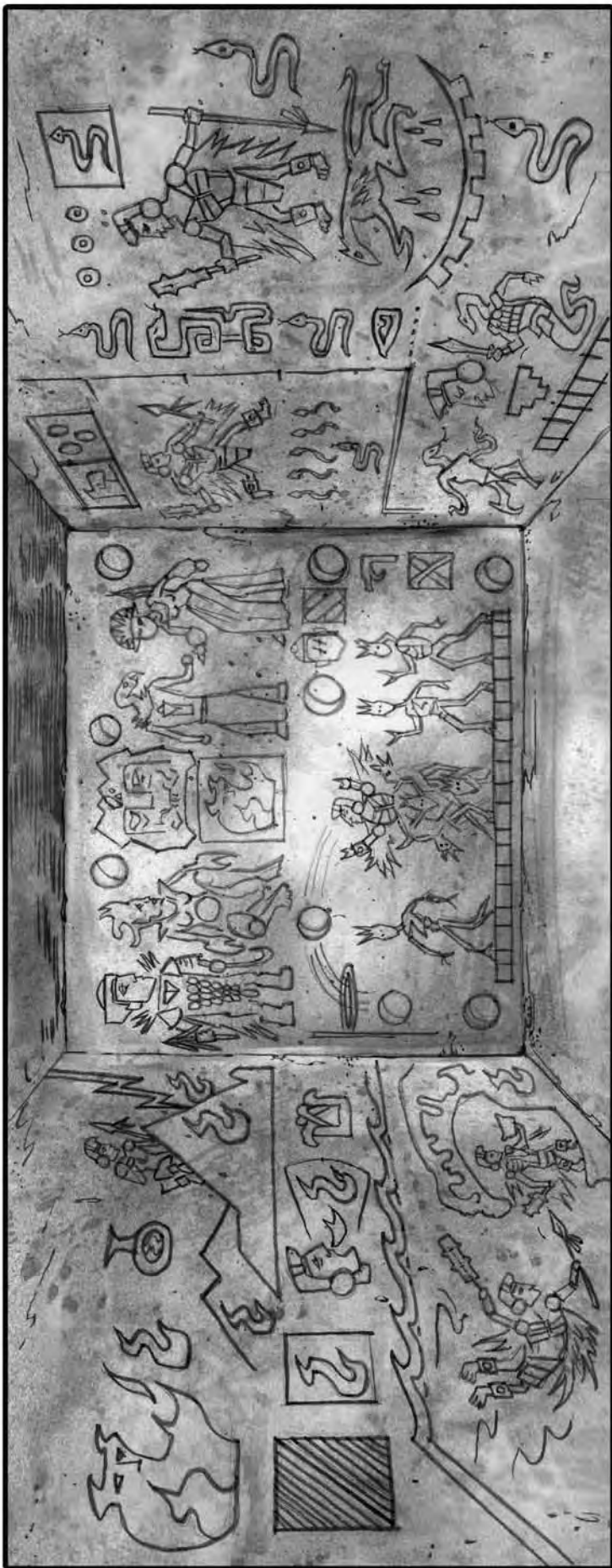
HANDOUT A



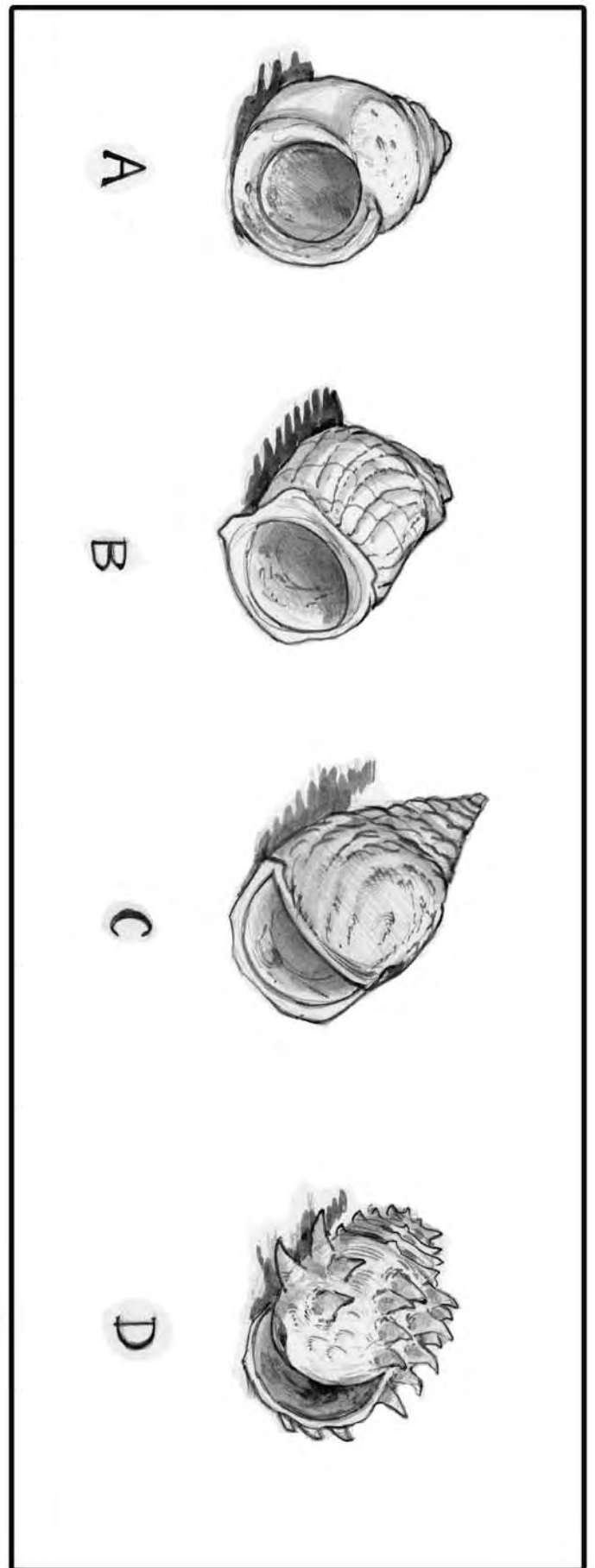
HANDOUT B



HANDOUT C



HANDOUT D



HANDOUT F

BEYOND ATOTZIN
AREAS 1-5 THROUGH 1-7

□ = 10 feet



BEYOND ATOTZIN
AREAS 1-1 THROUGH 1-4

□ = 10 feet



To 1-5

The Atomickan
+1,300 ft.

1-4

thirty
feet
deep

twenty
feet
deep

ten
feet
deep

five
feet
deep

1-3

FLOW

1-2

ten
feet
deep

five
feet
deep

ten
feet
deep

FLOW

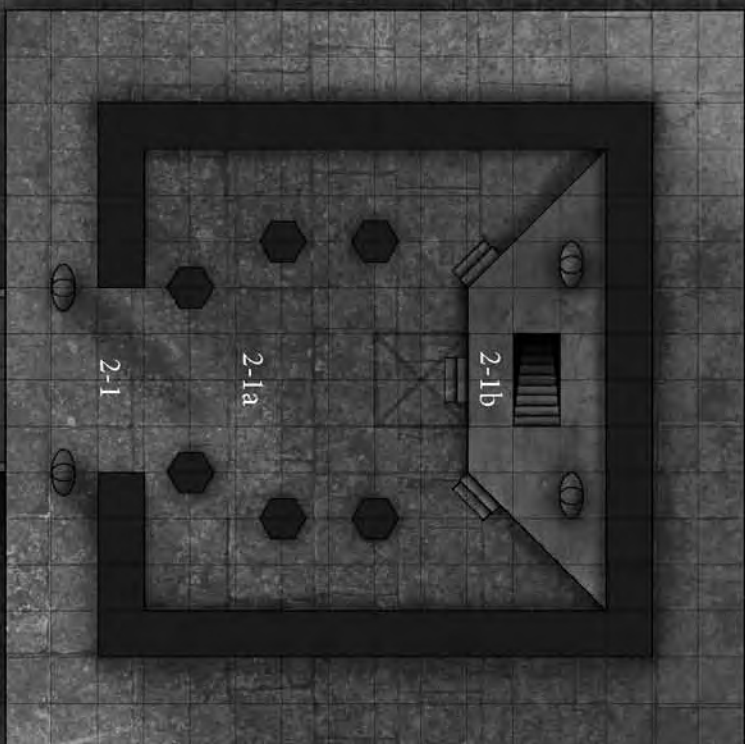
The Atotzin

1-1

THE OUTDOOR SHRINE

AREA 21

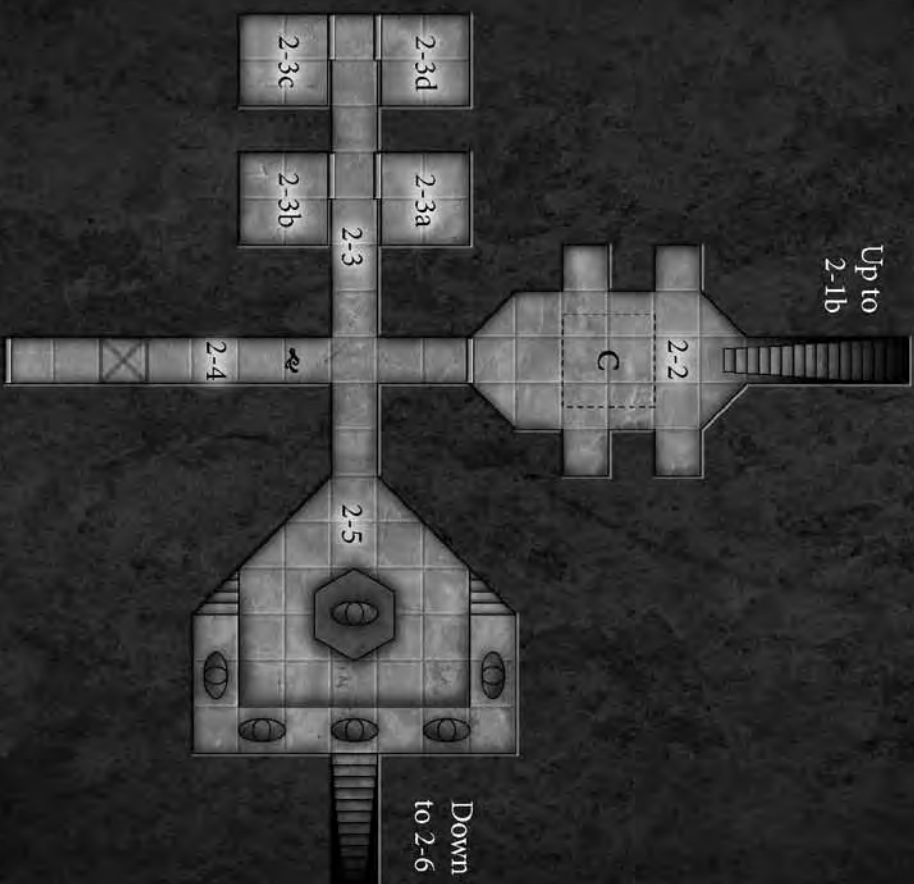
 = 5 feet



THE ENTRANCE LEVEL

AREAS 22 THROUGH 25

 = 5 feet



THE TOMB OF CUAUHCUHTLI

AREAS 2-9 THROUGH 2-16

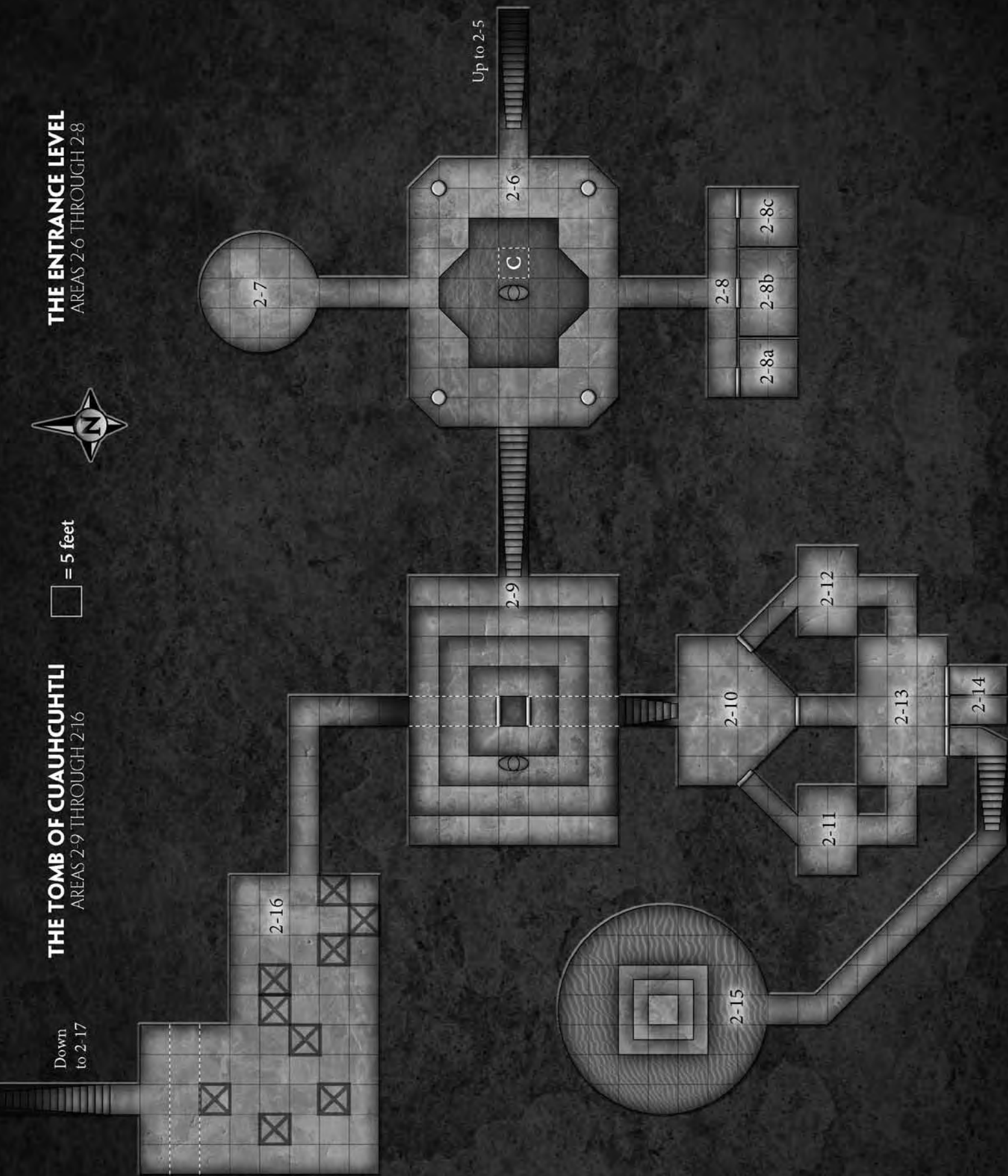
□ = 5 feet



Down
to 2-17

THE ENTRANCE LEVEL

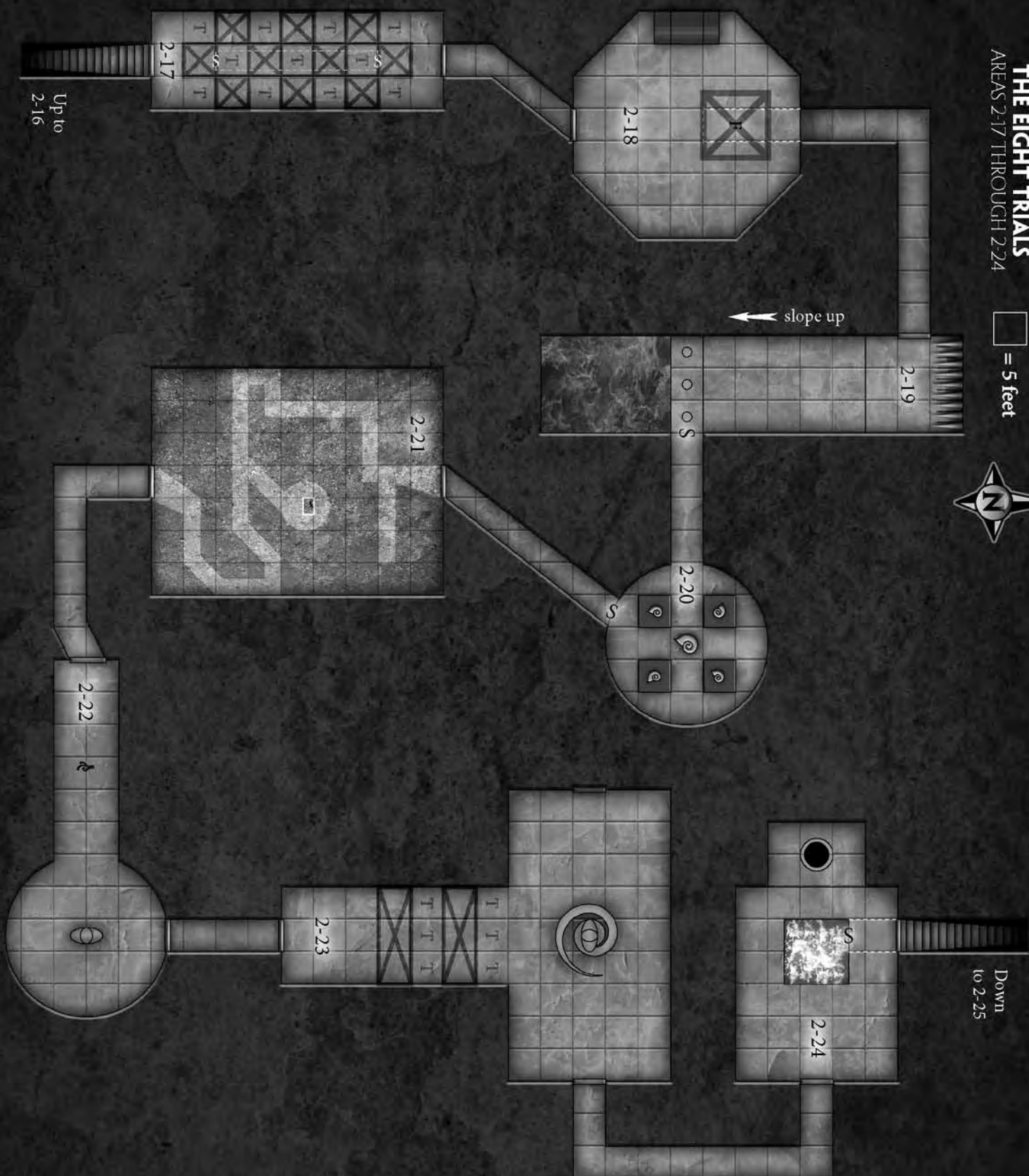
AREAS 2-6 THROUGH 2-8



THE EIGHT TRIALS

AREAS 2-17 THROUGH 2-24

 = 5 feet





THE NINTH TRIAL

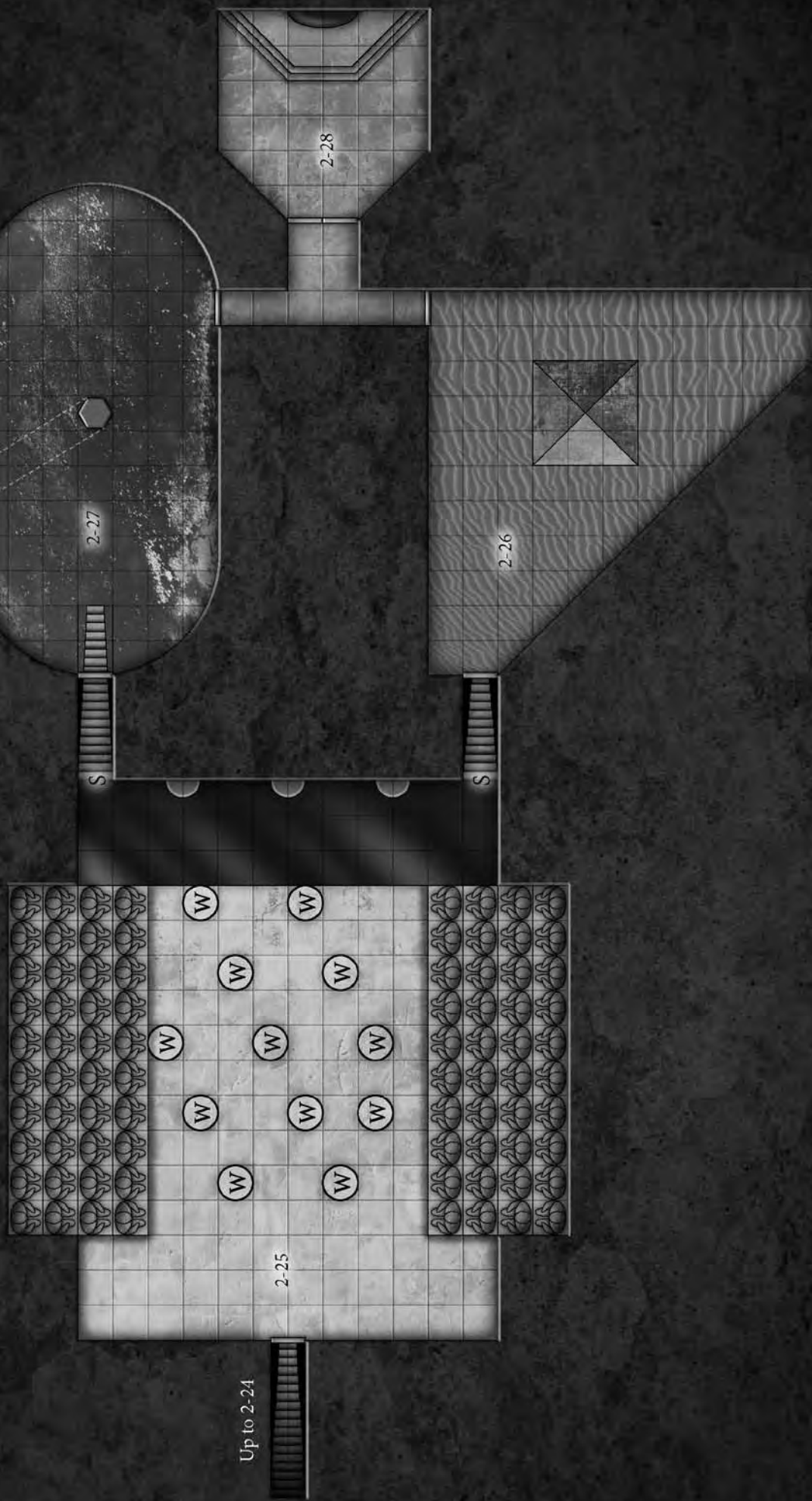
AREA 2-25

 = 5 feet

Exit to
the jungle

THE LOWER CHAMBERS

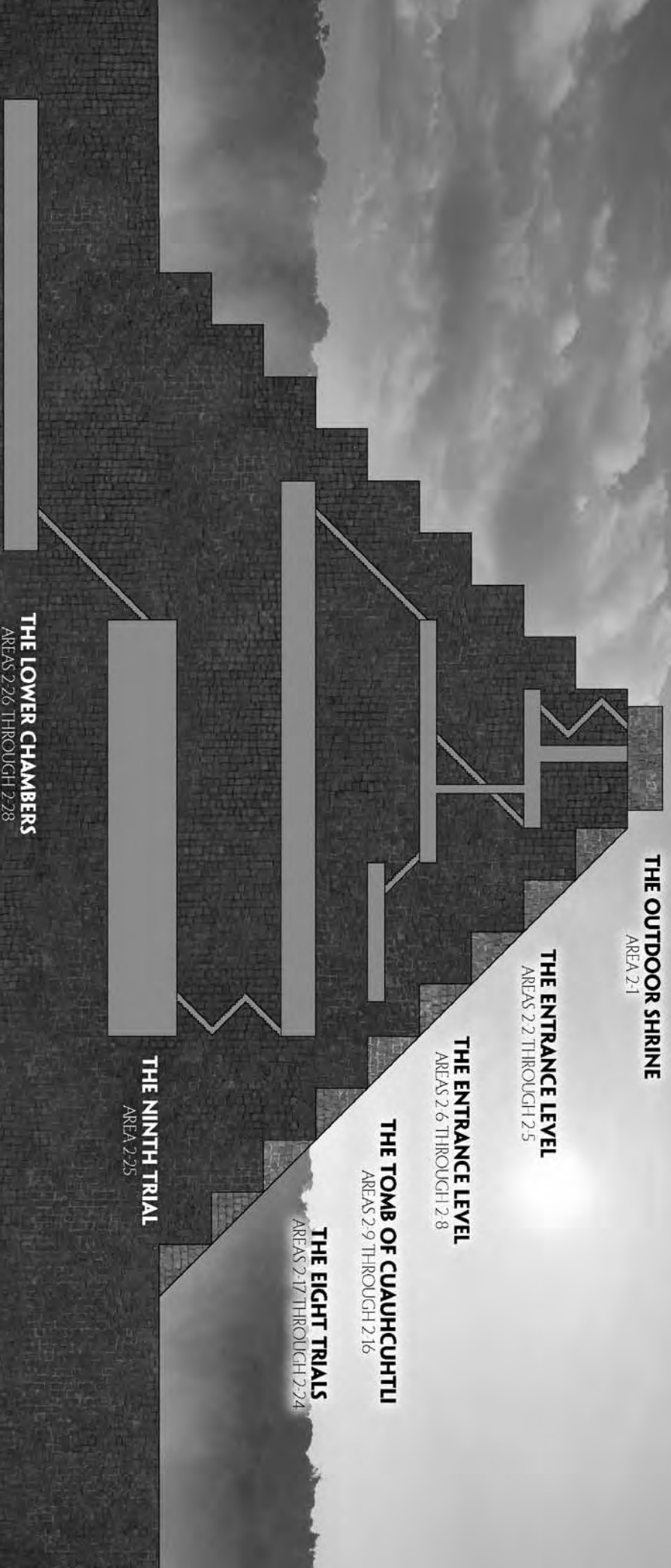
AREAS 2-26 THROUGH 2-28



THE SHRINE OF CUAUHCUHTLI

SIDE VIEW, FACING NORTH

 = 20 feet



OVERLAND MAP

□ = 500 feet



The Shrine of
Cuauhtli



Teputzitloc

The Plateau

1-5

+1,800 ft.

1-1

The Atotzin



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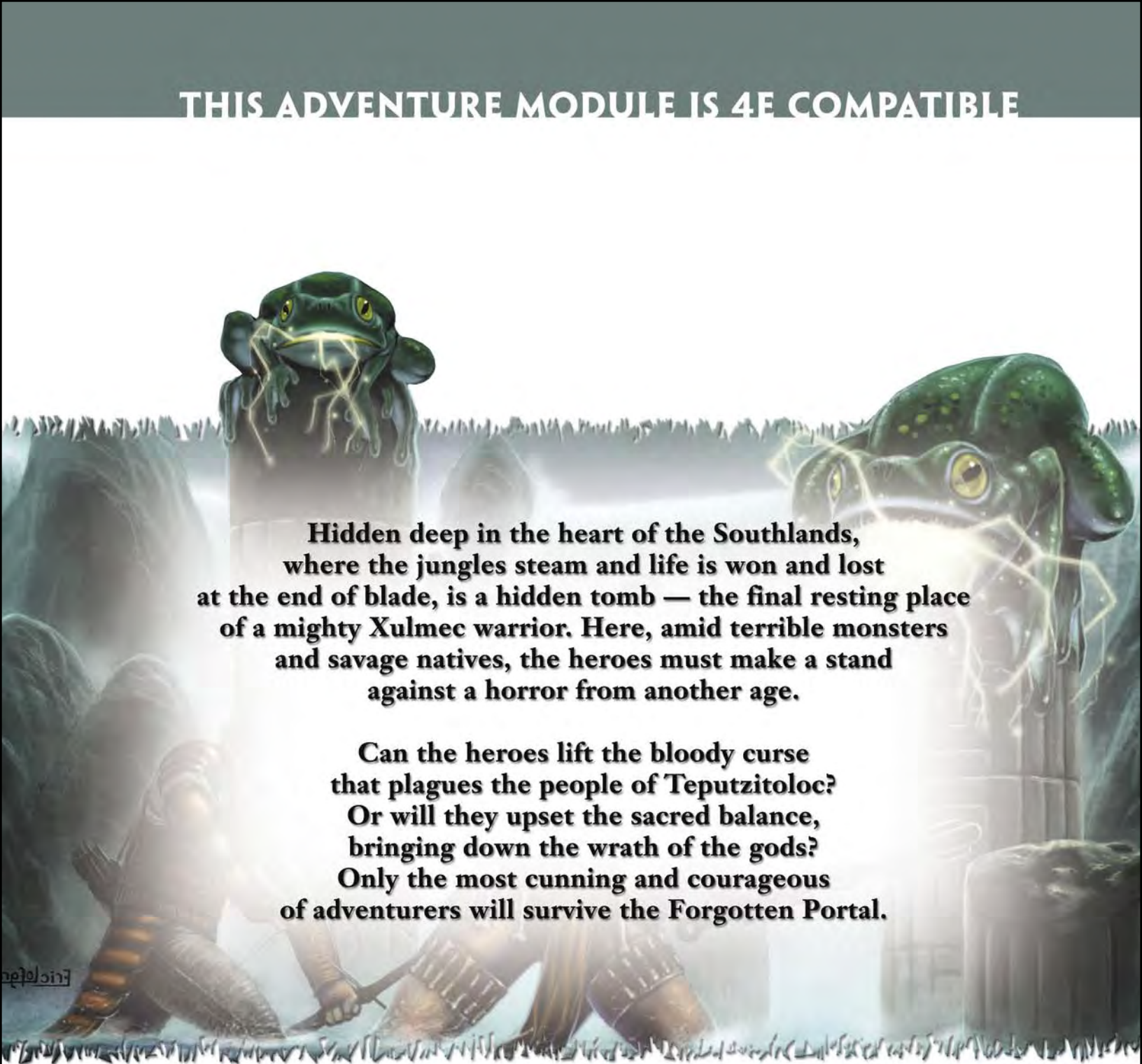
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