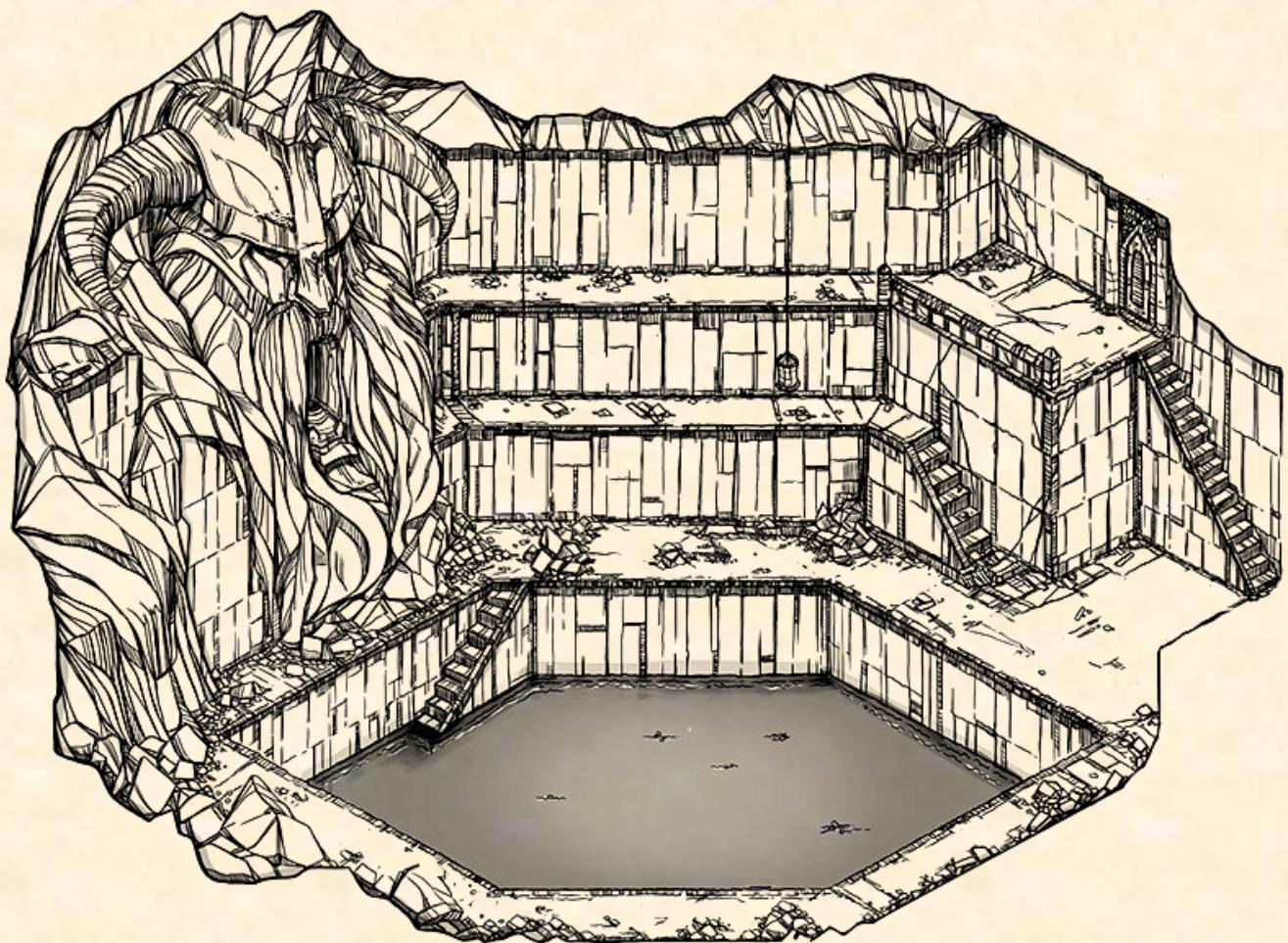


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# THE IRON GOD COMETH



# The Iron God Cometh

## Rumours & Hooks

*Lord Aldred*, a winter warrior of advanced years and genuine devotee of *Graxus*, is on his death bed. He wishes to be laid to rest in a hidden shrine to the *Iron God*. He hires the adventurers to find it.

In chance loot, the party discovers a weighty tome; *Litanies of Blood & Iron*, a prayer book dedicated to *Graxus*. On the back of one page is a hand scrawled entry that refers to a hidden shrine along the *Spine of Ulgoth*.

## The Iron God

Beneath a stony rise, in the high mountains of the *Spine of Ulgoth*, lie a series of cold tunnels dedicated to *Graxus*, the god of war, struggle and glory. Commonly portrayed as a juggernaut of destruction, the Iron God is a towering half man, half metal fusing of steel and flesh. During times of conflict and strife, *Graxus*' name is invoked to implore victory, rally strength or to deflect his wrath.

In the Second Age, amidst years of war and suffering, a wealthy priest commissioned the construction of a secret shrine to the Lord of Battle; a holy place of ritual offering to win the deity's favour.

In a great arena, beneath the sacred visage of *Graxus* himself, fervent devotees fought and died in gladiatorial combat, sacrificing their lives to entreat victory and end the war. Whether *Graxus* answered his faithful, and what became of the warring peoples, is unknown, but the Halls of the Iron God still remain.

The adventurers might learn about the ancient halls through obscure historical texts, by wandering into the area while exploring the Spine, or on retainer for Lord Aldred (an elderly, ex-mercenary captain with a wet cough, on his

death bed, who wishes to be entombed within the hallowed complex).

## Random Encounters

The halls are approximately five days trek up the cold, steep mountains of the Spine of Ulgoth. Wind and rain are relatively common in the ranges, making climbing more hazardous and increasing the risk of landslides. There is a 20% chance of a random encounter every six hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8 (plus 2 during the last day of travel):

1. 10d6 *Beastmen* (LFG p.100) have made a home here in shallow caves. Their drums can be heard during the day. There is a 50% chance a sentry is downwind from the adventurers, and rallies a hunting party.



2. The adventurers wander into a steep ravine, requiring a Str (Athletics) check to climb out. The ascent is littered with scree and loose rock, making it particularly taxing. A failed Str check causes 1 Str loss due to exhaustion.

3. 2d6 *Griffons* (LFG p.113) are on the wing, hunting for a meal to carry away to their mountaintop aerie.

4. 2d4 *Ogres* (LFG p.120) are rampaging through this area, throwing boulders, snarling and generally making an awful ruckus. The ogres are arguing over dinner: bear or beastman? If they spot the party however, everyone agrees human tastes best.

5. *Landslide!* Whilst navigating a long, narrow ledge, the weather turns poor, releasing a roaring torrent of mud and rock! A Luck (Dex) save is required to avoid being carried down the mountainside, causing 6d6 damage.

6. 3d6 *Cyclops* (LFG p.103) are waiting for the adventurers. Their shaman, descendent of a line of true augers, foresaw their arrival. The shaman might have a message for the party (possibly: humans are her favourite meal).

7. 1d6 *Giant Spiders* (LFG p.125) can be heard skittering across the stony earth, around the next mountain bend, zeroing in on the party's location.

8. A *Wyvern* (LFG p.130) from the highest peaks is gliding overhead, casting its long shadow across the earth. It is either hunting, or returning to its den to mate (50% chance).

9. 2d6 *Urgot* from Area 1 are on the prowl in nearby territory. A bone chilling,

simultaneous chittering warns of their approach.

10. *Smorc & Runk*, the *Ettin* from Area 2, appears from over the next rise. He has picked up the party's scent and is salivating for "humey blood".

### Area 1 - Cave Mouth

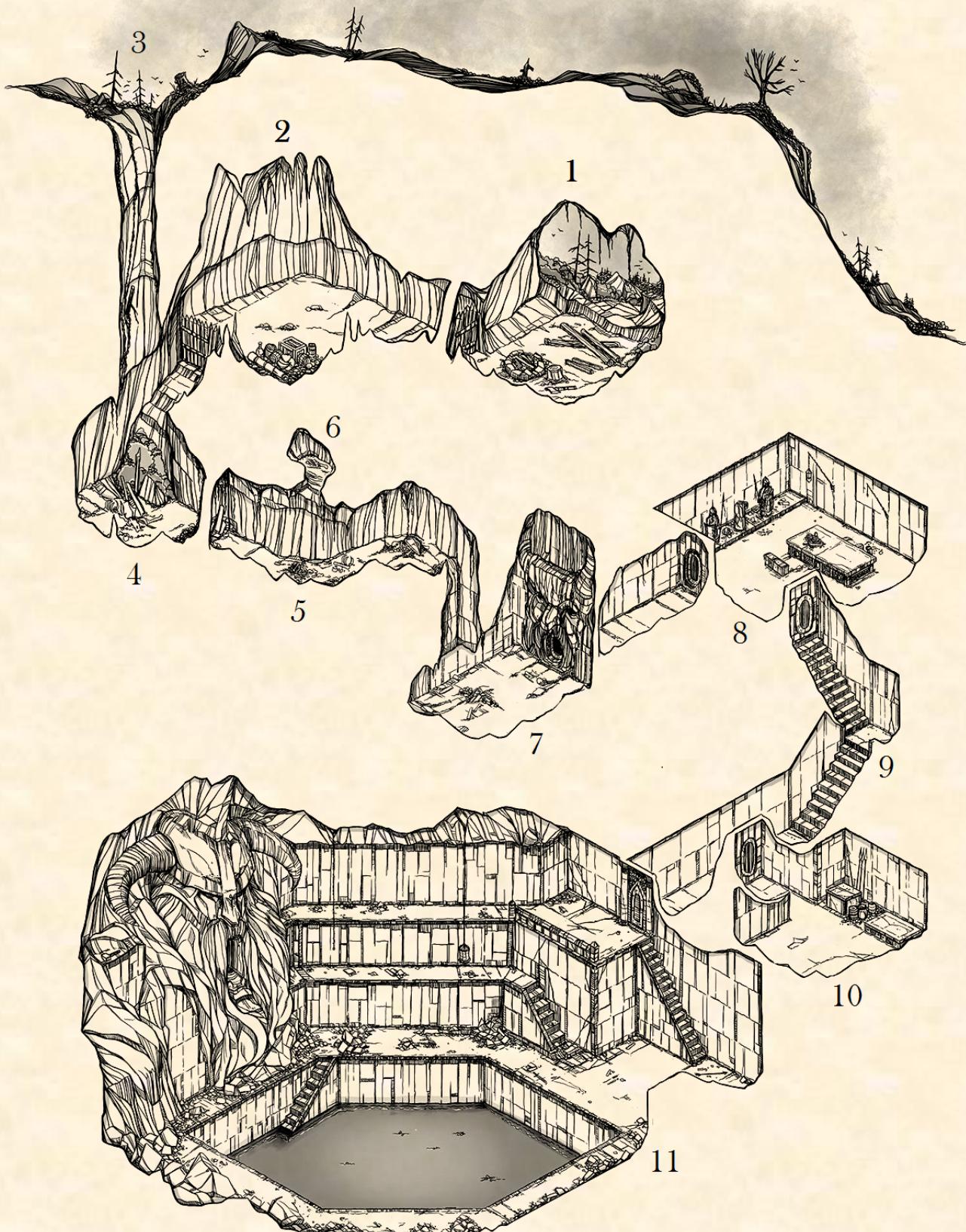
This 20 ft by 20 ft cave is open on the north eastern side, and contains a campfire and numerous logs for fuel. 4d6 *Urgot* (LFG p.128) are living here and in Area 2. There are always 1d3+1 urgots on sentry duty.

This particular tribe is accursed with large heads, noduled skin, bestial teeth and malformed faces. They employ ritual scarring on their chest to demonstrate tribal standing.



Technically, the mutants are led by an *Urgozer* named *Norp'Lu*, but the entire band has pledged themselves to *Smorc & Runk*; a massive, 13 ft ettin that lords over them. Perhaps surprisingly, the urgots and ettin have developed close kinship, based on mutual hardship and physical oddity.

Map



*Urgot*, AC 11, HD 1+4, Club 1d6+1 or Bite 1d6+1, 19: as weapon, S13 D13 C16 I7 P9 W12 Ch6, L5, Mv 30 ft. A group of urgot may issue a simultaneous howl or chitter once/day, causing creatures within 20 ft to suffer a minor madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

*Norp'Lu, Urgozer*, AC 11, HD 3+3, Battle Axe 1d8, 19: as weapon, S12 D14 C16 I12 P11 W16 Ch8, L7, Mv 30 ft. Norp'Lu may cast 3 spells per day chosen from: *Hold Person, Charm Person, Slow, Phantasmal Force*.

Norp'Lu is a hunched, elderly urgot with one hand replaced with tentacles. His common is patchy at best, and he primarily shouts in a rare tribal dialect (all but extinct beyond the Spine). Norp'Lu might offer to let most of the party pass if his kin get to eat the fattest of them. He is generally friendly towards *Smorc & Runk*, but will flee if seriously injured, ettin notwithstanding.

### Area 2 – Sleeping Cavern

This 25 ft by 25 ft cavern has a very tall ceiling lined with sharp stalactites, and is the main sleeping area for the urgot and ettin. Dim light makes its way into this chamber via Areas 1 and 3.

A wooden door to Area 4 is barred to prevent access (the ettin and urgot are aware of the scorpion nest, and do not venture there). Stacked in the southern corner are most of the group's goods (1 x 3 HD Lair Treasure, LFG p.140), stolen from travellers.

*Smorc & Runk, Ettin*, AC 13, HD 10+3 (59 hp), 2 Big Clubs (2d10), 19: target is knocked prone and mercilessly mocked by both heads, S19 D10 C15 I8 P9 W14 Ch8, L10, Mv 40 ft.

Smorc & Runk is 13 ft tall, with long hair, large incisors and a sizable gut. As far as ettins are concerned, he is a genius, and his common is quite reasonable. Smorc & Runk likes his urgot "servants" well enough, but will not hesitate to maim or kill them if he must in order to demonstrate who's boss. He likes to bellow "You

go splaaaat now!", "One headed freak!" and "Humey smell eatey!" when he fights.

### Area 3 – Chasm Entry

Surrounded by rough scrub is an alternate entry/exit to the halls; a 5 ft wide chasm that drops 60 ft straight down. Light from above filters into to Area 4.

The walls are fairly steep, but riddled with large handholds and ledges to cling to. A Str (Athletics) check is required to free climb the descent. An adventurer with climbing gear automatically succeeds. At the GM's option, recent rain has left the earth slippery and loose, imposing disadvantage on free climbers and requiring a check for an assisted descent. A failed check results in a drop of 1d6 x 10 ft before striking the ground.

### Area 4 – Scorpion Nest

This 15 ft by 15 ft chamber connects via a barred wooden door to Area 2, and a 5 ft wide tunnel (cool and dark, naturally formed, with an earthy scent) winds away to the east. Rubble and scattered bones litter the area.

A nest of 1d6+1 giant scorpions live in the tunnel, freely moving between Areas 3 – 7 (they have no difficulty navigating the chasm).

*Giant Scorpion*, AC 15, HD 6, 2 Claws 1d8 and Stinger 1d4 + poison, 19: caught in a pincer, the target suffers automatic damage each round (Str contest to break free), S19 D13 C15 I1 P10 W14 Ch3, L8, Mv 40 ft. 10 ft reach. The stinger's poison causes 1 Con loss every hour until death (*Luck* (Con) save resists). See LFG p.122 for poison treatment details.

### Area 5 – Skeletal Remains

No natural light penetrates this far into the underground complex. From this point on, adventurers will need to carry their own light source.

This section of tunnel includes a large pile of animal bones, and to the east, humanoid bones scattered beneath a steel shield. Strewn within the bones are 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136). The shield is somewhat dirty and well dented, but silvered and fully functional.

### Area 6 – Scorpion Nursery

This compact chamber is the scorpion nursery, currently home to 1d100 baby giant scorpions (about six inches long). They are freshly birthed, only days old, feeding on a small wolf carcass.

The hatchlings have no interest in leaving their chamber, unless the adventurers disturb them. If disturbed, 1d100 of the arthropods surge out. The leaping, stinging torrent of baby scorpions cause 1 point of poison damage per scorpion (Luck (Dex) save for half, or on a great success nil damage).



### Area 7 – Mask of the Warrior

This 15 ft wide, 20 ft long chamber's most striking feature is the massive 25 ft high carving of a warrior's face on the north eastern wall. A jet black ballast door is set into the face's open mouth. It is stained with dust, dirt and what looks to be dried blood. Left over scorpion meals

(animal bones and a decaying carcass) also occupy this room.

The door has no handle, lock or other obvious means of opening it. A secret pull ring is hidden in both the left and right eye sockets, about 10 ft off the ground. Climbing up the face is relatively easy, there are many handholds to do so.

Pulling the right ring causes the door to open, raising itself upwards with a loud grating noise that echoes throughout the chamber. Careful inspection of this ring reveals more scratches and marks on it than the left ring (might require a Perc check, depending on lighting/time spent).

Pulling the left ring causes poisonous gas to issue from secret compartments hidden inside the nostril cavities. The poison causes 4d6 damage and imposes a serious madness (LFG p.91): *“Truly I speak unto you; I am the one scion of the Iron God made flesh. Test not my patience, mortal!”*. A Luck (Con) save halves the damage and resists the madness.

Beyond this door, the remainder of the halls are fashioned of straight cut stone blocks and smooth floors. Torch and lantern brackets line the walls (empty of torches or fuel). The air within is cool, dusty and dry, the corridors completely dark and silent. Sounds are magnified and just walking produces some echo.

### Area 8 – Guardian's Tomb

The north eastern door to this 25 ft square chamber is stuck but not locked, requiring a Str check to force open. The door to the south is similarly wedged.

Inside is a long, 10 ft sarcophagus, inlaid with silver and gold, with heraldry (twin falcons on a shield) of a long dead Graxus fanatic (his name is not recorded). Next to the sarcophagus is a 2 ft high step for sitting or kneeling beside, careful examination of which reveals a faded anvil and skull icon (a symbol of Graxus). Along the north

western wall are three statues of spear & shield guards (human), one of which is heavily damaged (missing pieces lie on the floor). A steel inscription on the back wall reads "The Iron God Cometh" (in a dead language, an Int check with disadvantage reveals the gist of it).

Within the sarcophagus is a *Sentinel*, the undying corpse of a Graxus devotee who sacrificed his life to safeguard the halls for eternity. The sentinel has lain dormant for centuries, but will animate and attack if anyone attempts to open the southern door without first offering a prayer to the Iron God.



Anyone who sits or kneels at the step and prays or makes some other offering to Graxus has a 50% chance of restoring 1 point of *Luck*. Praying to a god other than Graxus has a 50% chance of draining 1 *Luck* point instead.

*Sentinel*, AC 17, HD 8+3 (45 hp), Axe 1d8+4, 19: as weapon, S19 D10 C18 I- P16 W- Ch-, L9, Mv 30 ft. The sentinel is immune to ranged piercing weapons, has *Off Turn Attacks*, 50% Magic Resistance and *Causes Injuries* on a critical hit.

The magic sustaining the sentinel has weakened over time, causing its flesh to smell and rendering the guardian prone to confusion. There is a 40% chance (per attack) the sentinel mistakes a statue for a foe and targets it instead of a PC (resulting in a shower of rubble) until all 3 are destroyed. The sentinel cannot leave the halls. If defeated the sarcophagus contains 1 x Valuables and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.140, 141).

#### Area 9 – Trapped Staircase

This steep stone staircase is trapped. Anyone stepping on the landing has a 50% chance of setting off a trapdoor (the centre is rigged, the outer 6 inches of the landing is solid). Triggering the trapdoor requires a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid plummeting 30 ft down onto metal spikes, causing 6d6 damage and a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.

The round after the trapdoor is activated, a horrible grinding noise can be heard from above. Each player turn thereafter (roll initiative to determine order) requires a *Luck* save by the active player to avoid approximately 1 cubic metre of sandstone dropping from the ceiling into the pit, reducing anyone below to zero hit points. Digging out a trapped adventurer is possible but extremely time consuming, assuming the right tools are on hand.

Careful checking of the staircase might reveal hairline cracks in the floor or ceiling (Perc check at disadvantage, or without penalty if specifically studying the floor or ceiling).

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## Area 10 – Preparation Chamber

The iron banded door to this room is locked (the key is lost). A Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens the lock. Alternatively the door can be broken down with enough time.

This 25 ft square chamber has racks of weapons, armour and other combat paraphernalia lining the north eastern wall. The goods are ancient and tarnished, but still in serviceable condition. One of the weapons or armour (GM discretion) is enchanted, marked with an anvil & skull rune (LFG p.152). The remainder of the chamber is empty (originally used as warm up space before combatants entered the arena).

## Area 11 – Sacred Arena

This enormous underground chamber is 80 ft in diameter, wider than the light emitted by most torches and lanterns. The air here is especially still, and the echoes louder.

A 10 ft deep, 50 ft wide hexagon arena has been built into the floor, with tiered walls and platforms on the northern and southern sides. The western wall is carved in the likeness of an awe inspiring, 30 ft warrior's head roaring a battle cry. The warrior's mouth is actually a tunnel, leading to a treasure trove of sanctified offerings (1 x 8 HD Lair Treasure, 1 x Potion and 1 x Scroll; LFG p.140, 150, 152).

The arena is not undefended. Filling the bottom 10 inches of the pit is a *Colossal Grey Ooze*, a unique monstrosity of elder years, spawned deep underground during the Second Age. Centuries ago, the awful monstrosity burbled its way up through cracks in the arena floor before settling into a stasis like hibernation. The ooze resembles a pool of dark grey, non reflective liquid.

1d4 rounds after any warm blooded adventurers enter the chamber, strange popping and slurping noises can be heard as the ooze awakens. The next round it attacks, consumed with voracious hunger.

*Colossal Grey Ooze*, Boss Monster, AC 13, HD 15 (120 hp), Tunnelling Pseudopod 2d10 + special and Emotion Burst 19: a psychic lash inflicts *Confusion* (as the spell, *Luck* (Will) save resists), S20 D12 C18 I4 P16 W17 Ch1, L15, Mv 40 ft.

The 50 ft ooze is a Boss Monster with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95) and a 15 ft reach. It is more liquid than ooze, a fast flowing and terrifying amoeba that feeds on the thoughts of living creatures. It attacks by surging into an adventurer's mouth, nose and ears, tunnelling its way to the victim's brain which it absorbs. Victims suffer 2d10 damage and lose 1d4 Int (*Luck* (Will) save for half) on each successful attack.

The ooze has rudimentary intelligence and limited psychic abilities. It can project an Emotion Burst once per round; an overpowering wave of fear, stupefying awe or insane mirth up to 120 ft (1d4 targets, *Luck* (Will) save or lose next action and 50% chance of suffering a moderate madness).

If seriously injured, the ancient and malevolent grotesque flees, pouring back down through the cracks in the arena floor or other accessible exit.

## Aftermath

If the adventurers were tasked with locating the halls, they succeeded, and may report back to Lord Aldred. If cleared, he is particularly happy, and pays them a generous bonus. At the GM's discretion, he might include further benefits for the PCs in his will - especially if they offer to ensure he is buried at the shrine.

If the party is driven off by the colossal ooze, the horrible thing quickly makes its way to the surface, and begins feeding on neighbouring inhabitants. If not dealt with, it eventually goes into procreation mode; splitting off baby oozes that venture further and further abroad.



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