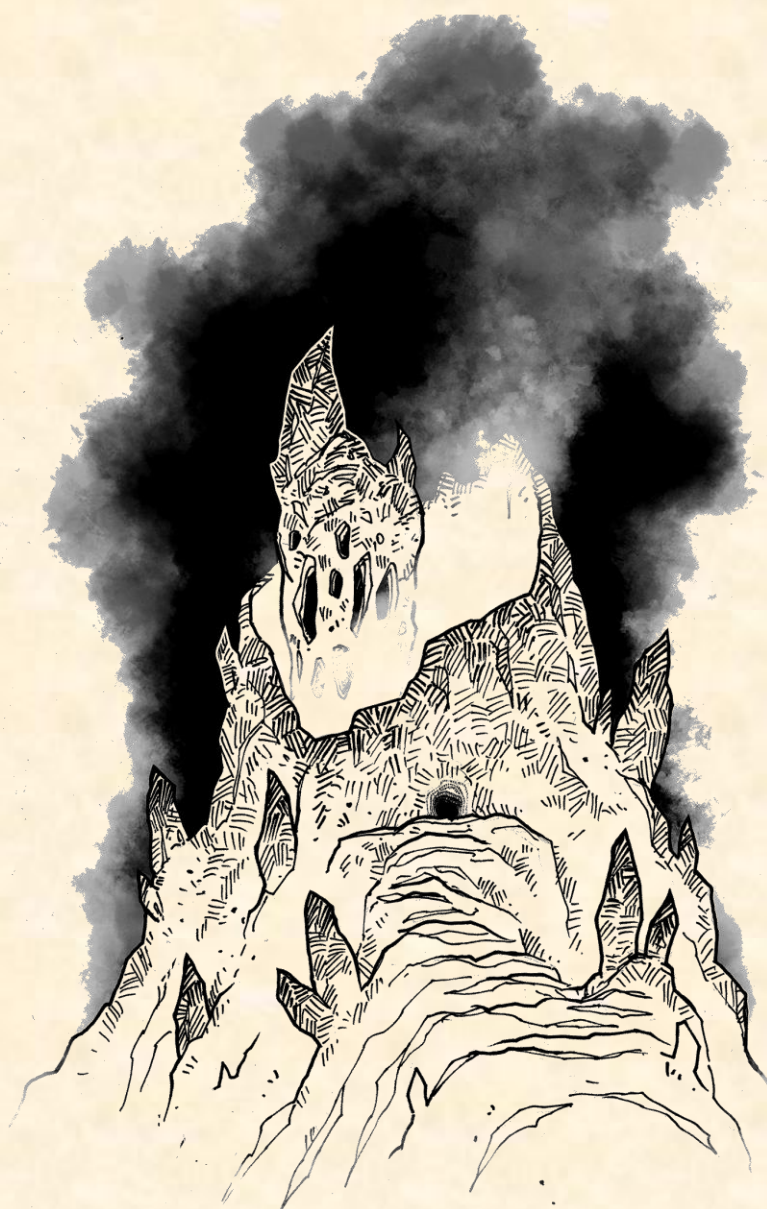

INTO THE FURNACE



Into the Furnace

Rumours & Hooks

Some recent travellers report that a tribe of cannibals in the *Suurat Jungle* have discovered a fist sized ruby, crafted in the shape of a human heart.

Mr Bourgermont, a successful prospector and owner of several slave mines, has heard of a new ruby ore discovery somewhere on *Mount Rokan*. Savages claim the area, making surveying difficult. He wants to pay someone to drive them away. Or kill them. He's not fussed either way.

Heart of the Fiery Furnace

Every magic item is unique, but not all magic items are created equal. Some arcane objects are of a calibre not seen more than once an age, items of such potency that no mortal could possibly have fashioned them.

The *Heart of the Fiery Furnace* is such a device. Crafted from a flawless stone of red ruby, the artifact resembles its namesake in both size and shape. Warm to the touch, anyone holding it will feel a rhythmic beating, a sorcerous facsimile of life's tempo.

And in one sense, the Heart is alive. Imbued with a malign sentience, the stone has slept for countless centuries at the bottom of *Mount Rokan*, until a recent eruption delivered it to an unsuspecting jungle.

Strayed upon by cannibals of the *Cromaga* tribe, the Heart quickly made its way into the hands of *Chief Korgu*, who was swiftly controlled by it. Shortly thereafter, the previously nomadic clan took up residence in the ancient worship chambers of the fiery mountain, reinstating blood rituals not seen for millennia.

The nameless entity residing in the Heart has Will 19, and observes everything the bearer

experiences. It is malignant and eternal, an emotional infusing more than a dominating intellect, steering its host to greater and greater acts of deviancy.

Anyone within 10 ft of the stone is subject to subtle direction from it (an opposed Will check resists). If attuned, the Heart's influence is much stronger, and may attempt to usurp full control of the host for up to 1d4 hours (an opposed Will check resists), during which time the host experiences an addictive, ecstatic dream state. An attuned host cannot voluntarily relinquish the Heart (unless it wishes to be relinquished), and inexorably morphs into an increasingly cruel, callous and vile version of their former selves.



The Heart has six levels of attunement, granting increasingly potent abilities over time. Activation of any of the powers requires a *Dark & Dangerous Magic* check (LFG p.57).

1. The bearer is immune to fire and heat, natural or otherwise.

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2. Any weapon the bearer wields may be wreathed in flame (no action), causing an additional 1d6 fire damage on a hit.
 3. Once every 1d4 days, the bearer may invoke a *Wall of Fire* (no action).
 4. Once per day, the bearer may cast *Fireball*.
 5. Once per week, the bearer may spend an action to summon a 20 HD *Fire Elemental* that obeys commands without question. The elemental disappears after 1d4 hours.
 6. Once per month, the bearer may conduct a 1d4 hour ritual to cast *Forbidden Wish*.

The party might become involved in this adventure by (i) hearing rumours of the ruby heart stone and its cannibal caretakers in the Suurat Jungle, (ii) finding reference to it in the mouldering pages of the *Codex Amaranthine*, or (iii) hired by a rich prospector to investigate stories of a ruby mine inhabited by barbarians of Mount Rokan.

Jungle Trek

Entry to the sacred tunnels is via a cave in the eastern face of the small volcanic peak known as *Korakuda*, or “Molten Catacombs”, adjacent to the towering Mount Rokan.

The trek to reach Korakuda is not short nor easy, requiring a minimum of 7 days from the closest edge of the jungle (assuming porters to carry supplies, extra hands to slash a path through vines, and an experienced guide). The air is humid and the heat oppressive, often mixed with a steamy downpour as night approaches. Trees, vines and shrubs are thick and resilient, protected by thorns, poison and other defences. Factor in plague like mosquitoes, savage animals and head hunting cannibals, and it becomes clear why none

of the civilized nations have attempted to settle here.

A handful of savage tribes (5d20 people per tribe) survive in this harsh environment by working together and keeping on the move. There is a 60% chance an encountered tribe are cannibals and keen to add the party to their menu. They speak an ancient regional dialect. There is a 20% chance of a single scout speaking fractured common.

Random Encounters

Generally speaking, there is a 30% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8 and consult the table below:

1. *A Savage Tribe* is in the middle of a secret ceremony, and intruders are considered *very* bad luck (60% chance the tribe are cannibals, in which case intruders are a welcome feast!). The tribesmen (5d20, as Berserker LFG p.114) are armed with spears, short bows and daggers. 2d4 hunters each have one dose of *Yellow Suckle* poison (blow dart up to 60 ft, 1 point of damage, *Luck* (Con) save or *Slowed* (as the spell)).
2. *Pit Trap!* A pit trap to catch wild pig or possibly people is concealed on a game trail, beneath a latticework of sticks, earth and vines. Stepping on the trap requires a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid falling 15 ft into the spikes below (4d6 damage). A hunter concealed in a nearby tree might attempt to slink away and alert her fellows (40%), tracking them with 5d6 tribesmen.
3. A pond of water is located here, surrounded by bushes and low hanging vines. Careful inspection of the area reveals no recent tracks (animal or otherwise). The pond is diseased and local life give it wide berth. If the party camps here, there will be no random

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4. encounters. Drinking from the pond, or lingering here more than 1d4 days risks air borne infection (*Luck* (Con) check or contract *Oozing Eye Pox*, causing 1d4 Con loss and blindness in one (80%) or both eyes (20%) for 1d4 months).
5. A tame monkey, *Fifu* is in the trees above, calling playfully to the party. If they attempt to catch her, she will take them on a merry chase, but eventually jump into their arms if she judges them safe. Fifu is in fact the lost pet of a local shaman, who would be grateful to see her again.
6. 4d6 *Cannibals* (as Berserker, LFG p.114, but armed as Encounter 1 above) are out hunting. It would be a great honour to return to camp with fresh foreigners for the stew pot.
7. 2d4 *Sabretooth Tigers* (LFG p.127) are lying in wait in nearby scrub, hoping to ambush the party as they pass by.
8. 4d4 *Serpentmen* (3d4 *Hraarsk*, 1d4 *Ssurlocs*, LFG p.122) are camping by a deep pool. 1d4+1 sentries have been set to warn them of intruders. They are on their way to treat with Chief Korgu, and learn whether the rumours of the Heart resurfacing are true.
9. The party is set upon by 5d6 *Man Eating Monkeys* (LFG p.117), which drop from the trees to attack. During the battle, a thumping and splintering noise can be heard growing in volume (as if something very large approaches). After 3 rounds, the monkeys immediately scatter. The next round, a hungry *T-Rex* (LFG p.126) bursts out of the trees with a ribcage rattling roar!

Korakuda

The peak known as Korakuda is a relatively small vent on the eastern side of Mount Roka. It issues forth smoke and pungent fumes most days, but has not erupted for generations. The ash and sulphur is not conducive to most plant life, leaving much of the mountainside bare, soot stained rock. Approaching from the western face reveals a large entry cave.

The catacombs within are igneous rock, naturally formed, winding and uneven in width and height. The temperature inside is generally just as bad as outside due to radiated heat from the subterranean magma flows. Footing is poor and uneven, scattered with tiny rocks (any running requires a Dex check to avoid falling prone part way through the movement).

There is a 50% chance of a random encounter every 20 minutes in the catacombs. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6:

1. 1d6 *Cannibals* are about to turn the nearest corner. They're talking and laughing about something.
2. A tremor shudders throughout the whole of the complex, shaking loose flakes of rock that drop from the ceiling. There is a 1% chance of a volcanic eruption, the extent of which is left to the GM to determine.
3. Two Cannibals can be heard fighting around the next bend. They are yelling and pushing each other, about to break into fisticuffs.
4. 1d4 cannibal kids silently round the corner, playing a game of hide and seek. They stop dead in their tracks when they see the party.
5. A *Giant Spider* (LFG p.125) has been lurking in a high, dark corner of this



passage for two days, and is growing hungry. Any shiny or clinking characters will attract its attention.

6. *Chief Korgu* is marching down the passage with 2d6 tribesmen, making his way to Area 9 (to join in the marriage festivities) or Area 4 (to collect *Usha* for sacrifice/wedding feast).

Area 1 – Cave Entry

The entry to the catacombs is approximately 20 ft high and 80 ft wide at its broadest point. The cave extends about 110 ft (to the back wall of Area 2). During the day, enough sunlight filters in to see clearly. At night flickering torches and a small campfire can be seen from a distance.

Area 2 – Sentry Post

2d6 cannibal sentries are always on watch here, spread about Areas 1 & 2. At any sign of trouble, one sentry will head to Area 3 for reinforcements, whilst the rest investigate further. Three 5 ft rises are set into the back of the cave, granting the sentries some cover from fire below. The ceiling here rises to about 30 ft.

Cannibal, AC 11, HD 1+1, Spear 1d6+1 or Short bow 1d6, 19: as weapon, S12 D10 C11 I8 P12 W12 Ch9, L4, Mv 30 ft. 1d4 of the sentries each have one dose of *Yellow Suckle* poison (blow dart up to 60 ft, 1 point of damage, *Luck* (Con) save or *Slowed* (as the spell)).

Area 3 – Barracks

This 30 ft chamber is lit by flickering torches set into holes in the walls. 2d6 “off duty” cannibal

warriors eat, socialise and rest here. They will be reluctant to assist their kin in Area 2 unless clear and obvious danger is present and needs to be dealt with.

Area 4 – Larder

This 20 ft wide, 25 ft long chamber is the tribe's larder, filled with root vegetables, hanging salted meats and clay jars containing spices. Additionally, a rival tribeswoman, *Usha*, is bound to a rock pillar (Barbarian 1, 50% chance Usha is also a cannibal). Usha has been here for three days and is dehydrated and dishevelled, but suffers only minor injuries. The cannibals intend to sacrifice/eat her as part of the wedding feast (see Area 9). Usha does not speak common, but if released, will be glad to assist her rescuers until an opportunity to escape arises.

Area 5 – Main Sleeping Quarters

This large 90 ft by 20 ft cavern serves as the main sleeping quarters for the tribe. The children and young women generally gather on the eastern side. Beds consist of tanned hides, soft vines, leafy branches and so on. There are 4d6 cannibals resting here at any one time. A thorough search of this area turns up 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136).

Area 6 – Ancient Burial Site

This section of the catacombs is notable for the remnants of three melted sarcophagi that are 90% buried in the earth. The lids have been sealed shut by molten lava.

The sarcophagi are made of a strange, dark purple stone, covered in marred glyphs and pictograms of what appear to be various snakes and snake hybrid creatures. The Cromaga consider the burials cursed and do not touch them. A character with a background in ancient history, or the General Lore skill, may make an Int check to recognise references to *Shasuroc*, a serpentman culture from the prior age (and the makers of Areas 12-13).

If the burials are broken into (the lids are fused shut, a Str check at -3 and disadvantage opens one), 3 x Valuables (LFG p.147) are found. There is a 70% chance one of the sarcophagi is protected by a magic ward (as the *Blindness* spell).

Area 7 – Chief's Chamber

This 40 ft cavern is open to the central vent of the volcano and the magma pool below. Despite the oppressive heat, Chief Korgu has made it his living chamber in order to be as close as possible to Area 13 (he doesn't feel the heat anyway while he has the Heart). Luxurious skins and trinkets from past meals litter the chamber. Korgu's wife and children reside in Area 5. Looting this chamber nets 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.136, 147).



If the party has managed to sneak into this area, there is a 50% chance Korgu is meditating here with the Heart, seeking to establish a higher connection with it (he has yet to unlock the 6th attunement). Otherwise the chief is in Area 13 performing another sacrifice. The artifact is always with him.

Chief Korgu (Boss Monster), AC 12, HD 8 (73 hp), 2 x Spear 1d6+4, 19: special, S17 D16 C14 I9 P11 W12 Ch14 L9, Mv: 30 ft. Korgu is a Boss Monster (LFG p.95) with all the usual benefits. He may use Ferocious Rage like an 8th level Barbarian. Korgu would rather die than relinquish the heart, and will invoke all of its powers if necessary.

Area 8 – Gathering Chamber

This enormous underground cavern is 270 ft long and up to 100 ft wide. Entry is via sloping tunnels from Area 2 or 5, or Area 10. The ceiling ranges from 25 ft to 80 ft high. A tiered floor drops away in increments of 10 ft, except at Area 9, which rises 15 ft.

Sunlight filters in from Area 2 for a short distance, but otherwise intermittent torches provide limited light. Patches of this enormous cavern are dark, which the cannibals prefer.



Area 8 is trapped with a family of 1d4+1 *Cave Impalers*. This particular group of impalers has been trained not to drop on anyone wearing a skull necklace (which is all of the Cromaga tribe).

Cave Impalers, AC 14, HD 2, see below for attack 19: the target must roll on the *Injury & Setbacks* table, S7 D5 C17 I2 P14 W12 Ch4 L5, Mv: 10 ft. Cave Impalers are stony skinned, undulating predators that climb walls to hang from ceilings and drop onto prey, skewering them with their spike tail. They have a natural camouflage ability and are easily mistaken for 2-4 ft stalactites (advantage on stealth checks). An impaler's initial drop attack is made at advantage if the target is unaware, causing 3d6 damage. Once on the ground, impalers are slow and cumbersome, but may still attack with an acid spit (up to 60 ft, causing 1d4+1 damage). They see in darkness as well as light.

Aside from the impalers, the space shared by Areas 8 and 9 is used as the main living space for the bulk of the tribe. Up to 7d10 cannibals will be here at any one time; socialising, cooking and so on.

Area 9 – Speaking Mound

This 60 ft plateau rises about 15 ft higher than the floor below, and includes a further 5 ft platform in the centre. At the time the PCs arrive, the tribe's shaman will be on the rock plinth, conducting an energetic marriage ceremony for a very loud and drum beating crowd. Up to 7d10 of the cannibals referred to in Area 8 will be in Area 9, distracted by the festivities. This might provide an opportunity for the party to sneak past or escape without being detected.

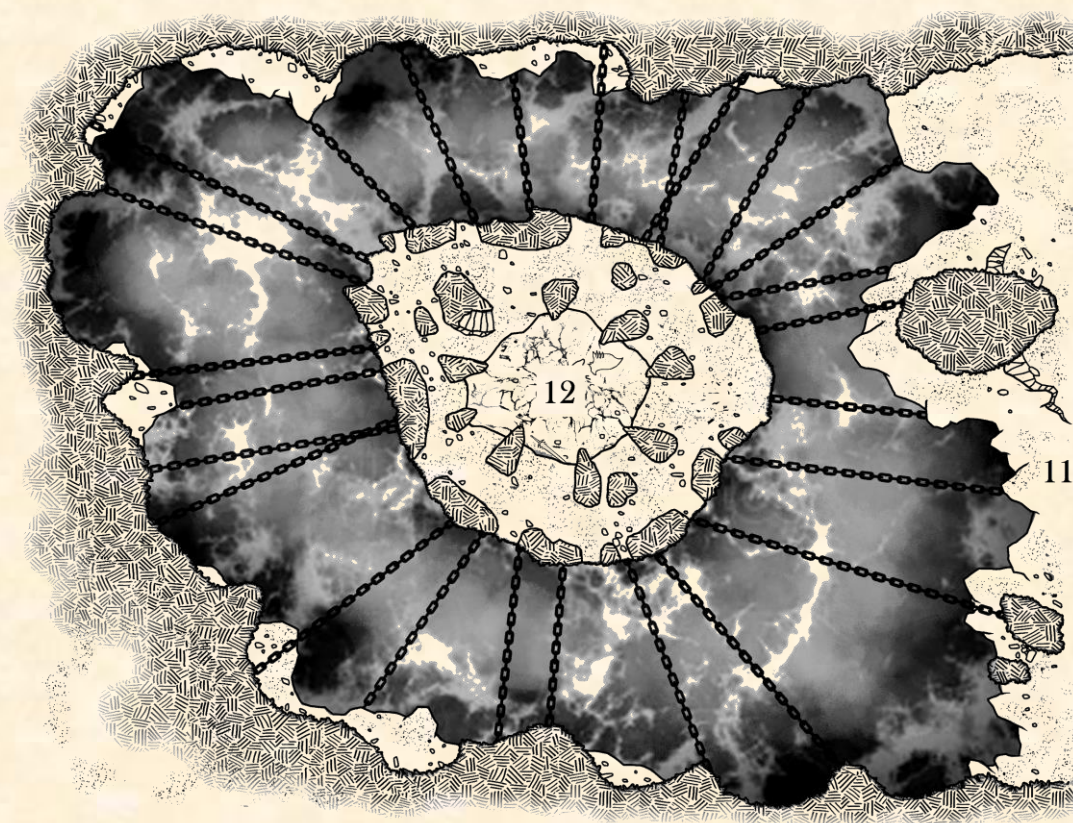
If the party is detected, the cannibals waste no time grabbing knives and other hunting implements, hoping to serve them up as part of the wedding feast.

Area 10 – Transition to Area 11

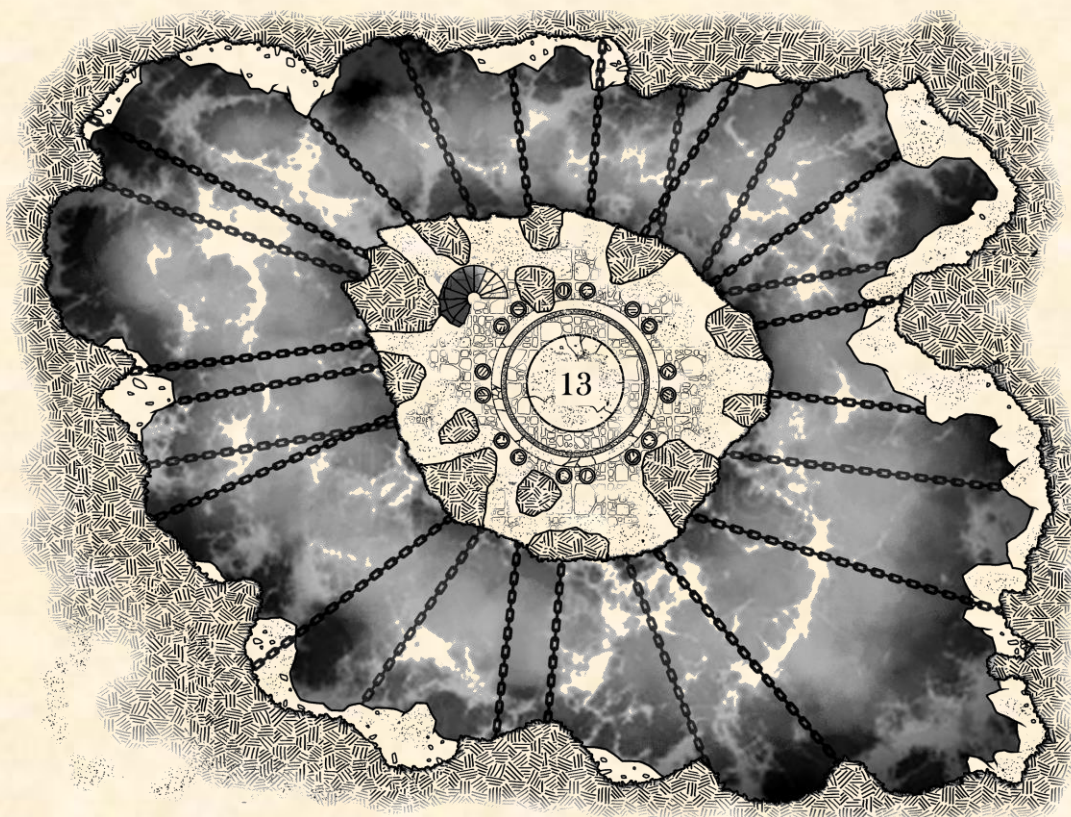
This section of the catacombs opens up into Area 11 of the next map. If the party has not dealt with the occupants of Area 7 or 9, they might have to deal with them now, depending on their actions.



Lower Map



Upper Map



Area 11 – Magma Pool Edge

This 220 ft edge is adjacent to a bubbling pool of hot magma 100 ft below. The radiant heat here is palpable, and toxic fumes induce a mild feeling of dizziness (-1 penalty on balance related checks).

In the centre of volcano vent is a 120 ft wide, 300 ft tall column of dark rock, suspended above the volcano's magma pool by impossibly large chains. The honeycomb like exterior of the "chained citadel" reveals multiple entry holes to a hollow interior.

The air temperature here is searingly hot, yet the chains are perfectly cool (enchanted to resist heat and fire, as is the citadel). The only access to the structure is via the chains which are large enough to walk along. Crossing a chain without falling off requires a Dex check at advantage, or is automatic if a PC slowly slides their way across on their belly. A character that falls into the magma pool dies instantly.

Area 12 – Chained Citadel (Lower Level)

This 120 ft diameter chamber is dotted with winding pillars and massive exterior entry holes alongside gigantic chains. The interior is illuminated by the reflected glow of the magma pool, casting a red sheen over everything. In the northwest corner, a set of hand carved steps spirals upwards (to Area 13).

4d4 *Magma Zombies* protect the lower level. Anyone who isn't a member of the Cromaga tribe is attacked. The zombies will attempt to push opponents into the magma pool if possible.

Magma Zombie, AC 11, HD 3+1, Fiery Fist 1d10, 19: special, S15 D7 C18 I- P12 W- Ch- L6, Mv: 20 ft. The magma zombies look like normal tribesman zombies, but release a glob of magma anytime they hit something or are struck. The magma causes an extra 1d4 damage and requires a Dex check to avoid catching on fire (causing another 1d4 damage each subsequent turn, until the Dex check is successful). On a Nat 19, a

magma zombie explodes in a 10 ft radius, causing 4d6 damage and knocking targets back 10 ft (*Luck* (Dex) save for half and to negate the push).

Area 13 – Chained Citadel (Upper Level)

The upper level is similar in size and appearance to the lower level, except the floor is partially tiled, and the centre includes three concentric rings of different coloured rock. The central circle is 25 ft wide and covered in blood stained sand.



Sixteen stone plinths (about 4 ft high) line the outside the rings. Each plinth has some kind of charred human organ on it (eyes, heart, lungs, etc).

There is a 50% chance Korgu is here (along with 4 cannibal helpers), carrying out some kind of hideous blood sacrifice within the circle. If he is not present, his wife, *Torsugi*, is performing the ritual in his stead.

A *Fire Demon* guards this level at all times, summoned by Korgu/the Heart via dark magic. The demon can move freely within the citadel, and to the length of the giant chains, but no

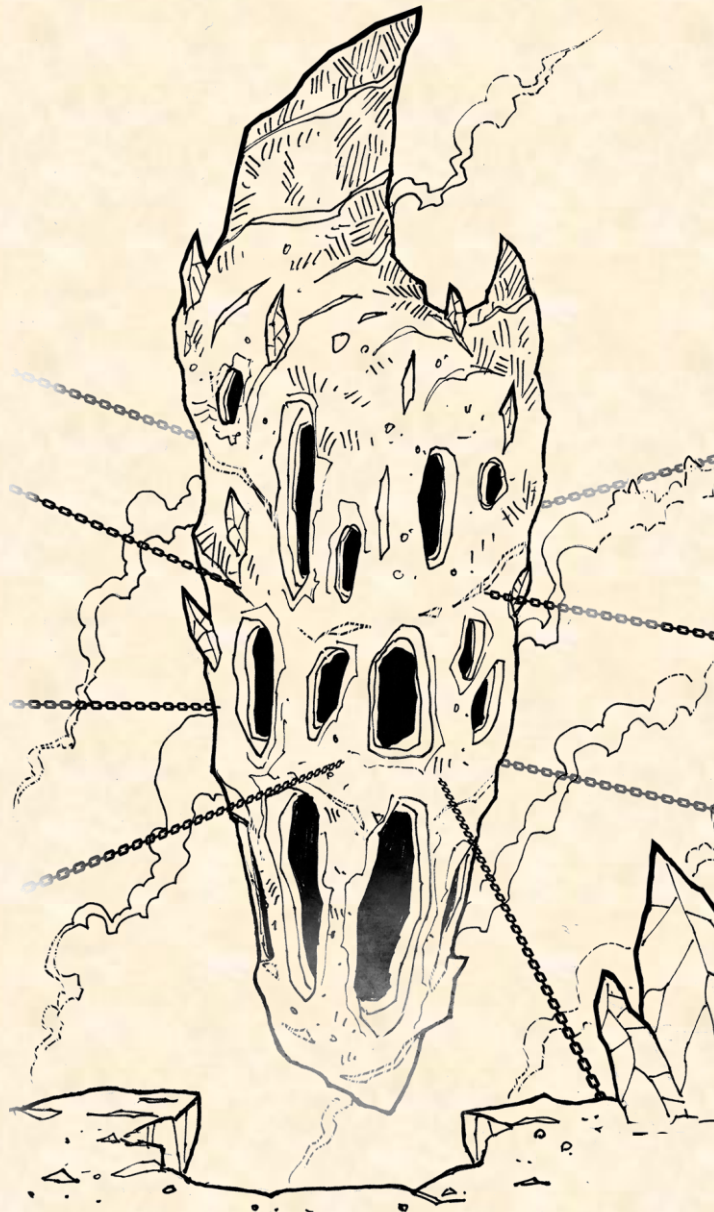
further. It follows the commands of Korgu, Torsugi, or the shaman in Area 9. If all three are slain, the demon becomes uncontrolled and goes on a rampage for 1d4 hours (including setting fire to the jungle), then vanishes.

Fire Demon, AC 16, HD 13, Fiery Blast up to 60 ft causing 2d8+2 damage, 19: a circle of flame blasts outward from the demon, causing 2d6 damage to all within 15 ft. S19 D12 C16 I7 P13 W16 Ch3 L13, Mv: 120 ft flying. The fire demon has the usual demon benefits (LFG p.94), as well as *Off Turn Attacks* and 60% Magic Resistance.

Aftermath

If the Heart remains with Korgu, he eventually transforms into a ruthless despot, conquering the whole of the Suurat Jungle with the aid of the Heart.

If the adventurers obtain the Heart, they will need to decide what to do with it. It is immune to natural forces and mortal magic of all kinds. Retaining it for any period will quickly reveal its detrimental influence. If the players refuse to attune to it, the Heart will attempt to direct the PCs to pass it onto a more sympathetic keeper.



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