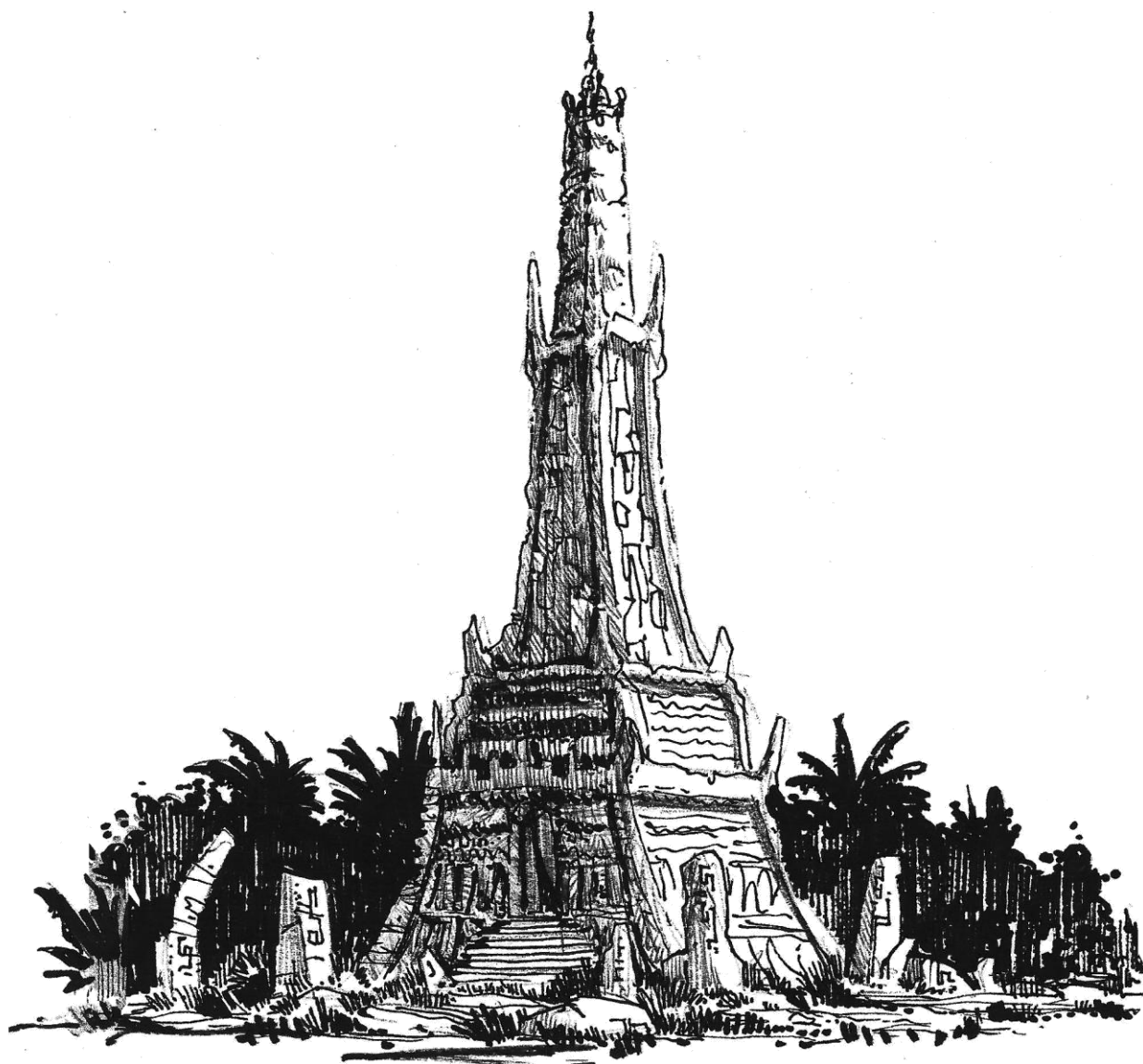

SPIRE OF THE VOID CALLER



Spire of the Void Caller

Rumours & Hooks:

The *Spire of Abartu*, named after an infamous warlock of the ancient *Suun* people, has resurfaced in the *Suurat Jungle*. Some records suggest his seminal work, the *Book of Bound Flesh*, is buried with him beneath the spire.

Serpentmen have been spotted scouting the western fringes of the Suurat Jungle, putting the local villagers on high alert. The chieftain wants someone to investigate; preferably self sufficient drifters with steel swords, sturdy shields and an overabundance of self confidence.

The Suun

In the vast *Suurat Jungle* of the Second Age, at least one human society is known to have persisted for hundreds of years: the *Suun*, a ferocious warrior culture rich in gold, blood rituals and stepped pyramids.

Lead by a tyrant Chief of royal descent, the *Suun* respected their warriors first and their civilians second. Beset by enemies, the great tribe battled thuels, serpentmen, trolls and more, but with each defeated foe, another took its place.

In time it became clear that willpower and sinew alone could not win victory. Sorcery, previously shunned by the Suun, was turned to, and quickly became an indispensable tool in the chief's arsenal.

Book of Bound Flesh

During this period, *Abartu the Void Caller*, the greatest and most perilous of the Suun warlocks, constructed a ruinous tome of terrible power; the *Book of Bound Flesh*. Within its papyrus pages the warlock recorded awful truths no mortal ought bear, secrets no man should wield.

During the Suun reign that followed, certain locations within the jungle were identified as eldritch junctions; focal points where the ley lines crossed, weakening the barrier between this world and the next.

The Abartu Spire was constructed atop one such junction, multiplying arcane forces for the warlocks to harness. For generations the spire helped the Suun fend off enemy incursions, and a number of respected priests and warlocks were buried below.

Ultimately however the Suun were defeated and the spire lost, hidden away by powerful abjuration magic. Abartu's remains, and his fell tome, sat silent and forgotten.

In recent months however, the ward concealing the spire has begun to decline, and serpentmen scouts from the *Hidden City* have arrived to investigate. The cold bloods understand the importance of the ley lines, and suspect the spire is more than just a burial site.



The PCs might become involved in this adventure by (i) reading about the *Book of Bound Flesh* in an ancient Suun scroll, (ii) investigating serpentmen scouts spotted along the borders of a fortified jungle village, or (iii) by wandering into the area while trekking through the jungle at large.

Jungle Encounters

The spire is located on the north western side of the jungle, about 2 days from the closest edge. This section of the jungle is the least humid and insect ridden, and some rough paths penetrate the first half day into the wilds, making travel easier. Nonetheless, the heat is palpable, and by the second day the party must hack their way through heavy vines and scrub. To top it off, showers often roll in at dusk, turning the earth into rivulets of slick mud.

There is a 40% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. An influx of *Beastmen* (LFG p.100) have taken over this region. The party crosses paths with 4d6 hooting hunters chasing game (70%), or hear the grunting and barking of the enormous 5d100 member camp.
2. 3d4 *Trapdoor Spiders* (as *Giant Spider* LFG p.125, but 3 HD, 2d4+1 damage, poison causing 2 Con loss) are waiting in ambush beneath the jungle floor. They sense ground based meals within 50 ft, and burst out of their hidden burrows to attack (advantage on hiding checks). A victim reduced to zero Con is paralyzed and dragged into the spider's tunnel to be devoured at their leisure.
3. A *Giant Serpent* (LFG p.122) is shedding its skin, peeling off old scales by rubbing between two massive kapok trees. There is a 40% chance the serpent is an fearless 19 ft, 11 HD monster, with *Off Turn Attacks*.
4. A solitary old crone emerges from the jungle, bowed and shuffling. How she made her way through such hostile and trying terrain is a mystery. The stranger does not speak, but wishes to share the party's camp or path for a time. If treated well, the old woman smiles at the party, revealing no teeth. If treated poorly, she slaps at them with her walking stick and "tut tut's" at them disapprovingly. After a few hours, the old woman disappears back into the jungle as quietly as she came.
5. A patch of flesh eating vines are spread out here, waiting for prey to pass through.

Flesh Eating Vine, AC 12, HD 1, Crush 1d6+1 and grabbed (opposed Str check to break free), 19: potent paralytic spore cloud, causing 1d4 Str loss (*Luck* (Con) save negates), S14 D14 C7 I2 P10 W8 Ch1, L4, Mv NA. The vines have a 15 ft reach, automatically sense moving creatures within 60 ft, and recoil from fire.
6. A towering karok tree fills the canopy here, black as night, wreathed in vines with exposed roots taller than a man. Strange faces and figures have been carved into the trunk. Anyone approaching feels extra hot, and is accosted by flies. Touching it drains or restores 1 *Luck* (50/50 chance).
7. In this corner of the jungle, lifelike statues of small mammals litter the undergrowth. A *Medusa* (LFG p.118) lairs within a vine shrouded trunk, eager to add more idols to her permanent "audience". The monster is allied with Kith'Sirak (see below), and will attempt to flee to the spire if truly endangered.

8. 1d4+1 *Ssurlocs* (LFG p.123) from Kith'Sirak's retinue (see below) are scouting or on sentry duty, driving off humanoids and other potential threats to the spire.

Serpentmen Scouts

Kith'Sirak, a serpentman *Razkarrt* (LFG p.123), leads the serpentmen scouting party on its mission to secure the lonely spire.

Like all serpentfolk of the noble caste, Kith'Sirak is ruthless, cunning, and domineering, with an entrenched hatred for all warm blooded creatures. The change in climate over millennia has forced her cold blooded kin into humid equatorial climes, and it galls her to see the man monkeys ruling lands once the controlled by the scaled folk.

Kith'Sirak, *Razkarrt*, AC 18, HD 9+4, Bite 1d6 + Poison (*Luck* (Con) save or 1d6 and 1 Str loss), 19: the Razkarrt unleashes a potent charm effect, *Luck* (Will) save or *Confusion* (as the spell), S12 D19 C14 I18 P16 W18 Ch14, L10, Mv 30 ft. Kith'Sirak may spend an action to shift between human, noble and hybrid forms. She casts spells like a 7th level Magic User and knows the following spells (4/3/2/1): *Charm Person*, *Cure Light Wounds*, *Detect Magic*, *Disguise Self*, *Shield*, *Wizard Lock*, *Detect Hidden*, *Levitate*, *Phantasmal Force*, *Speak with Animals*, *Darkvision*, *Hypnotic Pattern*, *Lightning Bolt*, *Fireball*, *Speak with Dead*, *Suggestion*, *Dimension Door*, *Wall of Fire*, *Object Reading*.

Kith'Sirak is accompanied by a vanguard of 3d6 dauntless *Ssurlocs* and 3d6 obedient *Hraarsks* (LFG p.123).

Ssurloc, AC 16, HD 6+3, Bite 1d6 + Poison or Spear 1d6+3 + Poison, 19: tail whip 1d8 and knocked prone, S18 D16 C14 I10 P11 W13 Ch10, L8, Mv 40 ft. *Ssurloc* poison causes 1d6 damage and 1 Dex loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

Hraarsk, AC 14, HD 2+2, Bite 1d4 + Poison or Dagger 1d4 + Poison, 19: momentary hypnotic effect causing the target to lose their next action (*Luck* (Will) save negates), S12 D13 C10 I10 P12 W10 Ch9, L5, Mv 30 ft. *Hraarsk* poison causes 1d4 damage and 1 Will loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists).



More than most razkarrt, Kith'Sirak enjoys masquerading as human to entice and entrap oafish men before gutting them and offering their innards to the *Nest Beyond the Stars*. She has sworn herself to claiming the spire, and would rather die than return to the Hidden City in shameful failure.

The Spire

The spire appears as a towering edifice of igneous rock, expertly carved in the Suun style¹ and surrounded by a handful of man sized rune stones. The last vestiges of the sorcerous warding causes the spire to flicker and bend from time to

¹ Aztec like.

time, as if viewed through a distorted lens. Once the party is within 500 ft, a group (LFG p.42) *Luck* save is required to avoid being diverted around the spire and all memory of it erased from the adventurers' minds. In the unlikely event the party fails this group save (even with their *Reroll poo!*, the adventure ends early². The party can try again when they gain another level, after a period of downtime, or at some other future time as determined by the GM.

1d4+1 ssurlocs are on sentry duty around the spire, standing guard in the shadows of nearby jungle, watching the stairs to the stone entry door. In addition to spears, they carry longbows and arrows coated with their poison spittle. If the ssurlocs fare poorly in battle, at least one heads into the spire to raise reinforcements.

Sunlight filters into the spire interior care of high, narrow windows, or is lit at night with braziers. The inside ground level is a single, massive chamber, the walls etched with fading jungle murals lined in jade and gold leaf. The floor is tiled with a silver circle interspersed with arcane runes and ancient bronze braziers. Statues of lost Suun heroes stand in each corner in eternal vigil. On the northern wall are descending stone stairs (Area 1).

Catacomb Encounters

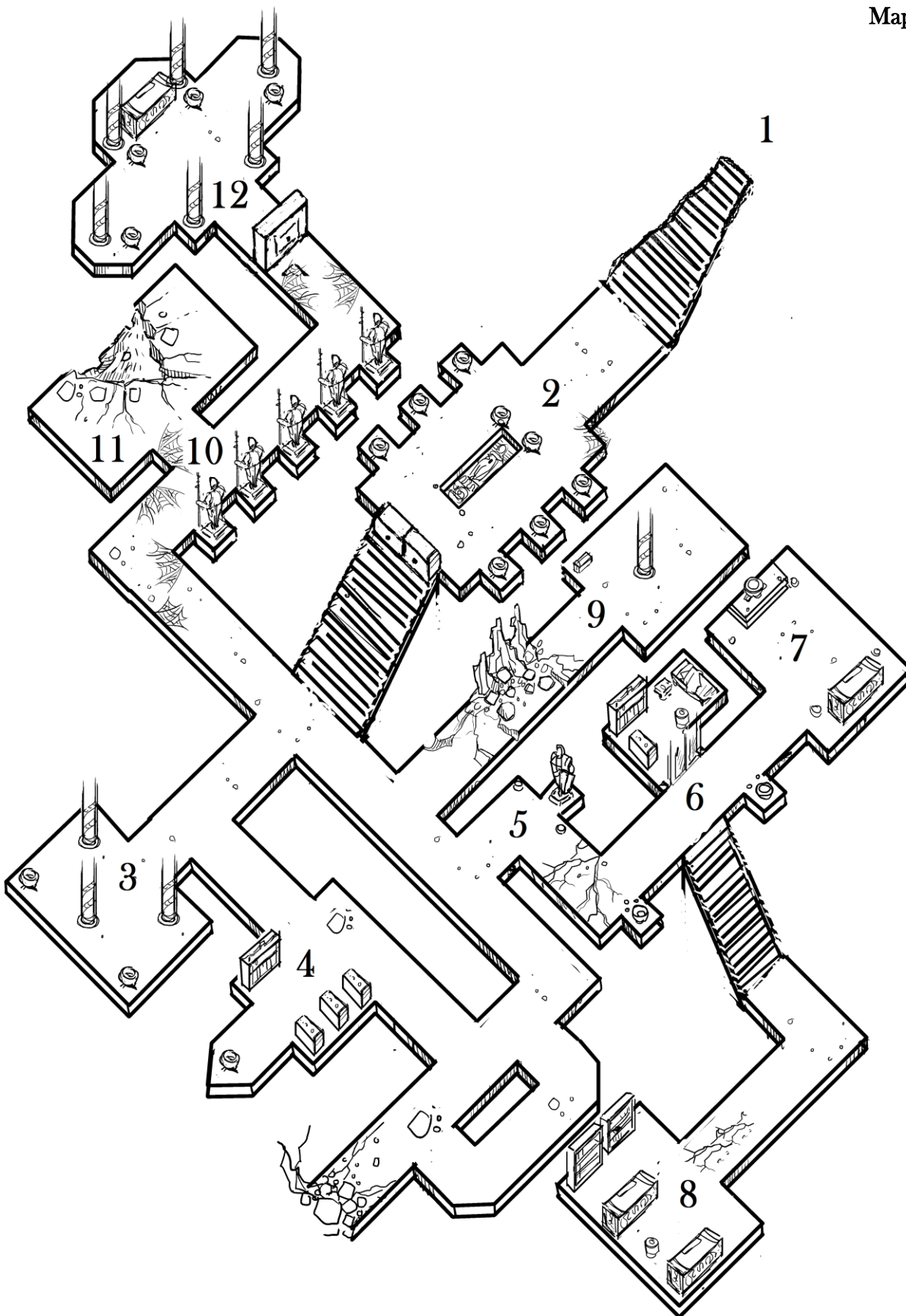
The catacombs are cold, silent and completely dark, except as noted in the individual room descriptions. There is a 35% chance of a catacomb encounter every 30 minutes. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6:

1. The *Bulette* from Area 11 is hungry and has detected the party's earth tremors. It bursts from the floor or wall, or comes charging down the corridor to eat the PCs!
2. A mysterious wind howls down the corridor, extinguishing torches and causing lanterns to stutter violently. In the distance, a faint, flickering light emanates from around the next corner (*Will o' Wisp*, LFG p.129).
3. The spirit of a cursed witchpriest, *Toshuga*, is trapped in the catacombs, aimlessly wandering the folds between worlds in tormented limbo. Toshuga has lost the power of coherent speech and seeks only to end his suffering, or cause others pain (as *Banshee*, LFG p.99). Targets slain by the witchpriest have a 50% chance of rising as obedient zombies in 1d4 hours.
4. *Cave in!* Part of the ceiling here is dangerously fragile, and the movements of the party set off a partial collapse. Everyone in the area must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or suffer 3d6 damage from falling rock.
5. A *Speckled Ooze* is stuck to the ceiling in a dormant state, waiting for a potential meal to move within 60 ft.

Speckled Ooze, AC 13, HD 7, Pseudopod 4d4 + special, 19: the ooze puffs out a toxic cloud, 15 ft radius, causing 1d6 Int or Will loss (50/50 chance, *Luck* (Con) save resists), S18 D14 C17 I2 P14 W15 Ch1, L9, Mv 5 ft burrow or 30 ft (inc walls, ceiling, etc). On a hit, victims suffer 1d8 damage due to painful flesh melting for the next 1d4 rounds (alcohol negates).

6. The power of the ley line junction surges for a moment, causing an almost imperceptible distortion in the air. All magic users or characters carrying a magical item must make a *Luck* save or roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table.

² Sometimes adventurers just fail. There's always another hook or side trek to investigate.



Area 1 – Entry Stairs

These 8 ft broad stairs grow wider as the staircase descends 60 ft to the second level, and a 15 ft wide corridor. The air is cooler and mustier, lit by flickering torchlight from Area 2. Hissing can be heard echoing from below.

A single Hraarsk stands watch here, with orders to advise the serpentmen in Area 2 of any problems. There is a 30% chance the guard is napping.

Area 2 – History Hall

This 25 ft wide 35 ft long entry hall has a 12 ft vaulted ceiling. Massive bronze braziers are set into the side alcoves, and a tiled mural set into the floor. The jade and gold mural records the Suun empire's glorious advancements, culminating in blood magic at the time of the spire's construction. The writing is in the dead Suun language, but an Int (General Lore) check at disadvantage and a -3 penalty divines the gist of the record. A great success or Int (Arcane Lore) check identifies prayers to the demon *Dran-Soj'Kruug; Mistress of Tears*.

Kith'Sirak's serpentmen are set up here, coiled nearby the braziers, studying the tiles, ornate murals and runes. The serpentmen have not yet opened the warded double doors to the southwest (studying the doors reveals that an "offering to the Suun gods" must be made to open them. A vial of human blood spilt on the floor mural causes the doors to swing open).

The Razkarrrt will be inclined to kill the party and use their blood to open the double doors, but she might be inclined to join forces with the party to explore the catacombs if such an offer is made. She will not hesitate to double cross them however once Area 12 is secured. If battle with the party goes poorly, Kith'Sirak fights to the death; she simply cannot stomach the humiliation of defeat at the hands of man monkeys. If defeated, the serpentmen carry 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.136, 147).

Area 3 – Place of Three Pillars

This 30 ft by 20 ft chamber contains three columns with gold icons of the sun, sky, and earth: the three sacred pillars of original Suun theology. Verdigris bronze urns are set in the south and west corners of the room (filled with grey dust).

Dropping an item related to the sun (eg: a torch, lantern), sky (arrow, telescope) or earth (plants, rocks, gems) invokes a "blessing" from fickle forces that still watch over this sanctified place (once only). Roll 1d8:

1. Gain 1 point to a random attribute permanently.
2. Lose 1 point to a random attribute permanently (*Luck* save to reduce the duration to 1d12 months).
3. Gain *Darkvision* (as spell) until the end of the adventure.
4. Suffer *Blindness* (as spell) until the end of the adventure.
5. Gain the ability to cast a single random 1st level spell once per adventure. Also lose 1 HD permanently. The HD can only be restored by magical means (eg *Cure Malady*), but if so, the spell ability is lost.
6. Roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table (LFG p.57).
7. Immediately gain the effect of one random potion (LFG p.151).
8. Immediately age 3d6 years. A *Cure Malady* spell reverses the curse.

Area 4 – Stone Receptacles

This irregularly shaped 20 ft by 40 ft chamber contains three stone chests and a bookshelf of moulding texts and scrolls. The chests are

unlocked. If the heavy lids are removed (Str check required) remnants of preserved organs and the tattooed skin of sacrificial victims are revealed. The bookshelf is lined with ancient philosophical and religious texts of the Suun, in their dead language. Handling any of these books causes them to crumble to dust, but for one random magic scroll (LFG p.152).



Area 5 - Golem

This alcove of faded red, green and yellow tiles holds a statue of black volcanic stone; an imposing Suun warrior with crossed arms, staring imperiously and wearing a golden torc (700 gp). The statue is a *Stone Golem*, charged with protecting the eastern catacombs, and will animate and attack if not provided with the ancient Suun password (long since lost).

Stone Golem, AC 16, HD 11+3, 2 Fists 2d8, 19; bear hug (see below), S21 D11 C23 I- P13 W-Ch-, L11, Mv 30 ft. The golem has 60% *Magic Resistance*, except against *Stone to Flesh*, *Transmute Rock to Mud*, *Stoneshape* or *Move Earth* spells which cause 6d8 damage (once only). If both Fist attacks hit, the target is crushed (*Luck* (Con) save to avoid rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table). 10 ft reach.

Area 6 - Bedchamber

The stone door to this 20 ft by 10 bedchamber is locked, the key lost (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens the door). The door is also trapped. A number of small sun and moon circles are carved into the door, one of which may be rotated 90 degrees to disarm the trap. Otherwise a heavy stone block drops from the ceiling (*Luck* (Dex) save to avoid) causing 5d6 damage and a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table. A PC that studies the area may make a Perc (Detection) check to notice perpendicular cracks in the ceiling, telegraphing the block, and/or locate the disarming sun/moon dial.

The caretaker's ancient bedchamber contains a fragile bedframe, a stone chest and bookshelf, and some personal affects (1 x Trinkets & Curios, 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x random Potion (LFG p.141, 136, 150)). The key to Area 12 is also in the chest.

Area 7 - Chapel

This 30 ft by 20 ft chapel has a 15 ft ceiling and walls covered in faded murals. The tiled scenes depict dark scenes of war, mutilation, blood sacrifice, drowning and worse. Towering black humanoids with horns or antlers lurk in the background of the murals, hands outstretched, as if somehow puppeteering the humans before them. An altar dedicated to strange powers is located to the northwest, and a stone sarcophagus to the southeast.



The chapel is especially cold, causes goose bumps and misty breath upon entering. There are faded red stains on the floor. Centuries of sacrifices have monumentally weakened the barrier between worlds here. Any magic cast in this room inadvertently summons 1d4 *Gibbering Terrors*. Additionally, each magic item brought into this chamber has a 10% cumulative chance of releasing 1d4 aberrations.

Gibbering Terror, AC 14, HD 8, Bite 2d8, 19: disturbing howl, enemies within 20 ft must make a *Luck* (Will) save or suffer a moderate madness, S16 D7 C16 I3 P10 W14 Ch1, L9, Mv 30 ft. Terrors regenerate 1d12 hp each round, except from silver or fire damage or when reduced to zero hp. These terror's howls are especially potent and impose disadvantage on the relevant *Luck* (Will) save.

The sarcophagus contains the preserved skulls of hundreds of victims, as well as various ornaments and trinket offerings (1 x Valuables, LFG p.147).

Area 8 – Experiment Chamber

The walls of this 20 ft by 30 ft chamber is lined with bronze etched with garbled pseudo scientific formulae and principles. Two bookcases on the northwest wall are lined with clay jars and crumbling tablets. On top of two massive stone benches are a single preserved corpse, still and unmoving. Within one of the corpses is a *Grey Ooze*, in a dormant state, but susceptible to waking if a humanoid moves into the room. The Grey Ooze takes 1d4 rounds to rouse before surging to attack, ravenous for brains.

Grey Ooze, AC 12, HD 6, Tunnelling Pseudopod 2d4 + special and Emotion Burst, 19: a psychic lash drains 1d4 Int (*Luck* (Will) save resists), S18 D16 C16 I4 P14 W16 Ch1, L8, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceiling etc. Emotion Burst 120 ft range, *Luck* (Will) save or suffer a moderate madness, 40% chance recharge each hour. May project basic emotions up to 120 ft at will.

Area 9 – Pillar of Skulls

The corridor to this chamber is unsafe and susceptible to a cave in, care of the Bulette in Area 11. Moving through this passage has a 50% chance of setting off a collapse, causing 6d6 damage and requiring a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (*Luck* (Dex) save for half and no injury roll).

The chamber beyond is an expertly carved twisting pillar, set with the skulls of ancient warlocks throughout the centuries. The skulls are patterned in jade, with quartz or sunstone gems for eyes. Prying the gems loose will garner 2d6 x 100 gp worth of stones.

Spells cast in this chamber use 1 spell slot less than normal (minimum 1 slot), last twice as long, and automatically cause maximum dice effects. They also however increase the DDM chance by 3 instead of 1.

The small chest in the western corner contains personal trinkets of the dead warlocks (1 x Curios & Trinkets, and 1 x Random Scroll, LFG p.152).



Area 10 – March of Sentinels

This 10 ft by 65 ft corridor is lined with 5 guardian skeletons; warlock novices who gave their lives to protect the western catacombs from tomb robbers. The skeletal sentinels wear ornate ceremonial masks. They lurch forward to attack, shaking off centuries of dust as they creak and clack across the tiled floor, grasping for intruders.

Suum Sentinel, AC 13, HD 2+2, Crushing Grasp 2d4 + curse, 19: a defeated sentinel re-animates to aid this one, S15 D13 C14 I- P14 W-Ch-, L6, Mv 30 ft. Skeletal sentinels are *Undead* with the usual benefits (LFG p.95), automatically sense the living within 60 ft and are immune to piercing weapons such as arrows. On a hit, targets suffer the *Curse of Golden Blood*, losing 1d4 Dex each week as their blood hardens. A victim reduced to zero Dex dies, their blood congealed and turned a golden yellow hue.

The curse may be removed by a *Cure Malady* spell, or by going on a quest to restore a stolen treasure to its rightful resting place or owner (as determined by the GM, but not including any Suun treasures from this adventure. Restoring treasures from this adventure slows the Dex loss to 1d4 per fortnight instead).

Area 11 – Bulette Den

This 20 ft by 35 ft chamber was once a preparation and ritual slaughter room, but a resident *Bulette* has destroyed most of it. A huge hole and collapsed bulette tunnel occupies the northwest wall. Fractured wall murals, a few bronze knives and clay bowls (50 gp) are all that remain of the original contents. If the Bulette has not previously been alerted to the party, it is either asleep (50%) or detects them within 120 ft of this chamber (in which case it come rampaging out, eager to make a meal of them).

Bulette, AC 18, HD 9+4, Bite 3d6 + special and Emotion Burst 19: the target is dragged underground and begins asphyxiating. A Str check at disadvantage is required to dig free, S22

D13 C19 I2 P13 W14 Ch3, L10, Mv 30 ft inc when burrowing. Detects movement tremors within 120 ft, *Causes Injuries* on critical hits. This bulette is particularly ferocious and gains *Off Turn Attacks* when staggered (LFG p.53).

Area 12 – Abartu's Tomb

This cross shaped 50 ft by 30 ft chamber has a 20 ft vaulted ceiling, supported by 6 pillars of obsidian stone. The pillars are wrapped in the flesh of dead humans (including faces), stretched around and secured with gold chains (total 300 gp). An ornate sarcophagus sits beside the northwest wall, marked with ancient Suun hieroglyphs and golden runes. The ceiling here is painted black like the night sky, sprinkled with unfamiliar stars and a number of alien looking moons and planets (inconsistent with the game world).

The burial chamber was originally a place of quiet reverence and contemplation, enchanted to dampen sounds, quieting all noises to a fraction of their normal volume. Speaking normally sounds like whispering, for instance.

Abartu's skeletal remains and the Book of Bound Flesh are inside the sarcophagus. Any attempt to open the coffin causes six *Shades* to manifest (one from each of the six pillars), and a single 10 ft tall *Elder Shade* to slide out from between the sarcophagus and its lid.

Shade, AC 12, HD 4, Touch 1d6+1 + Str drain 19: the target's weapon or armour (50%) is transformed into shadow (*Luck* save resists), S-D16 C- I10 P13 W10 Ch7, L7, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. Shades are *Incorporeal Undead* with the usual benefits (LFG p.94, 95). On a hit, the target loses 1 Str. Targets reduced to zero Str are slain and have a 50% chance of rising as a shade.

Elder Shade, Boss Monster, AC 14, HD 7 (66 hp), Touch 1d6+1 + Str drain 19: the target's weapon or armour (50%) is

transformed into shadow (*Luck* save resists), S- D16 C- I15 P15 W15 Ch9, L7, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. The Elder Shade is a *Boss Monster* and *Incorporeal Undead* with the usual benefits (LFG p.94, 95). On a hit, the target loses 1d4 Str. Targets reduced to zero Str are slain and have a 50% chance of rising as a shade. The elder shade may spend an action to invoke the following magical effects up to 3 times per day (as a 7th level caster): *Silent Image*, *Darkness 15 ft radius*, *Fog Cloud*, *Dispel Magic* and *Shadowbolt* (as *Lightning Bolt*, but made of life leeching darkness rather than lightning).



Book of Bound Flesh

The Book of Bound Flesh is an enchanted tome that requires attunement to open and read. A human face is stretched across its accursed cover, the pages constructed from magically preserved reed paper. Within its yellowed pages are terrible secrets of the universe, unhinging the mind of any mortal that seeks to fathom them. Such a character gains a serious madness and the ability to cast two random 1st level spells once per week (or if the character is a Magic User, three random spells of level 1 and/or 2, at the character's option). The madness is curable only by ending the attunement (which also ends the spell casting ability). Over time, a second level of attunement may be unlocked, allowing the character to distil obscure knowledge from the text (as *Contact Other Plane*) once every six months.

Aftermath

If the party retains the sorcerous manuscript, the tome acts as a natural curiosity to aberrations and demons from across the veil. From time to time, at the GM's discretion, an attuned character and/or those around them might have disturbing dreams of alien observers watching them from another reality. Eventually, on a triggered *Dark & Dangerous Magic* check, the GM may choose to substitute a demon or aberrant terror instead of the usual random result (representing an opportunistic being come to retrieve, eat, merge with or destroy the tome).

The serpentmen do not give up on the spire, sending more and more of their kind to secure it as the months roll on. Unless the structure is destroyed, the Hidden City soon harnesses the resident ley lines to bolster their magical power, unlocking new secrets in weather magic (useful in their ongoing mission to restore the sweltering climate of the Second Age).

CREDITS

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