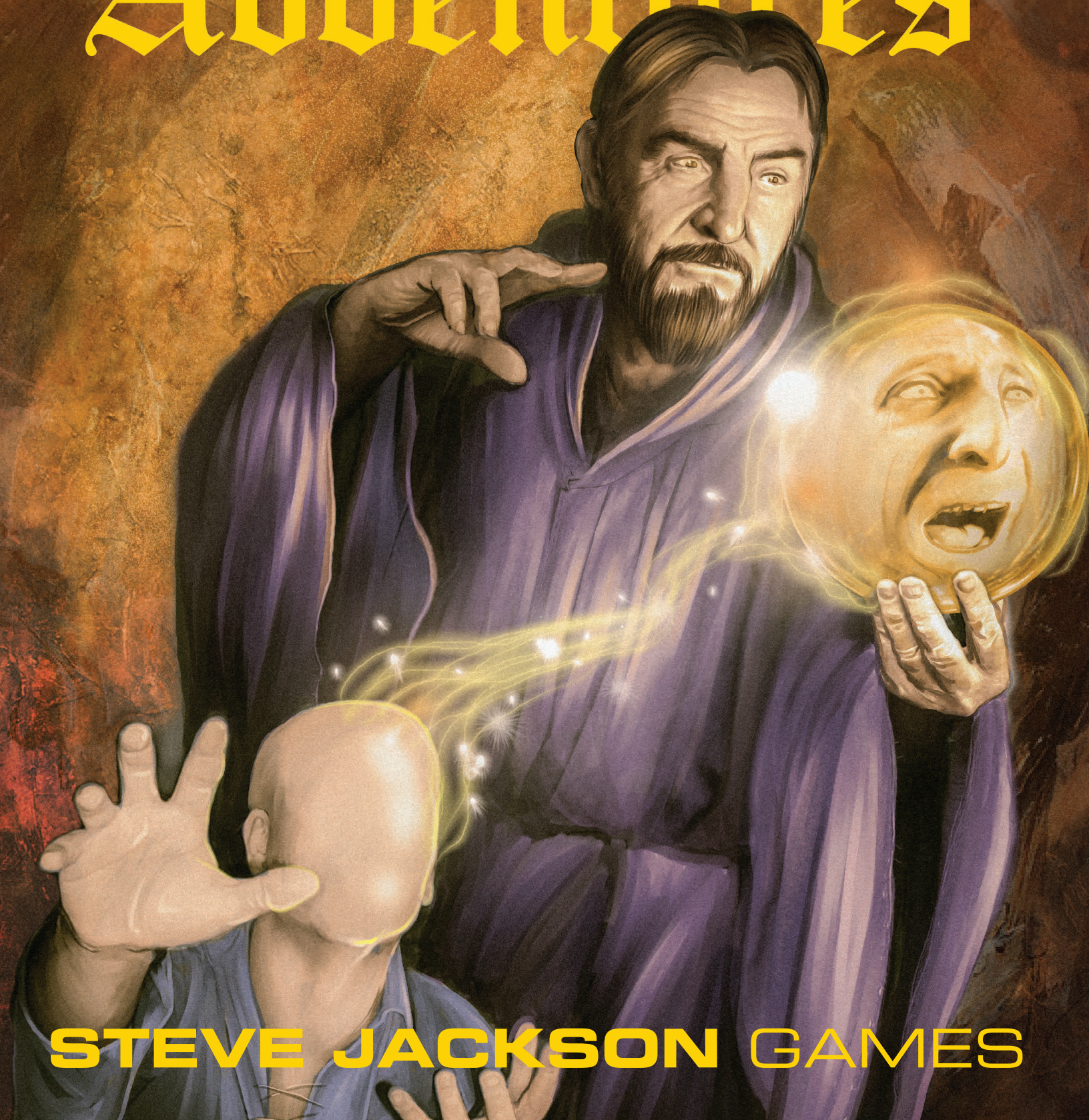


The Fantasy Trip[™] Adventures

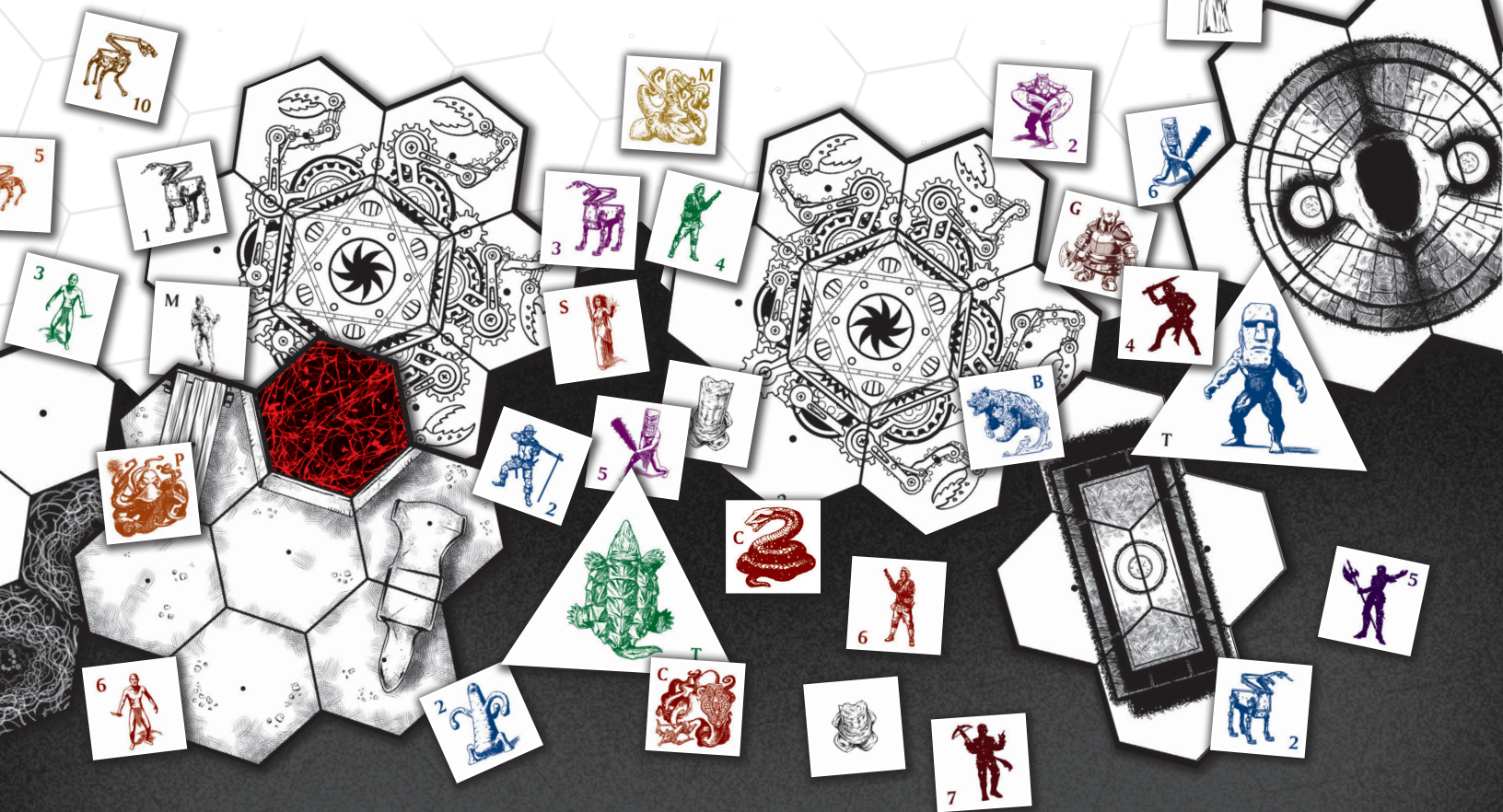


STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Adventure Awaits!

Five new adventures, each with die-cut game counters, for *The Fantasy Trip*. This book includes:

- ***The Chaos Triads***, by Steven Marsh
- ***The Curse of Katiki-Mu***, by Robert Saint John
- ***Fire in the Temple***, by David L. Pulver
- ***The Clockwork Tower***, by Greg Poehlein
- ***Tomb of the Wizard-King***, by Christopher R. Rice
- And an afterword, with further game notes, by Steve Jackson.

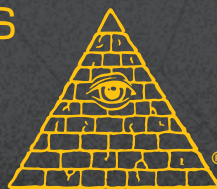


STEVE JACKSON GAMES



#TheFantasyTrip

thefantasytrip.game



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Made in China

The Fantasy TripTM Adventures



**Adventures by Steven Marsh, Robert Saint John,
David L. Pulver, Greg Poehlein, and Christopher R. Rice**

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INTRODUCTION

Sometimes an introduction is just pro forma; readers expect an introduction, so one gets written. Then again, sometimes a bit of actual, literal introduction is a good idea, and this is one of those times.

These are the first new *TFT* adventures in decades, written after the end of the *Legacy Edition* Kickstarter campaign but long before the game reached the shelves. That means that all of the writers cared enough about the game to print out hundreds of pages of PDF material just to learn what they were writing about. I think it shows.

All five of these adventures have four functions. First and foremost, they are stories, and can be read as such! Second, they are roleplaying adventures; third, they are settings for tactical games. And fourth, they can all be stepping stones toward greater campaigns.

PAGE NUMBERING

This project was originally conceived as a set of five independent adventures to be distributed in PDF. The hardcover book came along after your feedback on the first two adventures. But it presented a numbering issue, because the pages of the original adventures were numbered individually. We decided to leave the individual numbering in place, rather than risk introducing error in the page references. So all the internal page references are just as they were. That means that in the index you'll see things like "1/12" for "Adventure 1, page 12." (Why did I index this at all? Because indexes are handy and a lot of you like them.)

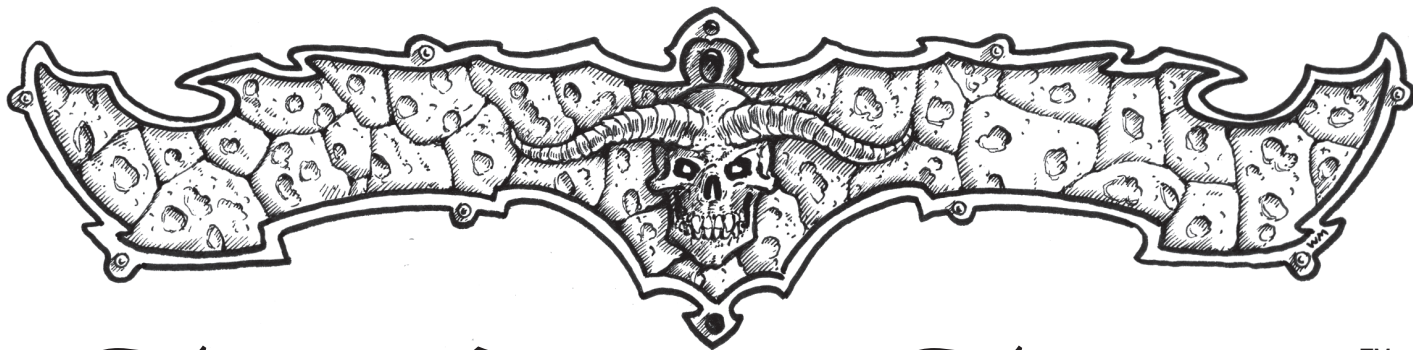
COUNTER SHEETS

These were another stretch goal. *The Fantasy Trip* is a tactical game, and needs counters for play. The original PDF adventures included print-and-play counters. Those are still in place, but the physical book is also packaged with a die-cut two-sided counter sheet for each adventure. All but the last adventure even include one or more custom "megahexes" – special terrain for combats. The last adventure has a special bonus. It has no terrain megahexes, and only needed a few counters . . . but we had a whole sheet of cardboard to fill. So we included a lot of extra "column" counters, and made some of them half-height for more tactical interest. I expect you'll find more uses for these. And we still had room left over, so here's an extra couple of small dragons for you, in different colors, and six brand-new Octopi from Liz Danforth. I promise you, you now have more Octopi than you'll ever want to fight.

MORE ADVENTURES?

Quite probably. We think that these adventures – about 9,000 words each, 12 pages long, with game counters – represent a pretty good format. Certainly the Kickstarter support was generous and very heartening. We'll be waiting for your reactions, now that you have the actual book in your hands. Should we do this again? Tell us what you liked and didn't like, and let's see what happens.

– Steve Jackson



The Chaos Triads™



BY STEVEN MARSH

ILLUSTRATED BY RICK HERSHEY

INTRODUCTION

An unknown assassin has attacked Baronet Ehl Mick, 12-year old heir to the Barony of the Foothills. A tiny dart of a rare and dangerous substance called Chaos Matter is lodged in the Baronet's neck. The effects are slowly killing him, and the dart cannot be removed. His grandmother, the elderly Baroness Dawn, wants to send a party of mercenaries to the abandoned Hedgeforth Caverns where the substance was once mined.

The party must retrieve an artifact, the Orb of Ages, hidden in the Caverns. The Orb is described as a sphere of glowing crystal about 2 feet in diameter. It absorbs Chaos Energy and should allow the Baroness' physickers to remove the dart and save Ehl Mick's life.

Officials have announced the Baroness will give a \$10,000 reward to a party that enters the Caverns and returns with the Orb. A famed mercenary band, the Silver Stars, took on the job . . . but after several weeks they have not returned.

A ragtag band led by one "Alice the Ax" talked a panicked official into funding a second attempt. They have not returned, but nobody really expected to see them again.

The Baroness offers to equip a group with \$500 per person in supplies (including inexpensive magic and potions).

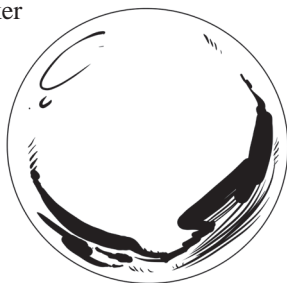
This adventure is suitable for 5-7 starting characters, and might be completed by four 40-point characters.

DOING A LITTLE DIGGING

Research and good reaction rolls may bring more information. The baronial retainers believe the expedition is hopeless. Small amounts of Chaos Matter were once mined by dwarves in the Hedgeforth Caverns. They brought in the Orb of Ages, which absorbs Chaos Energy, to make the mine at least marginally safe to work. But the small veins of Chaos played out and the Orb was taken away generations ago.

But the Baroness believes the Orb could still be in the mine, based on stories told by her grandfather. He said his ancestors required the dwarves to leave the Orb behind when they closed the mine, protecting it with concealment, traps, and a magical Guardian, to assure any remaining traces of Chaos Energy were absorbed harmlessly. The Orb was to be left there for 30 generations of Barons; the Baroness is the 17th. No one but the Baroness has ever heard of this, even in legend, and a few of the retainers think that grief has unbalanced her.

On a 3/IQ roll, a dwarf, Scholar, Alchemist, Chemist, or metalworker has heard of Chaos Matter but knows only that it is dead-black yet with a silvery shine, rare, dangerous, and unpredictable. That would confirm what the retainers and Her Excellency have to say about the properties of the material.



GM INFORMATION

The situation is worse than anyone knows. The caverns *are* a played-out Chaos Matter mine. Only the baronial family knew that the Orb of Ages was left when the mine was closed. Dawn's version of the story, a secret passed down from Baron to Baron, is correct in all particulars (and Dawn is not in the least unhinged; she is a strong leader).

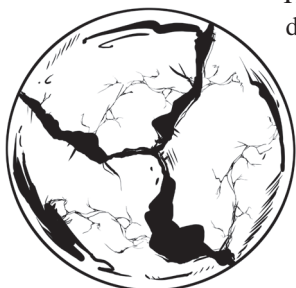
A dwarf or Scholar in the party, on a 4/IQ roll, has heard the name "Orb of Ages," but knows no more than the name.

The Silver Stars went to the mine, found the concealed entrance, and fought the Orb's Guardian. A misplaced crossbow shot broke the Orb into three shards, releasing the Chaos Energy it had absorbed.

Inside the mine, matter and magic no longer behave normally. There is a danger that the Chaos area will expand to threaten the rest of the barony, as the old Barons feared.

The three shards of the broken Orb are now leaking the Chaos Energy they once absorbed. Near the three old veins of Chaos Matter, three areas called Chaos Triads mark a rapidly thinning barrier between reality and the mad void.

The Orb's Guardian, itself now damaged and addled by Chaos, still tries to do its duty. The mercenaries killed in the Orb's explosion remain as Chaostained entities who single-mindedly defend the shards of the Orb. It is only by retrieving these shards that Chaos may be contained.



ANSWERING THE CALL OF CHAOS

If the PCs accept the job, they will be told the Orb has been described as a glowing crystalline sphere just under two feet in diameter, carried in a silver frame or tray.

The baronial advisers privately tell the PCs that they should not expect to actually *find* the Orb, but that they will pay \$3,000 if the party will enter the caverns and return with reasonable proof of the fate of the first two expeditions. They wish only to assure the Baroness everything has been done so that she can grieve in peace when the Baronet passes away.

The party will have two days to equip themselves before leaving on foot (the country is too uncertain for horses) to the area near the entrance to the mine.

THE ROAD TO CHAOS

On the second day out, the PCs encounter the second group recruited by Baroness Dawn's panicky retainer. Alice the Ax tried to take the money and run. They headed in the direction of the Hedgeforth Caverns, intending just to keep going, but the transformations near that region were unnerving and caused the superstitious bandits to turn back. They have returned to their old game of ambushing traveling parties.

If the PCs are scouting ahead, or have individuals with appropriate skills such as Alertness, a 3/IQ roll should be sufficient to give warning of the upcoming ambush. (Alice's crew is not very stealthy.) If so, the PCs automatically enter the encounter with initiative.

The bandits will immediately assume this well-equipped band is there to arrest or kill them for not completing the mission. Assume one adversary per PC, starting from the top of the list below. If there are more than six heroes, you can duplicate Antonio, or create some equally incompetent bandits on 28 points.

This encounter uses the standard *Melee* map; any available counters can be used for Alice's renegades.

Place the bandits at one set of entrance hexes and the heroes at the other as they enter a clearing. If the PCs gained initiative, they can choose to hold back some of their people and have them circle around to flank the bandits, entering from any side they choose at the beginning of turn two. If the players don't think of this themselves after an Alertness success, allow a 3/IQ roll for anyone with Tactics to come up with it. Again, Alice's crew is less than stealthy.

Alice the Ax

Human Bandit Leader

ST 11, DX 12(8), IQ 10

Weapons: Small ax (ready), shortsword (belt scabbard)

Armor: Chainmail, large shield painted with a battleaxe

Equipment: Chipped gemstone (worth \$25), \$18 in coin

Li Fang

Human Bandit

ST 11, DX 11(9), IQ 9

Weapons: Mace (ready), dagger (belt scabbard)

Armor: Leather

Equipment: Prayer book (worth \$5), \$6 in coin

Mel River

Human Bandit
ST 10, DX 10, IQ 10
Weapons: Hammer (ready)
Armor: None when encountered
Equipment: Healing potion (seal is tight; 5/ST to pull it out)

Thar

Human Bandit
ST 13, DX 10(8), IQ 7
Weapons: Morningstar (ready), dagger (belt scabbard)
Armor: Leather
Equipment: Pet hamster named Wiggles (worth \$2 if alive), hamster food, \$3 in coin

Mr. Chop

Human Bandit
ST 12, DX 10(7), IQ 8
Weapons: Broadsword (ready), shortsword (belt scabbard)
Armor: Chainmail
Equipment: Necklace of ears (worthless), \$0.50 in coin

Antonio

Human Bandit
ST 10, DX 10, IQ 8
Weapons: Cutlass (ready), dagger (belt scabbard)
Armor: None when encountered
Equipment: A bundle of racy love letters (worth \$20 to the right collector), small skin of cheap wine, \$2 in coin

The bandits are inclined toward violence (-2 to reaction rolls), but if the odds have them at a serious disadvantage, they may surrender or flee, as the tactical situation suggests. (The scoundrels don't *want* to die here!) If questioned, the bandits reveal they were just too frightened by the weirdness in the region to go on. (Example: they say the trees are "acting strangely," as are animals close to the area of the old mine.)

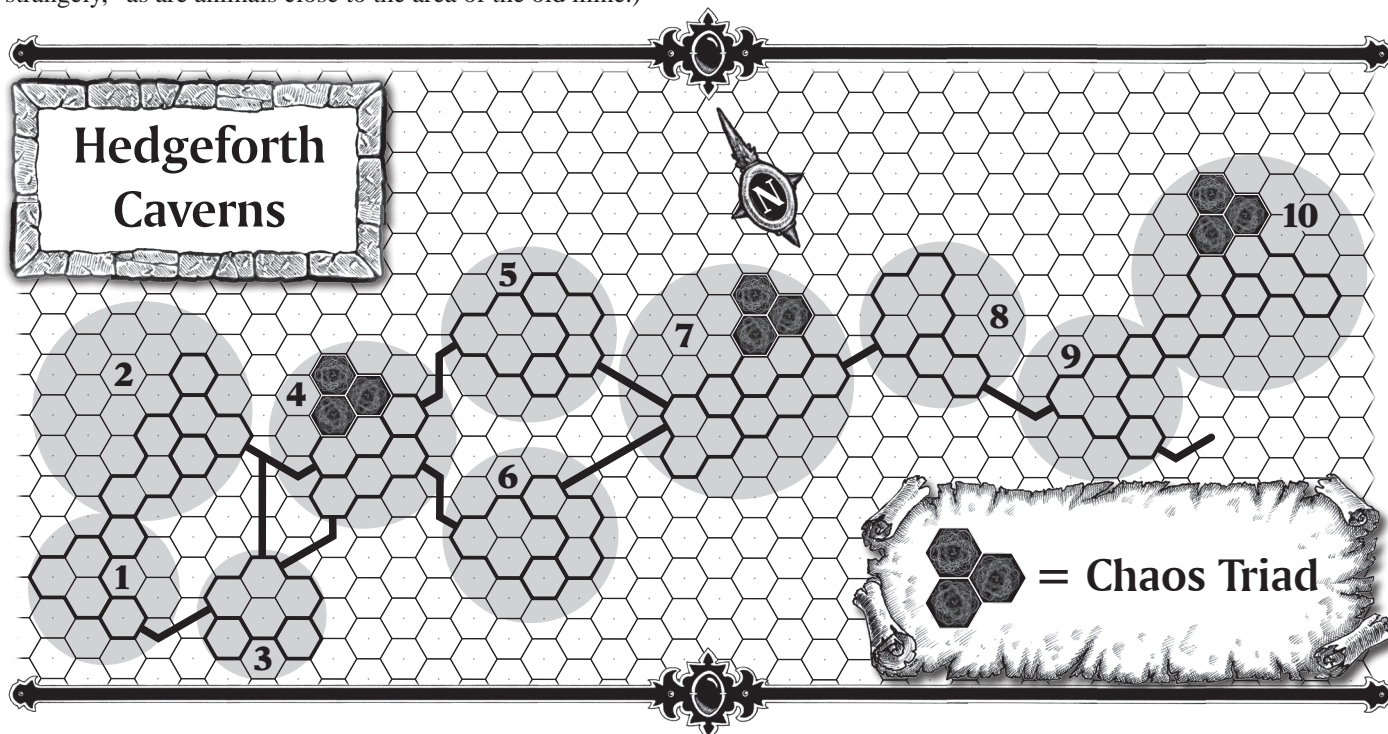
Under no circumstances can the bandits be persuaded to actually approach or enter the Caverns. If the party has taken them prisoner, they will have to decide what to do with Alice's crew, and be ready to justify it when they get back to Dawn's court.

WEIRDNESS ABOUND

After this encounter, the approach to the Caverns reflects the madness that scared the bandits, as Chaos slowly seeps into the area. The GM should feel free to improvise chaotic elements to make the atmosphere increasingly creepy as the PCs approach. These shouldn't be at all harmful (or useful). The "special effects" are to let the heroes know that something odd is happening – and spreading. Each effect doesn't last long, but should be disconcerting. Examples could include:

- Birds fly but don't flap their wings.
- Insect noises (crickets, cicadas, etc.) abruptly go silent within a quarter-hour's travel of the entrance area. (3/IQ secret roll for the PCs to notice.)
- The PCs' sense of smell is reversed. Wild flowers suddenly smell like fish; food and water look normal but smell vile. In contrast, anything normally bad-smelling has the undeniable odor of roses.
- Sound can only be heard in one ear (left or right). This changes from time to time for the whole party at once.
- Any reflective surface (shiny armor or weapons, a pool of water, etc.) reflects things non-mirrored (left to left instead of left to right).

Finding the cavern entrance itself proves to be no real problem. The PCs will know they are close when trees and other foliage sway the wrong direction in relation to the wind. (This is the creepy tree "wrongness" the bandits described.) The once-concealed entrance has had brush hacked away. The dirt and loose stone that once blocked the cavern mouth have been moved.





CHAOSTAINED

Those who die near a source of great Chaotic energy may become Chaostained. These wretched creatures remain fixed upon their last goal in life, whether it was great or small. But the effect of Chaos muddles their thoughts, making it all but impossible for them to communicate, cooperate, or focus on complex plans.

Chaostained resemble wraiths – they don't interact with the physical world as expected. They are not insubstantial, but they wade through the world like droplets of oil through water. Chaostained ignore effects caused directly by Chaos Energy.

To create a Chaostained, start with the original character's Attributes. The Chaostained will appear to have the armor and weapons they most used in life – but these are not real, only the figure's memory of familiar things. They will have the same Talents as they did while living, but cannot cast spells.

If the figure wore armor, the Chaostained will have the same MA, and protection. Its DX will be the adjDX the armor gave it in life. If it favored a ranged or thrown weapon in life, it can make similar ranged/thrown attacks without running out of ammunition. Chaostained weapons do normal damage but cannot break or be dropped, as they are part of the figure's Chaos matrix.

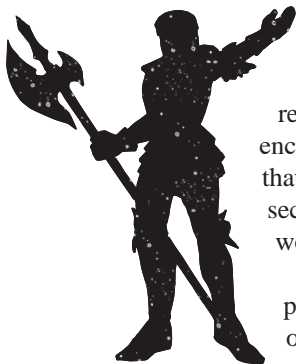
No Chaostained can cast spells (but they are affected by them). Former wizards can strike as if they had a staff in hand, if they normally used one.



Every Chaostained has one Chaotic Power and one Chaotic Weakness. The following powers and weaknesses are just examples. Roll 1 die on each list as follows, or create your own weirdness. Describe the effects as bizarrely as possible. Chaostained break reality by their very existence. Each encounter is different, and should always be unnerving and harrowing.

Powers

- 1 – Uncertainty causes the Chaostained to appear to face in all directions at once, with front facing on all six sides.
- 2 – The Chaostained's perception is not blocked by matter. It ignores all obstacles (including magical walls and darkness) in ranged attacks.
- 3 – Attacks by the Chaostained warp around victims, striking from impossible angles. When attacking successfully, it rolls damage twice and takes the larger roll.
- 4 – Reality melts around the Chaostained at will. At the cost of 2 MA, it can move through a hex as if there were no impediment therein (including occupied hexes, solid walls, hazards, etc.). It cannot end its turn in an occupied hex. If it would, the Chaostained instead fades back to the last valid hex it occupied.
- 5 – The Chaostained can rewind time. It can reroll (once per encounter) the first failed attack roll that it makes but it must take the second result, even if the outcome is worse.
- 6 – Contact with the Chaostained proves painfully disruptive to others. It rerolls all 1s when rolling for damage caused to a target.



Weaknesses

- 1 – At the beginning of each turn, the Chaostained rolls 1d. On 1 or 2, it detaches from reality for the turn. This means it cannot move, act, or be acted upon in any way (giving foes a chance to get into position, ready attacks, etc.). In this state, it cannot engage a foe.
- 2 – The Chaostained oozes through reality, leaving echoes of itself in a shapeless radius. It is considered to be a 3-hex triangular monster as far as those who would attack it are concerned (use any 3-hex counter), but it can only attack others as if it were a single hex (the front of the triangle). Figures not adjacent to the front hex of the counter are not considered engaged. This gives attackers more areas to hit.
- 3 – Damaging blows repeat like echoes. Any critical success (roll of 3-5) against the Chaostained "repeats" for the next 1d turns, doing the same base damage roll (*not* tripled or doubled) at the end of each subsequent turn.
- 4 – Chaos makes the Chaostained unable to coordinate actions. It cannot move and act in the same turn, except for action options that can be undertaken while standing still or shifting one hex.
- 5 – The Chaostained can only move in a straight line each turn and can only rotate one facing at the end of its movement.
- 6 – Ranged attacks against the Chaostained are at a +4 DX, as if projectiles were being sucked toward it.

IN THE CAVERNS

1: ENTRANCE

As the heroes enter, a horde of rats streams out of the cavern toward them. Rat counters aren't necessary because the rats seem completely uninterested in the PCs as they spill across their boots in a mad dash to flee. Getting out of their way is the heroes' best bet, requiring a 3/DX roll to hug the wall until the rats pass by. On a failure, the figure is tripped up and falls prone in their hex. This is probably a frightening occurrence (3/IQ just to avoid panicking and rolling around screaming "Rats! Rats!" for the rest of the turn), but the rats will not try to bite even a fallen figure unless it deliberately attacks them.

The adventurers *can* attack the vermin on purpose, standing their ground and trying to block the flow. Any hit they make into an adjacent hex will kill a rat on any success; see *Rats, ITL* p. 99. A figure may also stomp on a rat in its own hex or an adjacent one, rolled like any regular attack.

A figure in an adjacent hex stomping rats does not need to roll to miss a character in the hex being attacked. (Using a weapon to do so *could* hit the figure in the target hex.) Don't worry about tracking the rats that are killed; there are always more rats.

A figure that does deliberately attack the rats will suffer 1d rat attacks that turn. Rats have DX 10, giving a 50% chance to hit. For simplicity, roll 1 die for each attacking rat. On a roll of 1-3, the rat bites successfully and does one hit. Rat bite hits in a single turn are *cumulative* against armor. Shields don't protect against rats.

At the end of the third combat turn, the rats have all fled. A 3/IQ observation of any dead rats shows that they have been transformed in subtle ways. Many have odd-colored fur: green, baby blue, orange. Variations in number of eyes, heads, legs, and tails abound. Use your imagination. Any rat corpse that has been transformed in an interesting way (roll 1d × number of PCs) would be worth \$10 each to the correct buyer, if the heroes care to carry such creatures out. (Maximum sale is 10 rats. There are only so many Chaos rat corpses that anyone really needs.)

2: THE GUARDIAN OF THE ORB

The door to this chamber seems to have been pretty well concealed, but someone has found it already and broken through the door. The chamber shows signs of recent battle. Several burned-out torches lie about, along with a pile of ash in which useless fragments of armor and weapons remain, including one half-melted silver amulet in the shape of a five-pointed star. (Value: about \$30 – but far more as proof of the fate of the Silver Stars mercenaries who died here.)

In the hex immediately in front of the exit on the far side of the area stands a battered suit of dwarven plate armor. The exit door beyond is completely smashed, leaving only burnt shards of wood behind.

The armor was once ornate and beautiful, but has seen better days and would be valued at no more than \$400 in current condition. At the center of the same megahex, in front of the armor, lies a tarnished and battered metal tray atop three short legs, with three metal bands attached to a handle at the top.

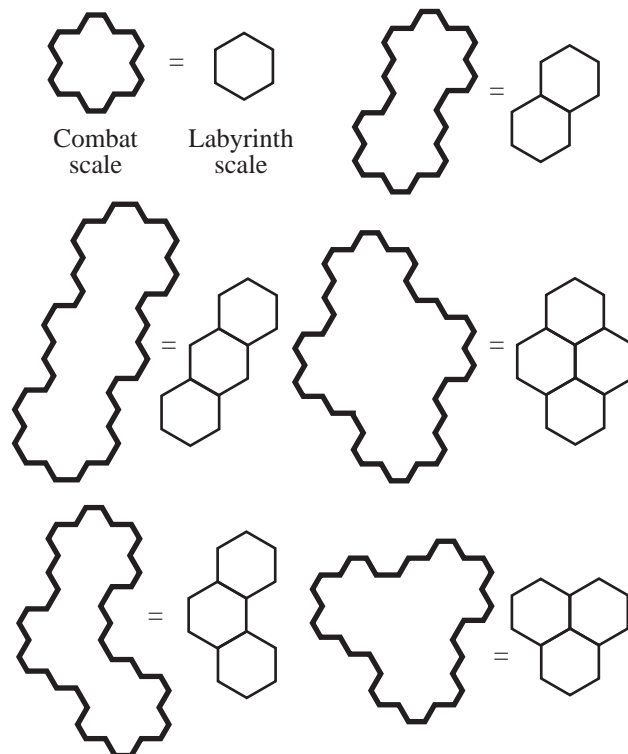
Though damaged and old, it appears to be made of fine silver. (The apparent value is at least \$200, even as damaged as it is.) The tray itself can be carried in one hand by anyone who picks it up.

Upon the approach of anyone within 2 megahexes, the armor will stir and creakily stand up straight. Though no face shows in the visor of the helmet, it moves as if occupied. A battleaxe is welded to the armor's right arm and gauntlet.

USING MEGAHEX TILES IN PLAY

Megahex tiles in combat scale seen as hexes in labyrinth scale

Moving from your overall labyrinth map to combat-size megahex maps or tiles is just this easy . . .



. . . and for single hex tiles:



The encounter areas in the caverns can be assembled using *TFT* megahex tiles as provided in *The Fantasy Trip Legacy Edition*. See the labyrinth map (p. 3) for the size and types of tiles used to represent each room, the form of single-hex-wide tunnels that connect locations, and the entrances and exits to the areas. If you don't have the tiles or don't want to use them, you can just lay out each encounter on paper for the combat.

The special megahex tiles used to make the Chaos Triads shown in rooms 4, 7, and 10 are provided on p. 12, and can be printed and mounted to cardboard. But since you're reading this as part of the complete collection, you have the actual counters too!

In a booming metallic voice, it will speak to any who approach in an archaic form of the dwarven tongue. “I am the Sacred Guardian of the Seven Families of the Mountain,” it will intone. “What can any living being – no matter how old, experienced, or well-traveled – never truthfully claim to have witnessed?” Any dwarf will understand the words, and if a PC speaks a different language in the Guardian’s presence, the Guardian will repeat the question and thereafter speak to that individual in his own native tongue.



The acceptable answer to the question is “his own death” or the equivalent. This is from an old Seven Families proverb, and a dwarf of the region, a Scholar, or other person with appropriate Area Knowledge should be given a 4/IQ roll to vaguely remember the answer, even if no one can figure it out. Anyone giving the correct reply will get a +2 on further reactions from the Guardian.

The Guardian will converse peacefully even if the PCs do not immediately answer the riddle – as long as they do not approach within 3 hexes of the Guardian or the silver frame. (He’ll advise them politely to stand back if they approach too closely.) He will attack if they do not heed this warning, attack first, or try to proceed through the doorway behind him.

He can say, if properly questioned, that he was placed here a long time ago by the Seven Families of the Mountain to protect the Orb of Ages and use it to defend against the rise of Chaos. He doesn’t have any knowledge beyond that of how he got here or what his purpose may be, and his responses sound much like someone who is disoriented after suffering a shock or concussion.

If it is drawn to the Guardian’s attention that the Orb is not present in the empty silver tray, he will seem to take stock of that for the first time. “It was broken,” he will explain haltingly. “It was broken, and Chaos bloomed. The foes were destroyed and the pieces of the Orb . . .” He struggles for words, finally saying “. . . left me behind.”

With a good reaction roll, the PCs may persuade the Guardian that they mean no harm and share its goals. (Any dwarf or even someone who speaks their language will get a +1 adjustment to a reaction roll.) A very bad adjusted reaction roll (2 or less) will result in the Guardian reluctantly initiating combat. If so, it will fight until destroyed.

If the Guardian can be appeased without combat, it will relate that it was challenged arrogantly by “foes with silver stars.” During the fight, “the leader” misplaced a crossbow shot that struck the Orb. It exploded into three pieces, stunning the Guardian and killing all of the Silver Stars in a wave of Chaos. The three shards of the broken orb “jumped away” as the caverns transformed and deteriorated around the Guardian, who loyally remained at his post even in the Orb’s absence. The Guardian knows the shards of the Orb are deeper in the cavern because he can feel them, but he cannot determine their exact locations.

If befriended, the guardian is willing to accompany the heroes and fight at their side *if they specifically ask*. It will fight to the “death” for them, but it will not come up with any original ideas. The PCs have to figure out things for themselves, though the Guardian can be used by the GM to give hints if they are getting too far off track.

The Guardian

Animated dwarven plate armor

ST 18, DX 12, IQ 10, MA 6

Armored body stops 5 hits

Battleaxe welded to its arm – 3d damage

Special Abilities/Weaknesses: Cannot be healed in any fashion. Cannot himself attack or attempt to touch any fragment of the Orb.

3: SILENT SNAKES

Lurking in the shadows of the two southernmost megahexes in the chamber are a number of one-hex giant snakes – one per PC, divided evenly between the two megahexes. The shadows and their utter silence give the snakes a +1 to obtain Initiative the first turn. Their silence – not so much as a hiss – is not the most unusual thing about them. They regularly become insubstantial to recent opponents.

In game terms, any figure in combat with one of the snakes may not hit the same target twice in a row, and vice versa. When a successful hit is scored by either combatant (whether or not it does damage), the opponents become “quantum paired.” From that moment, they are insubstantial to each other. There is no change in appearance, but a hit on a paired target (by *any* means) just causes the attack to pass through as if it wasn’t there.

The pairing lasts until either figure successfully hits some other target. At that point, the pairing ends and the two figures in the new combat are now paired and can no longer hurt each other.

This means that the first figure to successfully strike in a combat here will find their opponent unable to immediately strike back at them. Any other target is fair game. Only the last figure to strike an opponent is paired.

A mass or area attack that *doesn’t* specify a target will not create a pairing. The combat must be close between two opponents to pair them; missile or thrown attacks don’t cause a pairing.

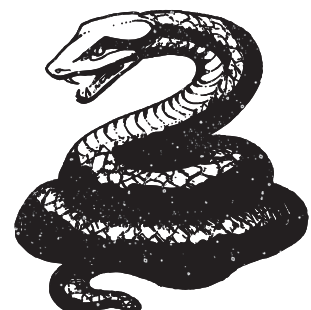
If the characters figure it out, they can alternate targets and ignore engagement with any snake to which they are currently paired. Clever heroes might find other strategies. The snakes are not brilliant, and they will not realize this is happening, attacking any adjacent foe at random whether or not they can really hit them.

Giant Snakes

ST 12, DX 12, IQ 6, MA 6

Bite – 1d+1 (not venomous)

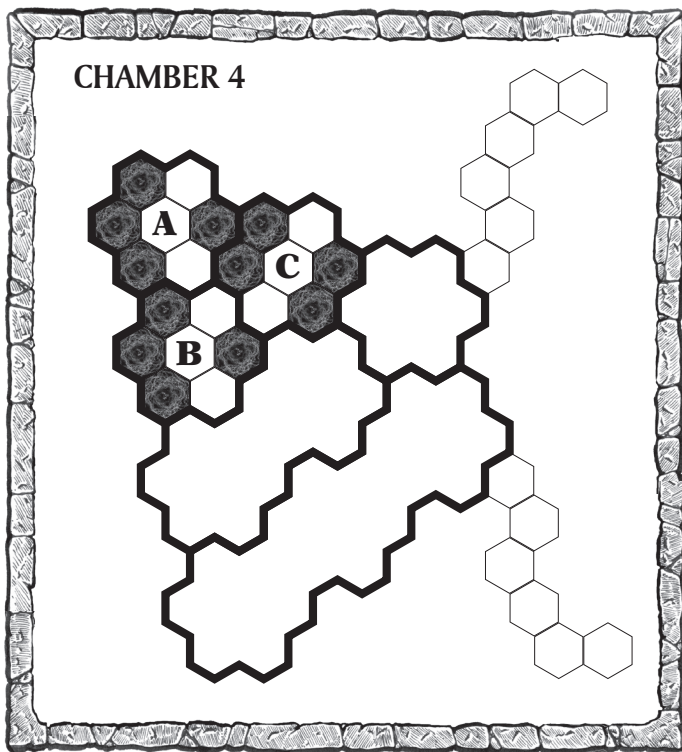
–3 to any attackers’ DX; side hexes are considered as front hexes in combat.



4: THE FIRST CHAOS TRIAD

When the Orb of Ages was shattered, it exploded into three similarly sized shards. The shards – irregular pieces of glowing crystal – have teleported into the caverns to the site of the three largest concentrations of Chaos Energy, where veins of Chaos Matter once protruded into this universe. These three-megahex triangles are the Chaos Triads of the title – places where the fabric between reality and Chaos is wearing thin. Instead of absorbing Chaos Energy, they are now leaking it back into the world, bringing each Chaos Triad closer to becoming a catastrophic rift in reality.

In this chamber, the first shard begins the encounter sitting on the ground at A on the Chaos Triad detail map. Energy from it is visibly pouring into the ground around it, where some hexes in the Triad seem to fade back and forth from reality, revealing a glowing, swirling void beyond a thin layer of translucent mist.



Chaos Hexes

Anything that passes through or above a Chaos hex seems to fade a bit, as if not quite in sync with the material world. An object tossed into a Chaos hex in this chamber will not sink into the chaos beyond the mist.

A PC entering a Chaos hex in this chamber will feel a chill and a bit of momentary nausea, but they will find they do not sink below the mist or suffer any immediate ill effects. Chaos Hexes can be entered and left like any other hex.

Shard Movement

Each time anything (a person, a weapon, a thrown object, even a spell) comes into contact with the shard of the Orb, after the contact is resolved (damage from weapons or spell effects taken), the shard glows briefly and teleports to either hex B or hex C, determined randomly. This teleportation will happen immediately after any such interaction.

Any large object placed in a target hex will make it impossible for the shard to randomly “choose” that place to appear. The PCs might be reluctant to test this by standing in one of the target hexes themselves, but any substantial object (a helmet, piece of armor, shield, backpack, etc.) will have the same effect. If a PC, the Guardian, or a Chaostained is in the way, he will block the appearance of the shard and will not be harmed. If the shard cannot teleport because the two target hexes are occupied, it will flare with energy momentarily, but remain in place. At this point, it can be interacted with like any material object – struck, affected by spells, etc.

Attacking the Shard

The shard is made of tough crystal that has ST 30 but no armor to speak of. It is still dangerous to attack, even so. If struck hard enough with fists or anything held in the hand (delivering any hits of damage), the shard will flare bright red and deliver half that amount of damage (rounded down) back to the attacker. If it can, the shard will then teleport to a new location.

After taking 30 hits, the shard will break into 1d fragments, which stop glowing, fall to the ground, and are safe and easy to pick up.

Capturing the Shard

It is possible to capture the shard without breaking it. The shard itself is not dangerous unless struck, but it can be quite elusive. It might be possible to drop a sack or other container over it, but an attempt to pull it away will be treated like a touch and cause it to teleport if it can.

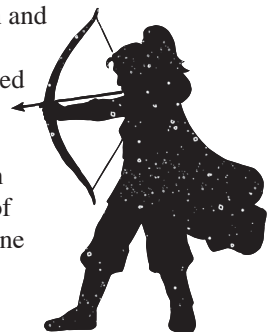
Only by blocking the shard from teleporting can it be captured intact. If unable to teleport, a shard can simply be grasped firmly and physically pulled away, requiring only a 3/ST roll to do so. This breaks the Chaotic loop.

The shard will stop glowing. If the damaged silver frame has been carried along by the PCs, the shard can be placed atop it. It will remain there and can be carried one-handed attached to the tray. It can also be wrapped in cloth or stashed in any other convenient container. Alone, however, a shard will take both hands to carry. It weighs only 5 lbs.

If carried outside the tray, openly and uncovered, into a room where *another* shard is still active, the uncovered shard will be reactivated and will teleport itself to one of the open target hexes in that room. It can be re-subdued, of course, by leaving it nowhere to flee again. Two shards cannot occupy the same space, but three can, as will be seen . . .

Attack of the Chaostained

Complicating any attempt to obtain the shard, this chamber also contains the three Chaostained described below. (See *Chaostained*, p. 4, for their description and nature.) Before their deaths, they were three of the Silver Stars heroes who tried to recover the Orb for the Baroness. Their last thoughts were of dismay at their error, and they are now fixated on preventing further interference. Each of the 7-hex megahexes in this area has one Chaostained in it.



For each Chaostained, roll on the tables on p. 4 for their special power and weakness.

Chaostained 1 (formerly Berta, warrior)

ST 13, DX 11, IQ 8, MA 6

Protection: 3 hits as per chainmail

Attacks for 2d+1 melee damage as per morningstar

Chaostained 2 (formerly Slyn, elven archer)

ST 10, DX 13, IQ 9, MA 6

Protection: 3 hits as per chainmail

Attacks for 1d ranged damage as per horse bow

Chaostained 3 (formerly Gundar, dwarven thief)

ST 9, DX 15, IQ 8, MA 8

Protection: 2 hits as per leather armor

Attacks for 1d-1 (1d+1 in HTH combat) as per dagger

The Chaostained will attack any PC entering the chamber until the shard is subdued or destroyed. They will attack the Guardian immediately. The Guardian will attack a Chaostained on sight, and they may fight back as long as he is engaged with them. If the Chaostained are “slain” before this area’s shard is subdued or destroyed, they vanish.

If the adventurers retreat, the Chaostained will not pursue them from the chamber, but all of them will be back at full ST to attack again when the PCs come back – including any destroyed earlier. Dealing with the shard is the only way to defeat them permanently. Once the shard is no longer active, the Chaostained dissipate. The Chaostained do not have any personal treasure. Their weapons and armor are part of them and cannot be left behind, even if they drop a weapon in combat.

5 AND 6: TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN

Rooms 5 and 6 share a special bond fueled by Chaos, causing them to “echo” each other. Notice on the map how the rooms are almost identical, except for the locations of the entrance and exit doors. Regardless of which of the two rooms the heroes enter first, the encounter plays out the same, as follows.

The door to the room is of metal, but not locked. The chamber has a swampy odor as the PCs enter, but everything appears dry.

Two full turns after the first PC enters this room, stone slabs drop from the ceiling and cover both the entrance and exit doors. Any heroes still in the corridor outside cannot enter. One turn after that, the room starts filling with water.

End of Turn 1: Water reaches about ankle height (reducing MA by 2; see *Water* in *In the Labyrinth*, p. 120).

End of Turn 2: Water reaches the heroes’ knees (cutting MA in half).

End of Turn 3: Water is about neck-high, cutting a walker’s MA to 2. Swimming is possible for those who know how.

End of Turn 4: Water reaches the ceiling of the chamber. Swimming underwater is possible. The Guardian is too heavy to swim and must walk on the bottom at MA 2.

Although this may be alarming to heroes (especially those without the ability to swim), the situation isn’t as bad as it may seem. Because of the effects of the Chaos magic, the

water is *entirely breathable*, as if it were air. Heroes will not be likely to realize this until they fail their first attempt at holding their breath. This doesn’t mitigate any of the *other* effects of water (particularly the combat penalty at -6 DX for being fully submerged, the inability of items to function that rely on being dry, and the difficulty in communicating underwater). Drowning isn’t a danger in this room. Sadly, another danger exists.

In the southernmost megahex of this chamber, covered with silt, is a half-buried 3-hex giant snapping turtle (see *In the Labyrinth*, p. 97). Characters will only notice him on a 4/IQ secret roll unless they actually come adjacent to him. If they get near, or at the beginning of Turn 3 in any event, the turtle will shake off the muck and attack the PCs. He will not attack the Guardian directly unless he is attacked first, but the Guardian will act to defend the PCs if he is in the room.

If the Guardian has been kept out of the chamber by the PCs, he will act confused for two turns, then remember he was supposed to deactivate the water trap before anyone entered. He can do this from outside by manipulating a concealed control. Anyone outside the room can spot the concealed control with a 4/IQ roll.

Inside the room, there is another concealed control mechanism near the exit door. The Guardian will remember it at the beginning of Turn 3 and can use it once he is adjacent to the door. Finding it is a 5/IQ test for anyone else inside due to the distraction of having the room filling with water. There is no penalty for failure looking for either control, outside of the time wasted.

Using either control after the trap is sprung opens hidden drains, causing the water to drain as fast as it filled. (*Turn 1:* water starts draining. *Turn 2:* water is neck-high. *Turn 3:* water is knee-high. *Turn 4:* water is ankle-high and both the doors open. *Turn 5:* water is gone.) The turtle is considered on land (for its MA) on Turn 3 and later.

The Chaos-altered water has one other special property. It does *not* cause any water damage to items submerged. The PCs will even find their clothes dry completely within two turns.

Giant Snapping Turtle

Hex Size/Form: 3-hex triangular figure

ST 36, DX 12, IQ 4, MA 10 (in the water), 6 (on land)

Shell stops 4 hits

Bite – 3d+3 damage

Tail – An adjDX roll to hit *each* one-hex figure in one of its rear hexes; any figure hit must make saving roll (3 dice on DX) to avoid being knocked down. No damage.

Special Abilities/Weaknesses: Any attack on the turtle is at +2 DX because of his size. Hero may give up this bonus to attack the legs or head, reducing armor to stopping 2 hits.

Even with the help of the Guardian, it is likely that one or more PCs may be badly injured or even killed by the turtle. Sad.

When the surviving PCs travel down the corridor out of the room, they will find themselves approaching, not chamber 7, but the *other* twin room from the westernmost entrance. They will have no sensation of travel. The metal door is in a slightly different location relative to the room, and the resemblance may be noticed on a 4/IQ roll.

When someone touches the door, the PCs will experience a moment of disorientation and nausea. The next moment, the party is intact, exactly in the condition they were before entering the previous room. Any dead PCs are alive and not even aware of what has happened, which the GM can use to create a macabre but funny moment when one of them suddenly speaks and is noticed by the others. The Guardian will seem entirely unaware that anything has happened since they approached the previous room, right down to his “forgetfulness” about disabling the trap. Anyone who survived the first encounter, however, will remember it all – including how to disable the trap.

This area is the Chaotic “echo” of the chamber they just left. Due to the connection between these two rooms, visitors to the second room can see faint ghostly projections of the previous encounter, unspooling in real time. These visions are immaterial and too faint to be taken for real. The faint sounds of the noise of the previous encounter can even be heard.

However, the events seen will not match completely. The heroes may see attacks fail that succeeded during the first battle, wizards choosing different spells, the turtle pursuing other tactics or victims, etc. Someone may even witness their own death – ironic, given the Guardian’s riddle.

Most important, *there is no giant turtle in the echo room*. The PCs can trigger the water trap either accidentally or on purpose and it will fill and drain, but nothing else will happen. This room of echoes poses no dangers and has no other effect.

It is feasible the party may backtrack after this encounter, go back to the previous chamber, etc. If so, they will see the visions play out in both rooms – visions that again won’t match what happened the last time they experienced them. They’re witnessing reality diverge and merge in real time, which may prove terrifying but will have no lasting effect. After having PCs encounter the echoes, the corridors out of *both* rooms will lead to encounter 7, just as shown on the labyrinth map.

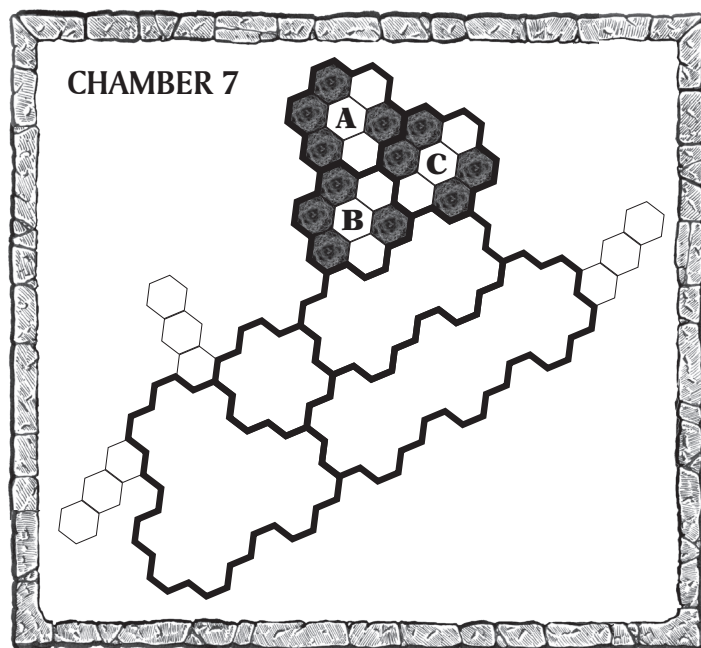
7: THE SECOND CHAOS TRIAD

This encounter is very similar to the first one (see p. 7). Again, this is a section of the caverns once mined for Chaos Matter, with a Chaos Triad having formed where the vein once extended. The second shard sits at A at the start, teleporting to B or C when acted upon as before. This shard follows the same rules for acquiring or destroying it. It leaves behind 1d fragments if broken and will cling to or remain in the silver tray if placed there.

However, this area has fallen further to Chaos, and uses the special Chaos Triad tile (see below).

The Chaos Triad

This Triad looks much like the first, although less misty and more well-defined. Entering one of these Chaos Hexes produces a feeling of bitter cold, as Chaos starts to leak into the figure. A figure in a Chaos hex suffers a -1 to adjDX for combat and to IQ for spellcasting as long as the figure remains there.



At the end of any turn that a character ends in a Chaos hex, a 2/ST roll should be attempted. On failure, the figure loses one hit due to the effects of contact with Chaos (treated like spellcasting fatigue, not physical damage). Thus, characters of ST 12 or greater will feel the chill but not lose hits as a result.

This room contains two new Chaostained. They begin the combat each in the center hex of one of the Chaos Triad megahexes. For each new Chaostained, roll on the tables on p. 4 for their power and weakness.

Chaostained 4 (formerly Josef, fighter)

ST 12, DX 12, IQ 9, MA 6

Protection: 3 hits as per chainmail

Attacks for 2d damage as per broadsword

Chaostained 5 (formerly Dmitri, elven warrior)

ST 13, DX 13, IQ 8, MA 6

Protection: 2 hits as per leather armor

Attacks for 2d damage as per halberd, using normal pole weapon rules

The Chaostained somehow understand the detrimental effects the Chaos hexes have on outsiders and use them to their strategic advantage as much as possible. Chaostained are unaffected by Chaos hexes and can pass freely through them or stand within them with no penalties. They focus attacks on anyone entering one of the target hexes marked A, B, or C to make it as hard as possible to repeat a subdual strategy without first dealing with the Chaostained.

As per encounter 4, the Chaostained remain and attack as long as the shard remains active unless “killed.”

8: TO BEAR THE ELEMENTS

The door to this chamber has been knocked down, with the frame showing both water and fire damage. Nothing can be seen as the PCs enter, but there is a strong gust of wind coming from somewhere above.



Residing here is a grumpy old bear that made this his den, coming and going through an overgrown tunnel leading to a small cave complex above, connected at the northernmost hex of this chamber. He has been tainted by Chaos, and when in the presence of living beings, shifts turn by turn through several elemental forms. This shifting wakes the bear and does nothing to improve his hostile temperament.

ELEMENTAL BEAR

Elemental Bear rotates among all four forms, changing just before movement on its turn. All forms have ST 20, DX 11, IQ 6, MA 8. All but the Air Bear form can enter HTH combat. Use a standard bear counter for the Elemental Bear.

He starts by shifting to the form of an Air Bear and attacks by surprise following an initial gust of wind if the PCs fail a 4/IQ roll. (Alertness modifies by 1 die, as does Acute Hearing in this case.) Swooping from above, the semitransparent bear-like figure drops on the most vulnerable-appearing member of the party.

At the beginning of each of his new turns, just before movement, the bear shifts in order among his Air, Earth, Water, and Fire forms, repeating as necessary. All damage done to him is cumulative, and his basic attributes are those of a normal bear. If in danger of being defeated, he will attempt to flee through the tunnel to the caves above. In death, he will revert to the form of a normal bear.

Air Bear

In Air Bear form, the creature flies at normal MA and cannot be engaged. He can knock a target down with wind as he flies through the target's hex. (2d/ST to resist.) The Air Bear cannot otherwise do physical attacks or be harmed by physical weapons, fire, or lightning. Other spells affect as normal, as do wizards' staff attacks.

Earth Bear

Earth Bear's soil-like form stops 3 hits/attack. He can attack with claws for 2d+1 or enter HTH with a hug giving the same damage. Earth Bear is immune to Fire. A Magic Rainstorm melts his muddy form at 1d hits/turn of exposure.

Fire Bear

Fire Bear is made of living flame, lighting the entire chamber when he flares up. He can attack distant foes with fireballs, like the spell. (Costs 1 ST to throw, does 1d-1 hits.) He normally prefers to strike engaged opponents with burning claws for 2d hits, or hug for 2d+2 hits in HTH combat. He is immune to fire or lightning, but a Magic Rainstorm does 4d hits per turn of exposure.

Water Bear

Water Bear's claw attack does no damage but a hit knocks down the opponent if a 3/ST save fails. Its hug attack in HTH combat does damage just like immersion in deep water; 4/DX save for non-swimmers, 3/DX for swimmers, 2/DX for divers. 1d hits drowning damage is taken by the hug victim if the DX save is failed. In water form, the bear takes double damage taken from fire/lightning. 1/2 all damage (round down) taken from non-magical weapons.

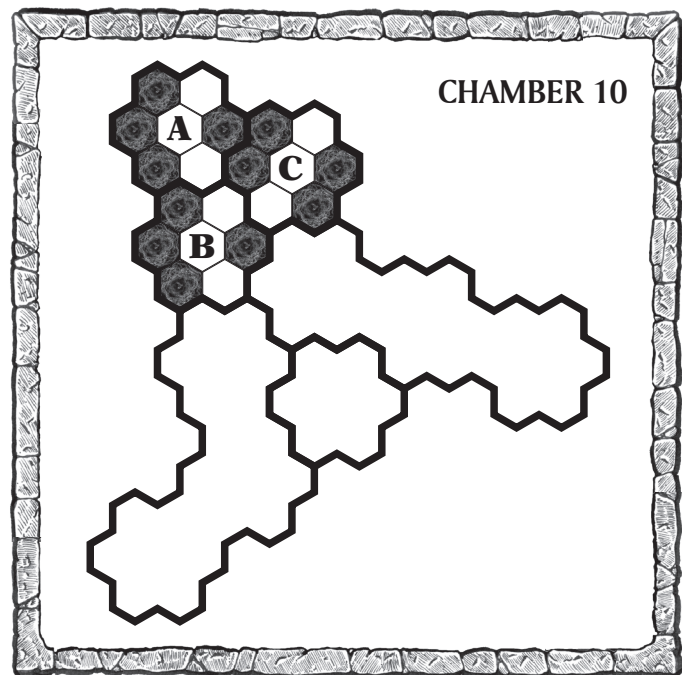
9: QUIET ROOM

This room is truly a quiet interlude before the final confrontation. Here, Chaos has taken an odd but mostly benign turn. Within this three-megahex area, no sound can exist. In the silence, the PCs will feel strangely relaxed and calm. Any previous loss of ST to *fatigue* will fade away at the rate of 1 ST/minute. This should be a relief to wizards in the party, certainly. While here, however, the PCs may not communicate with each other except by writing (if literate) or gestures (which should be fun). The GM should *strictly* enforce this condition.

10: THE FINAL CHAOS TRIAD

This chamber is constructed using the same Chaos Triad megahex pieces as seen in encounters 4 and 7. As before, patches of gaping void are part of the Chaos Triad. This time, the remaining barrier between reality and Chaos in the Chaos hexes is dangerously thin. Entering one of the Chaos hexes is like stepping into very sticky mud. Treat this like stepping on a Sticky Floor. The effects of being in a Chaos hex here are the same as in encounter 7. The target feels bitterly cold as Chaos starts to leak in and suffers a -1 to adjDX for combat and to IQ for spellcasting as long as they remain in a Chaos hex.

At the end of any turn that a character ends in a Chaos hex, a 2/ST roll should be attempted. On failure, the figure loses one hit due to the effects of contact with Chaos (treated like spellcasting fatigue, not physical damage).



In this final room, there is a cumulative effect of standing in pure Chaos. If the roll to escape damage is failed, the figure cannot move from a Chaos hex to a solid hex on their next move. They may move into another connected Chaos hex or stand still, but they sink farther into Chaos.

After a second turn in a Chaos hex, failing a 3/ST save costs the figure 1 ST in fatigue. If this save is failed, figures will also not have a chance to pull themselves out of Chaos and onto a solid hex next turn. They must continue to wallow in Chaos.

On a third consecutive turn in a Chaos hex, the figure is waist-deep in Chaos and needs a 4/ST save to avoid another fatigue hit. If the figure loses consciousness, it will continue to sink into Chaos. Any figure that spends four consecutive turns wading in Chaos will sink below the surface at the beginning of turn 5. (A generous GM might give the PCs a chance to recover him from Chaos in a subsequent adventure. Maybe.)

With a 3/ST save, a person standing on solid ground *can* drag another figure in an adjacent hex out of a Chaos hex at any depth including the one in which it goes under. This is reduced to 2/ST if the victim is conscious. The rescuer cannot move, fight, cast spells, or take any other action that turn, however.

A PC may ask the Guardian to plunge into a Chaos hex himself and physically lift a victim out to any consecutive solid hex – even if the victim has gone under the turn before. If he does so, however, the Guardian will himself be lost to Chaos. (Cue sad, slow music.)

Chaostained

This room has a final two Chaostained (see p. 4), described below. In addition, any PC killed earlier in the caverns will appear here as a GM-controlled Chaostained opponent. (Roll for their special power and weakness.)

Any PC attacking a Chaostained who used to be a member of their party must make a 3/IQ save on the first attack or suffer a -1 DX/IQ penalty for the entire combat. On the flip side, an engaged PC who tries to talk to a PC Chaostained attacker can attempt a 3/IQ roll. If it succeeds, the former PC has a moment of clarity, realizes what they have become, and with a cry of pure anguish, casts itself into the nearest Chaos Hex, disappearing into it. (Again, a very generous GM may offer PCs a later quest to rescue such a character, or at least put the anguished Chaostained soul to rest.)

For each Chaostained, roll on the tables on p. 4 for their powers and weakness.

Chaostained 6 (formerly Corragio, blademaster)

ST 12, DX 15, IQ 10, MA 8

Protection: 2 hits as per leather armor

Attacks for 2 damage as per broadsword

Chaostained 7 (formerly Anders, heroic leader)

ST 14, DX 14, IQ 12, MA 6

Protection: 5 hits as per plate armor

Attacks for 2d ranged damage as per light crossbow

As per Room 7 (p. 9), the Chaostained are unaffected by the Chaos hexes and use them to their advantage. As usual, the Chaostained remain alive so long as the Orb shard remains whole or uncaptured.

THE GOAL

In this room is the last of the Orb shards, again starting at the hex marked A. It has the same behaviors as the previous ones, and also generates 1d fragments if destroyed.



SUCCESS IS A SPECTRUM

It is possible, if they are very smart and skillful indeed, that the party can capture all three Orb shards intact. If they do so, they can restore the Orb by placing one inert shard in each of A, B, and C. They will teleport together onto A and recombine. If they do not think of this, and the Guardian still survives, he can restore the Orb by sacrificing his own existence to do so. (If the Guardian makes it past this point, though, his purpose will require him to go back with the party to guard the Orb or what remains of it; he will stay in the Barony when they leave.)

If the heroes do return the Orb of Ages intact, the Baroness will pay the full \$10,000 reward promised, plus a \$2,000 bonus for each surviving PC. The party, now Heroes of the Barony, will be allowed to be present when the Orb is used to dispel the Chaos Matter in the Baronet's neck. This will drain the magic from the Orb (perhaps forever), but the Baroness will be very satisfied with that trade.

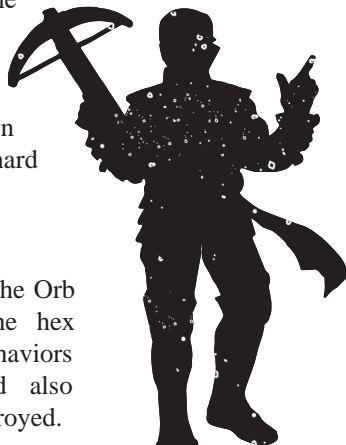
FAILURE IS AN OPTION

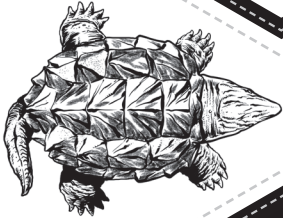
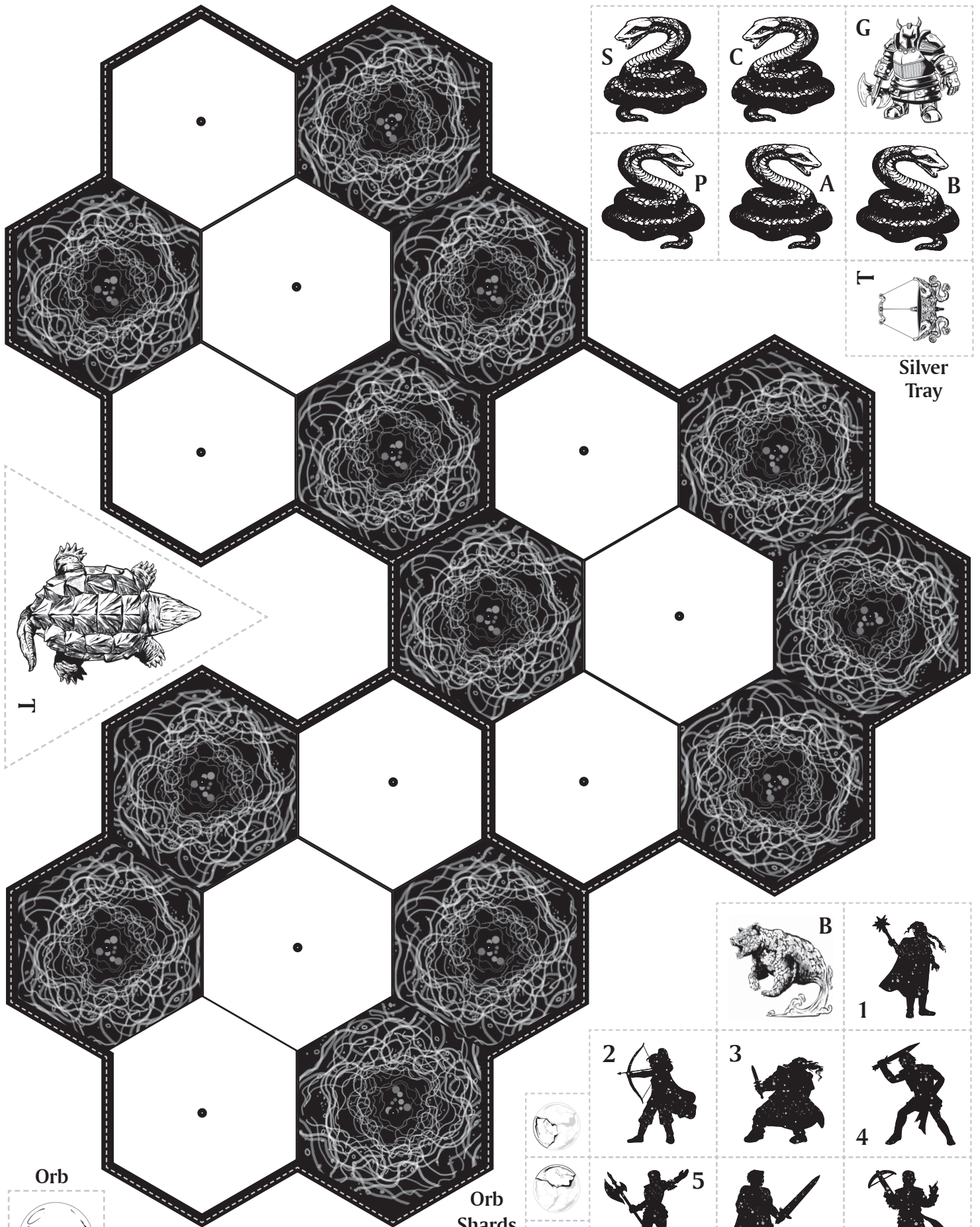
A winning outcome with an intact Orb is unlikely; the GM should not force such an ending on the PCs.

If the party returns with pieces of the Orb and the melted amulet, each intact shard is worth \$2,000 to the Baroness and any smaller fragments will bring \$200 each. Combined with the knowledge the PCs bring back, these may be used by baronial wizards to extend the Baronet's life for a time. The Baroness will continue to hope for a cure, and she may hire the PCs again for subsequent related adventures.

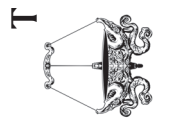
With no Orb and no intact shards, the young Baronet will pass away within a few weeks. The *spread* of Chaos from the area of the mine will stop after a few weeks, but the Caverns and surrounding areas may continue to be a Chaos-tainted source of trouble for many years to come.

In any event, there is still the matter of an unknown assassin who must be tracked down. That is a tale for another time.

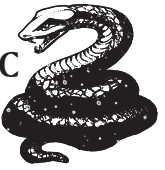




T



Silver Tray



B



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



Orb



Orb Shards

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The Curse of Katiki-Mu™



BY ROBERT SAINT JOHN

ILLUSTRATED BY DEAN SPENCER

Your team has been summoned by Cadakee, a respected and wealthy trader. Charismatic, a linguist and something of a scholar, Cadakee was an adventurer in his youth. It's widely believed that he made a small fortune on his last journey before settling down to turn it into a large fortune.

But Cadakee has suffered increasing misfortune. One son vanished three years ago, and a second was lost to a mysterious illness. Two trading ships have failed to return from their voyages. Rumor has it that the merchant's closest aides are abandoning him.

Cadakee greets the party; if there are nonhumans present, he speaks to them without accent in their own tongues. He offers refreshment but then gets right to his point.

"I am cursed." He irritably toys with a bluish quartz amulet, a disk embossed with patterns you cannot quite make out. "I took something that wasn't mine. Isn't that what all delvers do? But it all went wrong." On his desk, he removes a cloth to reveal a crude stone effigy of a grinning figure. "This . . . *thing* must be returned whence it came."

Cadakee recounts the tale of how he came upon the bluish amulet many years ago, wrapped in a crumbling map that he eventually deciphered. With hopes of fortune and glory, he led a party to a mountain cave.

Inside the cave, he says, the amulet sent them to an alien land. This new land – *Mu*, he calls it – sat under a familiar night sky, but was dense with sights, sounds, and even colors unlike any he had experienced. It was as if some great power had lifted *Mu* from another time and space and dropped it in a faraway corner of *Cidri*. Seeing no way to get down, the party turned its back on the new scenery and ventured deeper underground.

From there, his narrative becomes increasingly quick and disjointed.

Distant chants. The curious glow. An echoing tapping sound. Gems, wonderful gems! Violent confrontations. The claws! One companion vanished, then another. Chaos . . . panic! A shrine? A statuette on an altar. He snatched it and fled in terror with the other survivors. Angry screams from behind. Running. Back to the cave entrance. How to get home? The simplest solution.

Cadakee made it back, alone, with a knapsack full of unusual gems, enough to found his own trading house. For a few years, all seemed well. Then the dreams began. First there was the sense of something searching for him, growing closer. Then came the awful night when he awakened screaming, knowing he'd been found. And now he cannot sleep without seeing visions of the effigy, laughing at him, pointing, calling him a thief and a coward for abandoning his friends.

The trader falls silent, in shame and anger. "I am cursed," he repeats. "And I cannot bring myself to go back there. I know I'd go mad before I even stepped into the cave." He seems more than a little mad already.

He motions toward the effigy, without actually looking at it. "I've had another map made. And you'll need the key, of course." He hands over the quartz amulet.

"Go now. Be cautious and quick. You'll know what to do. Return this thing to the shrine and come home."

Days later, your party is fully equipped and stands on a ledge in front of Cadakee's cave. You have rested, and dawn lights the sky in the east. You have the amulet and the grinning stone effigy. The dark mouth of the cave beckons you to enter.

BACKGROUND (FOR THE GAME MASTER)

The cave is a genuine *Mnoren* artifact, a link between this land and another continent on *Cidri* known as *Mu*. Although listed in the *Book of Maps*, there are few details of *Mu*. It is as if the entire continent had appeared out of nowhere, or someone had tried to erase details of it. Or both.

The feather amulet is a token that bridges caves on the faces of two mountains: one on the local peak, and another, an unguessable distance away, that is the entrance to the depths of *Katiki-Mu*.

A *Muian* sorceress, an adept and worshiper of Earth powers, lives in the cave with her squad of loyal warriors and laborers. The expedition stumbled into the sorceress' lair, and matters quickly went from bad to worse for both sides. Neither party tried to talk, not that Cadakee recognized anything that was

said by the *Muians*, linguist though he is. Their tongue seems to have no relation to anything he knows.

The effigy that Cadakee snatched is a magic item that can bring the giant *Moatiki* statue in the shrine to life. The sorceress will be extremely pleased to have the effigy back in her possession. Not necessarily *grateful*, merely pleased!

Will returning the grinning effigy to the shrine truly lift the curse? Is the curse even real, or is Cadakee simply consumed by guilt? Who knows? But Cadakee has decided that the hideous little idol must be the source of his problems, and this is the task the team has accepted.

Cadakee is not happy talking about these things, and his explanation is broken and indirect. The GM should try the players' patience a bit as they work to get a clear explanation of the mission. But in the end, the objectives for the heroes are straightforward: get to the cave, use the amulet to activate the portal to *Katiki-Mu*, locate the shrine deep within, return the effigy to the shrine.



Cadakee will provide labyrinth kits, and \$100 each for expenses. Other than that, he offers no reward . . . instead, he talks dreamily and convincingly about the gems he found in the caverns. Looking about furtively, he shows them some rough gems that he says are the last remnants of his haul from the cave. "Whatever you find," he says. "They're just lying around like gravel. Anything you can take out. I should ask for a 50-50 split. I should go myself and keep it all. But I can't go. You've got to take this thing back. But anything you take out is yours. Just don't take any *carved* ones, haha." His laugh is painful to hear.

This is, in fact, the best that the man can offer. There is no adventure if the party declines the deal, so make Cadakee convincing. He is, after all, telling the complete truth, to his own shame.

STARTING POINTS

By default, the adventure starts in the city of *Dranning* (*ITL*, p. 172) and moves to a nameless peak in the *Gargoyle Mountains*, two days' trek from *Bordre*. This is past the territory claimed by the mountain dwarves, at least on the surface of the earth. They may tunnel beneath the cave on this side, but they won't find the path to *Mu* – not on this continent!

However, the GM can start this adventure in any city in his campaign. The mountain need not even be nearby, as long as it's close to somewhere that's accessible by Gate. And *Mu*, of course, is . . . somewhere else.

This is a good adventure for four or five 36-point characters, or a like number of starting characters with a bit of extra magic.

GAME MASTER NOTES

The map of the Katiki-Mu caves is divided into four sections. Each section includes a description of the area, followed by tables for random *Encounters* and potential *Discoveries* within the tunnels. While the party is in the cave and tunnels of Mu, roll 1 die every turn that they are moving about and not already involved in an encounter. On a 5, roll again on the *Encounters* table for that area. On a 6, roll again on the *Discoveries* table.

Each encounter or discovery will occur only once, unless it is specified that it may repeat. Later rolls with the same result reveal nothing unusual.

The party may randomly encounter a specific foe that is assigned to a room elsewhere in the adventure (for example, running into the Chef in tunnels near the quarters, before finding the kitchen). The GM should keep track of NPCs and creatures, and adjust for such situations accordingly.

THE CAVE PLAZA

This section includes the approach to the entrance, the entry cave that contains the portal, and the antechamber and initial tunnels beyond. The ledge and the cave exist in both the adventurers' land and in Katiki-Mu, but everything beyond the Gate cave exists only in Katiki-Mu.

CADAKEE'S TREASURES

Cadakee gives the party what are almost surely his three greatest treasures, more sign of his honest intent . . .

The Map. This is not the original map that Cadakee found, but a new one that he had made after he deciphered the original puzzle. It is very clear, and shows the way to a cave near the top of a nameless peak. Only on a good reaction will Cadakee even show them the original map; if he does, they will be impressed that he deciphered it.

The Amulet. It's a blue-gray quartz disc about 2" across, and seems brand new and finely made. When tapped, it rings like a high, sweet chime. One side is engraved with a stylized feather. On the other side is a glyph that Cadakee says "might be Mnoren." It's certainly nothing the PCs have ever seen. The amulet does not respond to a Detect Magic spell.

The Effigy. This is a leering little statue, crudely carved out of a drab brown stone. In style, it is completely different from the amulet. Someone with Detect Value, or any relevant artistic skill, will feel that the effigy has no artistic merit of any kind.

It reacts strongly to a Detect Magic spell. Reveal Magic suggests that the magic is elemental in nature, but that's all.

ENCOUNTERS

- 1-3 – Nothing.
- 4 – A dying creature on the floor. It is pale-colored, winged, and looks like a giant furred insect.
- 5 – A wandering crabman. ST 11, DX 10, IQ 3, MA 8. 1d+2 damage with each pincer.
- 6 – What appears to be the head of a very large snake emerges from a small tunnel at head height, stares at them, and draws back.

DISCOVERIES

- 1, 2 – Nothing.
- 3, 4 – Rats and rat bones.
- 5 – A discarded, burned-out torch.
- 6 – Flickering blue-purple in the torchlight, a single small rough gemstone is seen among the pebbles on the floor. It is worth only \$1d × 2, but it's encouraging!

1. THE LEDGE

A path up the face of the mountain leads to a precarious ledge outside the inconspicuous mouth of a cave. It is dawn. The sun is in the east and a large forested valley is far below. The occasional bat can be seen re-entering the cave, but the ledge is otherwise unremarkable and shows no sign of recent visits.

2. THE CAVE

The opening leads into a cave about 25 feet wide by 20 feet deep. Although it looks like a natural formation, the walls are smooth and featureless. Bats fly in and up into a dark opening in the ceiling. Bits of charred wood on the floor suggest that it has been used as a shelter, but not recently.

In the center of the chamber is an obelisk, 4 feet tall, which appears to be made of the same blue-gray material as the feather amulet. On the front of the obelisk is the glyph from the amulet, much larger. There is a disc-shaped impression on the pyramid tip, facing the cave entrance. It is, of course, exactly the right size to hold the amulet.

If the amulet is placed glyph-side up within the impression, nothing happens. If it is placed feather-side up, a portal is activated.

When this happens, the cave changes in a number of ways. Those inside have been transported elsewhere, but at first they will think that the cave itself has changed. The obelisk and amulet are still in the same position. But now the obelisk displays the feather image.

A pair of large double doors has appeared on the far side of the chamber. More interesting is that the lighting has changed. If the party ventures back out onto the ledge, the world looks very different. The sun is setting in the west. The moon and stars in the purple southern sky are familiar, but the valley below looks entirely different. A forest of palm trees stretches into the distance to a shore along a sea that wasn't there before. The strange cries of unfamiliar beasts come from below, and an impossibly large winged serpent glides through the air in the distance. Pale creatures that are not bats fly from the cave mouth into the night.

THE MNOREN PORTAL

The portal is *not* a magical Gate, and its operation is different. It is a creation of science, not magic, which is why neither the amulet nor the obelisk registers as magic. When the portal is activated, everyone within the cavern is transported to a similar area elsewhere.

The amulet is a key. It is not really quartz; like the portal, it is nearly unbreakable. Depending on which side is up when it is placed in the obelisk, it will either do nothing, or activate the portal.

Are there other keys with different symbols on them? Would they lead to different portal rooms? That is for the GM to determine and the players to find out.

There is still a ledge, but there is no longer a path down from the cave entrance. There appears to be no safe way to get down the mountain from here. The only way forward is back, through the double doors that materialized inside. The doors are stone, but unlocked and on hinges, and can be pushed inward with some effort.

3. ANTECHAMBER

The chamber is about 45 feet by 30 feet with a high ceiling, and unlit. With night falling outside, the party will require torches to see. The walls seem to be carved from the stone, and there are two wooden doors on the far side, one each to the east and the west. They are secured with carved wooden latches but unlocked. In the center of the room are five oddly shaped pedestals, evenly spaced about 10 feet apart. Each pedestal is whitish, with a wide base and rounded top. The floor is littered with rodent bones.

The “pedestals” are maulers (see *In the Labyrinth*, p. 98), rare and bizarre creatures with three arms and legs, a multi-pupil eye on top, and a mouth under the base. They will remain perfectly still until prey enters within 2 hexes of one of them, at which point all will spring to life, ready for a fistfight. Each mauler is ST 16, DX 13, IQ 6, MA 4, and will pursue and fight to the death. There is no treasure to be gained here.

4. FORWARD TUNNELS

Beyond the rear doors of the antechamber are tunnels, one that goes toward the northeast and one to the southwest. The tunnels are tall, wide, and seem to be natural formations. The walls are covered with veins of a glowing, slimy substance that dimly illuminates the passages with an unearthly shimmer of green and purple.

The slime is a luminescent algae that lines the walls throughout the cave system. It is poisonous to the touch, doing 1 die of damage (saving roll 3/ST). A Naturalist will be able to discern the nature of the algae, and it can be carefully applied to coat an edged weapon to enhance the first successful strike. It appears only on the walls and not the roof of the tunnels (as if “painted” there), and there is no danger of it dripping onto those traversing the tunnels.

A rhythmic tapping sound can be heard a short distance away.

The western tunnel leads to a collapsed area full of large rubble. It is possible to carefully crawl up and over the mound at 1 MA.

The eastern tunnel branches immediately to the northwest, where the tapping sound grows steadily louder.

LAIR OF THE CRABMEN

This section includes dimly lit tunnels and a number of staircases leading down to a flooded grotto, quarters for Muian laborers, and numerous, often wandering, crabmen (see *ITL*, p. 96). The air is warm and steamy, with a spoiled-vegetable odor that takes some getting used to.

ENCOUNTERS

1-3 – Wandering crabman. ST 11, DX 10, IQ 3, MA 8. 1d+2 damage with each pincer. There may be two such encounters.

4, 5 – A Muian laborer (see *Labor Quarters*, p. 6). ST 10, DX 12, IQ 9, MA 10. On a bad reaction, he will attack with a blowgun and a glowing, poisoned dart (1d poison damage if it breaks the skin) and attempt to flee to the Labor Quarters. If forced into combat, he is also armed with a dagger. On a good reaction, he will be curious, and beckon the party toward the Labor Quarters.

6 – The Chef (see *The Kitchen*, p. 7).

DISCOVERIES

1, 2 – Nothing.

3, 4 – Rats and rat bones.

5 – Small raw gems, worth \$1d. This may be discovered up to four times!

6 – The corpse of a human – at this point, only ratgnawed bones. Based on the familiar clothing, possibly a member of Cadakee’s party from years ago. No valuables or weapons are evident. A really thorough search of the corpse, on a 3/IQ roll from any participant, will discover a cloth packet in its left boot. It holds \$220 worth of raw gems, some the size of a small fingernail.

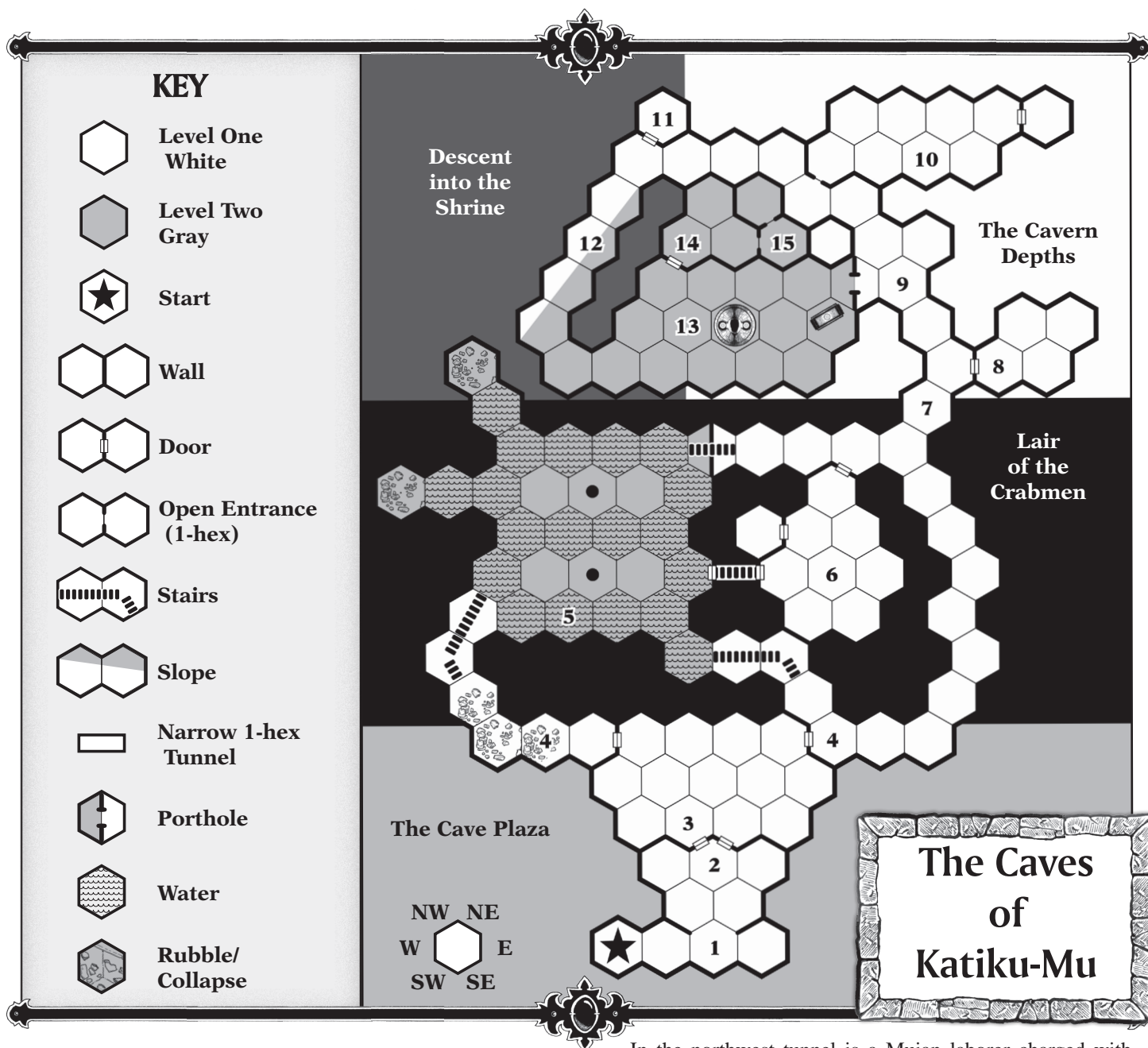
5. THE ALGAE GROTTO

Staircases from a number of tunnels lead down into this large (50 feet by 50 feet), flooded cavern. The glowing algae streaks the walls, and patches of it float in the water, giving the entire area an unearthly radiance.

Despite the algae, the water itself is not poisonous. The floor is uneven, and the water is no more than 2 to 3 feet deep. Movement through the water is halved, and members of the party must roll 3/DX each turn to avoid tripping or slipping into a prone position while in the water.

In the middle of the cavern rise two small islands, each with a stalagmite in the center. And next to each stalagmite . . . a crabman! The crabmen are crouched with their backs to the party, tapping against the stone floor.

Each is ST 12, DX 10, IQ 3, MA 8, and does 1d+2 damage with each pincer.



Two smaller crabmen (ST 9, 1d pincers) are immersed in the water. If the party observes quietly for a minute, they will see these crabmen emerge from the water, dragging ropes of algal blooms up onto the islands.

On the eastward side of the cave is an unlocked door with a carved wooden latch. Behind it, a narrow staircase leads up to a similar door that opens to the labor quarters.

On the westward side of the cave are two tunnels that each lead to a dead-end of rubble, as if once part of a mine. Digging through the rubble may reveal raw gems. Roll 1 die for each 5 minutes of searching. Only one cache of gems will be found in each location.

1-3 – Nothing.

4 – Raw gems, worth \$1d × 10.

5 – Raw gems, worth \$2d × 10.

6 – Raw gems, worth \$3d × 10.



In the northwest tunnel is a Muian laborer charged with keeping the crabmen from fighting among themselves, but he is currently asleep on duty. If there is any commotion, he'll awake and attack. He has ST 11, DX 12, IQ 10, MA 10, and is armed with a net and trident. He wears one of the headbands with a medallion (see *Labor Quarters*, p. 6), so the crabmen will not attack him. If one of the heroes finds themselves in the water and entangled in his net, it is possible they may drown. If the Muian takes more than 6 points of damage, he'll attempt to flee up the staircase to the labor quarters for help, shouting in a foreign tongue.

The crabmen are aggressive and sensitive to sound, so it won't be possible to slip through the cavern undetected without Silent Movement. They are not limited to the grotto and will pursue the party through the tunnels. The water does not inhibit their movement.

Note to the GM: The Algae Grotto is easily created using the *Wizard* map or playmat, and the position of the islands match the special center hexes of those maps. Use additional megahex tiles for connecting tunnels.

6. LABOR QUARTERS

This is a chamber 30 feet by 40 feet that serves as storage and quarters for the Muian laborers. The main entrance to the north is an unlocked wooden door. Unlike most areas of the forward section of the caverns, torches on wall sconces light the room. Four beds line the walls to the east, and a table with four chairs is in the center. Crates of supplies and barrels of algae-based foodstuffs are stacked to the south. A rack of javelins, spears, daggers, and blowguns is mounted on the wall. A door on the westward wall is unlocked and leads to a narrow staircase that descends to the algae grotto below. Another door leads to an empty privy.

There are four Muians in the room. In the unlikely event that 12 or more hours have passed and it is now daytime, the Muians are sitting around the table playing what appears to be a boardgame. Otherwise, they are asleep in bed, but any extraordinary disturbance (possibly even from the grotto a short distance away) will wake them.

The laborers are small (little more than 5 feet tall) but sturdy humans wearing tattoos and face paint, a kilt woven from palm fronds, and sandals. They wear headbands with medallions that bear the same feather emblem as the amulet. An Analyze Magic spell would reveal that these medallions have a charm that repels the crabmen.

None of the Muians speak or understand a language the heroes know, but they will chatter excitedly. They are initially unarmed, but if they perceive a threat, they will make a run for the rack on the south wall and grab their weapon of choice.

Laborer 1 – ST 10, DX 13, IQ 9, MA 10, armed with a javelin (1d-1).

Laborer 2 – ST 11, DX 11, IQ 9, MA 10, armed with a spear (1d).

Laborer 3 – ST 9, DX 12, IQ 10, MA 10, armed with a blowgun with poisoned darts (1d) and a dagger (1d-1). If he takes more than 4 points of damage, he'll attempt to flee through the north doorway to bring help from warriors deeper in the cave system.

Laborer 4 – ST 11, DX 9, IQ 9, MA 10, armed with a spear (2 hands, 1d+1).

7. THE BOIL TRAP

The cave tunnels converge into a 3-way intersection, with the tunnel to the north leading deeper into the cavern depths. Steam arises from cracks in the cave floor ahead.

In order to prevent wandering crabmen (or any other intruders) from progressing into the inner sanctum of Katiki-Mu, the Muians have created a trap in the floor itself. If anyone walks across this 10-by-10 portion of the tunnel, the entire floor will swivel on an axis, drop the hapless pedestrian into an extremely hot natural spring in the 8-foot pit below, and swing back to its closed position.

The trap is only 4/IQ to detect, due to the occasional jets of steam from the cracks. If an intruder steps on it, a saving roll of 4/DX is required to jump back in time.

The heroes may make an implausible attempt to jump the 3-hex diameter of the trap at 8/DX+ST. If they miss and land on the far edge, the floor pivots and a 4/DX saving roll will be required to grasp the edge in time. If saving rolls fail, the adventurer will fall into the near-boiling water and suffer 4 hits damage per turn (armor protects for two turns only) until his cohorts can figure out how to retrieve him. Suffice to say that a number of crabmen have become a dinner treat for the Muians in this way.

The trap can be easily deactivated by a lever hidden within obscured holes in the wall (5/IQ to spot, unless carefully looking) on either side of the pivoting floor. It is only necessary to reach inside the hole, nearly an arm's length, to grasp the handle and pull to engage a locking mechanism. The trap will remain locked and safe until re-engaged by the lever on the other side.

THE CAVERN DEPTHS

This area is occupied by more formidable Muian guardians, and provides the first glimpse of the Shrine. Wall torches illuminate the tunnels here, every 10 feet on alternating sides. The walls and ceiling are covered with pulsating vines and ivy that become thicker as the tunnel approaches the cistern and the shrine. The vines recoil from fire, but are harmless – just another sign that strange forces may be at work.



THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

It is more than possible that the party will not attack the laborers, and the laborers won't start anything without cause. The GM can certainly let the party try to communicate. However, the peace can't last very long . . . There is no chance of a common tongue; the party will have to depend on sign language.

- If shown the amulet, the laborers will look blankly at one another.
- If shown gems, the laborers will nod and perhaps bring out their own little gameboard that uses gems as pieces. They do not see the gems as valuable, just pretty. A mute attempt to exchange a dagger for the gems (\$2d × 10 value total) will succeed; the laborers have their own daggers, but consider the gems to be shiny pebbles and will be happy to trade. All very well, but . . .
- If shown the effigy, the laborers will scream in fright and awe and fall prone on the floor, covering their heads. Nothing will persuade them to rise again, and the party might as well go on.
- If shown magic, the laborers will react in the same way unless it's an attack, in which case they will try to defend themselves.
- And eventually, if not stunned by the effigy or magic, the laborers will chatter among themselves and #3, the smartest, will escape to find higher authority. If he is let go, he will return with two warriors. The warriors will realize that these new strange invaders pose a threat, and will quickly become hostile; the laborers will join the fight. It might occur to the party to try to overawe the warriors with the effigy, but the reaction will be, not fear, but savage anger. They know the effigy belongs to their mistress!

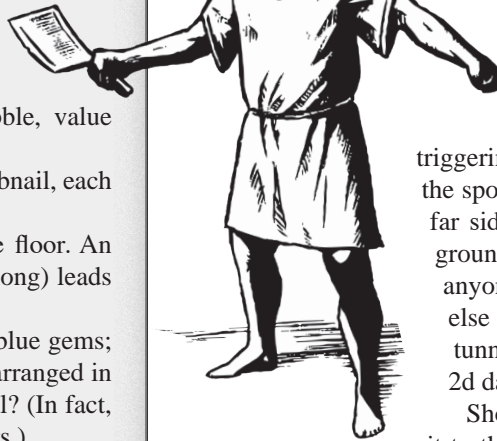
While the party is in the tunnels, roll 1 die every *other* turn. On a 5, roll again on the *Encounters* table below. On a 6, roll again on the *Discoveries* table.

ENCOUNTERS

- 1, 2 – Nothing.
- 3 – 1d small Scolopendra (see *ITL*, p. 95), scuttling through the vines above. They will flee from motion and light, and will only drop onto a hero if attacked.
- 4, 5 – A Mu Warrior (see *Barracks*, p. 8, and roll on the Warrior table to select). He will immediately attack, but will attempt to flee for aid from the barracks if their ST drops to 3.
- 6 – The Mighty (see *The Shrine of Moatiki*, p. 9), the most daunting of the Mu Warriors, who will berserk and fight to the death.

DISCOVERIES

- 1 – A single rough gem the size of a pebble, value \$2d × 100!
- 2 – Three rough gems the size of a large thumbnail, each with a value of \$1d × 100.
- 3 – Dried blood coats a large portion of the floor. An unusually large set of footprints (one foot long) leads out and away from the stain.
- 4 – A pile of 1d+6 roughly polished red and blue gems; figure value of each at \$2d × 20. They are arranged in a pattern whose meaning is not clear. Ritual? (In fact, they are game pieces used by bored warriors.)
- 5 – An unusual artifact at the edge of the floor, against the wall: a 6" tall figure of an upright lizard beast, green and made of tin. There is a small dial on the side. If the dial is wound, the figure seems to come to life! Its legs move and sparks come out of its mouth for up to one minute. If placed on the ground, it will slowly "walk" for 6 to 8 feet before coming to a stop. It's harmless, but noisy and distracting.
- 6 – The skeletal corpse of a human, spiked upright to the wall with a javelin, enveloped by vines. Based on the clothing, it may be a member of Cadakee's party from years ago. No valuables or weapons are to be found, even if the pitiful remains are dissected bone by bone.



Cookware hangs down low from the ceiling in the middle of the room, and anyone over 5 1/2 feet tall will likely have to crouch in order to avoid banging their head or making noise.

The room is dimly lit, illuminated only by the flames under the cauldron. It probably smells delicious, if you happen to be a Muian. To others, it smells like boiled, fermented seaweed.

Unless the party has already randomly encountered the Chef in the tunnels, he is hidden in the kitchen. He spotted the group earlier, and is concealed behind the door, prepared for their arrival.

The Chef is very possessive of his kitchen and wary of fellow Muians who might try to pilfer food while he's away. He has set a snare trap 5 feet inside the door, with a cord that goes up and over to a mechanism on the other side of the room. The snare is 4/IQ to see in the dark, 4/DX to dodge; otherwise, the hero will quickly find himself suspended upside down. Although the snare is easy to avoid or disarm by simply triggering it, it has a second component: the spooling mechanism on the table at the far side also fires a bolt 3 feet above the ground toward the door. It will pass under anyone caught in the snare. But anyone else in the bolt's path, even out in the tunnel, must roll 3/DX to dodge or suffer 2d damage.

Should any member of the party make it to the center of the room, the Chef will attack from behind.

The Chef (ST 12, DX 10, IQ 12, MA 8) is a little taller and stockier than the laborers. He has tattoos and face paint, and wears a canvas smock. He also wears the headband with the feather medallion. He is armed with a large cleaver (1d+2), and his talents include Cook, Knife, Ax, Acute Hearing, Brawling, Silent Movement, and Mechanician. He is paranoid and just plain mean. He will start trouble even though he's outnumbered. Attempts to turn this into a peaceful encounter will be met only with (continued) immediate violence.

The Muians are accustomed to a great deal of noise in the kitchen, even at night. If the Chef has no laborers to yell at, he will curse his own pots. No one will automatically come running to any pandemonium coming from the kitchen.

8. THE KITCHEN

A closed but unlocked door opens inward to a small cookery, 25 feet by 20 feet. It is the domain of the Chef, a hot-headed Muian who has no tolerance even for his own people, and reacts violently to the alien intruders.

The room is lined on the left side with the typical accoutrements of a kitchen: a wood-fired stove, an oven, and a preparation table. At the far end is another table stacked with kitchen utensils. A shelf behind it contains battered metal dinnerware. On the right side are a double sink, a large cauldron that is boiling algae, and a stack of firewood.

9. MEZZANINE

As the party approaches the mezzanine area beyond the kitchen, they will hear a faint chanting: "Mo-ah-tee-kee. Mo-ah-tee-kee." The vines are growing thicker here.

To the west, a flickering light comes from a porthole in the rocks, 5 feet from the floor and 8 feet wide by 2 feet tall. The porthole looks down into what seems to be a large shrine. The room is lit by various torches and is about 40 feet deep and 30 feet wide, tall and open. It recedes into a tunnel in the distance.

The chanting comes from two Muian warriors kneeling on the floor below. If the party has not seen them before, describe them as bigger than the laborers, and armed.

In front of them is a huge statue: a stone head with a face that is nearly featureless other than a large brow, long nose, and small mouth, lit on either side by huge torches. The Muians appear to be in a trance and will not notice the intruders as long as they're reasonably quiet.

Behind them is a large stone altar with a circular dais in the center. Within a few moments, the party may notice that the dais begins a pulsating glow. If the hero carrying Cadakee's effigy is at the porthole and makes a successful 3/IQ roll, it will occur to them to take a look at the effigy. It is pulsing in time with the dais, as if they're calling to each other. If the bearer moves away from the porthole, the glowing of both objects ceases.

The porthole is too narrow to easily crawl through (6/DX each turn to avoid attention, or 3/DX with Stealth or Silent Movement). The drop down is 20 feet to the next floor and would require a secured rope to scale down safely.

The more time the party spends here, the greater the chance of a random encounter in the tunnels.

Note to the GM: The following feature of the mezzanine area is completely optional and serves to provide the GM with an opportunity for future adventures in Mu. Feel free to modify it.

In a recessed area of the tunnel opposite the porthole, beneath the vines, is a hidden door (5/IQ to spot). It is magically locked (Knock required, or simple violence) and appears nearly indistinguishable from the rock surface. It leads to another passage that allows the Muians to venture out of the mountain.

Should the GM choose to utilize this exit, they should determine what lies beyond. A wondrous city? A yawning pit? Another Mnoren portal? A Gate? Does it require a word, spell, or key? Is the key hidden in the Sorceress' Chamber below, or carried on her person? Can the heroes leave through it in this adventure, or will they have to return? It's up to the GM!

10. BARRACKS

This chamber, 40 feet by 20 feet, has an open doorway. It serves as the sleeping quarters and armory for the half-dozen Muian warriors in the complex. On the walls are oil-burning lanterns. There is a table with chairs near the front, and a rack with weapons and shields near the entry. The rest of the space is filled with six sets of beds and side tables, each with a dim lantern and a book. At the rear is a door leading to a small privy, and a large wooden trunk.

The trunk is locked with a mechanism unfamiliar to the adventurers. The Locksmith skill can solve it at 4/DX, and a Knock spell will also work.

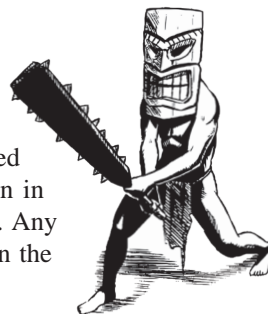
The trunk contains the possessions of previous unwanted visitors to the caves: a labyrinth kit, an empty waterskin, two shortswords, a morningstar, three daggers, and a pouch with coins (\$11 in copper, \$70 in silver, \$40 in gold) and gems (worth \$270), in addition to a Dazzle gem and a smooth black onyx stone with a shield engraved on it (a Spell Shield magic item). Another pouch contains four vials with three doses each of healing potion. There are also two clean human skulls.

Two warriors are asleep in this room; the others are on duty. Any hero entering the room without Stealth or Silent

Movement must roll 3/DX each turn to avoid waking them. Refer to the Mu Warrior Table below to determine which of them are in the room.

Roll a die each turn; on a 6, another warrior enters the room and joins or initiates combat.

There are no valuables on the warriors, though they do wear the familiar medallion headband beneath the masks. The books in the room are identical, perhaps a sacred text, with few illustrations and written in the completely alien Muian language. Any of these may have some value back in the adventurers' homeland.



MU WARRIOR TABLE

The six Muian warriors work in rotating shifts: two patrol the rear tunnels; two are in the shrine (often worshipping the Moatiki statue) near the Sorceress; two are asleep in the barracks. Roll a die to determine which warrior(s) is encountered randomly or in any of the rooms where they are indicated. Re-roll if the result is a warrior already encountered and defeated.

These are elite guards, more able and athletic than the laborers. When on duty, they wear carved wooden masks that cover their heads and torsos. The masks provide 2 hits/attack protection, a -1 DX penalty (treat as large shields) and a -2 MA penalty. The warriors are stealthy, loyal, devout, and almost fanatical; they will only retreat to seek aid from the others.

- 1 – ST 11, DX 10 (9), IQ 10, MA 8;
Spear (2 hands) 1d+1, Dagger 1d-1; Talents: Alertness, Knife, Literacy, Pole Weapons, Shield, Silent Movement, Spear Thrower.
- 2 – ST 13, DX 12 (11), IQ 9, MA 8;
Leiomanō* 2d+1, Dagger 1d-1; Talents: Alertness, Ax/Mace, Knife, Literacy, Pole Weapons, Shield, Silent Movement.
- 3 – ST 11, DX 12 (11), IQ 9, MA 8;
Spear (2 hands) 1d+1, Dagger 1d-1; Talents: Alertness, Knife, Literacy, Shield, Spear Thrower, Unarmed Combat I.
- 4 – ST 12, DX 11 (10), IQ 9, MA 8;
War Ax 2d, Dagger 1d-1; Talents: Alertness, Ax/Mace, Knife, Literacy, Silent Movement, Unarmed Combat I.
- 5 – ST 13, DX 11 (10), IQ 10, MA 8;
Leiomanō 2d+1, Dagger 1d-1; Talents: Alertness, Ax/Mace, Knife, Literacy, Shield, Silent Movement, Toughness, Unarmed Combat I.
- 6 – ST 11, DX 12 (11), IQ 9, MA 8;
Spear (2 hands) 1d+1, Dagger 1d-1; Talents: Alertness, Knife, Literacy, Pole Weapons, Shield, Spear Thrower, Unarmed Combat I.

* The Leiomanō is a large flat club, lined with shark teeth; treat as a morningstar.

INTO THE SHRINE

This final area takes the explorers down into the shrine seen earlier. The chanting grows louder as the party nears the shrine. The Sorceress and her own quarters are in this lower level as well, though only the most skilled heroes will have the opportunity to explore them.

While the party travels down the tunnel, roll 1 die every other turn. On a 5, roll again on the *Encounters* table below. On a 6, roll again on the *Discoveries* table.

ENCOUNTERS

- 1, 2 – Nothing.
- 3 – A large brown fuzzy spider, the size of a hand, descends on a strand of web onto the neck of one of the party members. ST 1, DX 10, IQ 3, MA 10. It will attack with any sudden movement from its prey, but its bite cannot penetrate any clothing or armor. The bite itself does no damage, but the victim must roll 3/ST to avoid 1d poison damage.
- 4, 5 – A Mu Warrior comes up the tunnel from the shrine (see *Barracks*, p. 8, and roll on the Warrior table to select). He will immediately attack, but will attempt to flee back to the shrine for aid if his ST drops to 3.
- 6 – The Mighty (see *The Shrine of Moatiki*, below), the most daunting of the Mu Warriors, who will berserk and fight to the death.

DISCOVERIES

- 1, 2 – The chants of “Mo-ah-tee-kee” cease.
- 3, 4 – A swarm of fireflies, beautiful and harmless. They glow with every color of the rainbow. They will scatter up into the vines if approached.
- 5 – A large raw gem worth \$1d × 10.
- 6 – A tray with a stack of four dirty plates and a large, cracked, empty crab claw.

11. CISTERN

Behind an unlocked door is a round chamber, 12 feet across, that reaches into the darkness above. It holds a large cylindrical wooden structure that occupies almost the entire room and also recedes up and out of sight. A dripping faucet sits on the front of this giant water tank. There is enough space to navigate around the edge of the room. Tools and lumber are scattered around the edge, indications that the cistern has been recently patched. The faucet works and the water is potable.

12. DESCENDING PASSAGE

The wide passage ahead descends for about 50 feet, dropping 20 feet from the upper level. The vines become thinner as the tunnel levels, where it opens into the shrine itself. It is possible to stealthily peer around the corner into the shrine, though line of sight is restricted to the southeastern side of the chamber. The porthole of the mezzanine above can be glimpsed in the distance.

13. THE SHRINE OF MOATIKI

This cave, 50 feet by 30 feet, has a domed ceiling rising nearly 30 feet into the air. Torches on sconces around the perimeter light the entire room. The cave walls are natural and rocky, but the angles would make them difficult to scale. The walls are painted with trees and bushes, as though the shrine were a jungle clearing. On the far eastern side is the porthole, 20 feet from the cave floor. Out of sight in the northwest corner is a door. The shrine is mostly empty of fixtures, with two notable exceptions.

First, near the center of the room, is a large marble altar with a circular dais in the center. The dais is lit with a pulsating glow (as is the little effigy, should its bearer happen to look).

Second, in front of the altar and against the wall, is a massive statue: a chiseled monolithic stone face staring solemnly at the altar, squatting on disproportionately short limbs at its base. The figure is about 9 feet tall and sits on a stepped marble pedestal 10 feet in diameter. A pair of tall torches on either side illuminates the eerie visage.

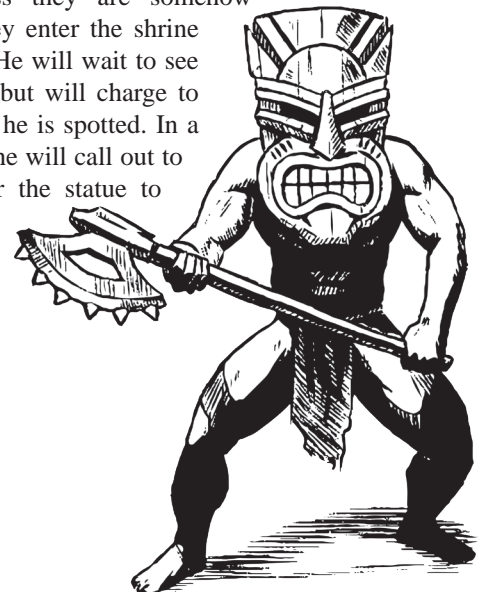
Between the altar and the pedestal, two Mu warriors face the statue, kneeling (see *Barracks*, p. 8, and roll on the Warrior table). Unless they have stopped chanting (*Discoveries*, above), they are still repeating, “Mo-ah-tee-kee,” in a partial trance. The warriors will not notice the party at the entrance unless they draw attention to themselves.

They are not the only Muians in the room. Standing guard at the door on the north wall is a very tall, solid, and dangerous-looking warrior. His Muian name would best be translated into common tongue as “The Mighty.”

The Mighty (ST 15, DX 12 (11), IQ 11, MA 8) is the commander of the Mu warriors, and majordomo to the Sorceress. He carries a Pike Axe 2d+2, Leiomanō 2d+1 (slung). His talents include Alertness, Ax/Mace Literacy, Pole Weapons with Expertise, Shield, and Unarmed Combat I and II.

In normal combat, he is menacing enough, but if faced with challenging odds (such as the invasion of the shrine by three or more intruders), he will attempt to go berserk (see *ITL*, p. 121). Regardless of his state, he will charge with his pike axe and fight to the death.

The Mighty will almost certainly see any member of the party (unless they are somehow concealed) as they enter the shrine from the tunnel. He will wait to see how many enter but will charge to attack as soon as he is spotted. In a deep bass voice, he will call out to the warriors near the statue to join the fight.



If the players show the effigy to the Mighty, he will shout “Moatiki!” in his deep voice, and immediately berserk if he had not already done so.

Note to the GM: The Shrine of Moatiki is easily created using the standard *Melee* map or playmat, the special megahex tiles included with this adventure, and additional standard megahex tiles to represent the adjunct rooms and tunnels.

Beginning in the fourth turn of combat, and each turn thereafter, the noise may rouse the Sorceress from her sleep in her room behind the door. Roll one die. On a 1, 2 or 3, she enters the shrine. Otherwise, she will enter one turn after the Moatiki statue comes to life. But if the statue is not activated, she remains asleep until encountered in her quarters.

The Sorceress (ST 11 (9), DX 13, IQ 14, MA 10) is a human with exotic features and a slender physique. She towers over most of her Muian companions. She appears to be middle-aged and wears a simple draped garb and an elaborate feathered headdress with the same medallion as the others. She carries a long Staff of Striking (Mana 14, grants Lightning), also tipped with the feathered symbol of Mu. Her one encounter with outsiders has made her hostile to the uninvited. She requires the Create Elemental effigy to awaken the Moatiki statue, as she has not yet mastered the spell. Her talents include Literacy, Priest, and Sex Appeal. Her spells include Aid, Break Weapon, Control Elemental, Image, Reveal Magic, Staff III/Staff of Striking, Ward, and others. Her ST is at 9 at the moment, as she has cast a Ward spell in her quarters before retiring. One of her first actions will be to cast Reveal Magic in order to ascertain the strengths of the party. This will also reveal the presence of the effigy (due to its proximity to the altar), whether or not it is concealed. Her goal at that point will be to secure the effigy and get it to the dais.

14. THE LAB

The party will not see this room unless they have defeated the Mighty and avoided or defeated the Moatiki. 20 feet by 20 feet, it has a door with a fairly complex lock mechanism (4/DX). The door is locked if the Sorceress is inside. This is her laboratory, magically lit. Shelves line the walls, filled with indecipherable books and scrolls, maps, and bric-a-brac. There are 1d+3 finished gems scattered about, worth \$2d × 10. Most are not enchanted, but one is a Gem of Summoning (Myrmidon). She will be quick to seize and use it. There are three vials with two doses each of healing potion.

Three workbenches are covered with copper tubes and containers, glass lenses, and what appear to be broken effigies. A staff with a polished globe leans against the wall – a wizard’s staff that will explode, doing 3 dice damage, if anyone touches it. An enigmatic portrait of an older man hangs on the wall. Perhaps he was the original creator of the effigy.

There is an unlocked door on the far side of the room. The Sorceress casts a Ward spell on it each evening before retiring beyond.



RETURNING THE EFFIGY

The stolen effigy is a magic item imbued with the Create Elemental spell (see *ITL*, p. 30). At some point, the players will realize that they have reached the shrine and are near the end of their quest. All they have to do is “return the statuette to the shrine.” They may decide that, due to casualties or caution, they should just roll the effigy into the shrine and run away! If they do this, the effigy will pick up speed as it rolls; the dais will flash and the effigy will somehow bounce onto it. This will awaken the statue and summon the Sorceress, but they’ll have a head start . . .

If they simply place the effigy on the altar dais, this will awaken the Moatiki statue. See below for the results.

If they subdue the Mighty but do not return the effigy, whoever carries it will feel it tug toward the dais, though not strongly enough to “escape.” But when they encounter the Sorceress, she will soon know they have it.



THE MOATIKI RISES

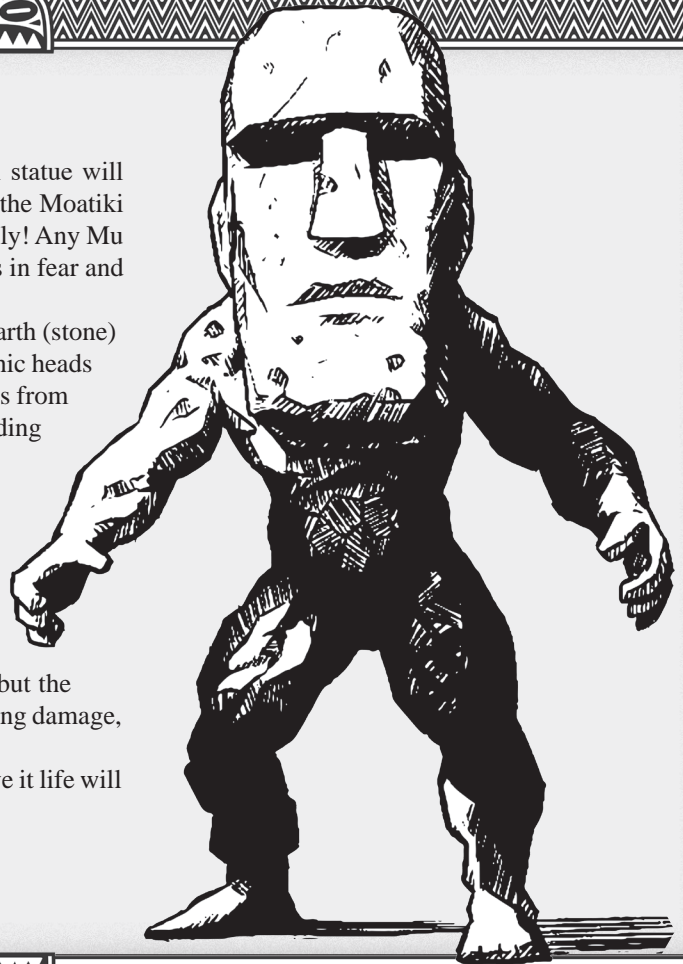
If at any time the effigy is placed on the dais, the Moatiki statue will begin to rumble, then rise to a standing position. The rising of the Moatiki should be the climax of the adventure . . . describe it dramatically! Any Mu warriors in the room will cower in shock and fall to their knees in fear and reverence to their living god.

The Moatiki (ST 40, DX 11, IQ 8, MA 10) is a giant 3-hex Earth (stone) Elemental in the form of a Muian god. It resembles the monolithic heads of a place that some worlds know as Easter Island. When it rises from its crouching position, it reveals a stocky humanoid body standing over 12 feet tall.

The Moatiki has the same strengths and weaknesses as any Earth Elemental (see *ITL*, p. 86), and a clever adventurer may recall the cistern of water at the top of the passage.

If the Sorceress takes control of the Moatiki through Control Elemental, she will command it to chase and crush the party. If it is attacked, it will attempt to do the same without commands. It will be able to relentlessly navigate all but the narrowest of the tunnels. The arms of the Moatiki do 2d+2 striking damage, and 3d-1 in HTH combat. Its stony body deflects 4 hits/attack.

If the Moatiki is shattered or melted, the gems that helped give it life will be revealed. There are a double dozen, worth 2d × \$50 each.



15. SORCERESS' CHAMBER

This room contains only a bed and a side table with books and an oil lamp. There is a privy to the side. If the Sorceress is in here, the Ward spell will have alerted her. There is a pouch with triangular gold coins beneath the bed, worth about \$350.

CONCLUSION

If the heroes manage to leave alive, they will need to work their way back to the portal to return home. If the Moatiki or Muians chase them, they may be able to buy some time or safety by taking a route through the grotto that slows their pursuers. However, the passages to the east are straightforward and large enough that the party might find their foe waiting for them in the antechamber.

If the party has avoided returning the effigy to the shrine, they must still decide whether to take it back with them. The ideal solution would be to leave it where the Sorceress, its rightful owner, can get it . . . but not immediately! As will be seen, they really should not take it back home with them.

Once the adventurers are back in the portal room, simply placing the amulet token *glyph*-side up within the impression on the obelisk will trigger the portal.

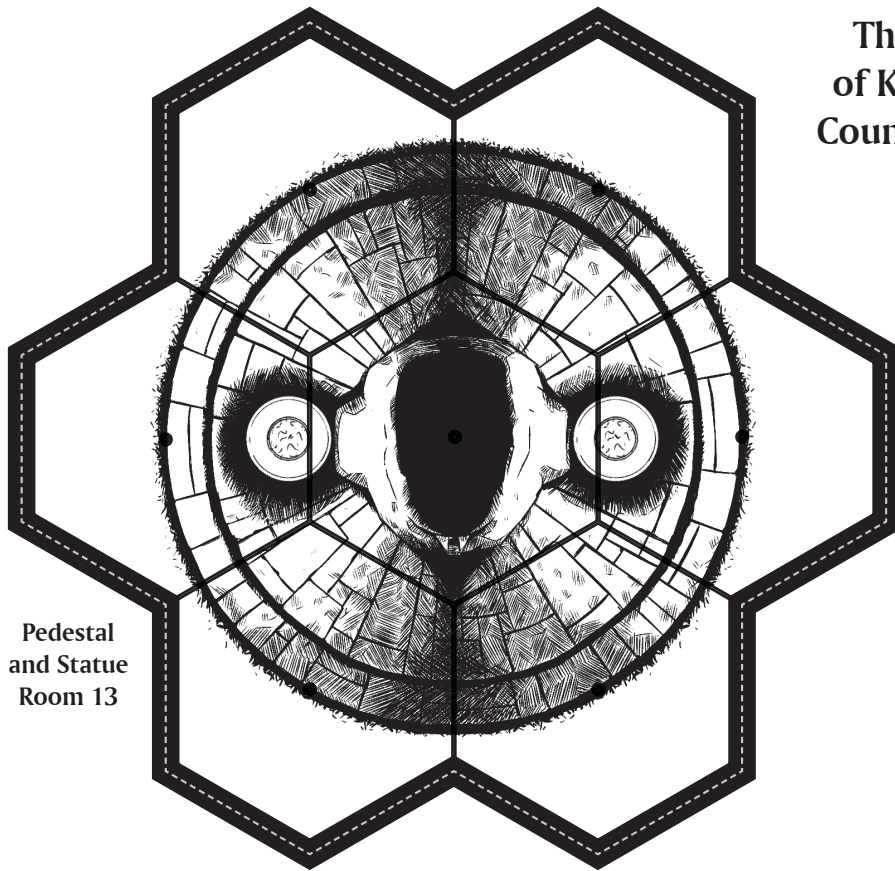
Anyone in the room will be transported back to the entry cave in their own lands. If the amulet is lost, the party is stuck in Mu unless they can find another “key” . . .

Treasure?

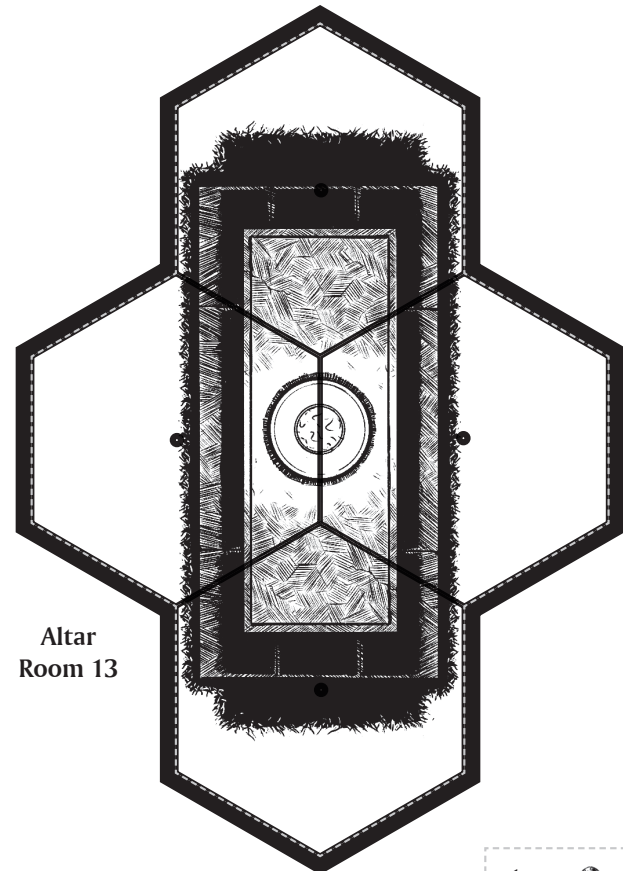
If the party reports back to Cadakee that the effigy has been returned, he will be delighted. Indeed, from this day on, his dreams will be ordinary nightmares at the worst, and his ill fortune will seem to abate. Such is his gratitude that if the party did not return from the cavern with wealth, he will pay them \$350 each. If they *did* bring out gems, he will offer to buy them right there, and his offer will be more than fair.

If the party reports that the effigy was not returned, the trader will be frantic with despair. There will be no reward, and they will flee from his home with his shrill curses in their ears. (And in the event that they kept the statuette, they will eventually dream that something is searching for them . . .)

As for the amulet: Cadakee will either be too delighted, or too angry, to ask after it. The party might choose to keep it for future adventures on the Lost Continent of Mu or try to sell it as the rare artifact that it is.

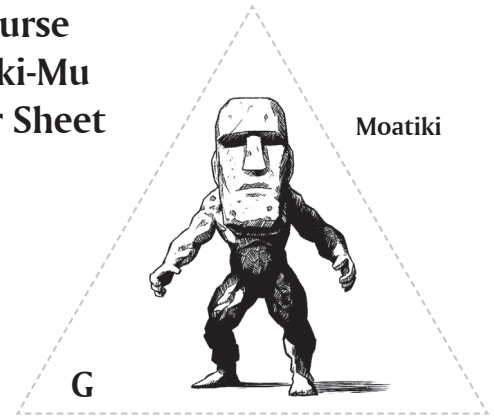


Pedestal
and Statue
Room 13

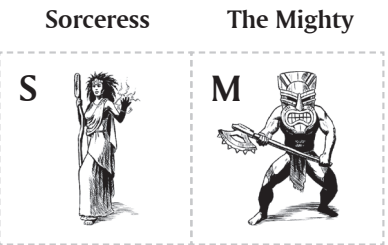


Altar
Room 13

The Curse of Katiki-Mu Counter Sheet



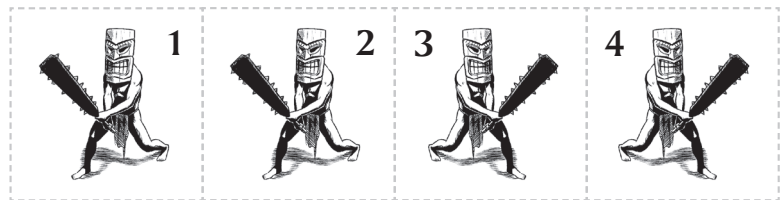
Moatiki



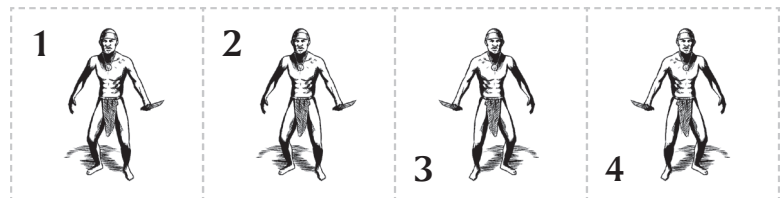
Sorceress

The Mighty

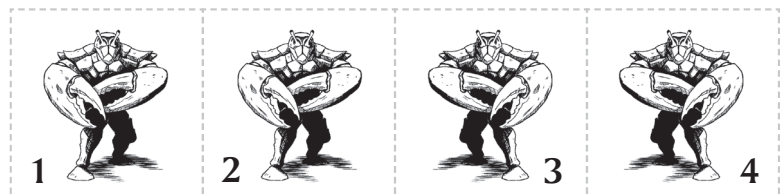
Muian Warriors



Muian Laborers



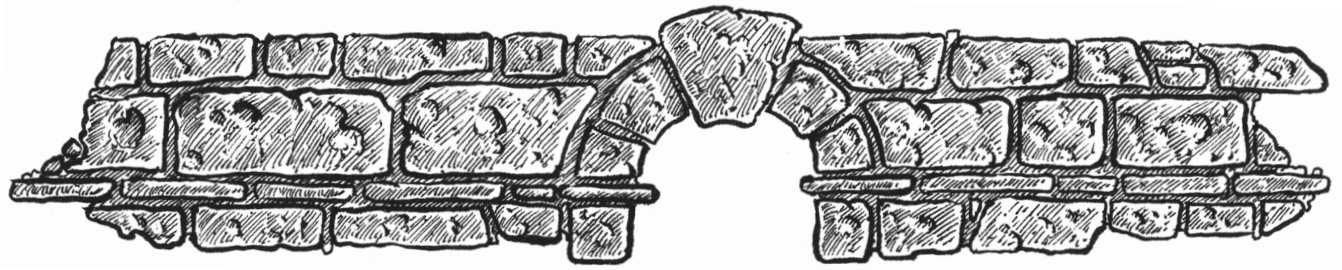
Crabmen



Maulers



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Fire in the Temple™



BY DAVID L. PULVER

ILLUSTRATED BY RICK HERSHEY

The Redcaps, a radical revolutionary cabal, plot to overthrow the local establishment. They are led by the goblin chemist Tamar, her human mechanic comrade Delgado, and the giant blacksmith Arok. Death to the lords and wizards!

Tamar knows the secret of gunpowder, which on Cidri requires a rare ingredient: dragon dung. She found a way to produce her own!

The Redcaps learned of the Temple of Dolosia, once famed for its hot springs, curative clays, and prophetic oracle. A few years ago, the temple was destroyed by a dragon, Wyrnath the Sinuous, who ate the priests and made a lair in its ruins.

Three months ago, the Redcaps assaulted the dragon's lair. Many brave comrades died, but aided by Tamar's potent

potions and Arok's strength, they surprised and captured Wyrnath. Now the temple ruins are the Redcaps' secret base and munitions factory. The unlucky dragon is chained and forced to produce dung, which the Redcaps use to manufacture a growing arsenal of petards, grenades, and gunpowder charges.

The Redcaps are arming themselves for a campaign of sedition and assassination. They require supplies and funds, so they are ambushing merchants and travelers using the forest roads. Those stumbling on the scene have found blood aplenty, but no survivors and no bodies. The authorities blame the losses on the dragon, but these disappearances are starting to alarm the local Merchants' Guild . . .

STARTING POINTS

The adventure takes place in forested hills, away from main trade routes, which is why the dragon and its successors were not quickly dealt with. The nearby cities are clearly not well governed, since class war is taking root. Therefore, they are not located in the Duchy of Dran or its immediate neighbors – the Duke and his peers would not permit the large-scale abuses that must be behind this dawning rebellion.

Southern Tanander, just off the bottom of the map on *ITL* p. 171, is a possibility, but so is any loosely governed area that has cities a few days' travel from wilderness. This adventure should be solvable by a half-dozen starting characters (there may be some untimely deaths) or four 36-point characters.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Redcap plot is still secret, so adventurers should not have any certain warning that they are in the temple. Depending on how many clues the GM wishes to give the players, the Redcaps may not be in their "initial briefing" at all!

DRAGONHUNT

Via the usual gossip, the party hears of a dragon-haunted ruin. The stories say that Dolosia of the Waters was an ancient nymph or minor goddess who dwelt beside a hot spring in the nearby volcanic foothills. Her worshipers believed the sacred spring's mineral-rich waters and red clays possessed properties of healing. A temple was built on the site, and pilgrims bathed in its cleansing springs and mud baths. The



priests also sold visitors clay cakes and vials of healing water, while their temple oracle inhaled vapors from the caverns below and proclaimed prophetic visions.

The temple prospered for many years. Then, four years ago, came the dragon Wyrnath the Sinuous. He overcame the temple's protector, the mystical Defender of Dolosia (said to be an avatar of the goddess), burned the temple to the ground, slew the peaceful priests, and took up residence in the ruins.

Reports suggest the dragon is of medium size (4 hexes) and now likely boasts a modest hoard of coins and temple treasures, the offerings left to the priests by pilgrims. A few adventurers have tried to slay it; they did not return. None of the closest cities has been willing to mount a large-scale expedition.

Until recently, the dragon was fairly quiet. However, in the last three months, several travelers and merchants have vanished within a day's ride from the old temple. While it's possible they fell to bandits or outlaws, some of whom have been troublesome of late, the local Merchants' Guild fears the dragon has grown bolder!

If the possibility of a dragon lair itself isn't enough to tempt the heroes, the feudal authorities or Merchants' Guild may offer \$2,000 to slay the dragon, plus any loot they recover from its lair.

GM Note: This hook leaves the Redcap cabal a surprise. The party will be alert for trouble but meet a different foe! If the PCs do pick up on the hint about "troublesome outlaws," the GM may wish to name them (see below).

WANTED POSTER

This alternative hook can be combined with the above if the PCs do some digging.

While staying at an inn a few day's ride from the temple, the party spot a poster depicting a bearded, middle-aged human man with an eye patch and a goblin woman with a scarred face. Each wears a red cap of odd design.

The poster says: "Wanted for Murder, Kidnapping, Poisoning, and Arson: Redcap outlaws Amadeus Delgado and Tamar Ratsbane, \$1,500 reward each."

Further inquiries may reveal some or all of the following:

The goblin woman Tamar is said to be a former ratcatcher and chemist, skilled with poisons and explosives. She leads a fanatical sect of goblin and human outlaws called the Redcaps. Her human companion is Amadeus Delgado, a rabble-rousing ex-member of the Mechanics' Guild, known for skill making firearms and grenades. He has a long-standing feud with the Wizards' Guild.

The Redcaps are a militant secret society who believe the old order of hereditary lords, courts, taxes, and especially the oppressive guilds must end. Magic is a tool of our cruel rulers! The weapons to free the people are the scientific arts!

The Redcaps have been implicated in ambushes and assassinations, most recently using a gas bomb and a group of blunderbuss-wielding bravos to kidnap Master Dolon, a senior Merchants' Guild member. When the Guild would not pay a huge "revolutionary tax," Dolon's head was found in a public square, trapped with a grenade that killed two town watchmen who tried to retrieve it. Since this outrage, local authorities have cracked down on Redcap sympathizers, forcing the group underground. Some believe they've fled the region.

Magistrate Brom, a local official, believes otherwise. He fears the Redcaps may be responsible for the recent disappearances of merchants and travelers in the hills to the north – though it is odd that the group has not taken credit for it. However, the popular belief is the travelers were taken by a dragon, Wyrnath the Sinuous, said to dwell in the ruined Temple of Dolosia in the hills. Or perhaps the dragon has eaten the outlaws!

Regardless, Brom offers \$1,500 for proof of death, or twice that for the capture of the Redcap leaders. There's a similar price on the dragon's head.

GM Notes: This gives PCs a better idea of their foes without quite revealing the whole plot. Consider it for weaker parties who need more prep, or groups afraid of dragons! Should the adventurers go looking for either the Redcaps or the dragon, see *The Temple Ruins*, page 3.

THUNDER IN THE HILLS

While on the road through a hilly wilderness, the party hears an echoing *boom!*, followed by hundreds of frightened birds rising a few miles to the east. If they investigate, they will see a low gray smoke cloud when they get closer, and they will eventually come upon the temple (see below). If not, perhaps they'll hear some more rumors and come back later.

GM Note: The boom was Delgado testing a petard. This hook drops the party in with no warning, but gets things moving right away. It may be the most fun for a quick start to the scenario or a stronger group.

THE TEMPLE RUINS

The party follows a battered old road through the wooded hills, searching either for Redcap outlaws or the rumored dragon-haunted temple. Sharp-eyed adventurers will spot the gleam of marble a few hundred yards off the road, partly masked by trees.

An overgrown cobblestone path, marked by a great stone carved with the word “Dolosia,” leads to the ruin of what once was a beautiful little marble-columned dome set against the hillside. Now the dome is broken and the area is littered with bits of charred wood and tile. A faint smell of smoke lingers in the air. A fallen stone statue, once about 8 feet tall, depicted a beautiful woman with flowing hair pouring a vase of water.

At the back of the dome, doors lead to a wide flight of marble stairs, a full megahex wide, that lead into the darkness under the hills . . .

THE DUNGEON MAP

Numbers on the map refer to sections in the text.

Location descriptions provide obvious information first, followed by extra details and NPC descriptions. It's up to the GM to reveal only as much as the party uncovers through their actions, talents, questions, or IQ rolls.

Most foes are Redcaps. Their locations are listed as first encountered. The GM may move them and adjust their actions if they've time to organize in response to an attack, especially if PCs retreat and strike again. They might even emerge to counterattack, at the GM's option. However, they need to leave guards on the captive dragon! See *Redcap Strategy* (p. 10).

The zealous Redcaps use battle cries like “Death to fat vermin!” and “Down with lords and wizards!”

Captured Redcaps are loyal and stubborn, unwilling to betray details of their organization or defenses. They may make defiant threats like “When Ratsbane's done with you, we'll make you into gunpowder!” As will be seen, that threat is not an empty one; it's quite literal.

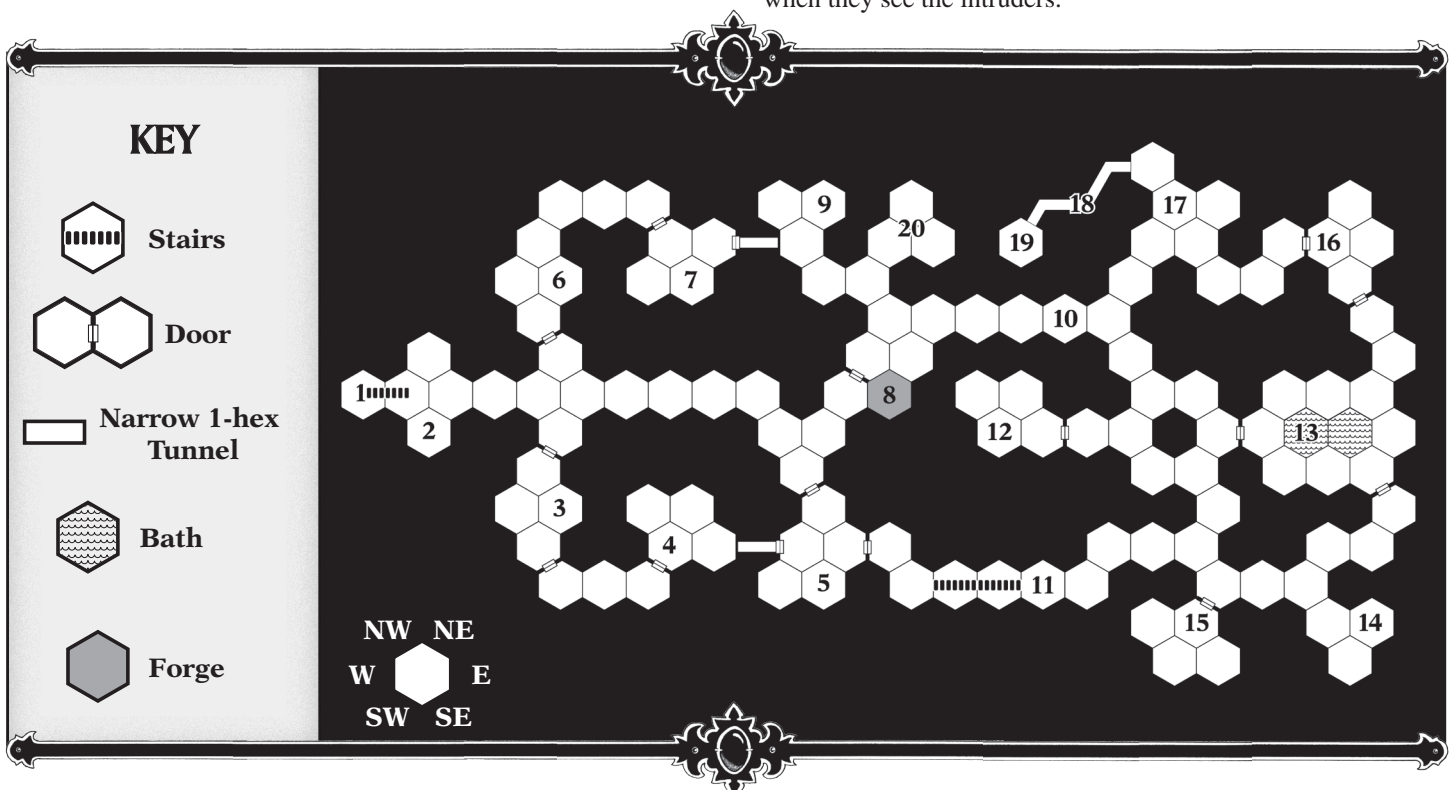
UPPER TEMPLE

1. ENTRANCE STAIRS

Wide marble steps, now dirtied and stained with both ash and old blood.

2. GUARD ROOM

The stairs lead down 20 feet to a high-ceilinged vestibule, the roof supported by six columns carved as nymphs. In daylight, some light comes from the stairwell, illuminating anyone descending. In the shadows of the columns, two human Redcap Warriors (p. 4), both with halberds, and a single Redcap Arquebusier (p. 4) stand on guard, eyes used to the dark. If the PCs approach noisily, they'll be seen and attacked. Otherwise, the guards will need to ready weapons when they see the intruders.



REDCAP ARQUEBUSIERS

Goblin Militants

ST 10, DX 12 (11), IQ 10

Talents: Axe/Mace, Guns, Knife, Literacy, and either a mundane talent or Armorer.

Languages: Goblin, Human Tongue.

Weapons: Arquebus; Hammer; Knife (sheathed on belt).

Armor: Cloth (stops 1 hit).

Equipment: Pouches with two extra charges of gunpowder and 3d silver coins.

Counters: Use the provided Redcap Arquebusier counters.



These are disaffected apprentices or clerks from nearby cities. They lack talent in magic, giving them low status in goblin society. They dislike wizards and will mistreat any they capture! Their red caps are in honor of their martyred former leader, Redcap Rojak, hanged for leading a journeymen and apprentice strike against the local guildmasters.

REDCAP WARRIORS

Human Militants

ST 13, DX 11 (10), IQ 8

Talents: Boating, Literacy, Polearms, Sword, one mundane talent.

Languages: Brawling, Goblin, Human Tongue.

Weapons: Halberd *or* Bastard Sword; Dagger (sheathed on belt).

Armor: Cloth (stops 1 hit).

Equipment: Pouch with a few silver coins (2d); red cap.

An army requires melee fighters to protect its ranged weapons. These humans wield swords or polearms. They'll support the gunners, buying them time to aim and/or to ready their melee weapons after firing a volley.

Most of the humans in the revolutionary group were recruited after the last boatman's strike was bloodily put down by Guild authorities. They are big, tough bargemen and dockworkers. They have impressive mustaches and long hair in pigtails; their bare arms are covered with tattoos. Despite their poor background, they've been attending revolutionary classes here and learning to read and write.

3. MESS ROOM

These walls are decorated with a brilliant fresco of a pair of mating seven-headed hydras amid a jungle of giant mushrooms and bloodtrees. A small table is set with cups, plates, and utensils. On the table is a pamphlet (*A Guild of Liars*, see below). Two oil lamps hanging from ceiling brackets provide plenty of light.

This was once a changing room for pilgrims before entering the temple but is now used as a Redcap mess hall.

Five Redcaps are present: one goblin Redcap Arquebusier (p. 4), two human Redcap Gunners (p. 4), and two human Redcap Warriors (p. 4). One has a bastard sword, one carries a halberd.

Half are seated, half standing. If not alerted, they're grumbling about dinner from the kitchen being late, drinking watered wine, and chattering away in a mix of human and goblin argot.

An eavesdropper may hear them arguing revolutionary theory. Are the "masses" ready to rise? Will "Comrade Delgado" plan another attack to punish "the magical-mercantile autocracy?" "We should make the next bunch of merchants we hit look like the dragon got them," says one. "You know, burn them and stuff." Another wonders if they have enough bombs and guns to "stick it to the guilds" by launching some sort of attack. Maybe a plan to use the petards to blow up the mage's guild hall or an attempt to kidnap a fat-pig noble?

If alerted by a messenger from room 1 or a noisy party, they'll stop chattering and deploy, firearm-users covering the entrance with melee fighters protecting them.

If the party give them plenty of warning, try to negotiate, etc., they'll send one warrior to run to the sleepers in Room 4 and (if the PCs haven't gotten them first) in eight turns will be reinforced, adding another four fighters.

A GUILD OF LIARS

A revolutionary pamphlet, authored by one "Comrade Delgado," tells of outrageous abuses perpetrated by local guilds, especially Wizards and Merchants. Lurid anecdotes reveal the cruel exploitation and abuse of young apprentices (including one Comrade Tamar . . . see her description on p. 9). The 16-page hand-copied pamphlet is worth \$50 to a collector. Parroting a few phrases could grant +1 reaction to Redcap-sympathizers, but being caught with it risks arrest in local towns!

REDCAP GUNNERS

Human Militants

ST 12, DX 11 (10), IQ 9

Talents: Axe/Mace, Boating, Brawling, Guns, Knife, Literacy, Toughness.

Languages: Goblin, Human Tongue.

Weapons: Blunderbuss; Dagger (sheathed on belt); War Axe.

Armor: Cloth (stops 1 hit).

Equipment: Three extra charges of gunpowder; pouch with \$1 silver coins (2d).



These are more tough dockworkers, each armed with a short-barreled blunderbuss and a boat-axe. Use the description of the Redcap Warriors for background and appearance.

4. REDCAP QUARTERS

This room was originally a locker room for visitors to the temple, divided into men's and women's changing areas.

It's now a barracks for Redcap militants.

The door has a crude alarm: roll 3/IQ to spot the bell, 3/DX to disarm.

Inside it's dark, with eight bedrolls on the floor and a crude plank table with an unlit candle. There are two footlockers that hold mess kits and personal gear (the equivalent of two Labyrinth Kits), and another copy of *A Guild of Liars* (p. 4).

The Redcaps sleep in shifts; four are abed. Their cloaks, spare clothes, caps, belt pouches, and weapons hang on pegs. It takes a turn to snatch each item if they're surprised. Sleeping here are one Redcap Arquebusier (p. 4), two human Redcap Warriors (p. 4), and one Redcap Gunner (p. 4).

Give them 3/IQ rolls to wake up in time to grab the nearest weapon if the party kicks open the door. If alerted by the alarm, they will awaken in time to stand and grab knives or swords.

If alerted by a Redcap from Room 3 or by a noisy party, they'll all be awake in two turns, take another four turns to struggle into armor and weapons, and then head to reinforce Room 3 or patrol for trouble. If so, this common room will then be empty, with signs of unmade beds and rapid dressing.

5. MEETING ROOM

This chamber's walls are covered with frescos of forest scenes: unicorns, winged sprites, and fawns peeking shyly from behind waterfalls or trees. Several are stained by soot and smoke, and a large claw mark and reddish stain disfigure the east wall.

Two large brass-framed chairs and a dozen stools surround a long wood table. There's an unlit oil lantern.

On the table, an unrolled parchment scroll is weighted by a bottle of ink, a quill pen, and a dagger.

This room was once a dining room for temple guests. It was damaged by the dragon and is now used by the Redcaps for meetings. On the table is a letter the Redcap leader Delgado was composing.

6. KITCHENS

This room has a big pot simmering over a pile of hot stones (heated from the forge). A big trestle table occupies the center of the room. A butchered sheep is being prepared, garnished with stewed apples and turnips.

A shelf holds cooking utensils (forks, ladles, spoons, a large knife). Also on it are two flasks, one holding a quart of cheap wine, the other a fine peach brandy (\$80, 1 lb.), and a pair of lit candles. Behind the flasks, not visible unless they are removed, is a small bottle of viscous gray liquid.

On another low side table is a jar of pickles, a cheese round, a basket of turnips and apples, a silver salt shaker (\$40; holds salt), four onions, and a handful of wild herbs. Hanging on hooks are a haunch of goat and two skinned rabbits.

There are normally two Redcaps here. If surprised, they're working on the dinner. If alerted, they've readied their weapons and are watching the exits. Shonn has the potion (the gray liquid) in his left hand, while Yezra will have a grenade ready and has pushed over the low table as a barricade.

The gray liquid is a Berserker potion (same effect as eating a berserker mushroom). Shonn may quaff it if the situation is dire. Of course, a PC might grab it . . . The bottle is heavy and well stoppered. If dropped, it breaks only on a roll of 1 on a d6.

DELGADO'S LETTER

My Dear Comrade Felix:

Our great work nears fruition! We've manufactured many pounds of the Substance and several devices to use it.

The revolutionary taxes we impose on the corrupt merchants and clergy continue to fund our righteous operations. Yes, I regret being unable to keep prisoners to ransom but we must harden our hearts for secrecy. Anyway, our "powder factory" needs his fuel.

Speaking of which, our goblin comrade has discovered a way to use that same Substance to activate the ancient weapon we found in the temple. Now the glorious Hand of the People has a fist of fire-hardened clay!

I have some "taxes" to dispose of. It is mortifying working with common criminals such as "our friend" in town, but if you will have him send a man to the usual place, we may be able to barter with him for more supplies. The tribute extracted from the oppressors includes much cloth, silk, and a real prize: a gryphon egg! In exchange for this, I ask that you have him bring us additional bronze and four iron ingots, more wine (the revolution must be fortified), and writing parchment.

To rouse our supporters among the apprentices and peasants to prepare them for decisive revolutionary action after our coming stroke, please ask your friend the copyist to reproduce my latest pamphlet exposing the corrupt practices of the autocracy! How soon will we strike? Well, it depends on whether our "factory" can manage sufficient quantities of the Substance we make this month. The total quantity we have is now is . . .

The letter cuts off here; Delgado needed to check the dung production level. (He's now with the dragon.) See also *Further Adventures* (p. 11).

YEZRA MAOPOT

Goblin Redcap Cook

ST 11, DX 11, IQ 10

Talents: Brawling, Cook, Literacy, Sword, Thrown Weapons.
Language: Human Tongue, Goblin, Orcish.

Weapons: Two grenades; Cutlass; Knife (sheathed on belt).

Equipment: Gold earring (worth \$150), \$2 of copper coins.

This foul-mouthed goblin, a former river pirate, is the Redcap's cook. He likes explosives and wears an eye patch.

SHONN THE TENDERIZER

Hobgoblin Redcap Thug

ST 13, DX 9, IQ 7

Talents: Axe/Mace, Brawling, Knife, Pole Weapons

Languages: Goblin, Orcish

Armor: None.

Weapons: Club (or beef bone).

Equipment: Berserker Potion (see above) if he's alerted.

This ugly, oversized brute wields a spiked club and helps with tenderizing the rations but is also employed for interrogations and executions. Shonn doesn't speak a human language (except a few curse words and "kill vermin!"). If surprised, Shonn might just grab a bony haunch of meat and use that as an improvised club.

7. STOREHOUSE

A dingy room containing four barrels, an open chest, four bulging sacks, and two baskets. There are two guards (see below) on duty. A lit torch is in a wall bracket.

Guarding the storehouse are two Redcap Warriors: Sleepy Gunred, a muscular swordswoman so named for falling asleep during revolutionary lectures, and Bort, a halberdier.

If surprised, Bort is sitting on one of the sacks reading a looted book of poetry to a fascinated Sleepy as an example of the decadence of the ruling elite. Sleepy is shaking her head in shock . . . she never heard such things in her village!

If they hear trouble, they'll hide behind barrels to ambush intruders, the book discarded on the floor.

Use Redcap Warrior (p. 4) stats for both: Bort has a halberd and Sleepy a bastard sword.

The four barrels hold 10 quarts of beer, six quarts of wine, 20 lbs. of salted fish and eels, and 14 lbs. of pickled herring and chopped vegetables.

The two baskets hold 36 edible mushrooms and 17 apples. One mushroom, accidentally picked, is a berserker mushroom (roll 12 on 2d6 to eat it by mistake).

The chest and sacks contain:

Chest #1: Partly open. Two more books of erotic poetry, well illustrated, each worth \$200, but possibly subject to confiscation by local moralists or priests, so be careful if you sell them!

Sack #1: 5 pounds of spices in small bags, worth \$1,500.

Sack #2: 12 pounds of sea salt worth about \$24.

Sack #3-4: Rolls of fine woolen cloth (4 lbs., \$100) and crimson silk (2 lbs., \$900).

It's loot from merchants attacked by the Redcaps, kept to trade for supplies (see *Delgado's Letter*, p. 5).

8. THE FORGE

Note: If Arok is at work (rather than alerted), anyone approaching this chamber will hear the resounding beat of a hammer on metal before they enter. This noise drowns out sounds of alarm.

Inside, this is a natural cavern enlarged and supported by a vaulted ceiling. It is lit by a puddle of lava that bubbles up from below, providing heat for a forge. A huge anvil (800 lbs., \$1,200) stands next to this lava pool, along with a stack of metal ingots. (Use the new megahex tile.) In another corner is a giant-sized (6' high) work table mounted on a tree stump.

Arok, a bald-headed giant with burn

scars on one side of his face, works here, stripped to a red loincloth, using

a hammer that seems tiny in his

mammoth hands. If he has been

alerted, he'll instead be carrying his

big club. He talks about himself in

the third person, e.g., "Hah! Arok will

beat you like an anvil." But he's smarter

than he looks and is a skilled craftsman and true believer.

The lava pool here was once used for temple rituals, with sacrifices to the goddess (the hair of worshipers) being burned here. Now Redcaps forge gun barrels!

The ingots are a pyramid of eight 20-lb. iron bars (\$10 each).

Atop the table are three recently completed blunderbuss barrels without stocks. A fourth, still red-hot, is on the anvil; Arok was beating it into shape. Each barrel is worth \$50 to an armorer.

Also on the table is an iron bucket containing hot sand and stones. Resting in it is a melon-sized egg, cream-colored with greenish speckles. A Naturalist can roll 3 dice vs. IQ to identify it as a gryphon egg and realize it may hatch in 2d days if kept warm. Looted from a rich merchant (a birthday gift for a duke), it's worth \$4,000+.

Note: The room is very warm. Anyone less than ST 25 within 2 hexes of the lava takes 1 ST/turn fatigue from heat! Touching the lava hex does 3d hits/turn.

AROK

Giant Blacksmith

ST 34, DX 10, IQ 10

Talents: Axe/Mace, Armourer, Literacy, Toughness.

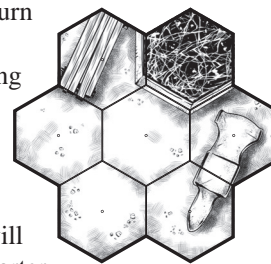
Languages: Goblin, Giant, Human Tongue.

Weapons: Club (or big hammer; same statistics) 2d + 1.

Armor: Toughness stops 1 hit.

Equipment: A sack-sized "belt pouch" contains 70 copper and 100 silver coins, and the gilded skull of a snake with ruby eyes (a good luck charm, no actual magic powers but worth \$400).

Arok was enslaved in a quarry until freed by Delgado, becoming his sworn follower. He forged Wyrnath's chain, wrestled the dragon, and helped Delgado make many of the guns. He's loyal to the cause, but taciturn and ill-tempered. His hair was shorn to provide potion ingredients; his burns are from battling Wyrnath.



If events draw him away from the forge, he will not stop to dress, but will grab his club, don his giant-sized red cap, and wade into combat, seeking to protect his leaders.

9. ARMORY

This room's walls are covered by frescos of lightly-clad men and women wrestling bulls and centaurs, as a tall nymph bearing a pitcher of water (resembling the outdoor statue) looks on. The floor is sand, not rock.

This was a gymnasium for exercising before or after bathing in the pools. Now it's a Redcap armory. There's a busy workbench with stools beside it, lit by two oil lanterns. Beside it, three barrels and two wooden crates are on the floor, and weapons hang on the walls.

Working here are two Redcaps: Yama Xarot and Hagar Justwell, armed with melee weapons rather than guns (to avoid using firearms near gunpowder). Use Redcap Warrior (p. 4) stats.

Hanging from the wall on hooks are a halberd, a war axe, a small shield, and a mace. On the workbench are two pots of oil, some rags, whetstones, an awl, and a small hammer. A disassembled blunderbuss (takes a Mechanician to reassemble) sits on the table, next to a stained rapier with a bent blade.

The barrels and crates hold:

Barrel #1: This isn't a barrel: it's a petard! There's a trailing fuse attached; a Mechanician or Engineer spots this immediately with a 3/IQ roll.

Barrel #2: This holds 15 charges of gunpowder.

Barrel #3 : This holds 12 charges of gunpowder.

Crate #1: The crate contains straw packing and eight grenades.

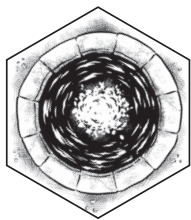
If hit by a stray shot, 1d-2 blow up! The others are jarred by the explosion and miraculously do not explode.

Crate #2: The crate contains four boxes, each holding 144 lead balls (arquebus ammunition). They don't blow up.

Hits by firearms, lightning, or fireballs into a cask or crate have a 2-in-6 chance each of detonating the petard, grenades (1d-2 will blow up!), or gunpowder (blast as a grenade).

UNDERGROUND TEMPLE

On the temple's second level are found the true secrets of Dolosia.



10. SPRING OF CLEANSING

This corridor slopes gently downward (to the east); at 10. A large fountain (connected to a hot spring below) stands in a carved basin.

Wall frescos and carvings on the fountain base show afflicted pilgrims covered with sores (and one hairy beast!) removing clothing and kneeling before a nymph-like figure who pours a vase of steaming waters on them, after which they arise, radiant and healthy.

The fountain seems dry, but every 15 minutes, it hisses like a kettle and sprays a mist of hot mineral water. Anyone bathing in it is subject to a Cleansing spell: it does 1d damage but kills off all diseases, fleas, parasites, and so on, including those for vampirism and lycanthropy.

11. STAIRS

This is a wide flight of stone stairs that lead down 20 feet to the underground temple. It has stones blackened as if by heat, and some large claw marks . . .

12. SACRED CAVE

This cave has a pool in the megahex at the west end, about 3 feet deep. On the walls are ancient primitive paintings, not frescos, showing a female figure, her lower half formed of clay, her upper body solidifying into a beautiful woman.

Most of the cave floor is a warm, reddish-orange clay, quite slippery (as a Slippery Floor spell to anyone standing on it), smelling oddly sweet. There is a stone bench cut onto one wall and a bundle (cloth armor, a bastard sword, and clothes) occupies it.

The clay has mystic properties. The priests believed the goddess Dolosia was born from it. Bathing in it is recuperative. Doing so for 4 hours each day heals hits at twice normal speed and cures ordinary sickness in a week. This clay also formed the golem (p. 9) and helps feed it. If gathered and baked into cakes using the forge's lava (see *Forge*, p. 6), it makes the equivalent of a healing potion at half the normal time and cost. There's still enough clay for 100 such potions.

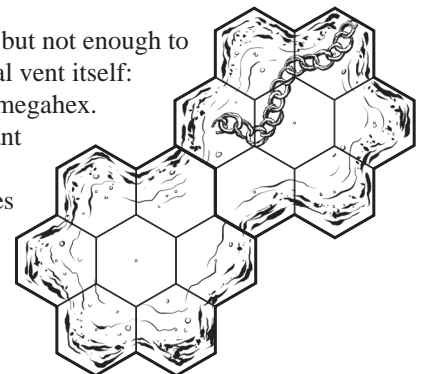
A Redcap, Manfred, is bathing in the clay. He probably heard intruders coming and will be holding his breath, mostly hidden, but can't do so for long. He'll emerge, covered with orange clay (making him look like an orange-skinned monster!). (3/IQ to recognize he's a normal, clay-covered human.) He was hurt fighting merchant guards and is healing in the clay bath. Use Redcap Warrior (p. 4), but with 3 hits of injury. It's his gear on the bench.

13. THE TEMPLE BATHS

This large chamber is dominated by a pool fed by a hot spring. It fills the central two megahexes; the hot spring bubbles away from the eastern hex. The water is 3-4 feet deep. However, few would be foolish enough to dive in, for it's occupied by a crimson-gold dragon! Wyrnath the Sinuous is restrained by a thick metal chain connected to a heavy collar. This chain, attached to a heavy ring driven into the stone on the pool's east end, prevents his leaving the basin.

Standing guard in the chamber around the pool, outside the dragon's reach, are two Redcap Arquebusiers (p. 4), two Redcap Warriors (p. 4) with halberds (p. 4), and their human leader, Amadeus Delgado (p. 8). Delgado has come to inspect the dung production levels for the letter he's writing (p. 5).

The pool water is hot, but not enough to burn except in the thermal vent itself: the center of the eastern megahex. There, anyone not resistant to heat suffers as per a Fire hex. Also, it produces concealing steam (as per a Shadow hex).



WYRNATH THE SINUOUS

Murderous Dragon

Hex Size/Form: 4-hex figure.

ST 30 (26), DX 13, IQ 16, MA 6/16

Scales stop 3 hits.

Attacks and damage: Claws 2d-2.

Breathe fire 3d (costs 3 ST).

Wyrnath is the sort of dragon who gives dragons a bad name. He loves gold and man-flesh, and is cunning, with a melodious voice and educated accent. He is beautiful even as dragons go.

Overpowered by sheer numbers and the giant's muscles, beaten nearly to death in his capture, the dragon is still at slightly reduced ST from the battle in which he was captured. Now he is forced to produce dung, on the threat of being fed aged carrion and laxatives instead of prisoners! Almost worse, his captors show him no respect, and after one "warning shot" fired into his shoulder, he knows where he stands. Wyrnath would have happily died fighting, but he refuses to die chained, and now bides his time. He would make any deal to gain revenge, but would delight in breaking his word to those who freed him. There are "good" dragons, but Wyrnath is not one of them.

Wyrnath knows from bitter experience he'll be shot if he uses his breath or tries to break free; firearms can penetrate his scales. If adventurers appear, he will attempt to parley with them. ("Free me, good people, that we may rend our foes together! Is not the enemy of my enemy my friend?") If his guards' guns are distracted fighting adventurers, he'll try to free himself or breathe fire on any foe in range. Whether he considers the party "foes" at the moment depends on circumstance.

For their part, Delgado and his Redcap guards are caught between keeping Wyrnath covered and quiet ("Shut up, filthy worm!") and firing on him if he tries to break free.

This could even lead to a tense standoff, with the guards switching their aim between intruders and dragon, knowing if they use firearms they won't have time to reload.

Delgado may try to negotiate with the party: "You fools! We can talk, just back off, or that dragon might get loose and then we'll *all* end up as dragon dung. Do you know how many men we lost chaining him?" Maybe he'll offer to trade them some gunpowder if they back off.

Wyrnath's chain is 9 feet (3 hexes) long, with links forged by Arok of meteoric iron. PCs or Wyrnath roll 10/ST to break it. Links stop 6 hits and take 15 hits.

While chained, Wyrnath can't fly and is -3 DX. His DX for fire breath is unaffected.

Visible to anyone peering into the pool is a reminder of what a dragon can do: it's full of bones, with at least two dozen skulls of goats, sheep, and horses – and a few humans. ("They were dead before I ate them," Wyrnath may remark in his cultured voice. "Merchants and the like, ambushed by these insufferable Redcapped thugs. The *utter* nerve of them, feeding me carrion like a common wyvern!")

AMADEUS DELGADO

Human Redcap Leader

ST 12, DX 13 (11), IQ 14

Talents: Charisma, Guns, Literacy, Mechanician, Master Mechanician, Sword, Tactics, Writing.

Languages: Goblin, Human Tongue.

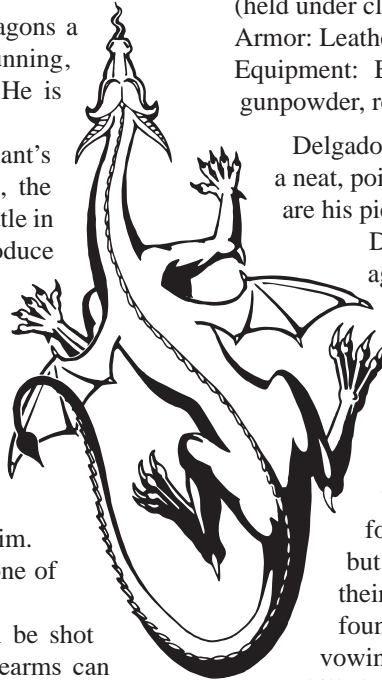
Weapons: Broadsword, Knife (sheathed on belt), Arquebus (held under cloak).

Armor: Leather (stops 2 hits).

Equipment: Belt pouch with 15 gold coins, charge of gunpowder, red cap.

Delgado is the Redcap's co-leader. 33 years old, he has a neat, pointed beard and curly black hair. Most striking are his piercing green eyes and very pale complexion.

Delgado embarked on his radical path 15 years ago. His chapter of the Mechanicians' Guild was shut down due to the conniving of a local Wizards' Guild, who planted fake evidence that the gadget-users conspired against the Baron. Delgado's master died in prison. Their workshop was destroyed. As a mere apprentice, Delgado was shown "mercy" – 10 lashes. Eventually, Delgado found another master and perfected his craft, but never forgot the arrogance of the mages and their corrupt aristocratic allies. He eventually found Tamar's group and made common cause, vowing to overthrow the whole rotten system. A skilled propagandist, he writes the Redcaps' tracts.



14. DUNG PITS

This chamber stinks! It has a strong smell of sulfurous offal. Two shovels and a small pile of fresh dragon's dung are stacked here, awaiting processing.

The *real* treasure is that dung: the 50 ounces are worth \$2,000 on the open market if gotten to a chemist within 3 days! Carting it around, however, will be an odiferous job!

Four latrine pits occupy one corner, used by the Redcaps.

A single Redcap Gunner (p. 4) is on guard here.

15. CHEMICAL LABORATORY

The green-and-turquoise tile floor is inlaid with images of entwined mermaids and octopi. In one corner of the room is an altar; behind it stands a nine-foot-tall female statue, akin to the one outside the temple, but of fired clay. In the room's center is a table.

Working there are a scar-faced female goblin in spectacles and robe and two male goblins wearing red caps. They're grinding powder into a greenish mix using a mortar and pestle. It has a "rotten eggs" smell. A large book of chemical formulae lies open beside them. Adjacent are a trio of large tubs, filled with smelly ingredients (charcoal, smelly sulfur and saltpeter, and strong acid). Shelves hold copper and brass tongs, crucibles, ladles, pincers, spoons, and measuring sticks. A bellows and a set of scales stand in one corner. Other shelves hold glass retorts, flasks, beakers, and vials. Collectively, this is a chemist's lab (\$10,000; 200 lbs.).

Tamar Ratsbane and her cohorts are making gunpowder. This requires charcoal, saltpeter, and sulfur. Charcoal is made from burning wood and saltpeter acquired from local manure, but the third key ingredient is the sulfur, processed from dragon's dung, as mining is impossible on Cidri due to a sulfur-eating microorganism.

The statue in the corner of the room is a 9' tall fired-clay sculpture of a beautiful nymph, perhaps the temple's goddess, for it resembles a younger version of the fallen statue outside the dungeon.

In fact, it is a construct: a clay golem (p. 9) that Tamar can order into action. When it activates and unhinges its jaw, smoke and a smell of burning gunpowder will emerge.

The corked vial on the shelf holds a golden liquid. It is a failed batch of Reptile Poison potion that will instead heal 1d hits for any reptile (or dragon) that drinks it. (A Chemist studying it understands its nature on 4/IQ.)

Tamar's book is 35 pages written in the goblin tongue, with the formulae for Gunpowder, Berserker potion, Weapon Poison, Reptile Poison, and Decrease DX potion. The book weighs 1 lb.; it is worth \$700 to a scholar or chemist.

Tamar's statistics are below. The two assistants use the Redcap Arquebusier (p. 4) statistics; they'll die to protect her.

TAMAR RATSBANE

Goblin Redcap Leader

ST 10, DX 11, IQ 13

Talents: Chemist, Diplomacy, Guns, Literacy, Mechanician, Streetwise, Sword.

Spells: None.

Languages: Goblin, Human tongue.

Weapons: Blunderbuss with sawed-off barrel (*half* normal range) and cutlass, both concealed under robes; knife in boot with one dose of Weapon Poison (+3d damage); one Reptile Poison gas grenade and one gunpowder grenade.

Armor: None.

Equipment: Purse with 6 gold pieces (\$60); bloodstone silver ring worth \$200.

Tamar is a goblin, age 31, one of two leaders of the Redcaps. She's a skilled chemist and dedicated revolutionary. She was once attractive, but her face and the left side of her body were burned in a lab explosion. She wears a concealing brown cowl and robes to hide her scars and is sometimes mistaken for a mage, which annoys her! Hard of hearing, she speaks loudly.

Tamar grew up in a mixed human and goblin town. Her parents ran a neighborhood apothecary near the mages' guildhall. As a child she was bullied by the neighborhood's wizard apprentices, chased by illusions and summoned wolves, even once set on fire as a "joke." Worse, grinding taxes imposed by the local lord drove her family shop into bankruptcy. Young Tamar worked hard, learning the basics of chemistry and securing her apprenticeship to a master chemist.

Her bitter memories led the young goblin to vow to use natural science to become as powerful as any mage. After a part-time job as a pest-exterminator in the sewers, her chemical studies led her to gunpowder, a power more potent than any fireball! Eventually she mastered the secrets of her craft and began a lifelong quest to use science to undermine

the "magical aristocracy" she hated and the wealthy exploiters who crushed her parents' hopes. The Redcaps are her instrument; explosions are her passion.

DEFENDER OF DOLOSIA

Clay Golem

Hex Size/Form: 3-hex figure.

ST 28, DX 10, IQ 7, MA 8

Clay stops 2 hits.

Attacks and damage: Punch for 2d+1. Breathe steam (as per Breathe Fire spell).

Special Abilities/Weaknesses: Requires charge of gunpowder daily.

Counter: Use the provided golem counter.

This is a fired-clay female humanoid, with obsidian eyes and articulated limbs and jaw. A furnace burns in its belly. The temple's magical defender, it fell "unconscious" in battle in a futile attempt to defend the temple against Wyrnath, but he did not understand its nature, and did not destroy its body. When the Redcaps took the temple, they discovered its blackened but intact golem. Tamar experimented with ways to revive it, finally discovering it could "eat" a mix of the mystical clay infused with a charge of gunpowder. A loading of this mixture will operate it for a day, and it will follow the verbal commands of its "awakener." Tamar's sure the Dolosian priests had a better way to do it, but speculates that gunpowder may have a magical association with the dragon that defeated it: if so, is it just gunpowder made from Wyrnath's dung that can activate it? She'd like to experiment! "Magic," she sighs. "It makes no sense."



16. MECHANICIAN'S LABORATORY

This large chamber filled with junk is Delgado's lab. A table stands in the center of the room with a pair of stools next to it. In one corner is a simple bed with a small night stand. Two oil lanterns hang from the ceiling.

Intricate tools suitable for a jeweler or mechanic are scattered carelessly over the tabletop.

Pinned to the wall are intricate engineering sketches for a petard-flinging trebuchet, the arquebus, a sawed-off blunderbuss, a labor-saving waterwheel-powered mill, and a fanciful mechanical owl (unbuilt). The diagrams are worth \$1,000 to any Mechanician.

Delgado (p. 8) is in room 13 but may retreat here.

17. GUARD POST

This annex is manned by a man and a goblin . . . both giggling. The goblin is bare-chested, sitting on his haunches, singing a lullaby as he cradles his arquebus. The human, a bewhiskered young man with a bastard sword, is barefoot and scribbling a spiral pattern on the wall in chalk while wearing a saucepan on his head. A discarded shirt and a pair of boots are nearby. On a rickety table are remains of a meal: a slab of bread, two red caps, two empty cups smelling of beer, and a mushroom.

This odd couple are Redcap guards. Bored after several days' inactivity, they sampled the hallucinogenic mushrooms at room 18, and are now under their influence. (One is still on the table.) When they see the adventurers, they incorporate them into their delusions. "Hey, stranger, why's a flower growing out of your head?" They fight, crazily, if threatened, but are otherwise harmless. If captured and interrogated, answers may be nonsensical. They sober up in eight hours. Use the stats and counters of a Redcap Arquebusier (p. 4) and a Redcap Warrior (p. 4), but both are unarmored and at -5 IQ.

18. MUSHROOM TUNNEL

This warm, wet tunnel has a dirt floor. Two patches of mushrooms grow here. The southern patch contains 13 edible mushrooms. The north patch has eight hallucinogenic and one berserker mushroom. A Naturalist can tell them apart on a 3/IQ roll.

19. ORACLE'S CAVE

A dark cave with a narrow opening. Inside, a bronze tripod (4 lbs., \$40) sits next to a crack in the floor. There is an odd sulfurous smell. The source is a ghostly swirl of vapor rising from the crack.

In one corner is a half-burned skeleton (the oracle priestess who crept back here to die). In past times, the oracle sat here and inhaled the vapors from the crack in the cavern floor, granting visions, aided by chewing mushrooms from room 18.

The vapors are narcotic: 2 fatigue per turn to anyone within 2 yards of the crack; loss of half ST may induce a euphoric state which, if combined with the mushrooms, leads to very bizarre visions. Anyone coming close to the crack (e.g., examining or reaching in) must roll 4/ST or be totally overcome, falling asleep for 2d hours (with psychedelic nightmares). Someone who specifies that they are holding their breath will be unaffected.

A Redcap exploring this cave saw the vapors swirl and, under the influence, shouted they were forming a ghostly nightgaunt. He panicked and fled. Since then, the other Redcaps have avoided the cave. They missed a treasure: with her dying breath, the priestess shoved an oilcloth-wrapped case into the vent. Someone reaching down (while avoiding the gas) can find it. The scroll contains prayers and rituals in praise of the goddess Dolosia, and also instructions for making the healing clay cakes, details of the power of the sacred spring, and a ritual for taking over the clay golem. ("After humble prayers, place a lump of clay from the sacred pool carved with the letters for Dolosia and Life in the golem's mouth, and you may command the sacred avatar.")



20. RESERVOIR CAVE

A cave holds three cisterns with 400 gallons of water each.

REDCAP STRATEGY

The Redcaps' goal is to keep their gunpowder factory a secret and to stay alive so they can launch their campaign of terror when they're ready. This means ensuring no foes escape to warn local authorities. They will ruthlessly kill intruders, but, if opportunity permits, they'll take prisoners to interrogate, mostly just to make sure their location hasn't been compromised.

The Redcaps are arrogant, thanks to their defeat of a dragon and their cache of firearms and bombs. They know enough tactics to have melee fighters up front and their gunners or grenadiers in back. After firing or throwing a volley of shots or grenades, gunners will not bother to reload (it takes too long) but will switch to melee weapons. Their big fighters, Arok and the Golem, will protect the leaders.

Adventurers might mount repeated raids on the temple. If so, the Redcaps will reorganize to better defend themselves, retreating and using their arsenal and petard to set explosive traps.

The common Redcaps are devoted to Tamar and Delgado and will fight to the end. *Exception:* if their leaders and the giant are lost, they'll lose heart and try to execute a fighting retreat, or if outmatched, flee or surrender.

If Tamar or the dragon is killed but Delgado survives, the group's arms-making is over; they'll evacuate and try to find a new base (and perhaps a new source of gunpowder). If they defeat the PCs, they'll use the base to begin launching attacks against the establishment.

The Dragon: Wyrnath is a wild card. He's cowed and humiliated but hates the Redcaps. He may temporarily ally with the adventurers. He won't be a reliable ally once the battle is over; not satisfied with revenge and freedom, he will seek to reclaim his lair and loot.

IF CHARACTERS ARE TAKEN CAPTIVE

Redcaps interrogating prisoners will want to learn whether their base is known to the authorities (time to evacuate!) or if the party are just random dragonslayers or bandit-hunters who happened by.

Tamar and Delgado love a captive audience. Prisoners are lectured, given a show trial as “enemies of the people,” urged to sign confessions, and so on, before the inevitable guilty verdict. The convicted Enemies of the People will die by firing squad (to test the guns!), and become dragon food.

But the Redcaps *do* believe in the power of their revolutionary rhetoric, so if captives seem to embrace their program, they *might*, on a good reaction, be allowed to enlist. Redcaps react at +1 to chemists, physickers, or mechanics but -1 to nobles, wizards, or merchants. Of course, new recruits will be tested for loyalty, probably as pawns in a gunpowder assassination plot aimed at a local merchant or guildmaster.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

If the party sets the temple to rights, they could follow up in various ways.

The Temple

If both the Redcaps and the dragon are disposed of, the party will have cleaned out the temple. What to do with it? There may be devotees of Dolosia elsewhere who would rebuild if it were safe; they’ll be grateful to the party for rescuing their holy precincts, especially if the golem survives. It is never a bad thing to have friends in the clergy.

If there are no Dolosians left, the party has as good a claim to the property as anyone. If abandoned, it will become a lair for local monsters, and no one wants that. Perhaps the party can sell their interest in the hot springs to someone who wants to build an inn and health spa.

The Redcaps

If the party returned captured Redcap leaders or their heads, they shouldn’t have any trouble claiming the reward (p. 2): “Well, well, if it isn’t Tamar Ratsbane and the notorious Master Delgado! We’ve been after them for a long time! Good work!” The authorities will want interrogations, a trial, and public executions; the PCs may be asked to attend or testify.

However, if the party were dragon-hunting or stumbled on the temple by chance, they may not realize there’s a reward for bringing in the Redcaps. If they boast about their deeds, some locals might clue them in . . . but if they didn’t bring back recognizable captives or corpses, they’ll have trouble claiming the reward. A trip back may be needed. Just hope the dragon didn’t eat the evidence!

If the party gets credit for taking out the Redcaps and/or the dragon, they should be able to drink for free in local taverns and get invited to all the best upper-class parties for a week or two . . . and they may be offered other interesting, dangerous jobs.

Magistrate Brom (p. 2) will gain prestige if was his tip that led to the adventurers defeating the Redcaps. A grateful Brom could be a good friend. Brom might also offer further work, such as a caravan escort job or a commission to take out the surviving Redcap cells.

As Delgado’s letter (p. 5) says, the Redcaps have at least one other hidden cell in town, led by one Comrade Felix (likely an alias). These radicals might lie low, try to rescue captive brethren, or plot further mischief. It’s up to the GM whether they’re harmless or dangerous!

In fact, Redcap reprisals are unlikely. Sure, if the party boasts of killing Redcaps in the wrong working-class tavern they could get into a bar fight with Redcap sympathizers. Or a goblin might fling a molotail through their window! But realistically, if the heroes don’t look for trouble, smart Redcaps will keep their own heads down. After all, the adventurers defeated their strongest cell on its home grounds!

But what if the party *does* go looking for trouble? Then the GM can run an adventure where the group tracks down surviving Redcaps among the slums and underworld of the nearest town. Felix’s cell could be a small group of a dozen or so goblins and humans in a working class tavern’s back room, a pie shop, or a dockside warehouse. They’ll lack the firepower of Tamar’s group but might still have molotails, crossbows, and a grenade or two. The main risk could be meeting undercover Redcaps while looking for information. Is that stable hand, barmaid, or blacksmith’s apprentice secretly a Redcap? PCs could be counter-ambushed in a dark alley or have rat poison slipped into their drinks.

Felix’s cell also has an alliance of convenience with local criminals and fences. A Redcap-connected fence or pawnshop would be a good target, with treasure in the form of stolen goods. But it may be heavily defended, with tough guards, mechanical traps, or defensive spells, and will likely be under the protection of the local Thieves’ Guild.

The Dragon

If Wyrnath survives, the GM will need to figure out what he’ll do next. The dragon would like to reoccupy the temple as his lair and eat the occasional cow, goat, or passing human. Then he can sit on his modest pile of treasure – wait, where’s his hoard?

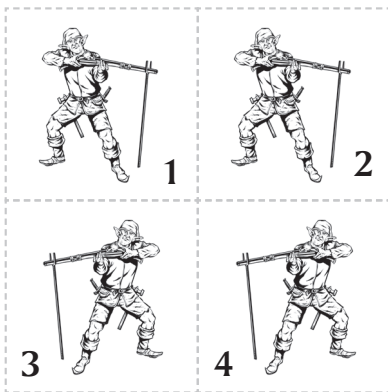
That’s what Wyrnath wants to know! He had, by his count (and he’s a dragon, so he counts very carefully) some \$12,480 worth of temple goods looted from the Dolosia priests: a pile of gold and silver, ornate temple lamps, three bejeweled idols of the goddess, a gold-framed mirror, and a silver dinner set. Where is it?

Actually, Delgado sold the treasure to equip their base (a forge and two labs aren’t cheap). Once he realizes his hoard is gone, Wyrnath will be angry all over again. If the party wants to discourage him from burning down the nearest village, they might suggest he go hunting with them. Roll reaction! If he agrees, he could accompany them on an adventure against the Redcaps or another target if there is treasure in it for him. Of course, he’ll demand the best part of any loot!

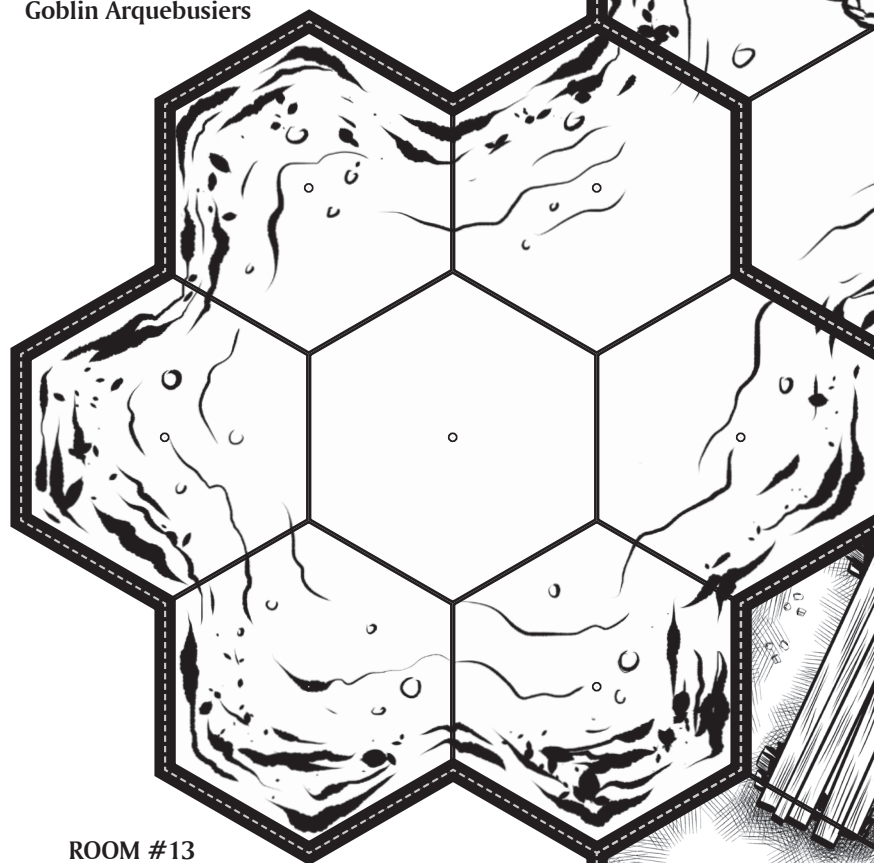
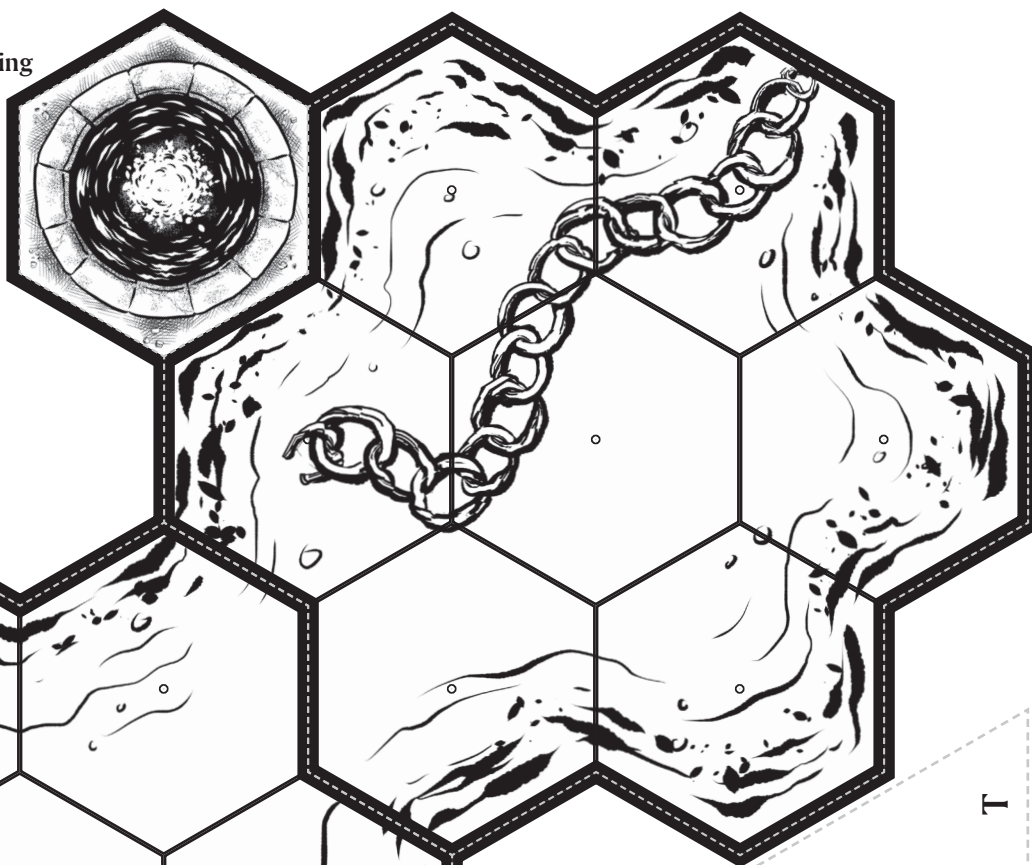
This all assumes that the party is amoral enough to work with a dragon who attacked and ate a whole temple’s worth of priests, and brave or foolish enough to ever trust a man-eating monster behind their backs. Wyrnath is not a nice creature and feels no shred of gratitude. But if he is brought to feel *respect*, and given a sniff of gold, he might be trustworthy. Slightly. For a while.

Such an alliance could annoy the local authorities, but if Wyrnath is credited with helping finish off the Redcaps, they might be willing to use the dragon as a weapon against further militant foes.

ROOM #10
Spring of Cleansing

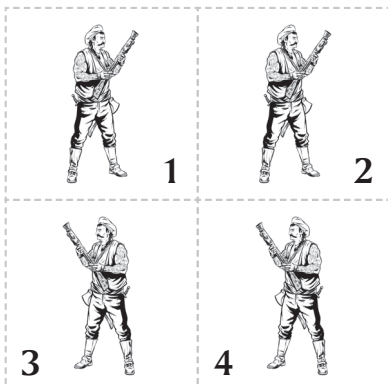


Goblin Arquebusiers



ROOM #13
Hot Springs Pool
(with chain)

Redcap Gunners

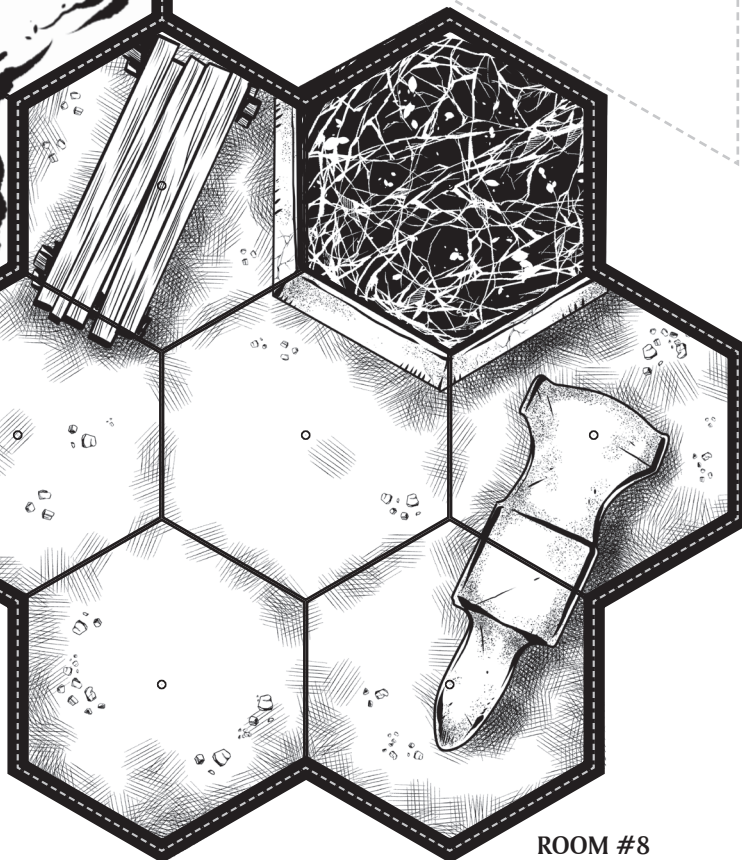


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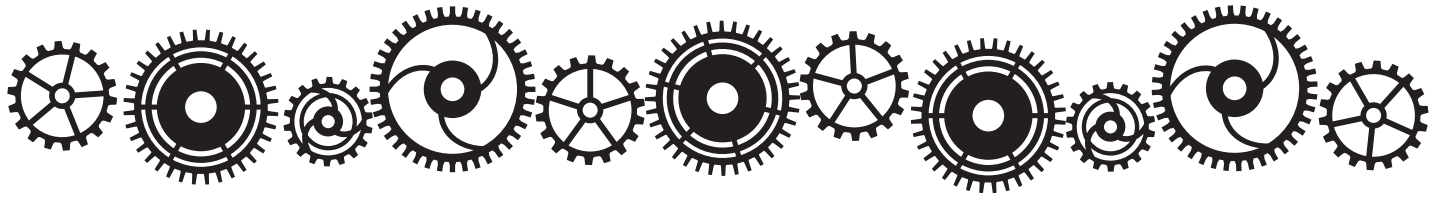
M



Manfred



ROOM #8
Lava Forge



The Clockwork Tower™



BY GREG POEHLEIN

ILLUSTRATED BY DEAN SPENCER

EDITED BY STEVE JACKSON

Many centuries ago, a very unusual Mechanician appeared in the world of Cidri. His name is lost to time; he is known as the Tinker. He built clockwork automatons the like of which has not been approached by anyone since. But these are no ordinary toys built for the amusement of the rich. They are capable of independent action, and never run down or need winding. Indeed, their power source is among their greatest mysteries. It is assumed to be magical, but they have no aura of magic. Some resemble animals, while others look like no creature known to man. They seem to have no purpose other than self-perpetuation.

To this end, the Tinker scattered “hives” of automatons across Cidri. Each is centered around at least one of the mechanical marvels called Assemblers. These “mother” machines, like their automatons, never run down nor need any maintenance beyond what they and their creations can provide – and they do provide! The automatons, often called Bronze Beasts, collect raw materials that the Assemblers use to build more automatons.



Because of the havoc that an active Assembler can create, most colonies that are found have been destroyed. But occasionally a new Seed (p. 9) becomes active, and sends units out to “acquire” raw materials. If there are people in the area, they will soon start noticing things, mostly metal, going missing. Of course, because any number of people and creatures like to collect unsupervised items, no one may immediately suspect the presence of a Bronze colony.

The Bronze Beasts will steal almost any metal that isn’t nailed down (and, later on, many items that *are* nailed down, as well as the nails). The automatons, scavenging by stealth, are almost never seen at first. It isn’t until they become a direct danger to local residents that a Bronze infestation is normally revealed. By then, there are enough Bronze Beasts that cleaning them out is not a task for a few villagers.

STARTING POINTS

This adventure begins in a village or crossroads inn. There are no other villages, let alone towns, within at least a day’s travel; most of the land is unoccupied, traveled only by hunters. Thus, a mystery can grow unnoticed in the wilderness, and the people of the village will have no one better to turn to than the visiting party.

This adventure is designed for four characters. It can easily be slipped in as a part of an ongoing campaign. If it’s used as a stand-alone adventure, have players create 32-point characters, either heroes or wizards. Each character starts with their weapon and armor of choice plus \$500 to buy supplies and other equipment.

This may also be a jumping-off point for other adventures featuring the Bronze Beasts (see the *Epilogue*, p. 10).

If, during the first encounters, the characters are struggling, the GM may drop the Bronze Beasts back either 1 or 2 ST or 1 DX. Likewise, feel free to adjust the number of turns between new Beast arrivals in the final battle. In an existing campaign with experienced players and advanced characters, add more Bronze Beasts to encounters to ratchet up the threat level; if the Beasts are too easy to kill, they can be given another point of armor and their DX increased by 1.



OPENING ENCOUNTERS

GOOD INN, GOOD COMPANY

The character party is passing through the village of Thistlewaite and decides to stop for the night. There is a very nice inn, with good food and pleasant company. The innkeeper is Willem Sethson, a solid fellow in his early thirties. Along with his wife, Siva, and his two sons, Jakob and Will, he has built a very comfortable resting place. The common room is large, filled with the smell of stew cooking in the hearth. The stew turns out to be quite tasty, as is the ale and wine Willem serves. Several farmers and merchants are present, and many stories are swapped over the course of the evening. The adventurers are made to feel welcome and encouraged to tell tales of their own exploits.

If a situation leads to a reaction roll, fudge it so the PCs get very good reactions. This is intended to be a genuinely friendly spot, and unless the PCs are actually out to start a fight, everything will go well.

This pleasant atmosphere will lead to the party’s retiring somewhat later than they had initially planned. They may well have had a bit more to drink than usual. None are drunk (unless such was their intent), but all are probably pleasantly sleepy, as appropriate to their characters.

When the PCs do retire, their “room” is actually a small separate building, with two rooms and an indoor privy. Luxury! There are four separate beds. The mattresses are down-filled and quite comfortable, and the room has a fresh, clean smell. (Again, accept any variations the players specify as fits their characters and desires.) All settle into their beds and fall into a deep, sound sleep. The GM can play out any amount of this desired, or even build it in to a small encounter at the inn as they choose. Avoid any hint of danger; we do not want the PCs deciding to post a guard. If they do, or if having a wakeful guard is the normal habit of a particularly paranoid PC group, the clever GM can find stealthy ways around this.

THEFT IN THE NIGHT

When the first party member awakens, he or she will discover that something is amiss. The area around the lock has been sawed through. A couple of fairly valuable metallic items (to be chosen by the GM) have been stolen, along with a number of less important things. The stolen items should not be critical to their completion of this adventure, but sufficiently valuable that the characters will certainly want them back. If a weapon was stolen, the town blacksmith can provide a loaner of the same type, but the quality will not be quite as good as the character’s original. Another possibility might be an amulet, charm, or keepsake, such as a locket or some other piece of jewelry, magical or not.

The characters are likely to complain to Willem, who will then tell the party about the myriad thefts that have been going on in Thistlewaite. The items that have gone missing started out small and easily overlooked, but as time passed, larger, more important, and more obvious items started disappearing. However, this is the first time that a lock has been removed this way; Willem is both embarrassed and angry that it happened to him and his guests. The innkeeper asks the party to wait while he summons other members of the town council to discuss the matter.

Once the other members of the council arrive, they examine the room and discuss the situation with Willem and the party. While this discussion is taking place (and before any real offers can be made to repay the party member or replace the stolen item), a young farm boy bursts into the inn and breathlessly reports that his father has been attacked by a strange creature that ran off with, of all things, a rake!

The council quickly comes to a decision. Willem asks the party if they would be interested in investigating the thefts and the assault of the farmer. He will offer \$200 per party member as payment, provided by the council members. He also tells them that any shop will give them a discount on supplies they need before and during the investigation.



SUPPLIES

The party can get supplies at any point while in the village. If they do so after having accepted the commission to investigate, they will be given a discount of about 10% on common items. Otherwise, supplies are priced as normal.

Blacksmith Shop: Arvin, the village blacksmith, is very capable and has a decent inventory of weapons, should a member of the party wish to purchase one. He has suffered repeatedly from the thefts and will gratefully offer about 10% off the price listed in *In the Labyrinth*. He will only have standard weapons of average quality, such as swords, maces, and similar weapons. No exotic weapons are available, nor are fine or enchanted weapons. He can repair existing metal armor but has no new armor for sale.

Saddlery: The saddle-maker, Merle, is quite capable of making repairs to any cloth or leather armor owned by the party but has none for sale at this time.

General Goods: There is a general store where the townspeople get common household merchandise. Most of the supplies and other materials listed in *In the Labyrinth* are available. Only items worth more than \$50 will be discounted to the party.

Wizards' Shop: Karla Bluestone, the local wizard, is not notably powerful but she is a skilled chemist and alchemist who sells charms, potions, and small magical trinkets. Because the party is helping out the village, she will discount her items to the party a bit. Karla has five doses of Healing Potion that she will sell for \$100 each. She also has one dose each of Increase ST (\$400) and Increase DX (\$550) potions. The GM should feel free to offer any other small magical items that aren't too powerful for a small discount (no more than 10% off).

Karla will tell the party that she hasn't (as far as she knows) lost any magical goods to the mysterious thief . . . but she will be interested in hearing what the party knows so far. She's no fighter and has no desire to accompany the party.

THE FARM ATTACK

At some point – depending on how dire the emergency seems to be – Tel Reston, the boy who reported the attack, will lead the party and several of the village council members out to the farm. They will find the farmer, Silas Reston, resting inside his home. His splinted leg is propped up, and he's obviously had a rough time of it.

Silas says he went out to milk his cows in the early dawn. The sun hadn't completely risen. Approaching his barn, he saw a bronze-colored animal the size of a large dog coming out. It was carrying his hay rake in its mouth, at the end of a very long neck. He yelled at it, hoping to scare it away.

Instead of running, however, the creature darted toward him and whacked at his leg with the rake. He leaped backward and fell . . . and heard his knee pop. The creature then darted off into the bushes and he lost sight of it.

He started crawling toward the farmhouse, calling for his wife, Mara. She made him comfortable and, as soon as the sun was up, sent their son to town to get help.

When asked about the creature, Silas will tell them he didn't get a very good look at it in the semi-dark. It had an odd, long body and four legs, and didn't move like any animal he'd ever seen before. Also, as near as he could tell, it did not have any eyes, but could apparently see very well in the dim, predawn light. When the creature swung the rake at him, he noticed its neck was unnaturally long and seemed to have a joint right in the middle so that it could fold its neck back along its body. Finally, he will tell the party he got the impression that the creature was stiffer than flesh – as if it wore armor.

The group will easily find the site where the encounter took place. There are signs of a scuffle in the dirt of the path; they quickly locate the stone that the farmer tripped over. Leading out of the barn are odd circular tracks. Someone with the Tracking talent will *not* know what created the tracks. The circular "footprints" appear to be in a four-legged walking pattern. Given that the tracks are circular, it will not be obvious which way the tracks are facing, though the gait will indicate a general direction of movement. A successful 3/IQ roll will reveal the direction the creature fled.

As the party is looking around, one of them will catch sight of something on top of a nearby ridge. It's the silhouette of a four-legged creature, with a long neck and an odd head right at the front of its lean body. They will not be able to make out any details, and the creature will quickly move down the other side of the ridge. It's at least a half mile away, so there is no hope of catching the creature immediately, but now they know where to look for more tracks.

THE CHASE BEGINS

As the party moves toward the ridge where they saw the silhouette, any PC who has tracking skills will start to notice signs of activity. Many twigs and branches have been broken, and even though the area is fairly wild, there are few large branches or stones that one would expect to find in such a rough wooded area. They will also note a couple of spots where leaf litter had been moved aside and something dug out from the dirt, and there are round tracks in the fresh earth.

When they reach the ridgeline, a look back downhill will confirm their position. From this vantage point, they can see the farmer's house and barn. Anyone can search for signs of the mysterious creature and will soon find more of the circular tracks.

As the party begins following the tracks, they will come across a fairly large wolf in their path. Surprisingly, though, the wolf will whimper and flee into the brush. The party, already looking for a wolf-like creature, may pursue . . . but they will soon realize it could not have created the tracks they have followed.

Members of the party should be given the impression that something had badly spooked the wolf.

Eventually, the PCs will come across a large clearing with more of the strange round footprints. At the center is the ruined foundation of a circular tower. Its walls are broken and crumbling, and there is a lot of rocky debris around and inside the tower's walls. The remaining walls are anywhere from one to 12 feet tall, with a ragged appearance at the top.

THE OLD WATCHTOWER

If the party hides and watches the tower, they won't see anything; the Beasts are aware that there are intruders, and won't show themselves.

If the party goes back to the village to report and ask more questions, they'll learn that this is an ancient watchtower, with tunnels and rooms underneath. No one goes there. In their grandparents' time, it was quarried for building stone, until it was close to collapse and too dangerous to work there. The party should realize that the tower they saw looks far more finished and stable than that . . . so somebody has worked to clean it up, make it usable, and then make it look like it is still a ruin.



Anyone with talents such as Architect, Engineer, or Naturalist will feel there is something odd about the ruins but may not be able to put their finger on what that is. If they ask about the surface of the walls, or make a 4/IQ roll, they will realize that, while the walls appear to be crumbling, there are no climbing plants on them, and the moss on the wall appears to be on individual stones and not spreading to adjacent stones. The "ruins" seem to be more stage-dressing than the result of aging on a natural structure.

IN THE TOWER

From here on, use the map on p 5. The map shows the tower-ruins footprint – each hex of the map represents a megahex for combat in the standard "labyrinth scale" from *In the Labyrinth*. The GM may lay out the tower using the hex tiles from *The Fantasy Trip Legacy Edition*. The darker lines on the map indicate where megahex tiles go to make up the tower ruins. The GM should scatter debris counters around the perimeter and a couple in the interior of the map to provide obstacles for the combatants. Here, and in the warrens below, these debris piles can be moved through, but may trip characters. Treat the debris piles the same as a fallen body when rolling to avoid tripping.

1. THE RUINS

From the outside, all that is visible is the ruined stump of the tower. Well inside the doorway, where it can see but not be seen, is a lone Digger acting as lookout. It should be easy to dispatch, possibly giving the party a false sense of confidence.

The Bronze Digger

The smallest version of the Bronze Beast is the first type of automaton that the Assembler creates. These are about the size of a large house cat and are designed for digging and light scavenging. Because of their size, Diggers can fit where other Beasts cannot. The body is boxy, long, and skinny. It has no head, but a small arm attached where the neck would be. At the end of this arm is a humanoid hand for picking up items; it can use tools for scooping soil. From within the hand, the Digger can extrude a small, powered saw blade for cutting tree roots or other jobs; it was such a saw that broke into the PC's room. This can be used for combat, but it is short and does little damage.

The four legs can splay like those of a lizard, giving the Digger a flatter, lower-slung profile when it burrows.

It weighs about 25 pounds and is 2 feet long.

Bronze Digger

ST 8

DX 12

IQ n/a

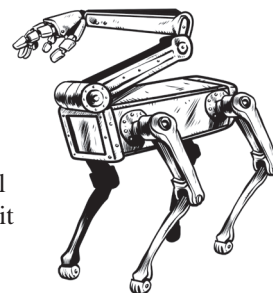
MA 12

Armor: 1.

Attacks and damage: Saw, 1d-2.

Special Abilities/Weaknesses:

Always attacks nearest foe and will continue attacking that target until it is eliminated before moving on to the next target.



The party may wish to search the debris piles inside, but will find only rocks of varying size. Nothing of value is there.

2. THE STAIRWAY

Once the guard has been dispatched, the party will find the spiral stairway into the tunnels beneath the tower. At the bottom of the stairway is a narrow (1 hex wide) tunnel leading to the east.

The Bronze Beast in the next area, and all others encountered, will be alerted by the Beasts' mysterious communication system. They won't know exactly where the party is unless there is a Beast that can see them, but they know they have been invaded and the Digger was destroyed.

BELOW GROUND

Again, the megahex tiles may be used to build the encounter maps for the players. The entire upper corridor can be made with one set of tiles; each encounter room uses those same tiles. Of course, if you have two or more sets of tiles, you can leave the corridor in place and build the rooms as the players reach them. In all cases, the doorway into each room from the corridors is a single-hex-wide opening. Close to the surface, the rooms and corridors are lined with ancient stone. Farther on is the area the Diggers have excavated; those rooms and corridors are roughly cut from the surrounding stone and dirt. The smell is of freshly dug soil, with just a slight metallic odor.

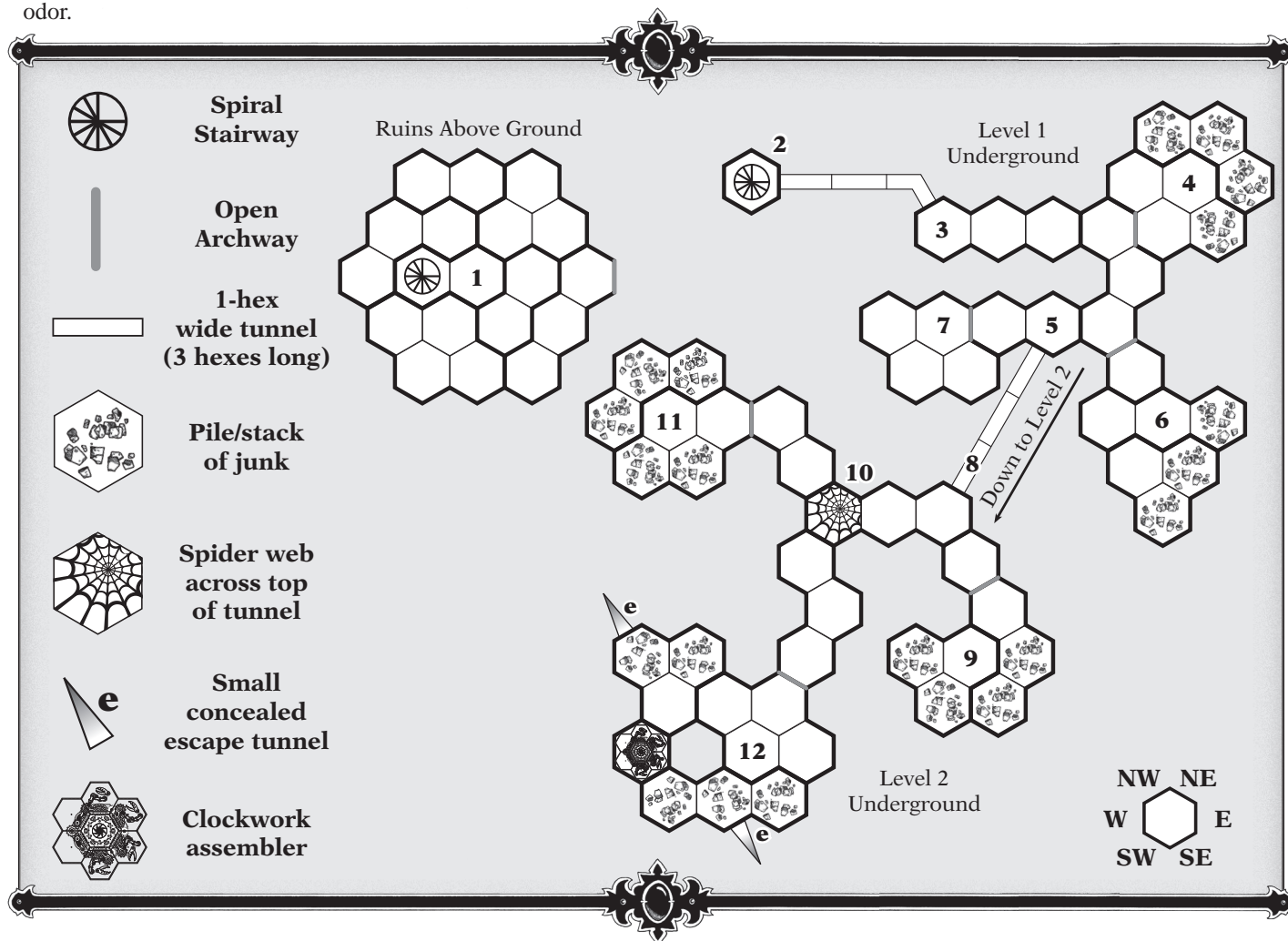
THE BRONZE CREATIONS

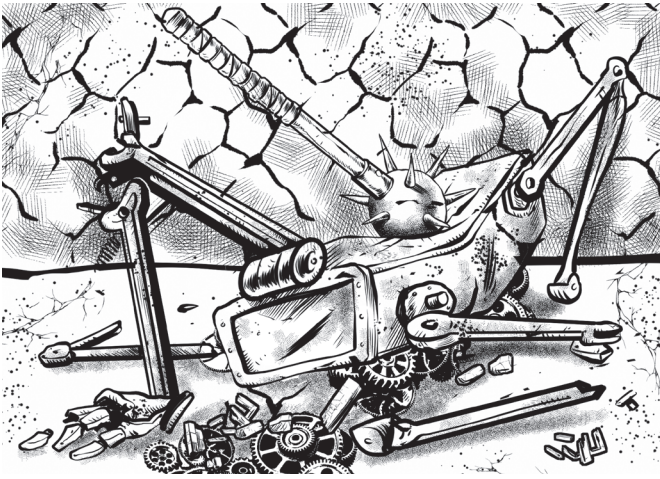
There are three types of Bronze Beast here.

All Beasts have sensors that "see" in all directions, with light or without it, and their arms are mounted on a rotating joint that allows them to position it in all directions. This means that Bronze Beasts have no side or rear hexes in combat.

Bronzes are mechanical and have no brain like a living creature. They can "see" Images and Illusions, but though they can see an Illusion, it cannot touch or cause any damage to the Beast. As mechanisms, they cannot "believe" or "disbelieve." A Beast may be distracted by an Illusion, but only for a little while. When an Illusion attacks a Beast, or vice versa, the attack passes harmlessly through the target, and the Beast's programming allows it to ignore that illusion henceforth.

Bronzes communicate with each other in some unknown fashion. They make no sound at all. The gears are totally silent in their operation.





It should also be noted that the warrens underground are completely unlit. The Bronze Beasts don't need visible light to move about. The party will need to provide their own torches or lanterns to see where they are going and what they are fighting.

3. IN THE SHADOWS

After rounding a bend toward the southeast, the tunnel widens (1 megahex wide). There is quite a bit of rocky debris here. Place several debris counters along the outer wall to the southwest. There is also a Bronze Builder rummaging through one of the piles of debris. The Builder is obscured by the debris piles and partially hidden in the shadows. This will make it hard to see initially and will require the party to make a successful 3/IQ roll to spot the Beast before it attacks. If the party fails the roll, the Builder gets both initiative and a free turn of attack. It will choose the person who is nearest and lock onto them. It will continue to attack that character until they fall or it is destroyed.

THE BRONZE BUILDER

The Bronze Builder is the second level of Beast that the Assembler creates. It was a Builder that attacked the farmer. A Builder is about the size of a large wolf. The body is boxy and long and skinny. It is armored to protect the mechanisms inside. It has four oddly shaped legs positioned at each corner of the body. However, rather than a head, it has a jointed arm projecting from the top front of the body. The arm is tipped with a single "hand" that looks like a mechanical copy of a human hand, complete with opposable thumb. The hand can extrude various tools, but none is especially fitted for combat.

It weighs about 100 pounds and is not quite 4 feet long.

Bronze Builder

ST 10

DX 12

IQ n/a

MA 12

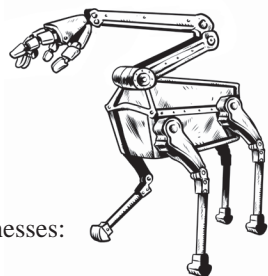
Armor: 2.

Attacks and damage:

Manipulator Arm, 1d.

Special Abilities/Weaknesses:

As for Digger.



There is nothing to find if the debris is searched. It is mostly just stone, possibly stockpiled to support further excavation.

4. LONE WOLF

The first true chamber the party will find is a seven-megahex space with a one-hex-wide opening. There is no door. This room has rocky debris scattered around the walls, as well as piles of odds and ends that the Beasts have scavenged. As soon as the party enters the room, they will be assaulted by the pungent odor of animal waste. This is due to a lone, near-starving wolf hiding there. It is the mate of the one they saw earlier. The wolves were hunting close to the tower, encountered Builders, and were attacked. One fled inside and retreated here. It will attack immediately.

Wolf

ST 8

DX 14

IQ 6

MA 12

Armor: 1.

Attacks and damage: Bite, 1d+1.



Once the wolf has been dispatched, a search of the scavenged piles will reveal a few small items of junk (broken farm implements, barrel staves, wheel hubs, and similar worthless debris), a small case containing one Healing Potion, a small box containing 10 silver coins, and a dagger worth about \$10.

5. TIGHT SQUEEZE

To the southwest, the party will find a narrow tunnel (1 hex wide) sloping down. The wider tunnel continues on to the west. The dank smell of the underground is even stronger coming from the narrow tunnel. Observant characters might notice a slight air current coming up from the sloping tunnel.

6. MORE MECHANISMS

A one-hex opening leads into this room. The room smells musty and slightly metallic. Place debris counters around the walls in the indicated megahexes. Two Bronze Builders are rummaging through a large pile of items. Place these next to the debris piles in the southmost megahex.

As the party enters the room, both Beasts will attack, locking on to the first one through the opening.

Once the Builders are both dealt with, the party may search through the debris. They will find a package of field rations (two-day supply for one person), a ring worth \$20, and a small pouch containing 10 silver coins. The items stolen from the PCs' own rooms are also in one of the piles here.

If in the GM's opinion the party spends too long in this area, the Beasts will come to them: the Warrior and two Builders from area 12 will attack, followed very closely by the Builders from area 11, and the three diggers from area 7 as a third wave. Unless the characters are truly doughty, they may have to retreat, or downright flee, from this onslaught, especially since they have no way of knowing that there is not a fourth wave, a fifth . . . In fact, if they don't have to flee from this many foes at once, the GM needs to increase the power of the Beasts, not just their number.

CAN WE TALK TO THEM?

This particular “hive” will not communicate. It is quite possible that a larger hive might develop the ability, and might even be willing to trade for what it needs, limit its reproduction, and co-exist peacefully. It is even possible that such a communicative Assembler could become an ally. But this Assembler neither understands the tongues of other races nor possesses any way to make the sounds. The Beasts have keen hearing; they just don’t understand words.

Attempts to communicate with the Beasts will be ignored. A Beast out in the open will flee while the PCs are trying to talk. A Beast in the tower will attack while the PCs are trying to talk. Gestures, telepathy, and so on will be equally futile. In a sense, there is *no one there* to talk to!

7. DIG WE MUST

This room is an additional storeroom in progress. Again, the doorway is a 1 hex wide opening. The room smells heavily of freshly dug dirt. Here, three Bronze Diggers have been scraping at the far wall to expand the room. All three Diggers will attack the first person through the doorway as soon as he or she enters.

The debris piles in this room are just piles of stone and dirt, and there is no treasure to be found here.

LOWER LEVEL

Once the party starts down the narrow (1 hex wide) passage, you can use the megahex tiles to build the corridors of the second level. As with the first level, the walls are rough-cut stone. The air has a slightly musty smell, and there is a light air current coming up from the area below.

8. CLOSE QUARTERS SURPRISE

This is a narrow passage (1 hex wide) sloping down to a lower level. As the party reaches the halfway point of the narrow tunnel, a Bronze Builder will come around the corner and enter the narrow tunnel. It will attack immediately. Because the tunnel is only one hex across, only the lead character will be able to fight, unless he or she can push the Builder back into the wider corridor below.

9. UNEXPECTED LURKER

This is another chamber used to store stolen materials. Place the debris pile around the walls in the megahexes indicated. In addition to the musty, stale smell, the party may also detect (3/IQ) a musty, musky smell as well. The room seems empty and the party will see no movement inside. All they can see are the piles of junk. If, however, the party begins to search the piles of salvaged materials, they will disturb a large constrictor snake that was nesting among the salvage (and is the origin of the musty smell). It will attack immediately, gaining one free attack round. The snake is also hard to hit; -3 from DX when attacking it.

Constrictor Snake

ST 12

DX 12

IQ 6

MA 6 -3 to hit.

Attacks and damage: Bite, 1d+1.

Once the snake is dealt with, a successful search of the salvage piles will reveal a nice hatchet worth about \$15 and a pouch containing 2d6 silver coins. The rest of the debris is more broken or intact tools, mostly metallic.

Again, if the party spends too long here, the Bronze Beasts from below will counterattack. But if they move onward, they face another danger.

10. LOOK UP!

There is a giant spider web woven in the shadows across the top of the middle three hexes of the center megahex of this corridor. There is enough clearance beneath it for the Bronze Diggers and Builders (as well as halflings and dwarves) to go under, but it will snare any human-sized character about the shoulder and head. The party member in the lead must make a 3/IQ roll to see the web before getting stuck. Anyone who gets stuck must roll 4/ST to break free or deal at least 5 damage from an edged weapon to cut free. The spider itself will quickly descend from its hiding place above and attack any character stuck, or the one nearest to the web otherwise. The spider’s bite will only cause 1 point of damage, but any character bitten must make a 4/ST roll or take 2 dice damage from the venom. Of course, once they are free of the web, applying a torch will effectively burn it all away. If this should happen while the spider is still alive, it will immediately jump from the web and attack on the ground.

Giant Spider

ST 6

DX 10

IQ 1

MA 12

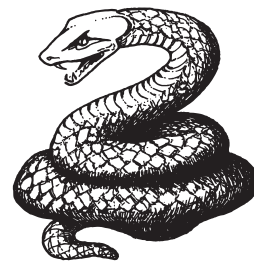
Attacks and damage:

Bite, 1 pt. and save 4/ST or take 2d venom damage.

11. LYING IN WAIT

This is another storage area containing several piles of salvaged items. The doorway into the room is a one-hex opening with no door. There are two Bronze Builders here, positioned on either side of the doorway, lying in wait for the first person to come through. Both will lock onto that first character and will get a free attack unless the party enters with weapons drawn, ready for combat.

Once the Bronze Beasts are defeated, a search of the debris piles will reveal some nice items amidst the random metal junk. Among the loot is a very finely balanced shortsword (+1 to DX when attacking) worth about \$800, a pouch containing 2d6 silver, and another case containing one healing potion.



12: FACING THE ASSEMBLER

Once again, entry to this room is through a one-hex-wide opening with no door. The air has the typical musty smell, with a strong metallic smell as well. The party may notice (3/IQ) a slight air current blowing from this room as they enter. This is a large room with piles of items and rocky debris lining the walls (use all the debris counters and place in the hexes next to the walls in the indicated megahexes). At the far end of the room is a large mechanical contraption with several arms and various openings. This is the Assembler, responsible for building and running this colony. To the party, it will look like a metal octopus, with waving arms and gnashing claws. It's obviously a menace, even if they don't understand it (the *players* will understand better than the characters, unless there is a Mechanician present).

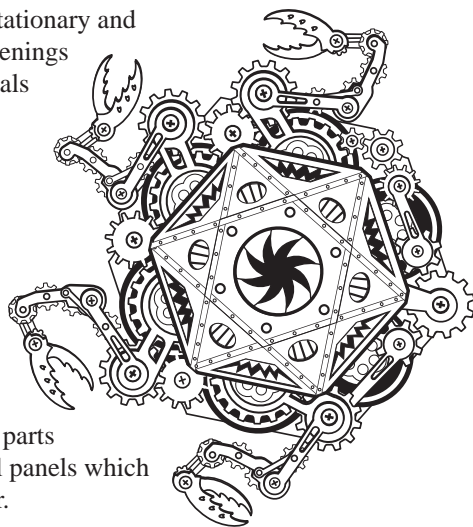
The Assembler

The Assembler is represented by a seven-hex tile that takes up one full megahex above the tunnel floor. Below it is the real "works" of the device, an underground factory with no room for even a small humanoid among the systems. The Bronze Beasts do not work directly on the Assembler after it is activated; it is serviced inside by its own snake-like manipulators and servo units. The above-ground segment was expanded from the original Seed's body and now houses both the major materials input ports and the "brains" of the assembly complex. This is the system's vulnerable point. If it is broken (reduced to ST 0), the entire Assembler will cease to function.

The Assembler's visible section has four heavy arms that it uses to help feed raw materials into its interior. Unlike the intricate and subtle manipulators of the mobile units, the Assembler's primary arms are simply for moving, scooping, and breaking down raw materials to get them into the "innards" of the assembly plant.

Those arms can also be used in its defense, and it can attack with all four at once. They can reach any target in any hex adjacent to the one in which the base of the arm is attached. This means that in some hexes, a target may be attacked by two separate arms in the same turn. All reachable hexes are front hexes for the Assembler. Should anyone manage to make it past the flailing arms to get atop the mechanism, they will be in reach of all four arms at the same time!

The Assembler is stationary and has slots, bins, and openings into which raw materials are loaded. Because it has arms on all sides, treat all hexes surrounding the Assembler as front hexes. Because of its large size, all attacks against the Assembler are at a +1 DX bonus. Its visible and accessible parts are protected by metal panels which serve as 4-point armor.



The Assembler will never be found alone. There will always be at least two Builders bringing raw materials from piles of ore and stolen goods. They will immediately attack any intruders, and more will continue to arrive the longer the combat takes.

When it is completed, the Bronze Seed will exit one of the hidden openings in the sides of the Assembler and scurry toward the nearest escape tunnel. Half of the Beasts in the room will make a fighting retreat to the tunnel and try to escape as well. The rest will continue to protect the Assembler. Once the Seed escapes, no more Beasts will arrive, as all now have the directive to escape – or to cause distractions – and help the Seed rebuild somewhere else.

Assembler

ST 20

DX 10

IQ n/a

MA 0

Armor: 4.

Attacks and damage:

Heavy-Duty Arms (4): 1d+2.



Note that this Assembler is hardly more than a baby. If it had expected discovery this soon, it would have prepared better. An older Assembler would have much stronger armor, perhaps heavy enough to be completely immune to hand weapons, and other defenses as well.

There are three Bronze Beasts in this room. Two are the standard Builders, while the third is the first Bronze Warrior that the Assembler has created.

The Bronze Warrior

The Bronze Warrior is a soldier, and is the third type of Beast created by this Assembler. The Warrior is usually not created until it's needed. While they can be used for scavenging, they are large enough that they will not pass unnoticed. As such, they will usually be kept "at home" for defense purposes until there are enough of them that they can become a small army and escort other automatons on large-scale raids.

The Warrior is about the size of a small pony, and has a shape more like a centaur without a head. It has four legs that look like larger versions of those on the Bronze Builder. Mounted on the forward torso are two arms like those of the Builder, but larger. Each has the humanoid "hand" of the Builder, as well as an extensible blade that strikes like a shortsword (2d-1). The Warrior is also capable of attacking with both arms at the same time.

It weighs about 250 pounds and is 5 feet long.

Bronze Warrior

ST 14

DX 12

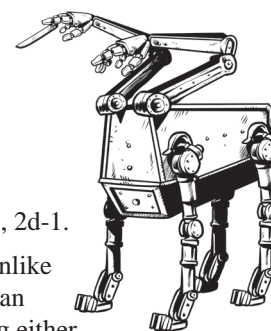
IQ n/a

MA 12

Armor: 3.

Attacks and damage: Arm Blade, 2d-1.

Special Abilities/Weaknesses: Unlike other Bronze Beasts, the Warrior can attack with both arms at once, using either the extensible blade or any other weapon held in the hand.



When the party enters the room, two Builders are standing next to the Assembler, feeding salvaged items into the openings below each arm. The Warrior is standing in the alcove to the north and will not be visible to the party as they enter. As before, all three of these Beasts will lock onto the first adventurer into the room and remain focused on them until they are dead.

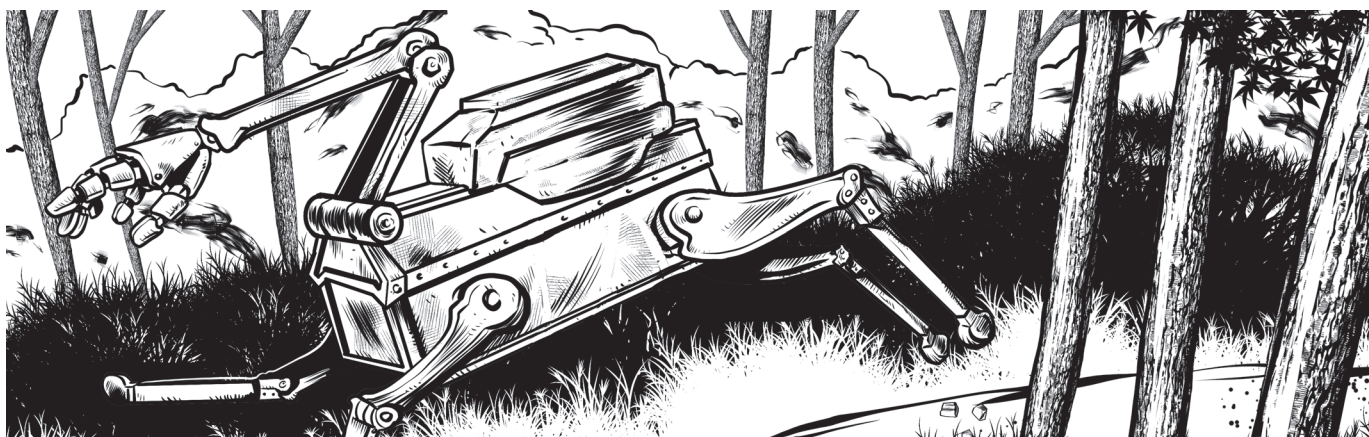
While this combat is going on, the GM should keep track of elapsed time. Starting with the fourth turn after the party enters the room, roll a die every turn. On a 1 or 2, a new Builder appears. Positioning a party member at the door will block any new Beast from entering the room until that person retreats or dies. All Builders in the area are headed toward the Tower now; a total of eight are available to join the combat. (Though there are also three Diggers outside the Tower, they will not join the battle, because, at this point, it's clear to the Tower that the intruders can easily defeat them.)

The Flight of the Seed

Two turns into the battle, a third Builder will emerge from a door in the Assembler; the door quickly closes. Anyone facing that direction gets a 3/IQ roll to notice that the Beast seems to be wearing a large saddle!

This Builder is carrying the Assembler's Seed (see box below) to safety. It runs to a small hole in the northwest corner of the room, and flees.

After the Seed escapes, one of the Beasts already in the room will break off its attack, run to the hole that the Seed escaped into, and back in. Wedging itself firmly into the hole to completely block anyone or anything from following the Seed, it will fight from that position until destroyed. Once destroyed, it will take the party several minutes to pull it out of the hole.



SEEDS

A “seed” is the reproductive mechanism of the Assemblers. It is designed to be carried and “planted” by the Beasts which that Assembler creates. The Seed created by this Assembler is shaped roughly like a saddle and would fit over the back of one of its Builders or Warriors.

A Seed is even more of a marvel of miniaturization than the rest of the Clockwork Beasts. In a package weighing less than 50 pounds is a self-assembling factory that can eventually grow into a whole new Assembler. It includes memories, instructions, at least two very tiny motile automatons (Bronze Mice, as it were), and fabricating devices that can self-replicate. It is intended to be delivered by one or more Beasts, which will protect it, prepare a location for it to grow, and collect materials. Whether a lone Seed could start growing without a helping Builder is a good question. Perhaps, over undisturbed decades or centuries, the Mice it carries could find enough material to start the growth process, but many things can befall a little mouse, even if it's made of metal.

A Seed is very time-consuming and “expensive” to create, and very vulnerable to accident or attack while it is first growing, which is why the Bronze Beasts do not rule Cidri. Normally, an Assembler will prepare one Seed early in its life but will not deploy it unless a perfect location is found or the Assembler is threatened with destruction. Once it has one Seed prepared, it will not create more unless it has scouted a perfect location and can spare a party of Beasts to escort it.

The best location for a Seed is far away from people, yet perhaps near enough that metal goods can be stolen – that's risky, but far more efficient than refining raw ore. It should be protected from the weather, which probably means underground but well above the groundwater line. A large Assembler complex will have at least one Seed hidden on site, to give it a chance of regrowth if it is destroyed (after all, the ruins of an Assembler are a perfect source for exactly the materials that a new Assembler needs to grow). A dead city far from civilization, perhaps lost in a jungle or killed by spreading deserts, would be a perfect location, with lots of metals available and little chance of interference. Or Beasts could be found in a lightless cavern deep underground, slowly mining for ore and patiently building up their numbers.

For more ideas about self-replicating systems like the Bronze Beasts and their Assemblers, look up “Von Neumann Machine.”

All remaining Beasts in the room will continue to fight and defend the Assembler. Because the Assembler is immobile, it can only attack any opponent who might stray within one hex. The Beasts in the room will try to force the party members into the Assembler's attack zone if they can. They will fight to the death, or until the Assembler is destroyed. If any Beasts are left after the Assembler is demolished, they will try to make it to any hex marked with an "e" and escape through a concealed small tunnel. Any Beast that escapes will do so in a way that allows it to fight anything that might follow. The crack is too small for anything larger than a Halfling to enter, and doing so would be foolhardy even if possible; there would be almost no room to swing a weapon. If any in the party is foolish enough to try, use a one-hex row that must be entered on hands and knees. Any attacks made within the tunnel are at a -3 DX because of the close confines, while the Bronze Beasts with their flexible manipulator arm have no such disadvantage.

Any escaped Beasts, plus the three Diggers outside, will rendezvous with the one carrying the Seed and go . . . where? Probably a long ways away. They may also dig a hole, bury themselves, and go dormant for the next ten years. Even if the party pursues as soon as they get out of the tower, the Beasts will not be found.

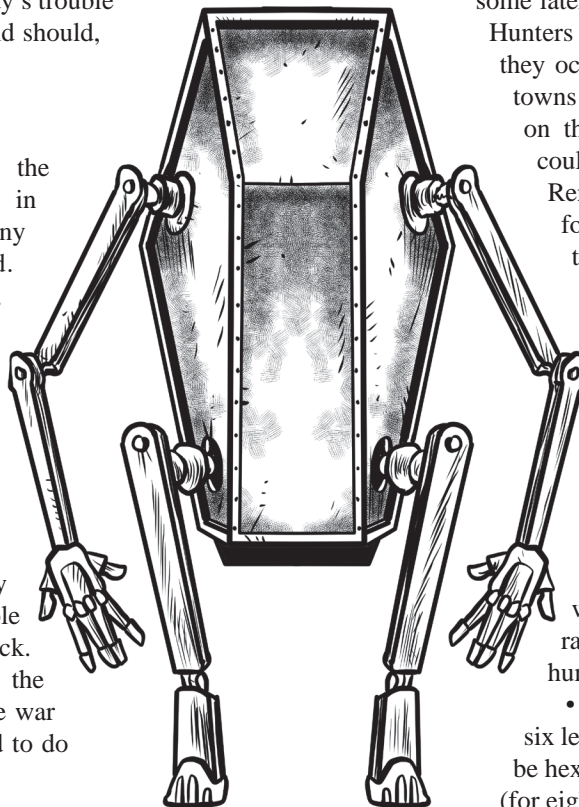
A Last Bit of Looting

Once the Assembler is defeated, the party is free to search the debris piles in the room. Among the loot to be found are 1d+3 pouches or containers each containing 2d+3 silver coins and another case containing one healing potion, and two weapons chosen at random from the weapons table in *In the Labyrinth*.

As for the Assembler itself: it contains a lot of good metal, but it's probably not worth the party's trouble to salvage it. The villagers can, and should, make good use of it.

EPILOGUE

Once the party has defeated the Assembler and the Beasts left in the room, they will find that any remaining automatons have fled. The rooms are empty of any threat, and can be searched in detail. Of course, any "dead" Bronze Beast will still be there, and if the party chooses to take one or more back, they can do so. The Diggers only weigh about 25 pounds, and one could fit in a knapsack. The others would require a mule or a wagon to carry back. Note, though, that a reasonable party should fear a counterattack. The GM should not give them the impression that they have won the war and have all the time in the world to do whatever they want.



When the party returns to the inn, Willem summons the village council. Among them is the wizard Karla. She talked to the farmer who was injured, and the description of the attacker sounded familiar. Referring to an old book she brought with her, she will tell the party and the Council more about the creatures they have defeated. She will have little to add about the mobile Beasts, but she can explain what the "mechanical octopus" Assembler really was, and tell something of how the Assemblers reproduce. Particular attention should be paid to the flight of the rest of the Beasts, since that probably indicates that a Seed (p. 9) has escaped – as indeed it did. If the villagers are wise, they will thoroughly pillage the old tower, break the ruined Assembler into bits and carry them far away, and keep watch forever against another plague of thefts . . . just in case.

If the party salvaged a Beast, Karla will offer to buy it, or (more likely) trade for a reasonable amount of magic. She won't offer a fortune, though, because she suspects that there might be others to be picked up for free at the old tower.

She will also suggest that, while of course there is no Mechanics' Guild in this tiny village, one in a larger city would likely be very interested in buying defunct Beasts and would pay for the locations of any Bronze colonies found in the future.

The grateful council will gladly pay the agreed-upon fee. Additionally, innkeeper Willem will offer them another two nights room and board for free as a thank-you for stopping the menace. (Willem is no fool. He doesn't know for sure that the troubles are over, and this is a relatively cheap and pleasant way to keep the party in town for a little while . . . just in case.)

Further Adventures

The GM is encouraged to expand on the material in this adventure. The PCs might stumble across another nest at some later date, or even decide to become Bronze Hunters to seek out the infestations wherever they occur. The Mechanics' Guilds in larger towns and cities may have more information on the Bronze Beasts, and further research could reveal new secrets and information.

Remember that the Beasts need not follow the same configuration seen in this adventure. Possible types of Beasts include:

- Spies – tiny units that do nothing but watch and listen. They might have legs, or they might fly. The Assembler in this adventure had no Spies.
- Bear-like Warriors that walk on all four legs but will rise to their hind legs to attack. These would likely be smaller than a real bear.
- Small humanoid Bronze Builders with two arms and two legs that could range anywhere from hobbit-sized to human-sized.
- Crab-like Bronze Diggers with four or six legs and two manipulators. The body could be hexagonal (for six appendages) or octagonal (for eight appendages).

- Elongated ant-like Diggers or Builders that have six legs and one arm where the head would be.
- Ball-shaped units that roll everywhere, with two arms that stick out from a central “axis” or that are retractable and hide inside to create a perfect sphere.
- Warriors with missile-weapon capability.

The possibilities here are endless. When designing your own Bronze Beasts, keep a few guidelines in mind:

- Remember that only a few types of Beasts normally appear in any but the largest colony. The progression will always be some form of Digger, then a form of Builder, and finally a type of Warrior. Specialist units like Spies or heavy excavators might come later if the Assembler thinks they are needed.
- Match the capabilities of the Beasts to the locale and to whatever they will be scavenging. Beasts may look and act like a swarm of rats, working as groups. Those near water could be capable of moving or working under water. Ones that burrow like moles, climb vertical surfaces like insects, or even fly could be adapted for special environments.
- Except for Spies, a Beast should have one or more arms. These could be hinged as in this adventure or might be more serpentine and tentacle-like. The “hand” at the end could have any number of “fingers” that may be jointed like human fingers, pincers, or even smaller tentacles. As long as the Beast can use them to dig, build, and carry salvaged goods, they will work.

In a “Bronze Hunter” campaign, eventually the players could come across multiple complexes in a single general area (cooperating or even competing), or a larger complex with two or more Assemblers and multiple types of Beasts. Campaign adventures can start with simple raids on Assemblers and move on to:

- helping locals build defenses, and training them to help fight the infestations.
- competing or cooperating with other groups of hunters, scholars, wizards, or Mechanics investigating the phenomenon.
- dealing with Mechanics who try, with various degrees of success, to disassemble, reassemble, duplicate, or exploit the Bronze mechanisms.
- becoming “ambassadors” to the Assemblers, if any can be found that are able and willing to communicate.
- investigating the origins of the Bronze Beasts, and perhaps discovering the true story behind the Tinker himself.

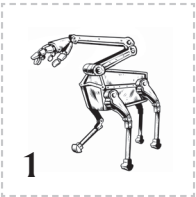
Any Bronze Beasts that are captured intact and “alive” can be disassembled and reassembled with some basic Mechanician skills. Interestingly, if a Beast is partially disassembled and then reassembled in the exact same way, it will come alive again. Replacing even one damaged part with a seemingly exact duplicate from another Beast will rarely work, and building replacement parts will never work. Of course, the Beast will violently oppose its disassembly, and will probably attack as soon as it comes “alive,” but that is the problem of the Mechanician who wants to experiment with it.

AND NOW, THE SCIENCE

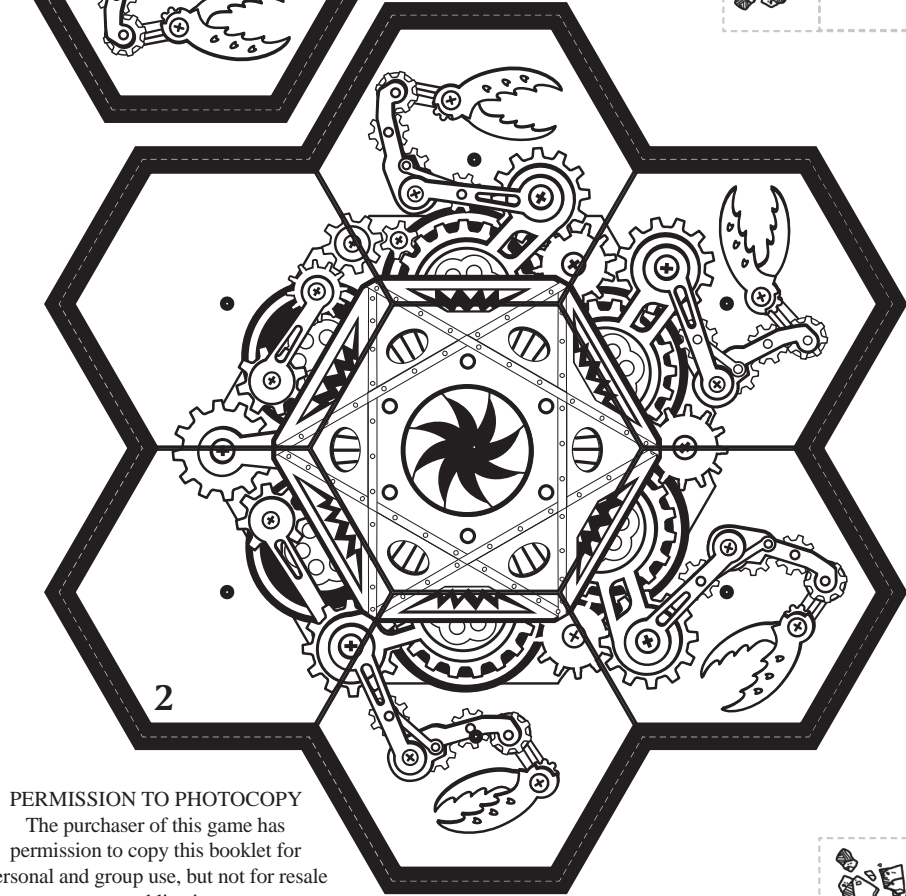
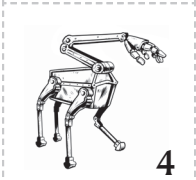
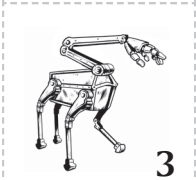
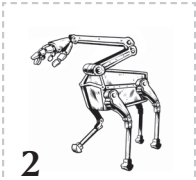
GMs – This information is not for players. In fact, you should not read it yourself if you want to preserve for yourself all of the mysterious aura of the metal Beasts.

- Power – They may be powered by tiny fusion plants, or by some battery technology we haven’t dreamed of. They are definitely not magic, though, and there is no chance of sudden catastrophic explosion when the PCs smite a Beast. (Unless you want them to catch fire like a B-movie vampire, of course.)
- Communications – Probably radio with a very high bandwidth. The Assembler is in constant real-time contact with all its automatons, though if something happens to the comm link or the Assembler itself, the machines will continue about their work.
- Sensors – Visible light, IR, sound at all frequencies, magnetism, and probably more. It is hard to surprise Beasts, especially on their home ground.
- Clockwork? Yes, really – at least, that’s what the folk of Cidri would call any such mechanical device. In fact, we can create our own “Beasts” now, albeit without the everlasting power source or the good-as-human hands. But it takes a huge factory and skilled workers to build one.
- Intelligence – A “not applicable” IQ score has been assigned to the automatons. It could just as well have been zero or 20; machine intelligence is very different from human, and since the Beasts do not communicate, roll to disbelieve, or have to try to figure things out, their intelligence, or lack of it, is not an issue.
- Programmed Reactions – The colony does not react to living creatures in quite the way that humans may expect. The colony could be called paranoid about remaining undetected, hiding from searchers, and lashing out if confronted. But it makes no attempt to communicate, instead stealing material in a way that guarantees a hostile reaction from humans. This is just the way it’s programmed. It obeys the laws of physics but not the “laws” of human behavior or society. No one except the GM knows whether there is really a mind present or whether it’s all an elaborate program, and GMs need not decide that if they don’t want to!
- Machine Genetics – It may look as though every Builder, for instance, is alike, but in fact the Assembler is constantly tinkering with the design in small ways, seeking perfection. This is why parts from one Beast are unlikely to work with another one. The Assembler will code its findings into its Seeds, and if there is another Assembler nearby, it will share the information, so gradually the whole system improves.

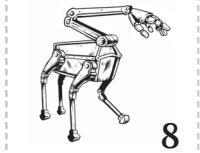
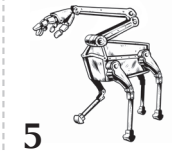
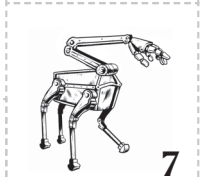
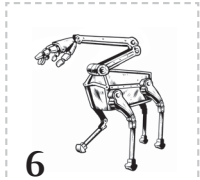
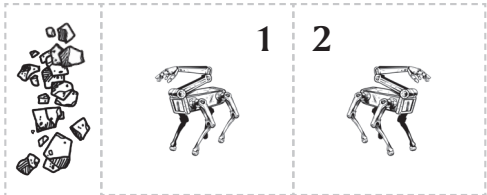
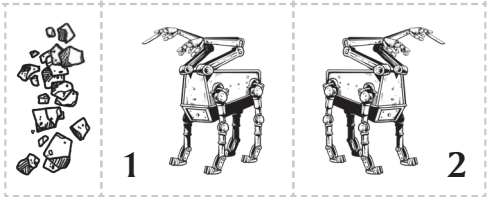
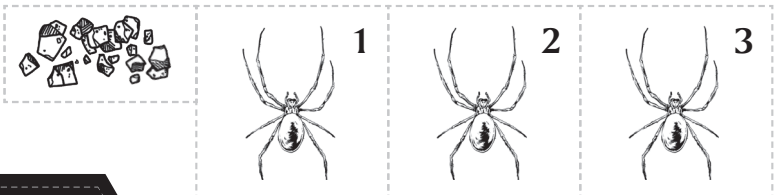
The Clockwork Tower
Tower
Counter Sheet



Because we had the room, this page contains extra Assemblers, Bronze Beasts, and even spiders, to let you make the adventure larger and more challenging.



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Tomb of the Wizard-KingTM



BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

ILLUSTRATED BY RICK HERSHEY

Who would tell of Kalinore the Archmage, ruler of a city long fallen to dust? He was, in turn, a benevolent ruler and a horrid tyrant; kindly wizard and dread sorcerer; champion of the light and consort of the dark.

The truth is that mighty Kalinore, Wizard-King of Tuvano, walked the path of righteousness for most of his life. It was not until tragedy struck that he became cruel and selfish in his quest to defy death itself.

Kalinore had a lover, Ilimyna, and she was kind and beautiful. They were never destined to wed but they were as two halves of the same soul. But a terrible wasting curse came

upon Ilimyna. No spell the archmage knew could reverse it, and his dearest companion withered away before his horrified eyes. When she died, part of Kalinore died as well.

Despairing, he prayed for a miracle, but no miracle came. After two decades of search, only one glimmer of hope was found. A man from a far land who spoke with the skulls of his ancestors revealed to Kalinore the secret of how to be both alive *and* dead, simultaneously. He also warned that such terrible knowledge was sought only by the desperate and the mad. Sadly, by that point Kalinore was both.

Kalinore went to the tomb where lay the body of his love. He planned to use the dread spell on himself to ensure that it worked, and then resurrect her. But by the time the spell was finished, the thing once known as Kalinore no longer cared about Ilimyna. In his place stood an abomination – a *lich* – that knew only cruelty, horror, and greed.

In the rage of his death-birth, the lich worked a horrific spell, condemning his city of Tuvano to rapid decay. Centuries passed, truth became hearsay, and hearsay became legend. All that was known for certain was that the sand-choked waste that had once been Tuvano was best left alone.

Now those sands are moving, set into motion by the lich. He needs certain materials for his dark research – things it can only harvest from the living. Thus, he has willed unwitting agents to spread word of the fallen empire's treasures, the better to lure greedy fools into his clutches.

The brave and foolhardy aren't the only ones on the move, though. Evil creatures are scrabbling out of the sands, emboldened by the dark energy that surrounds this place. But a parallel plan is in motion to let the spirit of Kalinore the Wizard-King know peace.

THREE PATHS TO ADVENTURE

Lures of the Lich

PCs who see themselves as treasure-hunters can be lured by the fabled riches of Tuvano. Start with a small cache of valuables found by the party during a dungeon delve; it is identified by the merchant who buys it as possibly being from Tuvano.

Later finds can include routine magic items of ancient Tuvano origin, then unique artifacts that could only have come from the laboratories of the ancient Wizard-King. In the process, the GM can reveal more and more about the legend of the Wizard-King.

The trail eventually leads to a village near Tuvano . . .

The Loyal Watchers

The last remnants of fallen Tuvano are scattered families entrusted with the secrets behind the legend, who have waited generations for the lich to rise. A party with a reputation for doing good may be befriended by a family of local merchants or minor nobles who encourage them along their path. The initial family will later reveal itself as part of a secret society known as the Loyal Watchers.

LICHES

Liches are wizards who used lost magics to extend their existence by turning themselves into undead. The transformation brings both powers and frailties.

Liches regain 1d-2 hits (minimum of 1) *every* turn, including ST lost to hits and to spell use. They ignore the first 4 hits per strike from non-crushing weapons (pointed blades, spears and other stabbing/slashing attacks) because liches are mostly mummified flesh and bone held together by magic. Normal damage is done by solid crushing blows such as those from clubs, hammers, maces, and the like. Broadwords, bastard swords, great swords and battle axes also do normal damage because their weight is more important than their sharp edge. Liches do not eat, sleep, drink, or breathe; they are immune to poison or disease.

But the lich's dried arms and legs are more vulnerable to breakage as well. A targeted shot at a limb doing 6 points or more (instead of 8) will break the limb off.

Because of their attunement to magical energies, liches automatically have the Mage Sight spell at no ST cost and reduce the cost of Detect Magic, Analyze Magic, and similar spells by 2.

All liches have a *phylactery* – an amulet, ring, crown, or similar valuable – that keeps their spirit anchored to their physical form. It must be kept on the lich's person at all times. If it is lost, the lich cannot heal or regain lost ST in any way. If the phylactery is destroyed, the lich will crumble to dust.

Destruction of a phylactery is not easy. Phylacteries are protected by the same magic that sustains the lich. No matter the material of which they are made, they have a minimum ST of 20 and are protected from the first 4 hits of damage inflicted, as if they were magically armored. A Dissolve Enchantment spell will remove the protection from a phylactery and make it as vulnerable as any ordinary object, but this spell requires a lot of ST and high-level wizardry.

Liches' phylacteries can hold extra ST to cast spells, just like a staff. When a lich is first encountered, roll 4d+10 to determine how much ST it has in its phylactery. A lich may have a Staff with stored ST, or the phylactery itself can be in the form of a staff or wand, but most liches prefer to use something more concealable and less easily targeted.

A lich has the ST, DX, and MA that it had in life, but its IQ is increased by 4. Thus, the *average* lich would have a minimum IQ of 14. A wizard-lich will have had time to learn dozens of spells.



Exactly what is being watched should remain vague at first. The PCs do not need to know the real origins and goals of their patrons until they have built themselves into a strong force. They are then sent to a village near the city, where they will receive further guidance. (See *Last Servants of Kalinore*.)

The Cult of Balinoth

Balinoth the Breaker (p. 4) is a wizard, madman, and would-be lich. He wants to find Kalinore's tomb and follow his path to immortality. His followers, the hideously scarred Fiends, know no morality except the will of Balinoth.

PCs not suited for the above introductions will find the hand of the Fiends in exceptionally depraved deeds that may affect their friends or their projects. Kidnapping, torture/murder, and theft of magic items feature heavily in their crimes. PCs may find and destroy a nest of Fiends, but that can draw the notice of Balinoth himself. During this time, the PCs can learn the basic knowledge about Balinoth and his quest for Kalinore's secret. They can follow this path to the region near Tuvano. (See *Balinoth and his Fiends*)



KEEP IT SECRET, KEEP IT SAFE

However the PCs get to the village, this occurs:

A man in ragged, once-fine clothing stumbles toward you in the street and presses something into your hands. He is obviously badly wounded. "The Breaker's Fiends fell upon me. Keep it secret. Keep it safe," he whispers. "Now, run, fools! Don't follow me, lest I give you away!" He stumbles away, leaving you with a small item wrapped in an embroidered cloth.

If the PCs try to delay or follow him, they attract a lot of attention; the crowd thinks the strangers are the ones who attacked the man, who some of them know. If the PCs don't withdraw on their own, they may be chased away by an angry mob.

The item is an intricate music box that, when opened, plays an ancient love ballad. It has a hard, smooth, and somewhat translucent surface of deep blue-black, as it were made of the night sky itself. It is edged in gold; embedded in the top is a 2-carat emerald worth \$450, a 5-carat ruby worth \$1,600, and a 7-carat sapphire worth \$2,700. It also has an extensive inlay of lapis lazuli: a pair of lovers looking across a plain of etched lines into the starry sky. It radiates magic strongly.

The box recently came to the patriarch Carel, who was taking it to be examined by his cell of Loyal Watchers when attacked by a pair of Balinoth's Fiends. He passed it to the PCs to get it out of his hands. If the PCs are known to the Loyal Watchers, Carel knew they would likely bring it to his associates. If not, he chose them because they were clearly out-of-towners and did not wear the scars of the followers of Balinoth. He hoped he would survive and be able to retrieve it later.

Kalinore made the box for his love, Ilimyna. It has been handed down through the generations and is well-known in the lore of the Wizard-King. The box is the key to the rest of the adventure.

SETTING AND PARTY

The main action occurs in, around, and beneath the Lost City of Tuvano, which was reduced to a desert ruin in centuries past. The GM may change details to work the locale into an existing campaign. It could be overgrown by jungle or sunken into a swamp. It just needs to be a place few people go and from which fewer people return.

There are villages and small towns, none very big or prosperous, around the outskirts of what once was Tuvano. It is in one of these that the adventure will begin.

Before a party tackles the tomb they should have at least four characters with a minimum of 36 character points each, including at least one experienced wizard.

If the PCs aren't ready for the main event yet, here are three leadups to prepare them. These can be built into any existing campaign or become the spark for a new game.

If the PCs were introduced to the legends of Kalinore along the way, they will probably (2/IQ roll) remember something about a music box. If not, a chance encounter or their own curiosity will bring them to someone who can advise them. (Trying to sell it locally will reveal the connection. It will also bring attention from other treasure hunters, Balinoth's Fiends, or the Loyal Watchers – or all three.)

Examination shows that the "stars" form a pattern. Wizards, or those with the talents Captain, Mathematician, or Scholar may notice something more. (All of these professions may grant knowledge of the stars in the sky.) Such a character may roll 4/IQ; those with more than one of these backgrounds may roll 2/IQ. Success reveals that the pattern of stars indicate the location of Tuvano. The engraved lines and the pointing finger of the male figure pinpoint a general area within the city itself. The gems indicate three locations within the ruins. If the PCs themselves do not possess the knowledge to figure this out, someone to whom they show the box (or perhaps a captured member of a group that tries to steal it) can do so.

This should now fit right into the plans of the PCs no matter how they came into the adventure. Treasure seekers will want the Wizard-King's trove. Those pursuing and/or pursued by Balinoth know what he is after. And, of course, the Loyal Watchers will know the box is vital to their cause. The PCs will be led through the abandoned outskirts of the city (as depicted on the engraved map) to the area where the three gemstones mark – what?

THE LAST SERVANTS OF KALINORE

As the city fell around them, a handful of Kalinore's servants and apprentices escaped with their families. From among them rose a secret society calling itself the Loyal Watchers. They remain dedicated to the ideals once held by Kalinore. The Watchers cultivate like-minded heroes who will be needed should the evil lich rise again.

Many of the Loyal Watchers live in the small villages near Tuvano. They are aware of the stirrings in the ruins and have been keeping track of any who might become involved, including the PCs and Balinoth's cult.



BALINOTH AND HIS FIENDS



Balinoth the Breaker is a powerful wizard who seeks to become a lich. This insane quest has led him across half of Cidri and cost him his health and sanity. Now it has led him to someone who knew that secret: the lost Wizard-King.

Since then, Balinoth has researched the legends, learning about Tuvano and what took place there. He discovered that certain family lines held the key to finding the tomb, and spent years tracking them down.

When the patriarch of one family escaped with a vital relic, Balinoth sent his "Fiends" after the man.

The PCs may start the game already hunting Balinoth and crew. If so, they will enter this stage by finding out that Balinoth's Fiends are searching the area for the lost knowledge of the Wizard-King.

Balinoth knows the patriarch Carel escaped his men and passed the box to strangers – and he will now be looking for the PCs. (See *Keep it Secret, Keep it Safe*, p. 3.)

Balinoth

Balinoth's insane quest has damaged his body so much that only magic keeps him alive. He has lost both legs above the knee. His arms are gnarled, twisted things, terminating in hands that seem freakishly large for his withered wrists. His head is covered in smooth patches of stolen flesh: glassy eyes regard the world with an amphibian coolness, and his mouth is a wide, lipless slit above a strangely-shrunken jawline.

Except for his face and hands, most have no idea of the extent of Balinoth's injuries. He wears a long wizard's robe to hide his deformities and uses magic to float his legless body. Physical violence is left to his minions – unless he needs to make an example.

Balinoth

Human Wizard

ST 11, DX 11, IQ 14, MA 6.

Talents: Literate; Quarterstaff; Scholar.

Spells: Analyze Magic; Blur; Darkness; Detect Magic; Drain Strength; Lock/Knock; Magic Fist; Persuasiveness; Reveal/Conceal; Reveal Magic; Scrying; Staff; Staff II/Manastaff; Staff III/Staff of Striking; Summon Lesser Demon; Telekinesis; Ward.

Weapons: Silver dagger (in belt).

Equipment: Amulet of Last Effort; three healing potions; Wand (holds 12 ST for spells).

Special: Due to an implanted gem of levitation, Balinoth can float at the speed of a slow walk. This makes him immune to some hazards (pressure plates, snares, and pits, for example).

The Fiends

Balinoth's "Fiends" are a gang of acolytes (numbering at least 4 per PC, though the GM can add more as long as Balinoth survives) who serve and worship Balinoth. Some are good fighters, some are just muscle, and none are overly smart. They are, however, fanatically loyal.

They admire the mutilations of their lord, and in his madness he grants them mutilations of their own when they serve him well. Thus, they will all wear cloaks and hoods in public. In private, by night, and when terrorizing a foe, they wear their scars proudly.

Once the Fiends realize the PCs have a map into the city's secret places, Balinoth will send groups of Fiends to take it. He'd like prisoners to question, but that's not as important as the map itself.

Once the PCs are headed to the tomb, the Fiends will set a trap along the way. If that fails, Balinoth will join in a second attack just outside the city. Once the PCs reach the city, the remaining Fiends and Balinoth follow.

For an extra challenge, some Fiends can strike before, during, or just after an encounter in the tomb. If the PCs are merely holding their own, on the other hand, have Balinoth's Fiends hang back with him, following until the final confrontation with the lich.

Balinoth's Fiends

Human Cultists

Any human fighter counters can be used, modifying the weaponry and armor for each figure as needed.

ST 13, DX 12 (adjDX per armor), IQ 8, MA per armor.

Weapons: As pictured on counter or figure, plus ritual dagger in belt scabbard.

Armor: As per the counter/figure, adjusting DX accordingly.

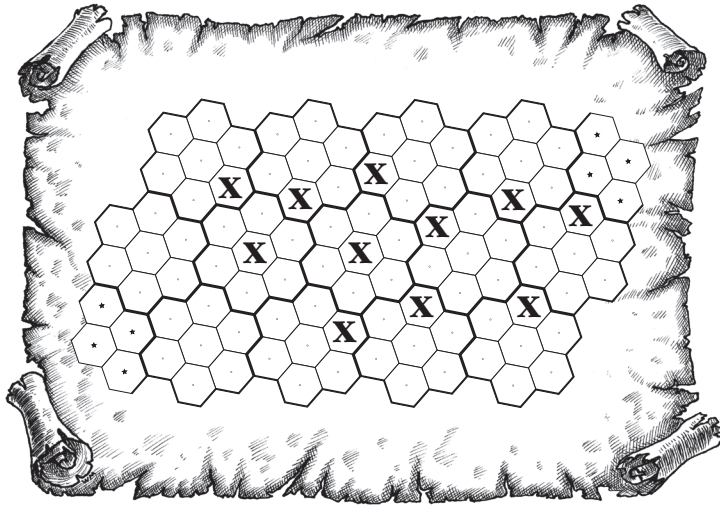
ON THE TRAIL TO TUVANO

The PCs should now be on the way into Tuvano itself, using the music box as a map. This may be played out in as much detail as the GM likes, based on how much fun the PCs are having skulking through the landscape.

The outskirts of Tuvano are empty of all but scattered wildlife, monsters, and possibly other treasure-hunters. Feel free to scatter encounters along the path, but these should be secondary to two main encounters which will bring together the cult of Balinoth and the PCs.

Soon after the PCs reach a nearby village, one of the Watcher patriarchs, Carel, is attacked while bringing in the Music Box of Kalinore and Ilimyna, recently located by Watcher allies. The PCs, sent to meet Carel, enter the adventure in this way. (See *Keep it Secret, Keep it Safe*, p. 3.)

PCs who enter the adventure through the quest for the riches of Tuvano, or by tracking Balinoth and the Fiends, may also encounter one or more Loyal Watchers as NPCs. The Watchers may help or hinder them; it's up to the GM.



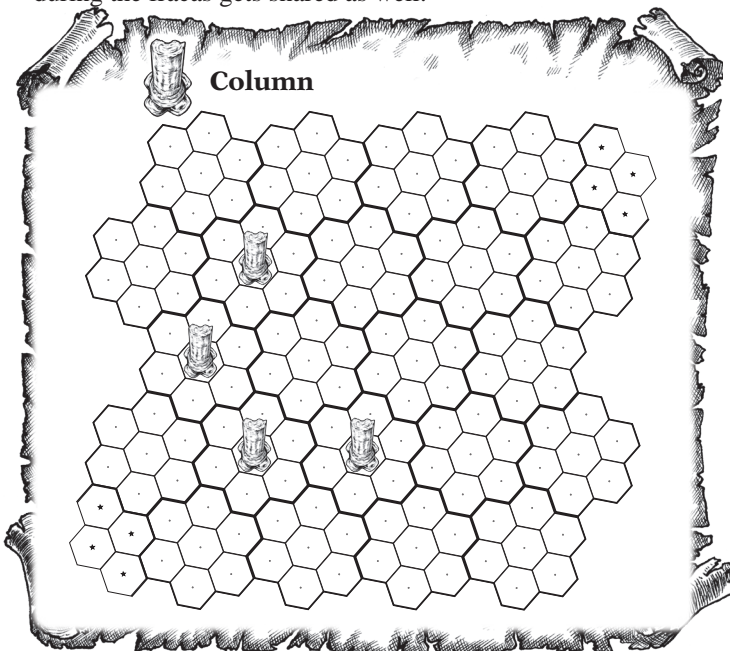
SNARES OF THE FIENDS

The Fiends have placed snares in a clearing on the only obvious trail to the lost city. It is a great place for an ambush, with thick brush all around. A *Melee* mapboard is used to depict the clearing. Snares are set at the hexes marked with an X.

The PCs will enter from the west entrance hexes of the *Melee* map. Start the encounter with them scattered across the map to about the halfway point before one of them is snared at a marked hex. A band of Fiends numbering two more than the PC party attack from the north at that time.

Anyone who is snared is yanked by a lasso into an upside-down position 8 feet up into the overhanging trees. A 3/DX roll is needed to avoid dropping one's ready weapon. A snared target is out of range of melee weapons from the ground, but a perfect target for arrows. On the other hand, archery or thrown spells by someone hanging upside down are at a -4 to all rolls.

If the victim has a sharp weapon, they may cut themselves free by spending a full turn, whereupon they fall to the ground (3/DX or take 1 hit of damage) and must rise normally before they can ready a weapon. Anyone entering a marked hex during the fracas gets snared as well.



If the encounter proves too easy, a second party of Fiends numbering the same as the PCs may attack from the east entrance hexes. (Anyone who leaves the map should be able to escape and regroup later.)

BALINOTH REVEALS HIMSELF

The second trail encounter will occur just before entering the lost city itself. The trees are thinning and the city ruins lie to the east. The PCs hear movement on all sides. They enter a *Wizard* map from the western entrance hexes. Four columns provide the only cover.

Balinoth has sent Fiends to approach from all sides and make noise. Balinoth and a number of Fiends equal to the number of PCs attack through the east entrance hexes just as three more Fiends enter from the north, south, and west ends of the mapboard. Balinoth will retreat if the battle goes against them, leaving the Fiends to cover his escape. If the battle again ends with people escaping the map, assume that when the PCs continue into the ruins of Tuvano, Balinoth and a few Fiends will be trailing them.



THE RUINS OF TUVANO

The first potential entrance to Kalinore's tomb (the emerald) is hidden in the basement of the old library (below). The second (the ruby) is in a modest house toward the middle of town. The third entrance (the sapphire) is beneath the ruins of the city's main temple under tons of rubble and sand. The PCs can scout all three, and may be harassed by Balinoth's Fiends at any point to make it interesting. Little cover exists above ground, so use an open *Wizard* map for any such encounters.

EMERALD: THE LIBRARY OF TUVANO

The Library of Tuvano was a shining tribute to knowledge. Only one black adamant wall still stands. Over the centuries, many have tried to enter what seems to be a monolithic block of stone, to no avail. Other doors may exist but are hidden beneath rubble and sand; finding and clearing them could take weeks.

There is a door in the exposed wall, but it is magically concealed and sealed. No ordinary spells can find or open it – but anyone approaching with the music box will hear the box start to play (even if closed). If the box is opened near the wall and the song allowed to play through to the end, a door will open. Once opened, the door cannot be closed again.

Once inside, the PCs will discover rooms of texts and scrolls. Those searching for easily-sold items must roll 3/IQ. Success yields maps, scrolls or books that can be sold for 4d × 20 silver pieces. Failure brings only items that might be desired by *some* scholar . . . or might be complete junk. This search may be done *once* per character.

The entrance to the crypt can be found behind a once-hidden door that is now crushed by debris. The door requires a 2/ST roll to clear. This passage leads to stairs going downward.

At the end of the stairs is another, shorter hallway, ending in a large stone door that leads to the crypt. There are no obvious ways to open it, but the door itself has three small recessed circles with glass stones embedded – one green, one red, one blue. The stones can be removed fairly easily, leaving small sockets. The three colored stones atop the music box mirror the pattern. When the music box's lid is held to the sockets, the door opens to the final tunnel into the crypt. Go to *Crypt of the Wizard-King*, below.

RUBY: ILMYNA'S HOUSE

The ruby marks a modest home, still mostly intact, which was the residence of Ilimyna. The outer door has long since rotted away; the house and its entrance are covered in sand but this can be cleared away in one hour divided by the number of people digging. Anyone following the PCs will probably let them do the hard work before attacking.

Kalinore's love for Ilimyna is immortalized in the melody the music box plays. Anyone with musical training (e.g., a Bard) who has heard the box will notice that the notes are inscribed on one wall of the entryway. The facing wall is inscribed with a different tune. (Someone with musical training gets a 3/IQ roll to realize the second song is a counterpoint to the first, meant to be played together.)

Most of the rooms contain naught but rotted furniture. The pantry in the basement holds a broken secret door that anyone can see. At the end of a short tunnel and some stairs downward, another stone door has the same three-colored-stones mechanism as the door from the library to the tomb.

This passage merges with the one that came from the temple. The door is obvious on *this* side, but much less so from the other end. Adventurers who try to flee the crypt might easily miss it in the dimly lit tunnel.

SAPPHIRE: THE TEMPLE

Once, this crumbled multi-story building was where bodies would be taken down into the crypts. It is the obvious place to look for an entrance into the tomb of the Wizard-King and many have explored it.

Archaeologists and adventurers alike found the temple shattered. They aren't going to be able to enter here. The tunnel from Ilimyna's house intersects the temple's tunnel; adventurers could explore upwards from there but will find nothing but rubble and perhaps a crushed skeleton.

Other Ruins/Buildings

Other sections of the city can be searched, but the likelihood of finding something valuable is low. The GM can improvise the purposes of other buildings according to whatever seems interesting.

Meanwhile, it's likely that Balinoth's group will be looking for places to hide or set up ambushes, pressuring the PCs not to waste too much time. Eventually, the PCs will have to try either the library or Ilimyna's house to get into the tomb itself.



CRYPT OF THE WIZARD-KING

Once past the token-locked doors, the crypt itself is lit by faintly glowing rocks embedded in the walls. (-1 on rolls unless supplemented by other light – see *ITL*, p. 70.) The walls are made of magically reinforced stone and are about 3 feet thick, nearly impossible to dig through. If an adventurer wants to *try*, it takes 10 times as long as normal digging and makes a lot of racket (which might attract nearby monsters, or Balinoth's group).

Doors are reinforced (ST 30 and ignore 4 hits/strike), as are the portcullises in area 17 (ST 60 and ignore 6 hits/strike). Locked doors (and all portcullis mechanisms are locked) are 3/DX for a Locksmith to open.

THE CRYPT, LOWER FLOOR

The first level of the crypt is a complicated series of rooms and halls: places for interring and protecting the dead, and places where visitors could honor those dead.

Since the entrances, composed of gently sloped tunnels and stairs, lead down several hundred feet, the "first floor" is actually the crypt's *lower* level: its main level is reached by going *up* again, and is near ground level. Accessing the upper level without going through the crypt's basement, however, would require digging through the *extremely* thick outer walls, made from the same magically sturdy rock as the inner ones.

1A OR 1B. CRYPT ENTRANCE

1a. This hallway, leading from the temple (and Ilimyna's house), ends in two doors, side by side. They seem identical. The one on the right is locked, while the door on the left is trapped with a poisoned needle. Both doors lead to area 2 (p. 7).

Poison Needle

3/DX to detect.

4/DX to disarm.

3/ST to save against effects.

Effects: 3 dice of poison damage.

1b. This door has a magical glyph on the doorknob that weakens its victim (see below):

Doorknob Glyph

5/DX to detect; reduce this by one die for wizards.

4/DX to disarm; reduce this by one die for wizards. Delete Writing (see *ITL*, p. 23) removes it automatically!

3/IQ to save against effects.

Effects: 1d-2 loss of ST, DX, and IQ for 1 hour.

Notes: This trap doesn't go away – it will affect anyone who touches it until it is removed from the door, at which point it ceases to function. Adventurers might speculate that there were once tokens or phrases to temporarily disable this trap for the scribes and servants who used this tunnel.

2. ANTECHAMBER

This room contains busts of Kalinore, his wives, concubines, and his family. These are magically animated when viewed, and will be startling when they move, but not dangerous. There are also two life-size statues of Kalinore, depicting him as a youth before he was a king and as an older man at the height of his powers. If delvers touch anything in the room, or remain for more than one minute, the two statues – who are actually Stone Golems (below) – awaken and attack everyone in the room.

The other doors and hall that connect to this antechamber are not concealed.

Treasure: Six stone busts that are magically activated when observed (they smile, turn their heads, etc.), eternally clean, and made of the finest marble with semiprecious stone eyes (\$10,000; 165 lbs. each).

3. ROOM OF PAINTINGS

This room is filled with paintings of those who were important to Kalinore: family, loved ones, teachers, and sages. To the right collector, they could be worth a great deal, as lost magic animates the portraits.

Treasure: Twelve 3 by 3-foot oil paintings that are magically animated (they smile, turn their head, etc.), eternally clean, and made of the finest materials (\$10,000, 0.75 lbs. each). Removing them from their frames ruins them, so they must be transported carefully.

4. GRIEVING ROOM

Kalinore's grieving room is large enough for about 20 people at a time. It contains chairs of the finest cedar and a magical illusion of Kalinore in his days on the throne. The illusion is placed at the north end of the room and seems to gaze wisely at everyone who enters. Initially "seated" in the chairs are several mourners who cannot let go of their grief and remain as ghosts (see *ITL*, p. 84). The ghosts will not bother entrants who are quiet and respectful.

There is also a well-hidden secret door (IQ/5 to see) leading to area 5. If a party engages the ghosts (either by acknowledging their grief or mocking them by talking about the evil thing the fallen Wizard-King has become), they will depart, passing insubstantially through the secret door – which will reveal its existence.

Treasure: Twenty carved cedar chairs (\$2,000, 24 lbs. each). Good luck getting them back to sell.

5. HIDDEN STAIRCASE

Leads to the upper floor via the staircase but is otherwise bare. The staircase itself makes more than one turn and comes out in area Upper 5 of the upper level.

6. HALL OF DEEDS

This room contains rough-carved pillars, as tall as a human, imbued with the memories of Kalinore and others. There are four pillars. Each contains a single person's memories relating to Kalinore and his reign. Place a hand on a pillar, and its surface seems to become a transparent window, displaying the visual recollections and whispering remembered sounds. One has Kalinore's own memories, and the GM might use these to provide clues about the crypt's layout or defenses.

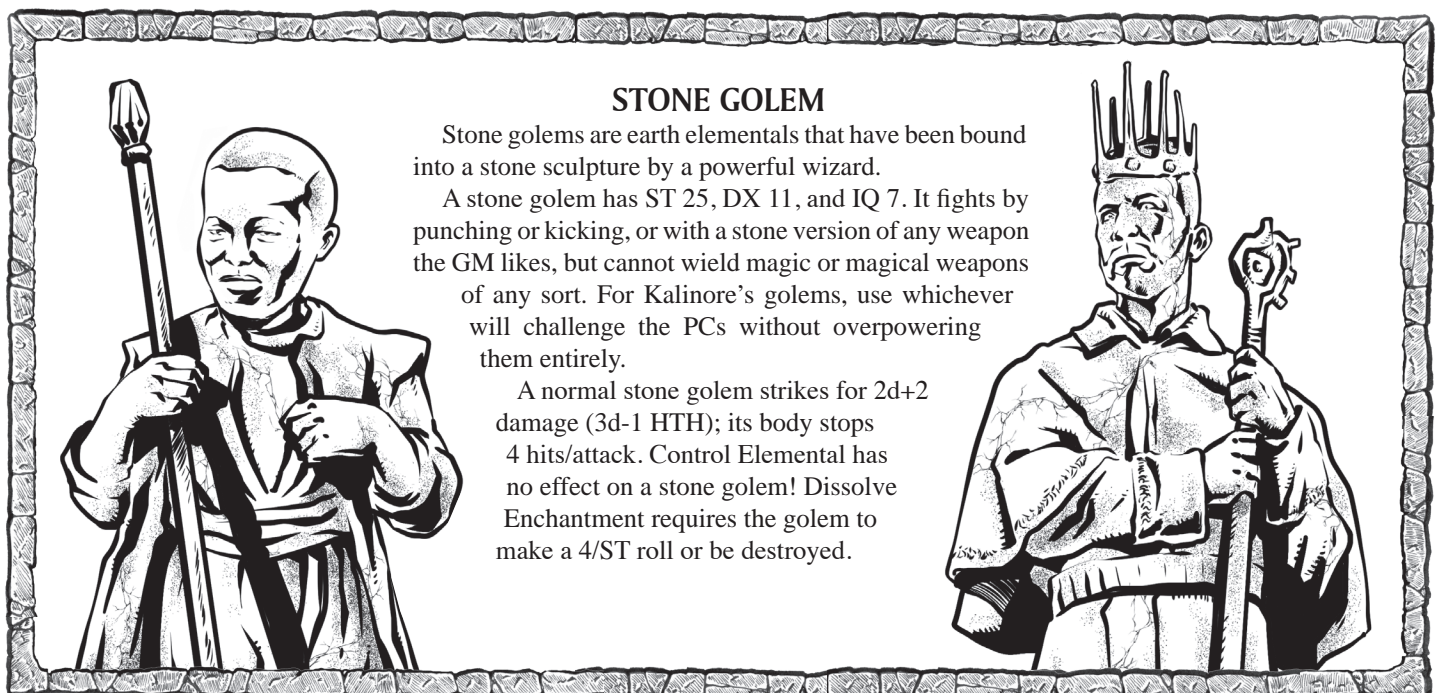
The two other exits in this room lead to areas where mourners would not typically go.

Treasure: Four memory-stones (\$12,000, 300 lbs. each).

7. STOREROOM

This room contains a small table and shelves filled with various spices, bandages, etc., for embalming the dead. Many of the bandages are still usable.

Treasure: 4d bandages; 2d bottles of random spices worth 5d × \$45 each, and 1d-2 Potions of Revival (*ITL*, p. 148).



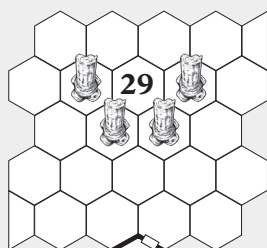
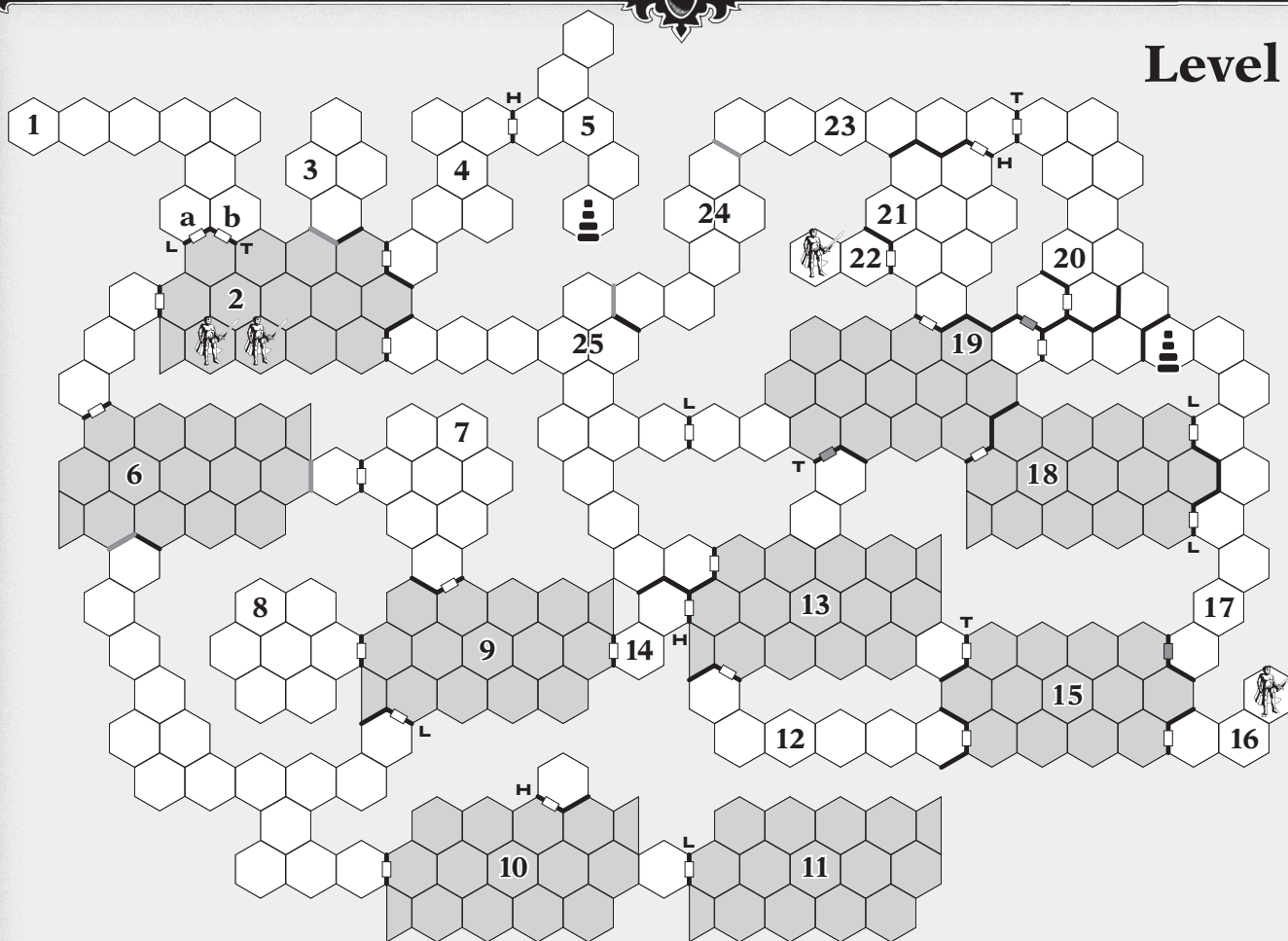
STONE GOLEM

Stone golems are earth elementals that have been bound into a stone sculpture by a powerful wizard.

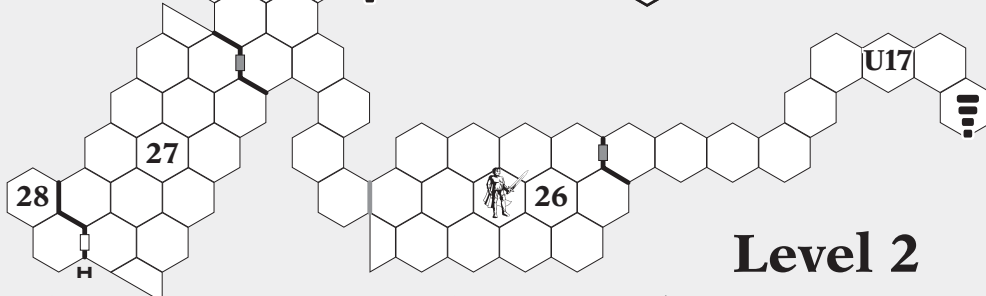
A stone golem has ST 25, DX 11, and IQ 7. It fights by punching or kicking, or with a stone version of any weapon the GM likes, but cannot wield magic or magical weapons of any sort. For Kalinore's golems, use whichever will challenge the PCs without overpowering them entirely.

A normal stone golem strikes for 2d+2 damage (3d-1 HTH); its body stops 4 hits/attack. Control Elemental has no effect on a stone golem! Dissolve Enchantment requires the golem to make a 4/ST roll or be destroyed.

Level 1



U5



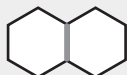
Level 2



Stairs Down



Stairs Up



Open Arch



Unlocked Door



Statue
(See Text)



Heavy Portcullis



Locked Door



Trapped Door



Hidden Door



Column



8. EMBALMING ROOM

This is where members of Kalinore's household would be cremated (servants and concubines) or embalmed (family members, wives, and favored concubines) before going to their final resting place in the crypt on the upper floor. Ilimyna was embalmed here, though the adventurers won't know that unless they saw Kalinore's memories in area 6; he held her hand until the last. There are several embalming tables, clean save for a heavy layer of dust, and a stone altar in the center of the room. A search reveals stores similar to those in area 7. There is also a massive book of glass on the central altar. It has thick glass covers, and thinner etched-glass pages that move on twisted glass rings. It would take two people to carry it, and it is fragile enough that removing it intact will be a real problem.

Treasure: The glass book contains funerary rites and incantations from Cidri's various books of the dead and dying. It would sell for \$2,000 to the right buyer. The GM may also decide that it is cursed or can raise the dead in some manner. (Sadly, it lacks a technique to lay the undead to rest.)

9 & 14. EMBALMING ROOM ENTRANCEWAY/ STORAGE CLOSET

This room leads to both the Store Room and Embalming Room but is otherwise empty. A door in the east wall opens into a long, narrow room filled with the remnants of empty coffins. There is a partially open secret door – though because there are piles of rotted wood in front of it, it can barely be seen (IQ/3 to notice without a search).



10. RECORDS ROOM

This room contains two small desks made of cedar and a shelf with several dozen record books, detailing the identities and locations of all those interred within the crypt.

A secret door leads to a small room with several empty bookshelves. In one corner, a skeletal corpse lies cradling a small music box. It's a twin of the one that led the PCs to the Crypt, but in this one is a love letter from Kalinore to Ilimyna, written in the Sorcerer's Tongue. The music, when played, is not the same – but someone who saw the music inscribed on the walls of Ilimyna's entryway will recognize it as the counterpoint song seen there.

Treasure: Two carved cedar scribal desks (\$2,400, 18 lbs. each).

11. STOREROOM

A bare room with cubbyholes built into the walls. If searched, roll 6d; on a 14 or less, a cloak in one of the storage niches detects as magic. It will be useful in rooms 15 and 18.

12. HALLWAY

This servant's corridor is bare, but leads to area 15, which leads to the staircase to the upper floor.

13. ANTECHAMBER 2

Like area 2 (p. 7), this room is filled with animated busts of Kalinore and his wives, concubines, and family. It lacks the stone golems, but the handles to the doors leading to area 15 and 19 have been smeared with a potion that inflicts the effects of a double-strength Decrease ST potion.

Decrease ST Potion Doorknob

5/IQ to detect; reduce this by one die for wizards or those who have Alchemy or Detect Traps; these bonuses stack.

4/IQ to disarm; reduce this by one die for wizards or those who have Alchemy or Remove Traps; these bonuses stack. Scour (see *ITL*, p. 23) removes it automatically! It must touch skin to be effective. Those who wear hand protection will not be affected. (Attendants who used this room all wore gloves.)

3/ST to save against effects.

Effects: 1d-2 loss of ST for 1 day

Notes: This trap doesn't go away automatically. The thick, sticky potion continues to affect any who touch it until it is removed from the door. Once scraped off, it soon loses its potency.

15. TESTER'S ROOM

The entirety of this room – walls, floor, and ceiling – is covered with dark red glowing runes. Any person who touches these with bare flesh immediately takes 1d damage.

Those wearing shoes and not touching the walls are not in immediate danger but may fall victim to a secondary effect of the runes – a feeling of despair and dread which grows the longer one remains in the room. Each turn a figure remains (for example, searching for treasure, trying to pick a lock, or attempting a spell) a secret 2/IQ roll should be made. Failure reduces the person to uncontrollable weeping. They will crumple to the ground or lean against a wall and sob uncontrollably – probably taking damage from the glowing runes. Another person may have to pull them out of the room to protect them. The effect fades once the target leaves. An authentic mourner or burial servant, protected by enspelled robes and a sincere respect for the dead, would have been unaffected.

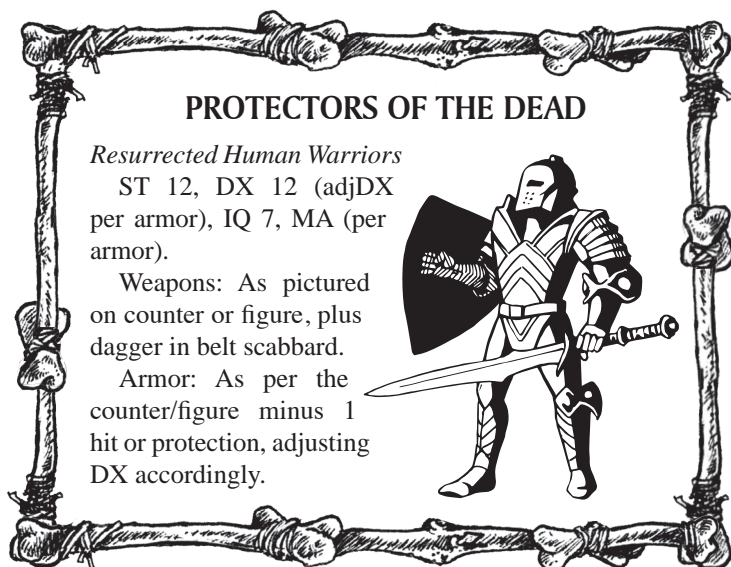
16. CHAPEL TO THE GOD OF DEATH

A life-sized statue of the God of Death dominates this room. It is carved from a single piece of blindingly white marble. He is depicted in his cloaked human form: tall and thin, with only the lower half of his face showing beneath the cowl. Oddly enough, he appears to be smiling. There are inscriptions at the foot of the statue in several languages, including one close enough to the modern common tongue to be decipherable. They read "Pray to the God of Death in this, his holy place."

Praying for a minute in the small chapel deactivates the runes in area 15 and 18 for 5d seconds. Optionally, praying for an hour means the runes are deactivated for 3d minutes.

17. ACCESS HALLWAY

This bent section of hallway leads to a staircase up to the main crypt area at Upper 17.



18. TESTER'S ROOM

The entire room is covered in dark red glowing runes like those in area 15. Similar boxes line the walls, but in one is a rolled-up oilcloth which has protected the robe wrapped in it (2/IQ to find it in a search). This robe will protect the wearer from both the touch and exposure effects of the runes. Both doors leading to area 17 are locked.

19. ARMORY

This room contains armor and weapons for Kalinore's four personal guards, who have been bound to his service beyond death. The south wall contains their urns.

If anything in the room is disturbed, the urns uncup themselves. The ashes flow into waiting suits of armor and attack the intruders! Treat them as normal warriors. Their armor is rather deteriorated and stops one less 1 hit/attack than normal, and they are armed with only normal weapons. When "killed," they return to ash.

20. SERVANTS' BURIAL CHAMBER

This room holds numerous urns of ash and shelves of neatly stacked bones (the higher-up the remains, the more status the servant had in life). Despite any (reasonable) paranoia the delvers may have, the bones do not animate in any way.

21 & 22. CHAPEL TO THE GOD OF WAR

The larger portion of this chapel (area 21) has walls painted with murals of battles. There are two exits from the larger room: one leads to the smaller chapel of the God of War at 22, and the other is a secret door that leads to area 23.

The smaller room (area 22) is dominated by a human-sized statue of the deity, carved from blood-red marble with black streaks. He's portrayed as a muscular youth carrying a spear and a shield. Inscriptions at the base in multiple languages read "Pray to the God of War in this, his holy place."

Praying in the small chapel has a chance of releasing a bit of ancient magic. Roll 6/IQ; success grants a feeling of resolve and invincibility that translates to +1d-3 (minimum of +1) to all combat-related rolls until they roll a critical failure (which counts as a normal success instead). The critical failure removes the bonus.

23, 24, & 25. EMPTY ROOMS/HALLWAY

These rooms and halls are empty, though there are suggestions that they were meant for more monuments to Kalinore and his family: patterns in the floor leave room for pedestals and wall-mounts hold no pictures.

THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

The second, upper level of the crypt is fairly small and contains Kalinore's burial place. Its walls have carvings of events during the Wizard-King's reign.

UPPER 5: ENTRANCE TO BURIAL CHAMBERS

The stairs here connect to the lower level's area 5. They were originally used by family and servants who tended the crypt.

UPPER 17: ACCESSWAY

The stairs in area Upper 17 connect to a long spiraling accessway to area 17 below and the Tester's Rooms at 15 and 18.

26. CHAPEL TO THE GODDESS OF MAGIC

The statue in the center of this room is half again as tall as a human, carved from a piece of blue-gray marble. It portrays the goddess in her three-in-one aspect: a young woman, a matron, and an old crone, all joined at the hips. Each aspect raises her left hand to the ceiling, points her right hand to the ground, and looks straight ahead.

Again, at the base of the statue is an inscription in multiple languages: "Pray to the Goddess of Magic in this, her holy place." Any wizard who does so will, on a successful 6/IQ roll, have a feeling of energy and connection to the source of all magic that translates to +1d-3 (minimum of +1) to all spellcasting-related rolls until they roll a critical failure (which counts as a normal success instead). The critical failure removes the bonus.

27. FAMILIAL BURIAL CHAMBER

The remains of Kalinore's parents, siblings, children, wives, etc. are buried here; perhaps some children and wives escaped in the fall of Tuvano, but he had a long enough life to have lost others before he became a lich. All have been embalmed and placed in stone sarcophagi which are partly embedded in the walls, upright. Representations of each person and their name are painted onto the lids. Among the decorations upon each is a single 2d explosive gem (*ITL*, p. 26) which affects any living creature who touches the sarcophagus *and* tries to open it. Merely touching it will not trip the magical trap, nor will poking it with inanimate objects. It will explode only if anyone tries to open the sarcophagus or remove the gem itself.

Hidden behind a false wall is Ilimyna's burial chamber. This secret door requires a 5/IQ roll to spot and is hidden by a false sarcophagus. The only thing unusual is an inscription below the (worn and indecipherable) name of the person supposedly at rest behind it: "She loved music." Playing either of the music boxes alone will do nothing, but if both are played at the same time, the tunes form a beautiful counterpoint that fills the room. The false sarcophagus will slide aside and reveal Ilimyna's Burial Chamber.

28. IILIMYNA'S BURIAL CHAMBER

The record books from area 10 do not have her name or location; only Kalinore's own memory-stone (lower area 6) proves she was ever in the crypt. The chamber itself was carved by Kalinore and hidden with his magic. If anyone enters the chamber, Ilimyna's ghost appears and says:

"Please, you must lay my love to rest. He cast a spell trying to resurrect us both, but it drove him mad and trapped us in a pitiful half-existence. He lies uneasy in his coffin and seeks to bring only death to the living. Help us find peace. The key, as always, is the music box."

The ghost will answer any questions the players might have to the best of her ability, but will only stay for a few turns before fading away again.

29. KALINORE'S BURIAL CHAMBER

The door to the Wizard-King's burial chamber is locked (6/IQ to open). Beyond this, however, it seems unprotected, which should certainly worry the PCs after the traps encountered so far.

Inside are four pillars; each has a few colored glass discs in small indentations at its base and multiple holes on the pillar itself. The discs must be placed within the holes in a specific pattern. The pattern is that of the musical notes of the two

music boxes, but it also is the pattern of the stars atop the two boxes when placed next to each other. Anyone having seen both boxes or the note pattern will be able to figure this out on only a 3/IQ roll. Once the riddle has been solved and the discs placed in the holes on all four pillars, the coffin of Kalinore rises from the center megahex – empty. They'll hear an eerie voice growl. "All this way for nothing. It is too late. It was always too late."

The chamber dims to blackness. An eerie light flares a few seconds later, revealing in the place of the empty coffin a skeletal figure holding a silver staff in his right hand. An ornate ring of dark blue, translucent material with three colored stones – green, red, blue – is on the bony ring finger of his left hand. The figure's insane, dead eyes gaze at the delvers. The hideousness of the lich cannot be understated: it is an abomination, unwelcome in both the world of the living and the land of the dead. It laughs – a sound like dried knucklebones being cast across a table – and attacks! (See p. 2 for general information about liches.)

The glowing staff is indeed a Staff of Power, but it is newly made for the fight and holds no reserve ST. The real source of Kalinore's extra power is his phylactery, a ring formed from the same material and stones as the music boxes and worn like a wedding band on his left hand. His extra ST for spellcasting and the enchantment that enhances his IQ both reside in it.

The phylactery ring is not large enough to be targeted separately in battle – but his dry, skeletal arm can be struck at specifically with a DX -4 penalty. As a lich he regains 1d-2 (minimum 1) ST per turn and he ignores the first 4 points of a strike made with an impaling/slashing weapon.

Losing the arm wielding the staff will reduce his attack capability, but if he loses the one wearing the ring, he'll become obsessed with its recovery.

Due to the phylactery's inherent ST of 20 and magical protection from the first 4 points of damage of any direct attack on it, it is hard to destroy – but Kalinore can't regain ST in any way without it. If it is removed, his IQ drops to 18 and he can't access the ST stored in it for spellcasting. The distraction will handicap him with a -2 on all rolls until he gets it back, and he will focus on that recovery to the exclusion of all other things.

Playing either or both music boxes in the lich's presence will cause him to hesitate, and cause the ring on his left hand to glow brightly. But he will shake off the effect after one turn and no further use of the music boxes will stay his wrath.


GLORIOUS VICTORY

Should the PCs manage to destroy the lich, Ilimyna's ghost appears to pull Kalinore's spirit from the remnants of his physical form. If the PCs had not spoken with her ghost before, the dead lovers simply gaze into each other's eyes before fading away with a sense of *ascension*. If they had met and promised to help Ilimyna, she first says:

"Thank you, brave adventurers. You have saved us both from the curse."

To this, Kalinore adds:

"And you have my gratitude as well. My life's work is hidden in the pillars – use it wisely."



KALINORE THE WIZARD-KING


Lich Wizard
ST 20, DX 12, IQ 20, MA 10.

Talents: Alchemy; Alertness; Architect/Builder; Astrologer; Charisma; Literacy; Poet; Quarterstaff; Scholar; Strategist; Tactics; Writing; Languages as the GM decides.

Spells: *all* IQ 8 through IQ 12; Control Elemental; Create/Destroy Elemental; Control Person; Curse; Death Spell; Flight; Geas; Greater Magic Item Creation; Lesser Magic Item Creation; Lightning; Pentagram; Scrying; Spell Shield; Staff; Staff II/Manastaff; Staff III/Staff of Striking; Staff IV/Staff of Power; Summon Lesser Demon; Telekinesis; Ward; Weapon/Armor Enchantment; Wizard's Wrath.

Weapons: Staff of Power (holds no ST for spells) (ready).

Special: Kalinore's Phylactery (his ring, made of the same materials as the music boxes); worn on his left hand; holds ST 20 for spells; bestows IQ+2.



And then they are gone.

With Kalinore's departure, many illusions in the room also vanish, showing the marks of time upon the pillars. If the PCs search the pillars, they will find false panels holding texts detailing the magic spells he knew in life. If they did *not* receive Kalinore's thanks, the panels are locked (IQ/3); more than one failure will damage the items within! Unfortunately, two of the pillars have cracked and exposed the books. This has caused some of the pages to rot; each spell is readable only on a roll of 12 or less. The other treasures in the room are also ripe for plunder.

Treasure: \$30,000 worth of valuables in the form of random gold objects, gems, and similar portable wealth, plus an Iron Flesh gold ring and an Amulet of Skepticism.

The spells in Kalinore's books include all the ones he might cast in the battle (see the box, p. 11), plus a smattering of others of the GM's choosing.

Getting it Home

The adventure is not over until the GM says it is. The loot here is enormous, but the complications of getting it home depend on what has come before. If Balinoth lives, he will attack as soon as he can. He will be sure the secrets of lichdom lie in Kalinore's legacy.

If the PCs were sponsored by the Loyal Watchers, that group may ride to the rescue. But whether they help fight Balinoth or not, they will want a share of the treasure to continue their watch . . . just in case.

INGLORIOUS FLIGHT

If the PCs flee the lich, it pursues until they reach one of the chapels, which it refuses to enter. They can take refuge in a chapel, but if they leave via another door, the lich will simply pursue by another route. If they aren't aware of the hidden door in the lower area 5, they could get a nasty surprise if they think the lich is stopped by the Goddess.

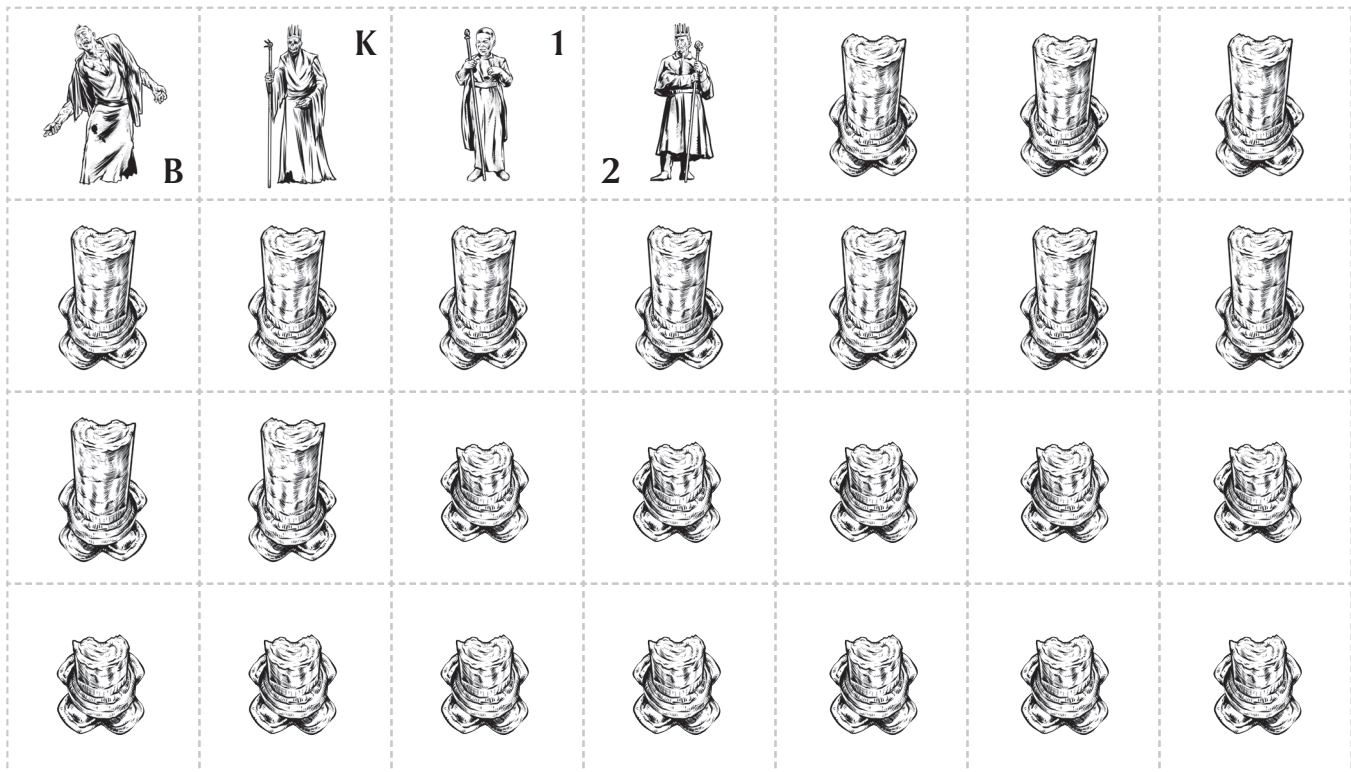
The only bit of luck for the delvers is that the magical traps of the crypt do not recognize the lich as being Kalinore but consider it just another intruder. Hopefully that will delay it long enough for them to escape. Kalinore will pursue only until they leave the building. However, should they return, he will be alert and scheming, not in his coffin!

THE RETURN OF BALINOTH

If the characters are outmatched, the GM may have Balinoth's group show up. The lich is enough of a threat to *everyone* that it becomes the target of Balinoth and the Fiends (though Balinoth won't hesitate to turn on the PCs after the conflict).

Even if this joining of forces defeats the lich, however, Kalinore and his ladylove won't stick around to help the adventurers. The PCs must defeat Balinoth on their own unless the lich does away with him first.

Likewise, if the PCs defeat the lich on their own, Balinoth and the Fiends will try to seize the trove of Kalinore, striking as soon as it is revealed.



Only four pillars are required for the combat on p. 5, but we had space for more, and pillars are very useful obstacles to have in your game set, so here they are! Note that this game defines the pillars as man-height, which would stop missile and thrown weapons . . . but for your own scenarios you could use some of the knee-high pillars, which would stop movement but not missile and thrown weapons.

Afterword

By Steve Jackson

I got heavily involved with each of these adventures as they came through, and of course my thoughts went in various directions that couldn't make it into the final 9,000 words allotted for each story. Here are some of those directions . . .

The Chaos Triads

The fraught politics of the Barony of the Foothills can certainly fuel a whole series of adventures. Plenty of very good questions are raised and not answered. Who tried to kill the young heir? What more do the dwarves know about Chaos Matter? (And do they want some?)

The party's disposition of Alice the Ax should have repercussions, whatever they chose. If they let her go, they released a treacherous bandit. If they just executed her and her band, they were taking responsibility for the high justice, which is out of line for mercenary adventurers. If they dragged her back to the castle in chains, they wasted precious time. Can they make a good defense for their decision? Or could they find another path entirely? Of course, if all the bandits died in combat, there is no problem. As long as nobody starts asking if that's what really happened!

If the party didn't completely botch the mission, and gets past that post-mission challenge, the Foothills could be a useful base for further adventure. Having the trust and gratitude of a Baroness is never a bad thing.

The Curse of Katiki-Mu

The ancient portals, both like and unlike Gates, are an interesting addition to the world of Cidri. There were probably a number of them, once upon a time. How many remain? And how can they be reached? Perhaps the blue stone token is a known type of Mnoren artifact and the PCs can acquire more, with different symbols, that lead different places. If the GM wants a really big portal net to carry the characters to the "adventure of the week" (shades of *Stargate*), then one of the first sites found could contain a whole collection of tokens.

They'd better not advertise their token collection too widely, though, because the portals are a resource that many rulers would kill for.

And then we have the problem of Mu. If the PCs like to slay everything they meet, this adventure was right down their alley. But if they want to talk to humans who aren't attacking them . . . well, too bad. They've been set up. They are not the first contact, but the second, and the first contact was completely botched. Because the Priestess and her guards were made paranoid by Cadakee's clumsy raiding party, the second contact will go equally badly.

So how can friendly contact ever be possible with the Muians? Finding a way to talk to them would help – if the party took the holy(?) book from the warriors' barracks, that's a starting place. Right now the party still knows nothing at all about the culture of Mu. They've only dealt with the Priestess, who lives in apparently-deliberate isolation from the rest of

her culture. But she's not an outcast; those guards came from somewhere, after all.

The other obstacle to peaceful contact with Mu will be Cadakee himself, who – whatever the outcome of the party's quest – is ashamed of his behavior, afraid of Mu, and unwilling to think about it any more. If he found out that a return visit was being organized, he'd oppose it if he could.

Fire in the Temple

As it stands, Wyrnath the dragon is very much a bad guy. He might become an ally of convenience, but it's purely in his own interest. He's a predatory, people-eating monster, and he deserves to be chopped up for spell ingredients.

But what if he were, instead, a victim of the Redcaps? Perhaps he listened in, unseen, on secret woodland meetings, and became converted to the cause of equal justice for all. He heard the lectures about "all races living together in peace and harmony" and figured that applied to dragons too. So eventually he spoke from the shadows beyond the firelight, and introduced himself.

He was invited to visit the secret base, and was terribly surprised when he was knocked unconscious by the giant blacksmith. He was worse than surprised when he woke up in chains, being used only for his dung. And he is deeply offended and disgusted at being given the choice of eating human flesh or starving. He's an ethical creature.

In this variant, Wyrnath would absolutely ally with the party and would risk his life to break the "Mexican standoff" in the pool room. Can he bring himself to trust the party afterwards? That's another question entirely. It would depend on what he saw of their actual behavior. He might just fly off at the first chance.

In other news, the Redcaps are a "good intentions, bad results" group that would make a great continuing antagonist. Not only could *Fire in the Temple* be the start of a campaign, but we may see a sequel adventure from David Pulver.

The Clockwork Tower

I've been interested in Von Neumann machines for a long time, so I enjoyed getting this submission from Greg Poehlein.

I like the idea that the hive we see in this adventure is only a baby. For story purposes (this IS a dungeon-crawl, after all) it doesn't communicate. But in a different story, it might reach a stage where it stops stealing hardware, and it might be able and willing to talk to visitors. Note that even if an Assembler displays the ability to speak and negotiate, there may not really be a mind there, just a good personality simulator.

What could an Assembler hive do to earn its way in a peaceful relationship? It can mine, though Dwarves may object. It can produce interesting and useful clockwork items, or even servants. It can use really marginal real estate. Politically, a hive might do well as a buffer state occupying badlands between two inhabited areas.

What do Assemblers want? Rare materials. Good communications with other Assemblers, perhaps. Freedom from random delver raids . . .

And what is the ultimate goal of the Assemblers and their Bronze Beasts? Perhaps there is none . . . the original Tinker just “wound them up and let them go” to see what would happen. Perhaps he intended them to become partners to the “living” intelligences of Cidri. And perhaps he intended for them to turn their marvelous clockwork hands to some great project, once there were enough Assemblers.

Tomb of the Wizard-King

If this adventure had been twice as long, it would have been interesting to actually design some of the music-box and door puzzles and let the players try to figure them out. Ah, well!

Balinoth, should he survive, is well suited to be the Big Bad in a continuing story arc. Will he have a continuing enmity toward the PCs? Possibly not! He’s obsessed with the quest for eternal life, and pursuing vengeance might be a waste of time. On the other hand, he’s a horrible, horrible person. It might be funny if, the next time he gets a lead toward lichdom, he hires

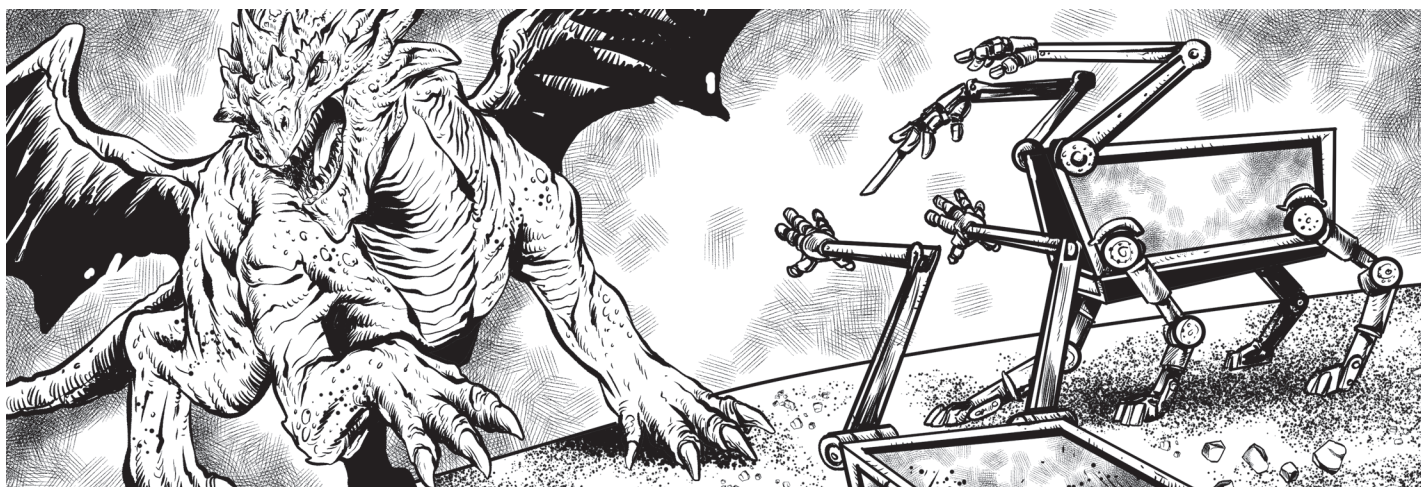
the party, through intermediaries, to follow it up. Won’t they be surprised if, after a successful quest, they meet their unknown patron, and he doffs his hood, and . . . fade to black!

And what will become of the Watchers? They might disband, their purpose now fulfilled. On the other hand, when you have a perfectly good secret society that you’ve been developing for generations and centuries, with secret lairs and passwords and everything, it seems like a shame to throw it all away. What will they do on Saturday nights? It would be reasonable to think that we might hear from the Watchers again.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

If the reaction to this collection is as good as its original reception on Kickstarter, of *course* we’ll do more. You could be a part of that.

If you’d like to write, look at <http://www.sjgames.com/general/guidelines/authors/> – it points to a lot of information and resources – and proceed accordingly.



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