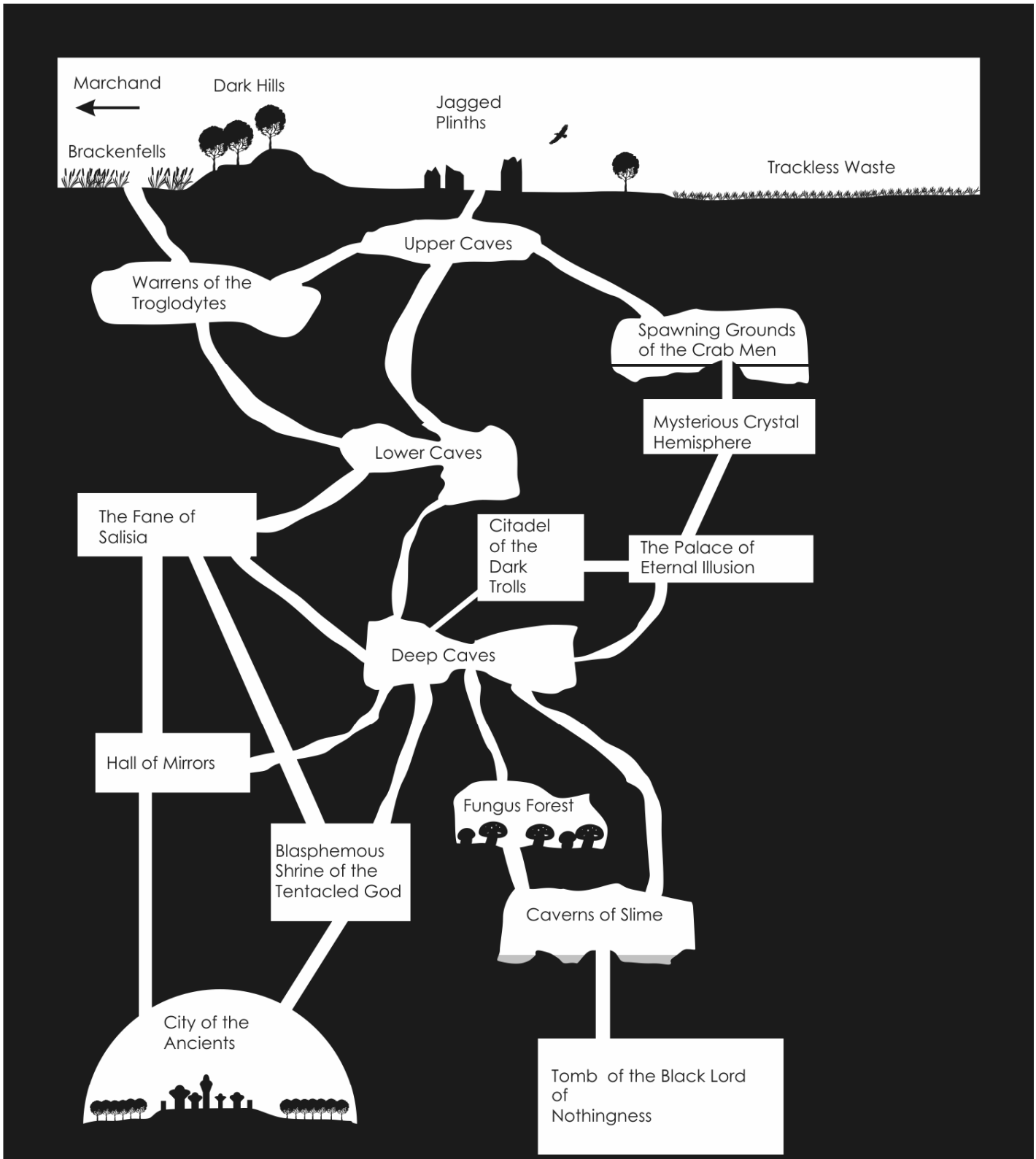


# THE DARKNESS BENEATH

RSC

# Notes from the Complier

The following pages are pulled from several issues of, “Fight On!,” a fanzine for classic Dungeons and Dragon or similar Old School Role Playing Games. This is a fairly complete body of The Darkness Beneath, a community made megadungeon.

Levels of the dungeon were released non-sequentially in separate issues of the magazine, however not all levels were finished before the fanzine stopped publishing. This document contains the following levels: Level 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.
This means Level 15 as well as the Surface Level are missing.

There is some strong variance formatting, and little consistency from one issue to the next. Additionally, you will see repeated images and maps as the pages were pulled right from the source. For the same reason, the page numbers seen near the bottom will not be accurate. You will also find that at the beginning and end of some levels include information severed from another entry in the fanzine.

Discussions with the huge group of contributors that made The Darkness Beneath what it is, are found on odd74.proboards.com, and start at odd74.proboards.com/thread/909.

Small note, in that introductory forum post Levels 1-15 are listed with their titles however over time those numbers were adjusted.

Version 1.1 of this compiled document.

The Roll-Then-Choose Method**:** Roll the first new material, then choose a second material to go with it. For example, I roll wood and choose wind.

Bellows Imps
Made of: Wind, Wood
LVL d8+1, DC 5, Speed 18
Abilities: Armor, Attack (Bludgeon), Bind, Knock down (vs Strength)
Bellows imps are the laborers who build and maintain these boiler monstrosities for their master. They're scrawny little stick-and-twig people, but they have enormous power in their lungs and long, strong, clinging fingers, and they're very resilient to attack. They blow gale-force winds to knock you down, then hold you down and bludgeon you with their fists.
Weakness: Flammable

The Choose-Both Method**:** The reason to roll materials is to spark your creativity when you don't have a monster in mind already. When you do have a monster in mind already, no need to roll. You can just choose, of course.

The Boiler Golem's Wife
Made of: Flesh, Metal
LVL d4+4, DC -2, Speed 12, 2 attacks per round
Abilities: Armor, Attack (Cut), Mesmerize, Stealth
A tragic figure! She's beautiful (mesmerizingly so, in fact), she's half flesh and half metal, and she loves the boiler golem with all her heart, even though he can't feel anything for her in return. She can't speak but she can communicate with her eyes. She moves silently – her armored body is perfectly oiled - and she has blades for hands.
Weakness: Emotional Connection - loves the boiler golem.

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# The Darkness Beneath
# Level 1: The Upper Caves

by Hackman, with Calithena and David Bowman

**Introduction:** The upper caves of this dungeon lie just beneath the surface (low level, etc.). They are intended for low-level characters, as low as 1 if you have good players or a large party. Though this level was conceived as part of a megadungeon, we have taken pains to ensure that this version is playable by itself without the other levels. There are many unique creatures and items herein, but three factions exert the most influence over the level. Troglodytes and Crabmen battle one another for supremacy, while a renegade Leprechaun and his ten Halfling minions play both sides against the middle. The Leprechaun will want to trick the party out of its goods (or use them to gain even more), but the Halflings are thoroughly evil and will probably try to kill the party outright if given the chance. There is a table for random encounters below; check it according to your usual procedure. There's also a table for cavern trappings when you need a little inspiration. Finally, there are several spots marked © for 'corpse' on the map; the third table tells you what's on these corpses if players search them. These caves, and especially the many cavern shelves indicated on the map, are somewhat slippery and treacherous to move through. Most of the areas are too large for a torch or lantern to fully illuminate, so the party will always feel exposed to the murky depths just beyond their present vision. I'd not wander off…

Random Encounters (d10)
1. 2 Crabmen (LVL 2, DC 5, AT 2, SPD 6/12 sideways)
2. 1d3+1 Troglodytes (LVL 1+1, DC 7, SPD 9)
3. 1d4+2 Halfling Minions. Scouting carefully and hiding – roll to spot, double chances of surprise and they won't attack an obviously superior force. In general they will lure parties towards areas 7-8. (LVL 1, DC 6, SPD 12)
4. 1d4 boys here on a dare, either false-brash or terrified.
5. Wandering Humanoids, roll d6: 1 = Ogre, 2-4 = d6+6 Orcs, 5-6 = 2d4 Kobolds. Wary, exploring.
6. Tagon Claymore, Dwarf Warrior, and Valenar, Elf Warrior-Mage, both neutral LVL 2 exploring the upper caves.
7. Nuisance: Swarm of Bats (noisy, may alert nearby foes)
8. Nuisance: Pack of Eight Legged Possums (same. These are a unique marsupial that lives around the dungeon.)
9. Creeping Mold (LVL 3, immune to weapons but slain by fire and damaged by acid, water, etc., 1d10 damage, Spd 6)
10. 1d2+1 Ghouls (LVL 2, attack paralyzes, DC6, Speed 9)

Cave/Passage Trappings (d12)
1. Small Pool
2. Dripping Water
3. Glowing Blue Lichen
4. Gust of Hot Air
5. Gust of Cold Air
6. Sound of Clanging Metal
7. Steam/Fog
8. Momentary Vertigo
9. Edible Non-Glowing Yellow Lichen
10. Mud Slide (roll for direction)
11. 1d3 Heads on Stakes (roll d4: 1 – Crab-man; 2 – Troglodyte; 3 – Human/Caveman; 4 – random other)
12. Vein of Glittering Stone: if character studies it, save vs. wands to avoid hypnosis.

Corpses (d8)
1. Naught but moldy rags
2. Elvish skeleton clutching a ruby (worth 300 gold coins)
3. Large Pile of Bones: 2 Dwarves, 5 Humans, 1 Halfling
4. Four decomposing Orc corpses, 200 silver & 58 gold.
5. Tattered cloak and boots (human sized).
6. Broken spear and pole-arm with shredded leather armor.
7. Two decomposing Human corpses, wearing damaged armor (plate and chain respectively).
8. Human skeleton with robe and broken staff. An ivory tube at its waist contains a scroll with 3 spells (random).

Room Descriptions:

**1.** The entrance cave from the surface above. Stalwart, attentive adventurers hear scampering from the Northwest area immediately. Two dozen eight-legged possums are here eating green lichen. They are harmless but will hiss when initially approached. There is a huge but empty burlap giant's bag resting against the Southeast wall.

**2.** In the middle of this cave is a small natural fountain of black brackish water that quickly drains off into a basin. There are several 8-legged possums about, two slurping water from the fountain. Though the water looks, smells, and tastes nasty, it will quench thirst and will actually cure 1d6 points of damage once per day for any imbibing. The Leprechaun and his Halfling minions are well aware of this and might attempt to retreat to this cave if hurt.

**3.** An enchanted ball of flame rolls randomly about the ceiling here, illuminating the chamber. It occasionally emits a streak of fire that has a 5% chance of striking anyone on the floor below for 1d10 damage. Player conjectures about why it is here might provide seeds for future adventures…

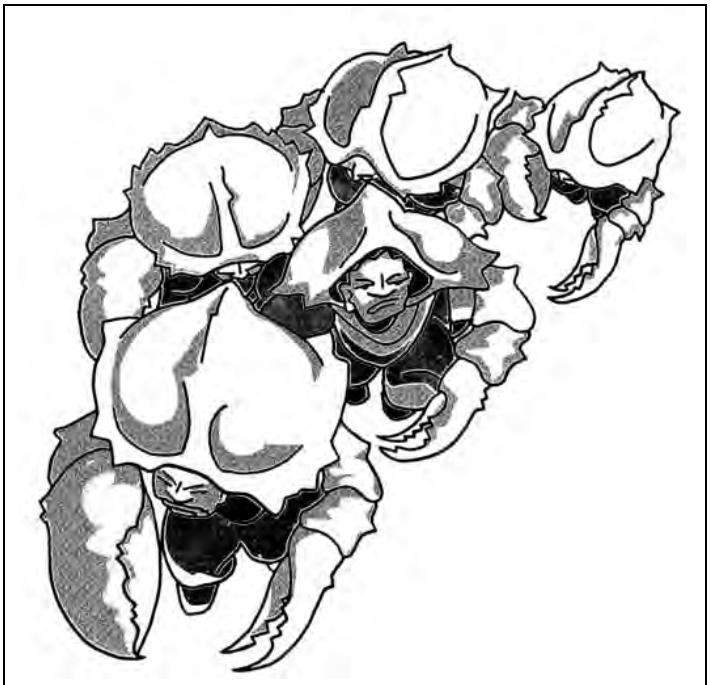
**4.** There's a small lake in this cavern with a waterfall going in reverse! The waterfall creates an anti-gravity effect in the lake which grows stronger the nearer one is to it. Anyone foolish enough to be sucked up into the waterfall will be transported to another dungeon level, an alien realm of one's own imagining, or perhaps just to a pool on the surface half a mile from the dungeon entrance. The shore drops off quickly and the lake is about 50 feet deep. A mutated Giant Frog lives here. It has a breath weapon emitting paralytic gas in a cloud right in front of it, and when it hits foes with a bite it will pull them into its mouth with its tongue unless a save v. breath weapons is made (automatic bite damage each round for characters trapped in its mouth, and their fighting options are limited). A gooey, vomit-like resin wells up from pores on the frog's back. At the bottom of the lake is a small locked coffer, containing a gold and ruby necklace worth 5,000gp. The necklace is an heirloom of a powerful lord in the area and would draw attention if pawned. It will require some ingenuity to dive for the chest without going up the falls. **Giant Mutated Frog**: LVL 2+2, HTK 13, DC 6.

**5.** These two passages are for GMs who wish to connect this dungeon to their own or create additional areas. If this is not desired, treat them as dead-end passages. If playing with the schematic on pg. 20, they go to the *Lower Caves*.

**6.** Several passages intersect here. If not already encountered randomly, a group of 5 Halfling minions of the Leprechaun are here. They will attempt to lead the party to **7** for an ambush by acting like friendly little guys. **Halflings**: LVL 1, HTK 6, 4, 3, 1, 1, DC 6, armed with slings and short swords. They are almost undetectable when hiding in cavern shadows and crevasses.

**7-8.** These two caves serve as the home of the Leprechaun Hamly and his Halfling minions. Both of these caves have a profusion of stalactites and stalagmites. If the Leprechaun is aware that a group is approaching, he will use his illusion ability to make the stalactites appear to be large black mushrooms. The Halflings will hide throughout the cavern and attempt to use their slings as long as possible. Meanwhile, Hamly will become invisible and transform any weapons he sees wielded. Alternatively, Hamly might just use invisibility and ventriloquism to make fun of the group while he and/or the silent, sneaky Halflings pick their pockets. Hamly can levitate as well, so he could steal something and levitate up. If defeated Hamly and the others will surrender, offer to scout and find the party gold, and so on, but will betray them at first opportunity. The northeast corner of **8** contains 10 cots and small trunks used by the Halflings for storage. Each Halfling trunk contains clothing, foodstuffs, 2d100 silver coins, and 1d8 platinum coins; one has a treasure map secreted away as well. There is a fountain of spring water in the area. There is a fire pit as well and if a group digs under this pit they will find a large iron trunk a few feet down containing Hamly's treasure hoard. The trunk is locked and trapped with a poison needle in the lock (save or die within 1 hour). The chest contains 1000 gold coins, 2000 silver coins, 25 platinum coins, 3 silver armbands worth 75 gold each, a potion of Flying, a potion of Heroic Fighting that lets any character drinking it fight as three levels higher for ten minutes or so (get extra hp, better attacks and saves, etc.), and *Illuminator*, a +1 sword. *Illuminator* is a lawful blade with Intelligence and Egotism 8 and communicates empathically. It can detect evil and gems and any chaotic foe hit by it must save vs. paralysis. The blade's mission is to expose corruption among nobility, and will withhold its help from players who don't work to do so after a while. **Halflings:** LVL 1, DC 6, slings and swords and leather, excellent stealth/ambush/thievery abilities. **Hamly**: LVL 1, DC 8, HTK 5. Spells cast on Hamly fail 80% of the time. As desired, he can make himself invisible, transform any weapon-sized or smaller, non-living, non-magical item into any other, create illusions, or use ventriloquism. He also knows magic and can cast spells as a 3rd level Mage: Slumber, Charm, Light, and Levitate. These spells plus See Invisible are all in his spellbooks, also in the trunk.

**9.** When approaching this area from either direction, explorers will see crab shells, exoskeletons, claws and even some crude spears spread about. A tribe of Troglodytes and a group of Demon Crab-worshipping cavemen fight occasionally in these passages. When explorers reach the point marked as area 3 on the map they will be attacked by a howling neanderthal and his 2 crabman companions. **Neanderthal:** LVL 2, HTK 11, DC 8, SPD 12. **Crabmen**: LVL 2, HTK 8, 6, DC 5, SPD 6/12 sideways. The passage heading east from here leads to *The Spawning Grounds of the Crabmen* if playing with the whole dungeon schematic, otherwise it can go where you like or dead-end.



The Neanderthal Tribe of the Claw worship the Crab Demon Garaskis. They wield crabshell-crafted weapons (pincer-spears, claw-clubs, etc.) and shell shields. Crabmen are chosen ones of the tribe who have undergone a ritual transformation as part of a years-long metamorphosis into Giant Crabs, essentially part crab, part man, with the earliest 'mutations' being a single giant pincer (ala fiddler crabs) and an exoskeleton carapace. They are true abominations of nature and should be described as vile, foul, unholy, half-caveman half-crustacean...things.

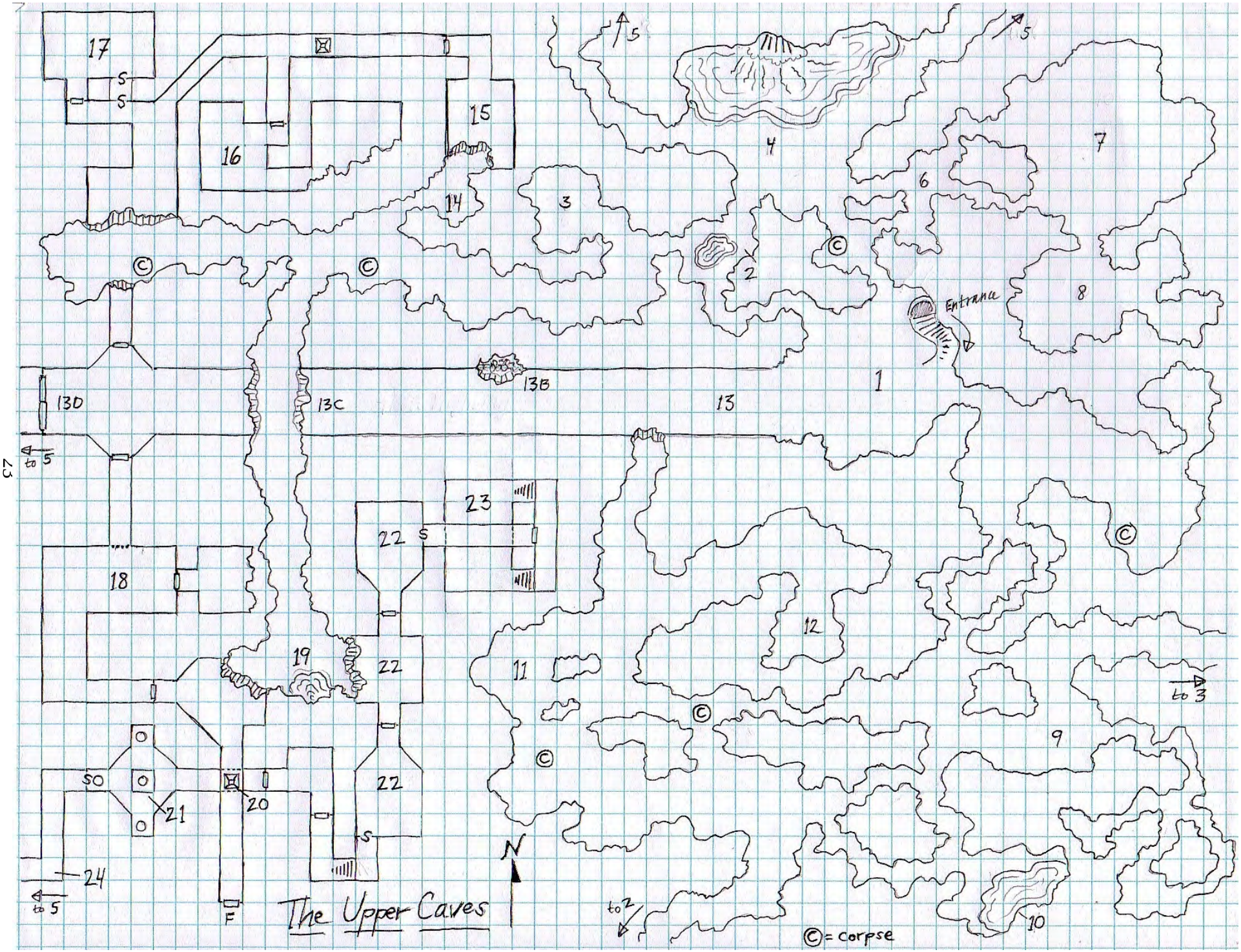
**10.** When approaching this area the sound of battle can be heard about 90 feet off. A group of 6 Troglodytes are finishing off two Lizardmen who swam into this cavern through the pool. Explorers arrive as the last of the Lizardmen are being slain. Explorers will have the jump on the Trogs. The Trogs have armor made of a leathery hide and three have small stone maces that can be thrown as missile weapons. All six have curvy swords made of some type of yellowish bone. **Troglodytes**: LVL 1+1, DC 7, SPD 9, Screech. At the beginning of each encounter, Troglodytes emit an ear piercing screech which is known to send brave men into panic. No effect on PCs, but all henchmen are required to make a morale check or flee. Each Trog is wearing a silver medallion worth 50 gold.

**11.** Another batttlezone, this one just having started. 8 screaming cavemen led by a Crab-Priest are doing battle with a group of 10 Troglodytes here. They will keep fighting each other as well as the PCs if attacked, but a wise group will let them finish each other first. **Neanderthals:** LVL 2, HTK 13, 11, 8, 7, 6, 6, 4, 3, DC 8, SPD 12. **Crab-Priest:** LVL 3, HTK 9, DC 4, SPD 6/12 sideways, attacks with pincers, can cast *Cloud of Fog* or *Puncturing Strike* (successful attacks by those under this blessing do double damage). **Troglodytes**: LVL 1+1, HTK 8, 7, 7, 7, 6, 5, 4, 4, 3, 2, DC 7, SPD 9, Screech, axes. South and east of this battle is a tunnel sloping downward, which leads to the *Warrens of the Troglodytes* in the full dungeon, otherwise to a dead end or location of your choosing.

**12.** Gulag the Ogre dwells here: LVL 4+1, HTK 19, DC 5, SPD 9, +2 damage on all hits. Gulag will not parley unless faced by more than 8 opponents. If reduced to 50% of HTK, he will flee to a nook in the south part of the cave where he keeps his treasure in a series of niches. Gulag will attempt to fit into this niche to avoid being surrounded, but he has a 3 in 6 chance of becoming stuck getting in, leaving his big ass an easy target. His treasure hoard consists of 1,000 gold coins (it could take a bit to collect the coins since they are spread out in various niches), an artful bronze neckace worth 30 gold, and a potion of transform.

**13.** This vast hall, which slopes noticeably downward going West, is called the Troll Highway. Deeper down, an enclave of dinosaur-riding Dark Trolls rides to the surface along this hall to **1**. The giant reptilian tracks are clearly visible in the pounded ancient stones here. The Dark Trolls will not normally be encountered unless a party waits for them for days; any party of appropriate power for this dungeon will be slaughtered or captured by such foes if they try to engage them. The hall is always misty due to the bubbling pool at **13B**; the Creeping Molds on the random encounter chart enter the upper caves through here (and if someone sticks something into or falls into **13B** there is a 50% chance of being attacked by one). **13C** marks a passage in the upper caves which passes over the Troll Highway – the two are not connected in any way. GMs who don't like the Troll idea are free to simply treat this as a large ancient hall, possibly also eliminating the brass-bound double doors at **13D.** Otherwise, these doors follow the Troll Highway all the way down to the *Lower* and *Deep Caves*, or to a location of your own choosing.

**14.** Piles of rags are strewn about this cave. If searched, a stone tablet will be found with a picture and lettering inscribed upon it. The picture is one of tentacles stroking a humanoid figure. The language requires magic or a sage to read (and a sage will be reluctant, recognizing the script as untrustworthy). The tablet describes a complex ritual to call forth unholy, otherworldly monstrosities. Any character with the ability to use magic can conduct such a ritual, though it will take hours and require some sort of sacrifice. Such demons will be powerful, ignore normal pentagrams and protection spells below 4th level, and will immediately attack anything nearby (including the summoner, though there is some control over where the entity appears). They cannot usually be bargained with and those summoning them must save vs. transformation or go insane. This tablet came from a much deeper level of the dungeon (*The Blasphemous Shrine of the Tentacled God*, if playing the connected levels) and could be sold to unscrupulous demon-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The Upper Caves
©= corpse

-ologists, though doing so is an evil act. The floor in the northern part of the cave is very rough and uneven, and a determined party with shovels (or a Dwarf and a pick) might tunnel through down to **15** if they thought of it.

**15.** The 20' pit in the hall outside this room opens on 3 in 6. There is a small hole just west of the pit and if any sort of pole or rod is stuck into it, the pit seals shut for an hour. The room itself has a pile of 2 Bugbear and 5 Goblin bodies decomposing in the entry passage. They were all killed attempting to pass by a blade trap protecting a suit of human sized plate armor and a two-handed sword in the middle of the room. There are 3 sets of 2 blades that swing down from the ceiling. The 1st set is where the entry passage connects with the room, the second and third one and two feet from the north wall of the room respectively. The blades in each set are millimeters apart and come down together, automatically resetting after their swing. They do 4d4 damage to characters struck by them (2d4 if somehow struck by one blade only). The blades are set off via motion into the alcove. Examining the bodies will give clues as to how they died, possibly indicating the traps to attentive players. The armor and sword are cursed. The sword is -1 but seems +3; the armor yells "Here I am!" loudly whenever undetected enemies are within sixty feet.

**16.** A group of 20 Goblins dwells in this area. They are "allied" with the Bugbears in **17**, though due to losses incurred attempting to obtain the armor and sword in room 15 they are not so loyal. The room is filthy, and stinks as the Goblins use the unfinished room to the east as their lavoratory. Sometimes they go on patrol, but much of their day is spent cooking over the fire pit in the middle of the room and playing "fun cut each other games" with one another. There are several bundles of rags in the room as well as two large tables, 5 barrels of Orcsmead (*see Max Davenport's article in this issue – Ig*), and 3 wooden chairs. The Goblins have a total of 250 silver coins and a healing potion in the rag piles. **Goblins**: LVL 1-1, DC 6, SPD 6, all armed with spears and three have crossbows as well.

**17.** 3 Bugbears dwell in this room, allied with the goblins above. They are here for the treasure in **15**, but have yet to get past the blade trap. There is a trip wire in the hallway leading to this room which alerts them to intruders. When the party approaches the room, the standard doors will be open and a small basin fountain on the north wall is visible. The Bugbears have trained two small white rats to dip into the water and squeak, so the first thing delvers see is two rats romping in the fountain. The eastern portion of the room has two sets of large bunk beds, a table with mutton and flagons, and two barrels of Sprucebeard Ale. The Bugbears have a net trap above the fountain. One Bugbear is in the room hiding and will pull the cord causing the net to fall and entrap those in front of the fountain. The other two Bugbears will have slipped out via the secret door on the south wall, passing through the second secret door leading to the hallway, and will ambush the party from behind as they struggle with the net. Of course cautious delvers might detect the secret doors, the strings, net etc. Each Bugbear carries 50 silver and 25 gold. They've also split up a cache of ten small gems worth 25 gold apiece. One of them also has a metal rod they use to disable the pit trap in the hallway leading to **15**. **Bugbears**: LVL 3, HTK 16, 14, 9, DC 6, SPD 12, very quiet and sneaky, armed with double-bladed axes.

**18.** The portcullis at the end of the hallway is closed. The lever to open it is inside the room, on the north wall 10' west of the bars. Extreme strength can bend the bars or lift the gates. The room is covered with bas-reliefs of frolicking Lizardmen and dinosaurs. Careful inspection of the west wall reveals a small handle concealed among the images. Pulling the handle reveals an ancient stone box, lizard-wrought, containing six emeralds worth 150 gold each and a magical +1 dagger that does not glow.

**19.** Towards the back of this cave there is a small fresh-water spring with a cluster of edible mushroom patches. **19** is above but does not connect to **20** and **22** below. A solitary Hobgoblin named Furby has taken shelter here. He escaped from a temple much deeper below where the dungeon-mistresses enslaved him for their lascivious rites. Furby has whip-scars and cuts all over his body as well as bruises in more sensitive areas. He's haunted and can be killed without effort. However, he has some knowledge of this level as well as of lower levels (particularly the *Warrens of the Troglodytes,* the *Lower Caves*, and the *Fane of Salicia* if playing with the full dungeon – otherwise wherever you want to put the priestesses in your world). He is not even all that evil for a Hobgoblin, so could serve as a guide.

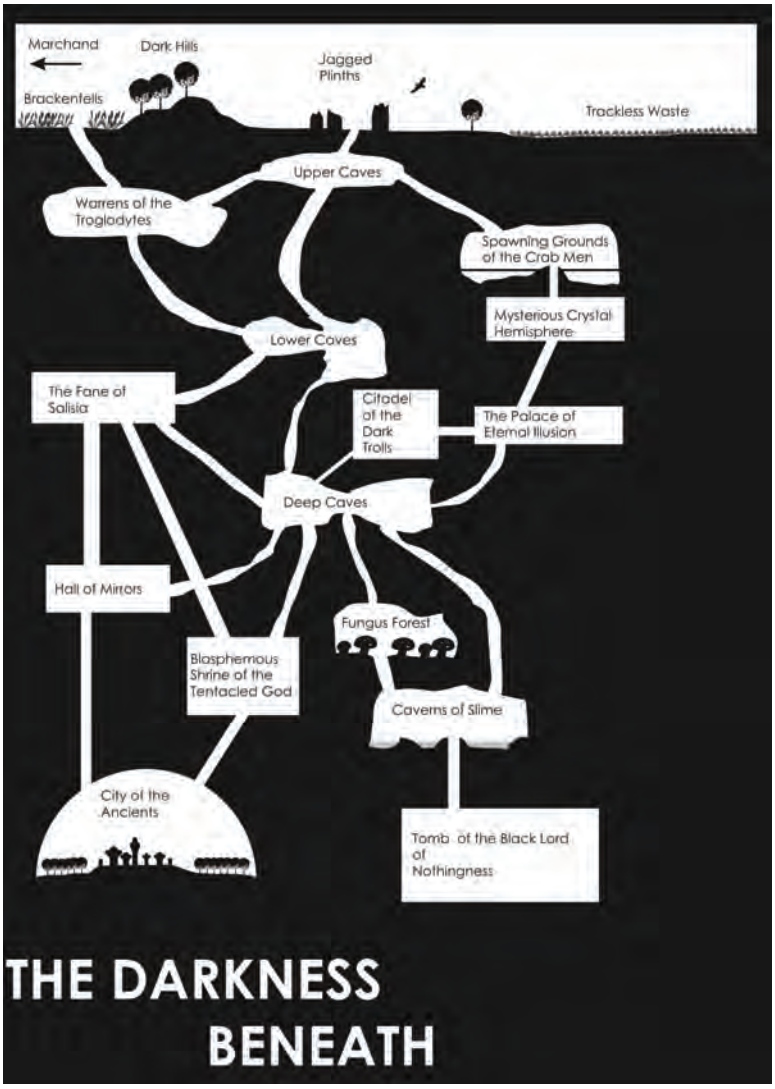
**20.** There is a pit here, 3 in 6 chance of opening. The drop is 10 feet, depositing fallers in an east-west hallway. This is the only way besides magic and excavation to access **21-24**.

**21**. This room contains four statues. Three are of an unknown race, reptilian like Lizardmen but strangely resembling elves in other ways. The statue in the middle of the room is a slender, yellow-eyed alligator in a basin surrounded by rocks. If PCs bring gems into the room, the alligator's mouth wags up and down, faster when one is held up to it. A gem placed in its mouth is consumed loudly, and the one placing it is blessed for 1 turn for each 10 gold the gem is worth. Forcing anything else into the mouth will cause that thing to be eaten as well: jewelry has no effect and anything else curses the giver for an hour. Blesses and curses will normally be of the 'stock' variety (+1/-1 to attack rolls and saves) but at GM option something more impressive might be bestowed for large offerings. The secret door behind the statue in the West alcove is activated by moving the left arm of the statue to an upward position; it will slowly lower back down as the secret door closes with it over 1 minute.

**22.** These three rooms have bas-reliefs similar to those in **18**, though the creatures portrayed seem to blend elements of Lizardman and dinosaur more readily and to use magic in certain of their frolics as well. On the ground in the middle of the three rooms is an amber gem; a mage who figures out how it works (save vs. magic) can use it to fire rays of scorching flame (6d6 damage, save for half) at any foe within 100 feet. If the mage ever rolls 12 or less total on the six damage dice, it burns out instead, doing the mage the amount of fire damage rolled as it melts in his hand (save for half, representing throwing it away in time).

**23.** The hallway behind the secret door from **22** is filled with a green mist that reduces visibility to 5'. If a group travels all 50 feet to the eastern door, they must save vs. magic or fall asleep. A Boondawoogle lives in the room beyond the regular door. What is a Boondawoogle, you ask? No one is really sure other than that they are not native to this planet. This particular Boondawoogle is androgynous and looks like a 6 foot tall humanoid with emerald colored skin. Its eyes are light blue and its head bald. The Boondawoogle is able to leap 30 feet vertically or horizontally. With its eyes it can charm individuals or shoot flames doing 2d8 and destroying flammable possessions. Boondawoogles can also create a green mist like the one in the entry passage, though it takes time. This particular specimen likes leaving parties naked somewhere in the dungeon after taking their choicest items. If a group makes it into the room, the Boondawoogle will be waiting in the lower area. It likes to use its gaze-charm and "speak" to the feelings of those it encounters. There is a plain circle carved into the floor in the north portion of the room and a circle with strange runes carved into the floor of the southern portion. Between the two circles is a pile of around 20 explorers' gear, mostly backpacks, torches, non-magical weapons etc. Special gear includes 2 silken cloaks worth 50 gold each, 100 platinum coins, 1,500 silver, 330 gold, a priestly scroll with Dispel Curse and Find Object, and a Wand of Doors with 28 charges (detailed in *Fight On!* #1, creates a locked (for all save the wandsman) heavy door in an open cross-section). When reduced to 0 HTK the Boondawoogle vanishes and reappears in the plain circle with pink light flickering around it. It shoots one last flame attack. Next round it appears in the circle with runes surrounded by green light and disappears. It cannot be harmed once in the circles. If the Boondawoogle takes a totally brutal hit it should still get a save vs. death to bring about this effect. **Boondawoogle**: LVL 4, HTK 18, DC 4, SPD 15 (jumps 30, charm ability, attacks via flame eyes).

**24.** This secret door goes to the *Lower Caves* (Level 5) in the full dungeon, but it might lead to a simple treasure room or the hidden city of the Reptile-Elves in your world instead. Happy adventuring! **Ω**



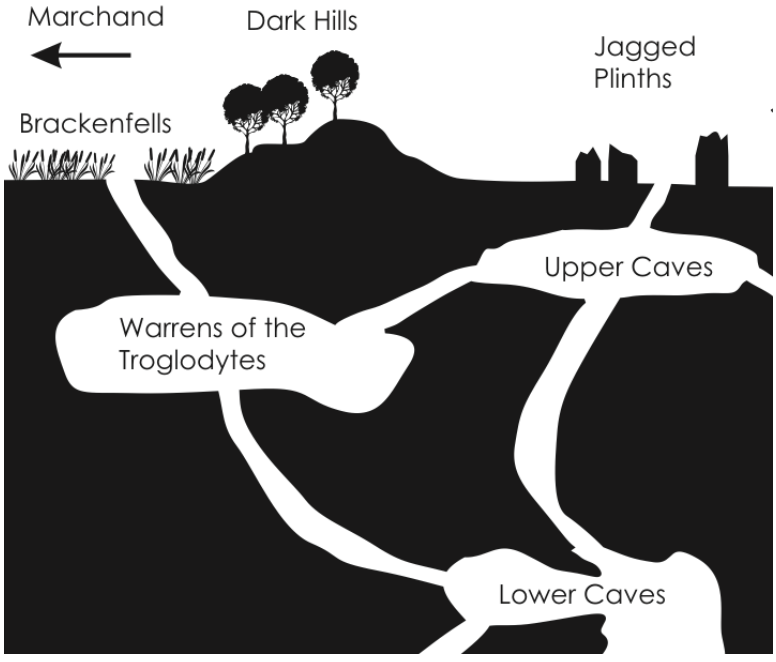

# Warrens of the Troglodytes

dungeon level by Calithena, w/help from D. Bowman

**Introduction:** This mazy troglodyte den can be played on its own, plugged into your dungeons, or used as level 2 of *The Darkness Beneath*, *Fight On!*'s community megadungeon. In *The Darkness Beneath* level 2 connects to levels 1 (*detailed in* Fight On! #2 – *Ig*) and 5 through areas **1** and **A6** and to the surface world through **27, 28,** and several sinkholes near **30** and **33.** These connections are shown in the accompanying schematics and may be adjusted to suit your needs. Players making their way up or down through the dungeons may have random encounters as the GM wishes, possibly using the Upper Caverns table if such are desired. Players coming directly from the Brackenfells (or surface swamp of your choice) should only rarely experience normal swamp encounters on the way in if they come or go by day, but night journeys are lethal: there is a 75% chance of running into an ambush force of d10+5 trog warriors (with special types at GM option). It should be common knowledge that trogs are nocturnal in the swamps, but up to the PCs to plan accordingly. The troglodytes in these warrens have a bunker mentality. They are constantly at war against crab-men and dark trolls elsewhere in the dungeon and with humans from the surface world. Treaty with them is basically impossible, though this is not necessarily true of other monsters on the level. These trogs come in several appealing mutant varieties which should provide entertainment in battle. They will respond in an intelligent and coordinated fashion to adventuring parties once they become aware of them, and will be very tough to beat if fully aroused; several hiding places can be found in the dungeon by canny players to avoid the worst fates.

**Motivation:** If your players are the sort of wan, *fin-de-siècle* aesthetes who need a reason to risk their characters' lives in a dark, slimy cavern complex filled with murderous monstrosities or if they have access to the local rumor mill they may learn that a merchant caravan laden with gold bars bound for Marchand was ambushed in the swamp, never to arrive. Also, these trogs regularly capture and eat human stragglers from Marchand who get lost in the swamp after dark, so rescue, revenge, and hygiene also present themselves as plausible cause for dungeoneering.

**The Mole-Men:** In addition to the troglodytes, a diminutive race of mole-men calls these caverns home. They inhabit a separate set of tunnels which interlace the trog warrens between **3** and **17** and between **29** and **40.** Of neutral, even kindly outlook, mole-men (HD ½, hp 2, DC 8, SPD 6/burrow 3, Atk bite or pointy stick 1-2, 5 in 6 chance to move silently or hide, never surprised) live off tasty swamp plants and cavern fungi and mostly keep to themselves. Their largest tunnels are big enough for a hobbit to function at -2 across the board, but all other races must crawl at SPD 2 and can only attack the square in front of them at -4 for ¼ damage. Mole-men will burrow around attackers and/or collapse tunnels on them; the troglodytes will never crawl into their warrens.



It would be unfortunate if players battled the mole-men, because their ideal role is to provide a safe haven for rest and secret pathways between the Upper and Lower Caverns. There are several low-ceilinged 10' diameter rooms in their burrows where PCs can recuperate and plan assaults. The mole-men can generally find or dig cramped but passable tunnels to within d3-1 rooms of any location that the PCs describe to them within their range. They are primarily motivated by food, but greatly dislike the troglodytes, and will happily assist the PCs by letting them use their tunnels (though none will risk themselves in battle). Mole-man tunnels show up through the random encounter tables, and softer GMs who like to see their PCs succeed (you know who you are!) may locate additional tunnels as a lifeline when the going gets tough.

**Character Level:** I prefer to run this adventure for 1st-3rd level characters, but if your players are *Diablo* types you may be looking at levels 3-5 for a good chance to survive.

**1. Warning Poles:** The tunnel spiraling down (from levels 1 to 5 in *TDB*) opens here into a wider cavern. Several wood and metal poles are planted along the western wall, festooned with human skulls, giant crabshell segments, yawning, half-rotten lizard maws, and various other animal parts. Beyond these decorations two passages lead west.

**2. The Blind Troll:** This cavern is home to a blind dark troll named Eustace (HD 6, hp 17, DC 4, SPD 6, Atk claw or bite 1d6, -4 to hit and 50% miss chance, regenerates 3 hp/rd). If he is murdered, dark troll warriors from the deeper dungeons may take revenge at some point. If befriended Eustace can give limited information about the dungeons, trog types, blast spores, etc. He has a small pile of treasure (77 sp, 26 gp, and 3 bottles of Erebinthian brandy) which he plays with and will try to defend.

**Punji Pits**: "X""s in the two tunnels between **1** and **3** and many places elsewhere on the map, mark 2'-5' deep crudely camouflaged pits with sharpened stones and stakes on the bottom. If not spotted adventurers passing by have a 2 in 6 chance to fall in and take 0-3 points damage. If hurt, speed is also reduced by 1 for that character until healed. Speed reductions are cumulative with each pit wound.

**3. Guard Outpost:** Four trogs armed with tridents (HD 1+1; hp 7,6,3,[2]; DC 7; SPD 9,[15]; Screech (henchmen within 60' must make morale check or flee)) wait here to alert their fellows in **10, 11,** and/or **16** about interlopers. The smallest is a small mutant trog with froglike legs that can move very quickly in the dungeon passages. They can be surprised by quiet adventurers, as normal.

**4. Stable:** Extra iguana-mounts (HD 3, DC 6, SPD 6/climb 4, Atk Tongue Lash (save v. wands or entangled and drawn to mouth subsequent round for 1d6/rd automatic biting, open doors to escape), Torpid (2 in 6 chance each round not to fight)) are kept here for Troglo-

knight patrols. There will be 0-4 (d6-2) such mounts here. They will not fight at all unless attacked or goaded by trogs (such goading replaces a normal attack for any but a mounted troglo-knight). If present, one has a saddlebag with dried (human) jerky, a potion of healing, and 50' of hemp rope with an iron grappling hook attached.

**5. Spore Cavern:** There have obviously been many attempts to block the top of the rough pebble-slide going down into this cavern with rubble, but none have completely succeeded – there are currently several boulder-sized breaks and it would be easy to push out bigger holes. Keeping your footing going down the rockslide is difficult, but falling incurs no difficulty other than embarrassment. Floating within the room below are 3 Blast Spores (hp 1,1,1; DC 8; SPD float 6; 5d6 fire explosion 15' radius if punctured (100%) or bashed/disturbed (50%)).

**6. The Spore Fungus:** Filling the entire back two legs of this cavern and about a 10' radius out into the room is a giant yellow-brown fungus (HD 6, hp 36, DC 7, immune to fire). It normally produces a new blast spore every few days, but if it is damaged it will start firing one per melee round at its attackers (roll to hit as with a missile attack, which then has a 50% chance to explode). If it is cleaned out completely with shovels etc. an ancient stone idol of a squat rhino-headed humanoid with a missing horn can be obtained from underneath it. The silver horn found in **24** fits it and will activate it as a *Stone Servitor* (HD 4, DC 1, immune to all elemental effects, SPD 6, Atk horn 2-7, can carry as much as four men if a large back-basket is provided, serves its activator loyally until destroyed).

**7. Mystic Mists:** The trogs avoid this room, which is usually full of swirling white fog. If characters pause and relax here and breathe deeply, they should make a save vs. spells. Failure means falling asleep for 2d6 hours or until dragged and woken outside the room. Success means one PC (preference to mages and/or random, others making save have no effect) may perform clairvoyance as a wandering disembodied viewpoint for 4d6 minutes. Second attempts on the same day will automatically cause slumber. The mists drive trogs to berserk insanity.

**8. The Chasm:** This room is in trog territory but they do not generally garrison it. A deep cleft here goes down 30' below the chamber floor into a smaller cavern. If that lower cavern is searched thoroughly there is a 10% chance of finding a *Ring of Rapid Healing* (character gains back 1 hp every ten minutes of game time) in a crevasse.

**9. Antecavern:** Three long stalactites hang from the low ceiling, tightening transit through the center of this room. There are large piles of human(oid) skulls and bones of various underworld creatures in the corners, but no monsters or treasure.

**The Upper Caverns – Random Encounters (d20)**
(*Roll on this table between **3** and **17, 19**, & **20** as appropriate, once every 10 minutes of game time or so.*)

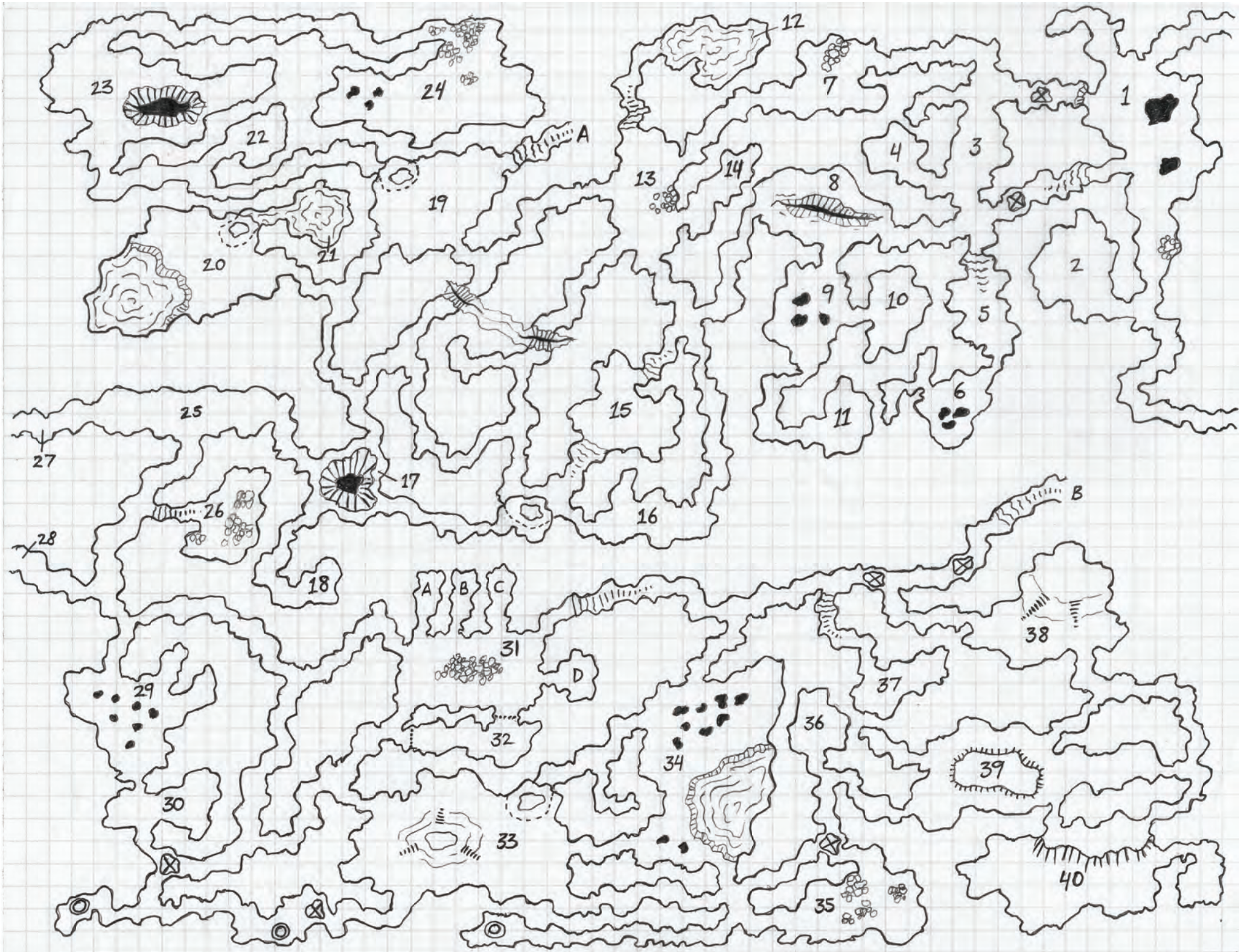
| | |
|---|---|
| 1-10 | No Encounter |
| 11-13 | Troglodytes (d8+1) |
| 14 | Troglo-knights on Iguana Mounts (d3) |
| 15-16 | Mole-Man Tunnel |
| 17 | Blast Spore |
| 18 | Giant Badger (from **14**, reduce # there if slain) |
| 19 | Human(oid) Band (d6+1) |
| 20 | Moon Slime |

**Troglodytes**: HD 1+1, DC 7, SPD 9, Screech (henchmen within 60' must make morale check or flee)
**Troglo-knights**: HD 2+1, DC 5 (tortoise shield), SPD 9 (6 on mounts), Atk Barbed Lance (1d6, or 3d6 vs. large creatures moving to attack them), Screech
**Iguana Mounts**: HD 3, DC 6, SPD 6/climb 4, Atk Tongue Lash (save v. wands or entangled and drawn to mouth subsequent round for 1d6/rd automatic biting, open doors to escape), Torpid (2 in 6 chance each round not to fight)
**Mole-Man Tunnel**: Roll to detect if desired. Entered at PC option; mole-men present at GM option (though they will be encountered soon if tunnels are entered).
**Blast Spore**: hp 1, DC 8, SPD float 6, 5d6 fire explosion 15' radius if punctured (100%) or bashed/disturbed (50%)
**Human(oid) Band**: Humans, crab-men, hobgoblins, and kobolds are all good candidates. They will be armed to the teeth and looking for a fight; all are possible allies.
**Moon Slime**: Stationary, if touched does d6 and destroys one piece of equipment per round until scraped (d3 rds, destroys scraper)/burned (instant, d6 damage) away.

**10. Barracks:** Six troglodytes lair here (HD 1+1; hp 6,5,4, 3,3,3; DC 7; SPD 9; Screech (henchmen within 60' must make morale check or flee), four armed with tridents (Atk 1d6) and two armed with spiked nets (Atk 1d2, entangled for half movement and -2 to hit until open doors check made to break free, additional 1d2 damage on each failed attempt to break free). When interrupted they are playing a game/conducting a religious ritual with 22 small shards of a translucent smoky white quartz, worth d20 silver each.

**11. Hunters' Meditation Room:** This crystalline cavern is covered wall to wall with translucent smoky white quartz. With time and tools this can be harvested; every ten minutes another pound or so, worth 10 gp, can be obtained. Short-term, however, the single relaxing Troglo-knight (HD 2+1, hp 9, DC 5 (tortoise shield), Atk Macana 1d6, Screech) and his three trained Leaping Lizard pets (HD ¼; hp 1,1,1; DC 8; SPD 15 leap, Atk bite 1 hp) must be contended with.

**12. Cool Lake:** The well-trodden stairs from **13** descend to an underground lake. The water in it moves slightly, and there appear to be abundant fish here. It goes down some ways through subterranean rivers and lakes and connects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to the lake in **21**, although water breathing and extensive exploration would be necessary to find the path. Other aquatic discoveries are of course possible as well…

**13. Crossroads:** This room is obviously very well-travelled and has seen many battles as well. There are numerous broken troglodyte weapons and bones here. If people investigate carefully they will also note large claw-marks, bits of coarse animal fur, and burn-marks on the upper walls, but noisy investigation or strong food smells will bring dangerous attention from **14.**

**14. Badger Den:** 3 giant badgers lair here, seven to ten feet long each (HD 3; hp 17, 14, 12; DC 7; SPD 12; Atk bite 1-6, with automatic damage until slain each rnd after hitting due to locked jaw). If some badgers have been fought as random encounters reduce the total accordingly; there is an 80% chance that all surviving badgers are there when PCs arrive, all less one otherwise. These monsters are heavily scarred from multiple battles with the trogs, and attack anything they see except blast spores and mole-men. Among the gnawed bones in their warren is a satchel with 22 pp, a limestone scroll case containing a single scroll with a *Heal Disease* spell, and a *Potion of Discord* which detects as a healing philter (but the player of the PC who drinks it must argue vociferously for a different course of action than the majority favors in every party decision for the next hour of game time, 1 argument minimum).

**15. Swamplight:** Steps rise to this cavern from two directions, and during the day one can see faint shafts of sunright through several moist rooty apertures. The trogs almost never come here unless in direct pursuit of a party.

**16. Way Station:** Numerous pallets of straw and swamp-grass are here, as well as nine troglodytes (HD 1+1; hp 7,6, 6,6,5,4,3,2,2; DC 7, SPD 9, Screech (henchmen within 60' must check morale or flee)) armed with tridents or clubs. Similar to **11**, the walls are lined with glittering quartz that reflects lantern-light dazzlingly and which can be mined.

**17. Terrene Tendrils**: There is a slight chance that clumsy characters peering over the edge of this sinkhole will fall in, taking 1d6 damage and coming to a rest 30' below the surface of the room – they must be lifted out with magic or rope. More serious though is the elemental creature of living rock yet deeper in the hole, a sort of land-squid with six rocky tentacles protruding from its maw (HD 5, hp 21, DC 2, SPD 7, Atk 1-6 tendril bashes d6 each, bite 1d6 if creatures get close, immune to acid and cold, half damage from fire, regenerate 1 hp per melee round while in contact with earth). If any gold, quartz fragments, or other metal or rock items of value are tossed into the pit when this room is passed, there will be no trouble; but if PCs simply pass by (or dally in the room without sacrificing) the creature will be waiting for them next time through. It will however stop fighting as soon as a sacrifice is made to it, heading back into the depths even if it has taken substantial damage. If a party could somehow travel hundreds of feet down below the sinkhole, they would find a horde of tens of thousands of minor gems and coins accumulated over thousands of years, as well as a few minor magic and technological items, but retrieving it from the cramped spaces and narrow crevasses would be even more unlikely than getting there in the first place.

**18. Moonslime:** Everyone entering the last 20' of this room/corridor steps into a room filled to the top with pale lime-tinted softly luminescent slime. It does 1d6 damage and destroys one piece of equipment each round until scraped or burned off; scraping takes d3 rounds and destroys the scraping implement as well as any other equipment, while burning rids one of it instantly but does 1d6 more damage from fire. Characters may note still air or similar towards the end of the corridor; the slime is hard to detect from a distance (roll, with appropriate bonuses).

*- There are no random encounters between areas **19, 22,** and **24** -*

**19. Lizard Guardians:** On chains in front of the sinkhole in the northern end of the room are two large (12') lizards with red and white mottled scaling and large acid-dripping jaws (HD 3+1; hp 19, 16; DC 5; SPD 6 and limited to 40' from their chain-points; Atk bite 1-6 plus save vs. poison or 2-8 additional; immune to fire). They are chained to either side of the sinkhole-passage in the northwest corner. The eastern staircase goes down to sub-level A.

**20. Water Dragon's Demesne:** A small (18' or so), swimming water dragon makes the pool here its lair. 30% of the time it will be gone, 30% of the time it will be sleeping, and 40% of the time it will be awake and alert and will check on interlopers (HD 6, hp 30, DC 2, SPD 12/swim 18, breathe caustic gas for 30 points/save to 15 once every d3 rounds, otherwise Atk 2 claws + bite for 1d6 each, immune to acid, breathes water or air). It can speak most human tongues and is extremely intelligent, and if PCs attempt to parley it will offer quite extensive information about the Warrens and other topics of the GM's choosing, exchanged 1 for 1 for valuable treasures. Its pool here is not connected to any others, but it knows the water-caverns beneath **21** and **12** well and often fishes and explores them. (At GM option, there may even be alternate routes here to lower dungeon levels!) It is a neutral creature and will also sell what it knows to the troglodytes, though it finds them distasteful. Its hoard consists of 3500 sp, 800 gp, 3 tourmalines worth 500 gp each, a majestic star sapphire worth 2500 gp, a *+2 shield*, a *+1 helmet of armor enhancement,* a *potion of fish control*, and a watertight copper coffer, verdigrised to near-worthlessness, which contains 8 oil paper packets of *sneezing powder* (living targets seize up with uncontrollable sneezes for d6 rounds when blown on them, no other actions possible).

**21. Sunken Lake:** Similar to **12**, except the water is quieter and the slippery path down from the sinkhole gives anyone trying to go down a 50% chance of slipping and sliding all the way into the deep lake below – taking anyone below on the path with them! Special precautions may blunt or avert this fate, and there is no danger in the water below save the usual chances of drowning in armor.

**22. Black Troglodyte Assassins:** This room is small, dark, and nondescript, whereas fungal light and eerie chanting are clearly audible down the westward corridor. The three mute black assassin troglodytes within (HD 2; hp 11,7,6; DC 8; SPD 12; +1 chances of surprise; 5 in 6 to move silently or hide; Atk barbed dagger 1d6, x2 if delivered stealthily from behind) will stalk the party from behind and assault them just as they enter **23** if they are not dealt with first. They will also defend themselves if cornered, of course – possibly with surprise.

**23. Antechamber of the Gibbering Fungus God:** In this well-lit room, currently occupied by no fewer than 18 troglodytes and 4 iguana-mounts, a bizarre ritual is taking place. Seven of the troglodytes are playing crude musical instruments, while three robed priests with red-white mottled scales similar to those of the lizards in **19** appear to be leading some kind of service around the gigantic sinkhole. If the party does not attack, the ritual will go on for twenty minutes before concluding; a small and quiet group could even carefully slip around the northwest wall and make their way on to **24.** Even if the trogs in **22** attack a watching party from behind, there is only a 50% chance that the four troglo-knights and their mounts will notice and join the fray. None of the other trogs in the room will act unless some are attacked, in which case the ritual is disrupted and general melee will ensue. If the ritual is completed, the Gibbering Fungus God will rise from the sinkhole, whereupon the troglodytes present will start eating various small fungi off his gigantic, misshapen, eyeless torso. At this point party members must all save v. fear or run screaming in random directions for 1d6 turns – not necessarily staying together (roll at each intersection) – but if they hold the trogs will be lost in ecstasy and will no longer defend themselves if attacked. The Fungus God will ignore most attacks, but if any single hit does more than 20 points of damage he will strike lazily out at that attacker, grabbing him and swallowing him whole on a successful hit. The Fungus God will descend again into his pit d20+10 minutes after rising up. **11 Troglodytes**: HD 1+1; hp 7,7,6,5,5,5,5,5,4,2,2 DC 7, SPD 9, Screech (henchmen within 60' must make morale check or flee). **4 Troglo-knights**: HD 2+1; hp 13,11,9,6; DC 5 (tortoise shield), SPD 9 (6 on mounts), Atk Barbed Lance (1d6, or 3d6 vs. large creatures moving to attack them), Screech. **4 Iguana Mounts**: HD 3; hp 16,14,9,4; DC 6; SPD 6/climb 4; Atk Tongue Lash (save v. wands or entangled and drawn to mouth subsequent round for 1d6/rd automatic biting, open doors to escape), Torpid (2 in 6 chance each round not to fight). **2 Fire Trog Acolytes:** HD 1; hp 5,2; DC 8; SPD 9; Atk fire fungus spore x2 ranged 1d8, then claw-fu 1d4; immune to fire. **1 Fire Trog High Priest:** HD 4; hp 13; DC 5; SPD 9; Atk fire fungus spore x 5 ranged 3d4, claw-fu 1d10; can cast *faerie glow* (1d6 adventurers glow red for 1d6 turns, stealth impossible and +1 to hit them), *dancing flames* (a 5'x5' hypnotic pattern, all looking at it must save each round or stand immobile), and *flame gazing* (any flame may be used as crystal ball) once per day each; immune to fire. **Gibbering Fungus God:** HD 25; hp 150; DC 3; SPD 3; giant-sized; Atk lazily grab and swallow, save or die; regenerates 3 points damage each melee round; immune to charm and mind control and mental contact with it causes save vs. insanity, with no other effect; immune to cold and acid. The troglo-knights have 200 sp, 54 gp, and a *+2 dagger* in their iguana-mounts' packs (these could be rifled during the ritual), while the three priests each have gold necklaces worth 100 gp, and the leader has a fire opal pendant worth 500 gp.

**24. Throne Room of the Troglodyte King:** Here the current ruler of the troglodytes, a four-armed mutant, rests with his harem of disgusting, bloated trogwives, each a scaly mass of pudding the size of a small water buffalo. **Trog King:** HD 4; hp 15; DC 3; SPD 9; Atk 2 macana and one lion-shield bite for 1d6 each; Sonic Screech (3d6 damage in 30' cone, save for half). **3 Trogwives:** HD 5; hp 18 each; DC 8; SPD 3; Atk bear hug 2d4; slow (only act every other round, do 1 the first and 2 the second). The King's *+2 Lion Shield* is a beautiful brass construct which not only improves defense but attacks once per round as well, with a metallic lion bite. His throne is a beautiful teak chair inlaid with gold, ivory, and rubies; stripped it is worth only 750 gp but if the party could somehow get it out intact it could fetch 2000 intact. A massive pile of coin contains 2275 cp, 398 sp, 67 ep, 452 gp, and 9 pp mixed

together, as well as 22 normal weapons and 9 suits of metal armor. A scroll of three mage spells (*Create Web, Turn Invisible,* and *Levitate*) in an ivory tube worth 50 gp is also in this pile, as is a fragile censer which can call forth air elementals (20% to break each time used, takes 10 minutes to set up or break down) and a cut crystal vial (20 gp value) containing a *Potion of Misty Form*. The king wears an elaborate gold and ruby necklace worth 1000 gp as well.

**25. Ready Room:** This is where the troglodytes prepare for their hunting forays into the swamp. Roll d8+5 on the Lower Caverns Random Encounter Table (next page) each time the room is entered to see if trogs are present. The room is well-stocked with human, rat, and swamp buffalo jerky and 'edible' fungus (to trogs, it will nourish others but save vs. poison or -2 on everything for d8 hours), as well as tridents, spiked nets (see **10**), macanas, and barbed lances. There is also a large, roughly built cage with 6 leaping lizards, who attack if freed unless charmed or the like. (HD ¼; hp 1,1,1; DC 8; SPD 15 leap, Atk bite 1 hp).

**26. Refuse Pit:** A horrible stench can be smelled coming up from below, even at the top of the stairs. All manner of rotting vegetable and animal matter can be found streaking the descending stairway and filling the cave below. An amber ooze (HD 3; hp 12; DC 6; SPD 6; Atk engulf 1d6 and then 2d6 to engulfed foe each rd after; immune to acid, cold, and mental; ½ damage from non-magic weapons) can be found here at all times, but only fights in self-defense or to finish off engulfed foes, and will not pursue. Truly desperate parties might find shelter or a stray minor magic item here, but sometimes garbage is just garbage.

**27-8. Swamp Tunnels:** These long tunnels diverge away from one another north and south and come out in different parts of the Brackenfells. Parties entering from the surface will come in through one of these the first time, though if they discover the sinkholes south of **30** and **33** they may use those to enter on subsequent visits.

**29. Death From Above:** Sharp-eyed parties note that all the troglodyte tracks through this room go around the perimeter. If not, the seven stalacsins hanging from the ceiling (HD 1; hp 6,4,4,3,3,2,1; DC 3; SPD 1; Atk piercing drop for 1-6, then drink one point of blood per round (if hit) or else crawl slowly and impotently back to ceiling) will drop on party members proceeding straight through.

**30. Sentry Outpost:** Eight trogs armed with tridents (HD 1+1; hp 6,6,6,5,3,[2,2]; DC 7; SPD 9,[15]; Screech (henchmen within 60' must make morale check or flee)) wait here to alert their fellows in **25, 33,** or even **22** about

| **The Lower Caverns – Random Encounters (d20)** (*Roll on this table between **25** and **40** every 10 minutes or so*) | |
|---|---|
| 1-10 | No Encounter |
| 11-12 | Troglodytes (d8+1) |
| 13 | Troglo-knights on Iguana Mounts (d3) |
| 14-15 | Mole-Man Tunnel |
| 16 | Amber Ooze |
| 17 | Manticore (from **34**, reduce # there if slain) |
| 18 | Ogre (from **36**, that room empty if slain) |
| 19 | Skeletons (d6+1) |
| 20 | Swamp Elemental |

**Troglodytes**: HD 1+1, DC 7, SPD 9, Screech (henchmen within 60' must make morale check or flee)
**Troglo-knights**: HD 2+1, DC 5 (tortoise shield), SPD 9 (6 on mounts), Atk Barbed Lance (1d6, or 3d6 vs. large creatures moving to attack them), Screech
**Iguana Mounts**: HD 3, DC 6, SPD 6/climb 4, Atk Tongue Lash (save v. wands or entangled and drawn to mouth subsequent round for 1d6/rd automatic biting, open doors to escape), Torpid (2 in 6 chance each round not to fight)
**Mole-Man Tunnel**: Roll to detect if desired. Entered at PC option; mole-men present at GM option (though they will be encountered soon if tunnels are entered).
**Amber Ooze**: HD 3, DC 6, SPD 6, Atk engulf 1d6 and then 2d6 to engulfed foe each rd after, immune to acid, cold, and mental, ½ damage from non-magic weapons
**Skeletons**: HD 1, DC 7, SPD 9, Atk weapon, undead, ½ dmg from cutting weapons, 1 pt. from thrusting weapons
**Swamp Elemental**: HD 6, DC 5, SPD 6, Atk smash and tendrils 1d6 each, will leave PCs alone if left alone, half damage from all energy attacks

interlopers. The smallest two are small mutant trogs with froglike legs that can move very quickly in the dungeon. All can be surprised by quiet adventurers, as normal.

**31. Gaol:** This large, well-webbed cabin is the haunt of a giant spider (HD 4, hp 19, DC 6, SPD 9, Atk bite 1d6 + save vs. paralysis) who serves the trogs as gaoler, though she would betray them if the wraith in **B4** commanded. PCs in the room only move at SPD 3; the webs will burn but do not combust. The iron portcullis barring **32** is obvious, but **31A-D** appear only as webbed-over wall sections unless webs are cut or burned away.
**A:** Contains Janna, a beautiful hobbit priestess (Pr 3, hp 15, Wis 15, Cha 16, down one first level spell but otherwise at full strength, no equipment but robes). She is lawful and will happily join up with any party freeing her.
**B:** Two skeletons inhabit this cell. If they are substantially disturbed, one will shed a white fungus which causes a wasting disease (sv or lose 1 Con/day until cured or dead).
**C**: Empty.
**D**: Within the room is Dav, a werewolf warrior in human form who was part of the slain caravan (War 2, hp 12, Atk *sword +1, +3 vs. archosaurs*, immune to non-silver & non-magic weapons). He can tell that the treasure was taken by undead. He is not aware of his werewolf form and is neutral in human form, but becomes a fully evil wolf-man at night (+2 hp) and will attack parties that rescue him.

**32. Iron Chamber:** This cave is closed off with two iron portcullis. It is dark within, but a huge enchanted black panther (HD 5, hp 22 (currently 14), DC 5, SPD 18, 50% invisible in darkness (-4 to hit), -1 damage from non-silver, non-magic weapons) squats silently in the middle of the south wall (only 50% chance to see shining light within, though light spells cast within the room will reveal it). This creature might be charmed or treated with by magic, but otherwise he is insanely hungry, and will attack parties releasing him unless they heal him first somehow, in which case he will pad off to eat a half-dozen trogs instead.

**33. The Southern Frontier:** A raised dais with a crude idol of the Gibbering Fungus God is in the center of the room. Three hard-bitten troglo-knights (HD 2+1; hp 11,10,8; DC 5 (tortoise shield); SPD 9 (6 on mounts); Atk Barbed Lance (1d6, or 3d6 vs. large creatures moving to attack them), Screech) and their iguana mounts (HD 3; hp 12,9,8; DC 6; SPD 6/climb 4; Atk Tongue Lash (save v. wands or entangled and drawn to mouth subsequent round for 1d6/rd automatic biting, open doors to escape), Torpid (2 in 6 chance each round not to fight)) keep a watch here for interlopers and lower cavern foemen.

**34. Manticore Cavern:** Two monstrous manticores (HD 7; hp 28,26; DC 4; SPD 12 (fly 18); Atk head butt 1d6 or volley of 6 (out of 24) tail-spikes for 1d4 each) dwell here amidst the stalagmites and stalactites, keeping tight control over the waters of the pool. They can squeeze through the passage to **35** for fungus and down the opposing hall and sinkhole to hunt in the swamp, but the passages to **33** and northward are too tight for them. They crave manflesh. Just north of the pool is their treasure, a pile of golden cups and plates (worth 600 gp in all), a *baldric of armor enhancement +1*, a *wand of polymorph* (random shape) with 19

charges, and a *potion of super-healing*. The pool itself is blessed and detects as good, and gives a full day's nourishment (food and drink) to all who partake of its waters, as well as healing 1d6 hit points once/day. This blessing emanates from the temple in **A7** below, but the aura has not softened these incorrigible creatures.

**35. Fungus Farm:** This room is full of the 'edible' fungus eaten by many of the monsters, which can nourish humans but requires a save vs. poison to avoid being -2 on everything for d8 hours afterwards.

**36. Ogre Cave:** Zsilam the ogre dwells here (HD 4+1, hp 11, DC 5, SPD 9, Atk monstrous bardiche 2d6). He is evil and anthropophagic, but also greedy for more treasure, as he currently possesses only a cave lion skin, 22 gp, 19 sp, and a chest with a poison-needle lock (4d6, saave +2 for ½) containing valuable silks worth 300 gp. He has the key.

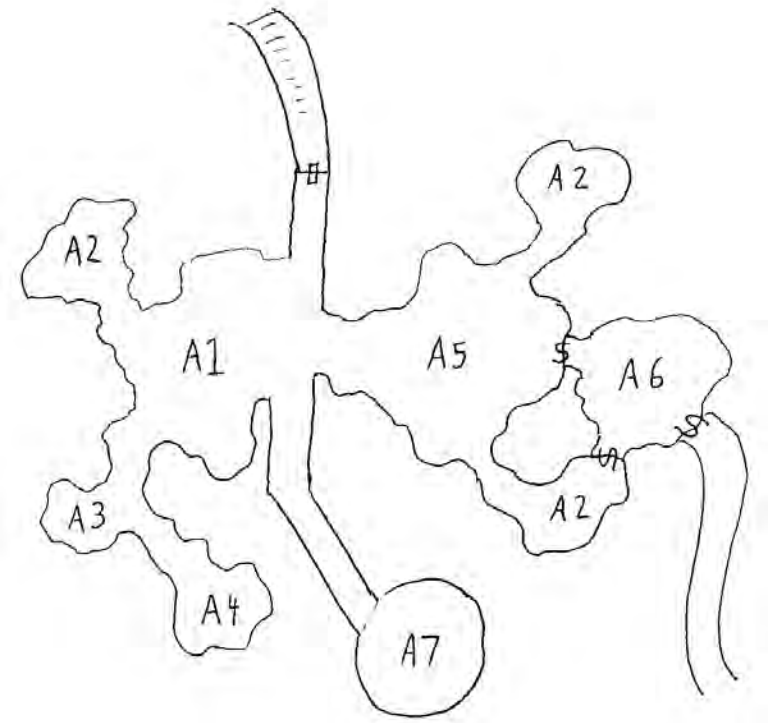
**37. Meat Locker:** 9 zombies (HD 2, hp 12,11,9,9,7,6,5,3, 2), DC 8, SPD 6, Atk weapon 1d6, slow (only act every other round: 4 go first round, 5 second) stand in stasis in the rooms below. They are dressed in gaudy but tattered Solaran silks, the survivors of the murdered caravan. They will not defend themselves unless attacked or turned, even if they are prodded or their treasures are removed (except weapons). One has a *+1 spear*, one has emerald earrings worth 75 gp, four have pouches totaling 68 sp, and one wears an elaborately brocaded goldcloth shirt that acts as leather armor (even for mages) and is worth 150 gp. If the skeletons in **B2** are defeated these will animate and head down to sub-level B, to help defend the wraith in **B4**.

**38. The Rock Whale:** A shimmering curtain of silver, stretched out between what looks vaguely like a carved mouth, occupies the northeast portion of this cavern. The silvery baleen are very sharp (d6 damage and possible extremity severing if PCs insist on pushing against it with flesh) but can be separated with metal objects, revealing a stony chamber with what looks like a tongue of solid rock leading up to a descending passage beyond. If party members disturb the rock substantially, or if all enter, the mouth snaps shut – for so indeed this is – and the party is taken for a ride deep beneath the planet in the belly of a rock whale, a huge cousin of the fabled zorn. Where they wind up is entirely up to GM discretion.

**39. Ruined Robotics:** The sunken area in the larger cavern (numbered) contains several incomprehensible devices of metal and crystal, shattered and resting in the room's center. If magic detection or similar is used here, three of the crystals detect as spell storing devices (2-1st, 1-2nd).PCs crossing the line of the western tunnels between **38** and **40** or coming down the eastern tunnel towards **40** will be shot at with a red ray coming from **40.**

**40. Ancient Artifacts:** An ancient, broken battle robot with the inscription "Zulgyan-47D" rests here. It is DC 2 and attacks and saves as a 10th level Warrior, but it cannot move and any single hit doing 5 or more points of damage will destroy it. Every other melee round it will fire its ruby ray (6d4, but those with polished plate mail, shields, or similar get a save to negate) at the closest moving target it has line of sight to. The complicated machinery here is also breaking down, but one can still experiment with it. Save vs. magic if you try: failure means rolling on a random mutation chart (see pg. 46). Success for mages gains 500 xp, while all others gain an automatic ability to detect magic for the next 4d6 hours (they just see it as auras). There is a 10% cumulative chance for each manipulation that this machinery too meets its end.

**Sub-Level A: The Sons of the Flame.** The fiery priests of the Gibbering Fungus God keep their fane here. Note that all loud battles will be heard in adjacent caverns.




**A1. Meditation Area:** After passing through the only normal door in the dungeon, iron-wrought (roll to open), a well-hewn passage of white stone collapses into caverns on either side. Currently a fire trog priest (HD 2, hp 9, DC 7, SPD 9, Atk fire fungus spore x3 ranged 1d10, then claw-fu 1d6; can cast *faerie glow* (1d6 adventurers glow red for 1d6 turns, stealth impossible and +1 to hit them) once/day; immune to fire) and two fire trog acolytes: HD 1; hp 6,1; DC 8; SPD 9; Atk fire fungus spore x2 ranged 1d8, then claw-fu 1d4; immune to fire) practice martial meditations here. The walls of this room and **A5** are covered with small white fungi used to prepare the fungus spore bombs.

**A2. Acolyte Cells:** These three rooms each contain two resting fire trog acolytes, though there are 'nests' for four.

**A3. Fungus Preparation Area:** This cavern is full of crude bubbling vats (1d6 damage as flaming oil on contact), small flames, and piles of the white fungus. A fire trog priest (HD 2, hp 7, DC 7, SPD 9, Atk fire fungus spore x3 ranged 1d10, then claw-fu 1d6; can cast *faerie glow* (1d6 adventurers glow red for 1d6 turns, stealth impossible and +1 to hit them) once/day; immune to fire) and acolyte: HD 1; hp 4; DC 8; SPD 9; Atk fire fungus spore x2 ranged 1d8, then claw-fu 1d4; immune to fire) labor here at making more fungus-bombs, 2d4 of which may be retrieved from this area by victorious parties.

**A4. Senior Priests' Quarters:** A fire trog vicar (HD 3; hp 14; DC 6; SPD 9; Atk fire fungus spore x 4 ranged 1d12, claw-fu 1d8; can cast *faerie glow* (1d6 adventurers glow red for 1d6 turns, stealth impossible and +1 to hit them) and *dancing flames* (a 5'x5' hypnotic pattern, all looking at it must save each round or stand immobile) once per day each; immune to fire) and two priests (currently in **A1** and **A3**) reside here. If the vicar is not surprised he will produce a *Scroll of Paralyze Person* and read from it before turning to his other weapons. The vicar wears a golden pendant with a fire opal worth 250 gp, and there are a dozen ceremonial gold necklaces worth 100 gp each here as well.

**A5. The Shrine of Flame:** A giant bonfire rages around the clock in this room, filling it with sweltering heat. This is where the high priest *flame gazes* if he escapes **23.**

**A6. The High Priest's Quarters:** This secret chamber is haphazardly furnished with copper and brass, and the high priest will attempt to escape here when badly wounded.

The secret passage slopes slowly downward into the depths; in *The Darknesss Beneath* it eventually connects to another secret door opening into the tunnel from outside **1** to level 5, The Lower Caves. Two locked brass chests contain 1000 gp each, and a gold-and-ruby brazier worth a like amount holds 20 gems of randomly determined value. A *Staff of Weather Control* (10 charges; each charge can create a serious thunderstorm in about an hour, or focus the lightning from an existing storm on a single spot (8d6 every few minutes from a new bolt) leans against one wall. There is also a *Potion of Human Control* here, which the priest will retrieve to combat interlopers eventually, and a silvery suit of elven chainmail which protects at +1 and imposes no penalties to movement, stealth, swimming, etc. A *+2 Mace* stylized with a lion's head rounds out the loot.

**A7. The Temple of Shalia:** A shimmering white curtain bars any further progress down the white marble central corridor. Only female characters of female players or any character (male or female) which is priest, paladin, or otherwise deeply sworn to a goddess may pass, though each such may lead one other character in by the hand. This room is a simple marble shine to the goddess of love and healing, with a statue of her at its center, and a small pool of waters with the power to fully nourish and heal 1-6 damage from those drinking each day. A party could theoretically rest here as long as it wished, so long as it did not occur the goddess' disfavor. A black leather *+1 whip* which does 1 point regular damage and 1d8 shock damage on a hit lies on the floor here, for reasons unknown.

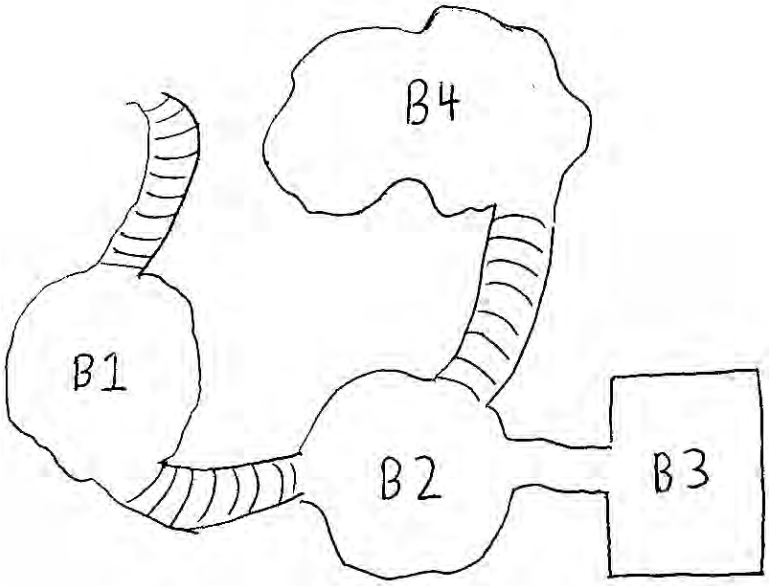
**Sub-Level B: The Mage-Wraith.** The trogs are not the only malevolent power in the swamp, or these caverns.

**B1. Skeletal Phalanx:** Two ranks of five skeletons each armed with spears (HD 1; hp 5,5,5,4,3,3,2,1,1,1; DC 7, SPD 9; undead; ½ dmg from cutting weapons, 1 pt. from thrusting weapons) stand eternally vigilant here, protecting the depths below.

**B2. Bone Archers:** If the skeletons in **B1** have been defeated, these will be completely aware of the party before they even come into sight, and they will be ready to fire their bone bows and arrows (3 each, magical +1) as soon as PCs enter the chamber. They will fire three times and then wade into battle with their bony claws (HD 1; hp 6,6,5,4,4,3,3,1; DC 7; SPD 9; Atk bone bow 1d6+1 or claws 1d4; undead; ½ dmg from cutting weapons, 1 pt. from thrusting weapons). Remaining arrows can be claimed as treasure by victorious PCs.

**B3. The False Mausoleum:** At the center of this bone-strewn room is a massive black sarcophagus, locked with a heavy iron padlock. If the sarcophagus is open, chlorine gas pours out, doing 3d6 damage to everyone in the room (save for half). There is a palpable aura of darkness here.

**B4. Tomb of the Mage-Wraith:** This room is constantly at a freezing temperature, filling those who enter with numb and dread (and causing 1 point of damage every three rounds). Gold bars are stacked here, 9600 gp worth in all, the lost caravan's remaining treasure. There are other treasures as well: a silver coffer (50 gp value) with 50 mithril elven coins within (each worth 20 gold), a wand which will detect secret portals, trapdoors, traps, and the like (10 charges), a book with the spells *Circle of Protection* and *Summon Bel, Slayer of Men* (a 6th level demon summoning ritual – not to be trifled with), and a wicked, slender black dagger which does triple damage to elves and similar beings. Guarding all this is a 5th level Mage-Wraith (turns as specter) who uses *Clairvoyance* to keep track of the dungeons but has other magic ready to go: HD 5, hp 23, DC 3, SPD 12 (fly 24), Atk touch (drains energy level), only struck by magical weapons, spells (*mystic missile x2, sleep, invisibility, silence*). Play him to the tactical hilt, and don't forget about the zombies in **37** if they're still around. Ω




# Congratulations Winners! The Erol Otus

**Art Challenge** has concluded. **Our champions**:

**First Place, Color**: Mark Allen
**First Place, Black & White**: Mikko Torvinen
**Second Place, Color**: Raven Daegmorgan
**Second Place, Black & White**: Steve Robertson
**Third Place, Color**: Stefan Poag
**Third Place, Black & White**: Steve Zieser
**First Honorable Mention, Color**: Peter Mullen
**First Honorable Mention, Black & White**: Lee Barber
**Honorable Mention, Color**: Brad Ingle, Kevin Mayle, Alex Schröder, Andy "Atom" Taylor, Simon Turnbull, and Kevin Vito
**Honorable Mention, B&W**: Bat, Paul "Bliss Infinite" Fini, Kelvin Green, Kesher, Samuel Kisko, Anthony Stiller, and Jennifer Weigel

(*highest award only listed*)

Many, many thanks to Erol and to our fine contestants, whose work will be seen gracing the covers and interior pages of upcoming issues of *Fight On! - Ignatius*

**83-84**. A jar containing a three-inch high figure of a terrified elf, suspended in a viscous amber fluid. The fluid is honey and the figure is intricate and finely painted.

**85-86**. A small bronze pig with a slot in its back and a small hatch on its belly. Engraved on the side is:

> If you feed me copper then
> In the morn there will be 10
> In a year no more than 4
> Lest I stop and work no more

If between one and nine copper coins are placed into the pig, by the following sunrise there will be 10 cc inside. This will work only four times a calendar year. If a fifth time is attempted, the pig will never again work.

**87-88**. A small silver amulet of a bee. On the bee's stomach is a tiny dial marked from zero to ten. If the dial is turned to a number, it will slowly rotate back to its starting position of zero, vibrating briefly and inaudibly as it passes each number – once every minute. This was used by a Mage to keep track of the length of his spells.

**89-90**. A bundle of (18) sticks, carved with unreadable runes and polished to a bright finish. They are wrapped in a square of red silk, which in turn is wrapped in a roll of canvas. They have no powers.

**91-92**. A small wooden case containing ten crudely carved dwarves and a wooden ball.

**93-94**. A stone with a hole in it, threaded onto a leather thong. Looking through the hole will enable the bearer to see anything invisible under a moonlit sky.

**95-96**. A small metal box, 8 inches square, containing charred pieces of wood that can't be removed. If the wood is set alight, it will soon become apparent that it doesn't burn, even though a flame is given off. Shutting the lid extinguishes the fire. The box itself does not get hot.

**97-98**. A black, scarf-like piece of material, with what looks like two eye-holes cut into it. If worn like a mask, the wearer will be able to detect traps and snares, which to him will appear to glow red. The mask does not grant the wearer automatic knowledge of how to disable said traps. Each time the mask is used, there is a 2% cumulative chance the mask will fail to correctly show a trap.

**99-00**. A small silver flask, engraved with an ode to the moon in elvish script. It contains a fine quality spirit and is worth 85 gc. Ω

# The Darkness Beneath, Level 3: Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men

contest-winning adventure by David Bowman

The Darkness Beneath *is* Fight On!'s *community megadungeon. Level 1 appeared in issue #2; Level 2 will appear in issue #4. David submitted this some time back and was encouraged to enter it in our adventure contest (p. 28); it got two 2nd place votes, one 3rd place vote, and one 4th place vote from the judges, of whom only I knew about the context. As the best overall showing by any submission, this won 1st prize. Congratulations, David! - Ignatius*

**Introduction:** Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men is an adventure module designed for a party of 3rd level characters. It was written as the third level of *The Darkness Beneath,* but it can also be used as a standalone adventure, or incorporated into a GM's own dungeons. Statistics for the new monsters herein are found at the end.

**Background:** The particular region of the mystical underworld detailed within this adventure has a past shrouded in mystery and uncertainty. It is left to the referee, should he so desire, to fill in the historical gaps presented in this module. What is known is that at some time a dungeon complex was constructed in the very stone which surrounds the river and caves of this area. Currently, the dungeon is inhabited by a savage cult of demon-worshipping Cavemen, The Tribe of the Claw. Chaotic and violent, these Cavemen follow simple rules which have allowed them to survive in the deadly environment which they call home. Worship of the Crab Demon Garaskis has brought them protection and longevity, and a life of blood and pain. While the actual family units of the tribe are not within this dungeon, enterprising referees might take it upon themselves to detail methods by which players could venture beyond the confines of this adventure to seek out these Cavemen. Here, in *The Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men*, the player characters will encounter those Cavemen charged with protecting the sacred caves and their crab inhabitants. The tribe is aware that, from time to time, Men of Light and enemies of Garaskis will intrude upon their sacred caves. The Tribe of the Claw has been battling the insidious Troglodytes from distant caves here in *The Darkness Beneath* for generations.

These Cavemen have perfected the use of the materials at their disposal; stone, discarded crab shell, and occasional animal pelts from various underworld predators. The Tribe of the Claw makes frequent, dangerous journeys to the Molting Cave to gather the discarded carapaces of the Large and Mature Crabs. Lengths of carefully splintered shell are sharpened into rudimentary daggers and swords, choice pincer claws are fashioned into heavy clubs, and

considers the tools and weapons of their enemies taboo. Such devices are normally simply left where they fall, or removed and deposited in some out-of-the-way location. The tribe subsists on the various fish within the underworld, specifically the Glow Scales.

Such is their devotion to Garaskis that they truly believe he and his crab children will provide for all of their needs. These Cavemen consider crabs of all kinds to be sacred. It is an honorable death to be devoured by the Children of Garaskis, whether through accident or sacrifice. The term Crab-Men is used to describe the various incarnations of those members of The Tribe of the Claw who are following a ritualistic path of black magic fueled by their worship of Garaskis, the Crab Demon. Through ceremonial sacrifice, the Tribe gathers together and channels their collective conviction into this rite. Using crude incantations and shamanistic magic, the Tribe of the Claw can cause one of their Chosen members to undergo a 2-3 year long metamorphosis of dark, unholy proportions. Once the foul process has been successfully performed, the Chosen member of the tribe enters the earliest stage of the metamorphosis. There are three distinct stages of this transformation, but the entire process is marked by gradual change. These three stages are, specifically; Transformed, Mature and Elder. In game terms, the Crab-Men are those foul denizens at the Transformed stage. Soldier Crabs and Giant Crabs are those monsters at the Mature stage. Great Crabs are at the final, Elder stage of the process. Seskiima is the sole Great Crab within the Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men. The Great Crab spawns the Scavenging Crab and Large Crab Children of Garaskis. While the Tribe of the Claw and the Crab-Men encountered here are not the only inhabitants of the dungeon, they are the defining theme of Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men.

**Features:** Ceilings in this level vary wildly in height. The natural limestone caves and tunnels typically have a ceiling height equal to their width. The block and brick dungeon areas normally have a ceiling height of 10'. This dungeon level is roughly divided into six regions. These are the **Winding River**, the **Shrine of the Claw**, the **Crab-Men Tunnels**, **Seskiima's Den**, **Quimlin's Manse**, and the **Forgotten Rooms**. Some minor details for these regions are included for the referee at the beginning of each section. All of the natural caves upon this level are substantially covered with lichen, mold and fungi. Of particular note are the unique Dim Shrooms which grow in clusters upon the walls, ceilings and floors in various parts of the caves, even under the waters of the Winding River, giving the entire place an eerie glow of faint blue luminescence. Both the Tribe of the Claw and Quimlin value this fungus and harvest it in order to make crude, but functional lighting within their halls. These Dim Shrooms range from 3" to 18" in size, and grow in clusters of 3d6. Each will glow for 4 or 5 days after being harvested. The light they emit is no more than the faintest glow, but it is enough to see moving objects from a distance of 30' when enough of the mushrooms are collected together.

**Named Monsters** and where to find their descriptions: **Old Bae** (area 2), **Crazy Clonk** (area 11), **Grand High Shaman of the Claw** (area 7), **Seskiima** (area 24), **Metheled** (area 41), **Quimlin's Eyes** (area 44), **The Thing From Beyond!** (area 48), **Quimlin** (area 49).

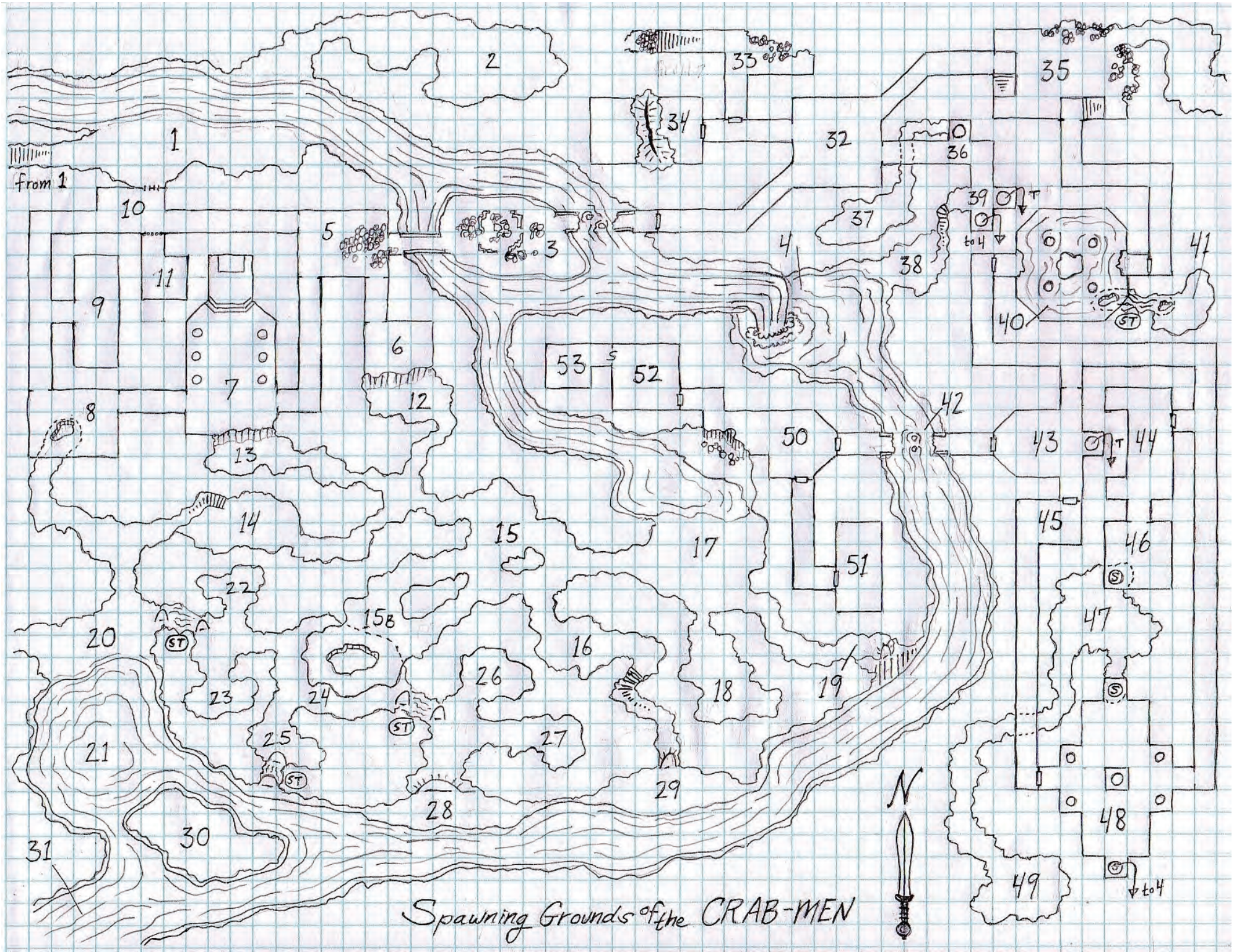
**Wandering Monsters and Random Events:** Every twenty minutes in the dungeon, the referee should check for Wandering Monsters on 1d6. A roll of 6 indicates an encounter, and the referee may roll or choose from the list. *Quimlin's forces (Speci-Men and Metheled) have orders to subdue and abduct Humans. They will attempt to slay other targets first and then knock out or overpower Humans and return them to room 47, in order that Quimlin might add to his Speci-Men army.*

**Wandering Monsters** (d10):
**1. Troglodytes**: 1d4+2.
**2. Tribe of the Claw**: 3 Cavemen and 2 Crab-Men.
**3. Soldier Crabs**: 1d3.
**4. Scavenging Crabs**: Pack of 1d6+4.
**5. Large Crabs**: 1d3.
**7. Lab Rats**: 1d6+8.
**8. Speci-Men**: 2d4.
**9-10. Special**, roll below

**Special** (d6):
**1. Adventurers**: Other delvers have been encountered. Whether they are cooperative or hostile is up to the GM.
**2. Metheled**: The gargoyle is watching or hunting the PCs.
**3. Quimlin's Eyes**: This spirit has found the party, and is watching them while sending mental images to Quimlin.
**4. The Thing From Beyond!:** This somewhat benign being will attempt to communicate his plight.
**5. Quimlin:** This alien parasite posing as a boy will pretend to be lost or helpless if encountered roaming the halls.
**6. Event**, roll below.

**Events** (d6):
**1. Melee:** The party happens across a battle in progress.
**2. Ritual:** The Tribe of the Claw has gathered to conduct a ritual in area 7.
**3. Experiment:** Quimlin is conducting research in area 47, normally with a handful of Speci-Men guinea pigs.
**4. Hatching:** Children of Garaskis are hatching from their eggs in areas 26 and 27, and Seskiima is overseeing, along with the three proud Seskiima-Mate Giant Crabs.
**5-6. Troglodyte Raid:** A large force of Troglodytes from the caves above has assembled in order to deal a decisive blow to their long time enemies: 12 Troglodytes, 4 Iguana-Mounted Troglo-Knights, and 10 Leaping Lizards.

**The Winding River (areas 1-4)** flows calmly from the northwest, winding its way across the level until it exits through the southwest. The stretches of the river between

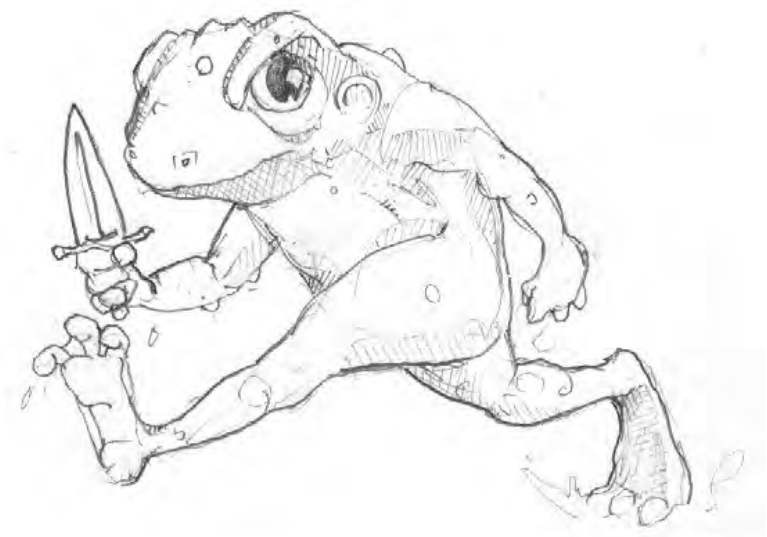

from 1
to 4
to 4
N
Spawning Grounds of the CRAB-MEN

areas 3 and 4 and between areas 30 and 31 are the only parts with a strong current. For the most part, the river ranges in depth from 10' to 15', and is deepest (30') at the pool in area 21. The entire river is illuminated by an eerie blue glow. Shell canoes are the standard vessels on these subterranean waters. In general these are easy to pilot except in the areas of strong current mentioned above.

**1. Entrance**. Entering from the west, adventurers will see an eerie dim blue luminescence and hear the faint sound of the Winding River in the tunnels ahead. The north side of this cave allows access to the river. Hidden in the dark recesses of the south wall is a pair of window slits, 12' up. These slits are but 1' wide and 3' high. They are used by lookouts from **10**. There is a 2 in 6 chance of being spotted by the not-so-vigilant lookouts, adjusted by time spent in this area, size of the party, and noise created before moving on, as judged by the referee. If spotted, the lookouts will make sure that the guards posted in **5** are prepared. Along the north side of this area, on the ground near the river, are six huge upturned crab shells, about 8' long from tip to tip. Each of these crude shell canoes has been whittled by stone and can seat up to three men. Within each shell canoe is a pair of paddles made of worked crab shell, tethered to the tip of the shell by a long strip of plaited trog hide. The north bank of the river opens up as well, and a tunnel can be seen beyond.

**2. Old Bae's Cave**. Piles of empty crab shells, broken claws, and splintered remains from crabs of all sizes are piled high at the narrowest point of the tunnel. The stench from the fetid remains is strong, and flies buzz about the mass of crustacean scraps. Old Bae has placed this here as a means to warn of approaching intruders. Old Bae has only a 1 in 12 chance of being surprised due to this precaution. After passing the pile of refuse, the strong scent of butter is almost palpable in the air. Unless surprised, Old Bae will bellow out a roaring greeting to the intruders before they can enter his lair in the easternmost section of this cave. Old Bae is an elderly, haggard Hill Giant who has retreated to these caves in his waning years in order to satisfy his ceaseless cravings for hot buttered crab meat. 12' tall and menacing despite his advanced years, Old Bae sees all who enter his cave as potential crabbers, but will not hesitate to bring down his fury upon the foolhardy who might challenge his might. Old Bae's lair contains three giant bear skins, two large cooking pots suspended over firing pits, a massive stack of fire wood, four casks of sweet butter, two barrels of foul smelling mead, and various giant-sized utensils. Boulders are arranged around his lair for sitting and entertaining. Hidden behind the southernmost boulder is a pair of large wooden chests holding 4,200 silver coins and 3,200 gold coins. Old Bae carries *Shellcracker*, a large *War Hammer, +1* which he uses to open stubborn shells. While *Shellcracker* is relatively small for his stature, Old Bae can still wield it to great effect, knowing full well its power. If parleyed with, Old Bae seeks to buy fresh crabmeat. He will pay 2 gold each for Scavenging Crabs and 8 gold each for Large Crabs, but the rest he claims to be too tough. If an enterprising party manages to earn 50 or more gold by delivering such delights to the Giant, he will offer some information about this level of the dungeon, including basic information about both Seskiima and Quimlin. **Old Bae (Hill Giant)**: wp 28, +1 to hit and damage from *Shellcracker*.

**3. Sentinel Isle**. This area is a large stone island which divides the Winding River into two separate channels. Just past this island the sound of rushing water can be heard echoing in the tunnels, and the current begins to increase in strength. Any shell canoe continuing past this area to within 50' of the waterfall to the east will likely be swept along in the current and drawn directly into **4**. This area has a pair of arched stone spans, one to the east and one to the west, which lead up over the river and into tunnels cut into the stone overhead. The west span is intact, while the east span is shattered and in ruin. Quimlin ordered the bridge dismantled as a defensive precaution when he first wrested control of the eastern portion of the dungeon. At the center of the island lie huge stone blocks, the ruins of some sort of defensive structure, long since toppled. Along the north bank of the island are three shell canoes. There is a chance (see Quimlin's Manse section) that the Gargoyle Metheled or Quimlin's Eyes are nearby. The island is currently being used by a group of crabbing Troglodytes. They have set up a camp along the eastern shore of the island. A burlap sack holds nine dead Scavenging Crabs. **Troglodytes:** wp 7, 5, 3, 7, 2, 2.



**4. Waterfall**. The Winding River drops 20' here down to a large 15' deep pool. Adventurers riding in a shell canoe will likely be thrown from their craft, and those in armor may drown. All items in hand have a chance to fall in the pool. Empty shell canoes have a 5 in 6 chance of slowly drifting to the edge of **38**, others will end up drifting farther downstream to the south. To the northeast of the pool is a cave opening. (Also see **19, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 38 and 42**.)

**The Shrine of the Claw (areas 5-11)** is that portion of the ancient brick and block dungeon which is now inhabited by the Tribe of the Claw. It is the location from which they protect their sanctum sanctorum, the Shrine of Garaskis. The flooring here is normally slippery and dank, constructed of well-worn slate, cracked, broken and upturned in areas. It is treacherous footing, like most of the areas in this dungeon. Anyone taking flight will run the risk of losing balance (GM adjudication). The cavemen have placed vessels housing collected and crushed Dim Shrooms to provide lighting at regular intervals.

**5. Blockade**. This room serves as the Tribe of the Claw's guard post. The entire area immediately around the door to the east is choked with collected stones, allowing a narrow passage through the blockade. If the guards posted here were alerted to the possibility of intruders, they will not be surprised, and will be prepared to push stones into the passage and leap down onto the adventurers, gaining the advantage of surprise. Otherwise, no such defense will be employed and surprise will be rolled as normal. The guards posted here are five cavemen, wielding long sharp shell daggers and crab shields. **Cavemen:** wp 8, 8, 6, 5, 3.

**6. Glow Scale Gutting Room**. The cavemen clean and prepare caught Glow Scales here, creating quite a reek. Refuse is tossed over the ledge to **12**. There is a pair of cavemen here, with long shell daggers and shields nearby. **Cavemen:** wp 5, 5.

**7. Shrine of Garaskis**. A sickly green glow floods this room and emanates out into the adjacent halls. Indecipherable chanting can normally be heard when approaching this area. The floor and walls of this chamber depict massive, menacing crabs conquering the civilized world. The Tribe of the Claw has found that mixing crushed Dim Shrooms and Glow Scale bile produces a thick, luminescent paint-like concoction which will glow sickly green for up to a full week. When not performing rituals to honor the Crab Demon Garaskis, the cavemen here are normally mixing this paint or else painting the walls in a ceremonial nature while uttering prayers to Garaskis in a low chant. The raised north end of the Shrine has an ancient, unrecognizable defaced altar of some forgotten deity. Set upon this low stone block is an enormous crab shell, painted in glowing intricate designs. On the floor before this massive shell is a pair of great crab claws, likewise painted and glowing green. These unholy devices are used by the Tribe of the Claw for their most revered ritual which begins the transformation of their chosen members into giant crabs, which requires a sacrifice to initiate. The Tribe of the Claw views all intruders as potential sacrificial victims. Of the 12 cavemen within this room, 7 are occupied with mixing and painting, 4 are steadfastly guarding the altar, and one, the Grand High Shaman, is crouched before the altar, deep in prayer. If the massive shell is lifted, it reveals a large pile of treasure piled upon the stone block: 1,200 sc, 900 gc, 8 gems (gc 2x10, 2x50, 4x100), an ornate gold necklace and pendant (gc 1,000), a quiver of two dozen *Magic Arrows*, and a *Scroll which Protects from Undead*. The guards are armed with long dagger and shield, while the chanters have weapons nearby. The Grand High Shaman requires a full round to stop praying and defend the Shrine with his claw arm. The referee should play up the bizarre lighting and shadows within the Shrine, as well as the menacing, glowing giant shell and low chanting. The Shaman himself has no spells other than his demonic rituals (which have no effect in melee), but this caveman leader is a violent combatant. None of the cavemen defending the Shrine need ever check morale, and will fight to the death to protect their holy of holies. **Cavemen:** wp 11, 10, 8, 6, 8, 8, 9, 10, 6, 5, 7. **Grand High Shaman of the Claw**: DC 6, Speed 9, WD 4, wp 14, crude ceremonial shell armor, sharpened crafted crab claw fitted onto his right arm.

**8. Scavenged Shells**. This room is littered with splintered shells and crab carapaces of all sizes. Stone tools are lying about, used to fashion the various arms used by the Tribe. A pair of cavemen is here working on breaking and sharpening the shells. A hole in the floor leads to a 15' deep shaft down to the **Crab-Men Tunnels**. Crude handholds have been carved into the wall of the shaft. **Cavemen:** wp 6, 8.

**9. Skinning Room**. This room is the area where slain troglodytes are brought so that their hides may be stripped and made into crude leather, and it is also where captured men of light are held prior to sacrifice in **7**. The floor of this room is coated in dried blood of a particularly dark, almost black, color. The air reeks of blood and decay. Currently, there are six flayed troglodyte corpses dangling from pegs set into the east wall. These will be taken to **6** and pitched down into the Crab-Men Tunnels eventually. Various skinning tools craf-ted from crabshell are on the floor, including a pair of very sharp dagger-like weapons which have been so hardened in troglodyte blood that they are both effectively standard daggers. These weigh ½ lb. each and will fetch 20 gold from an outfitter.

**10: Lookout Post**: A pair of not so vigilant Cavemen is posted here at all times (see **1**). It is their duty to watch for intruders through the windows which look out over **1**, and to release Crazy Clonk, the Malformed Chosen One, from **11** if under serious threat, or whenever Metheled threatens their region of the dungeon. **Cavemen**: HP: 6, 6.

**11: Crazy Clonk, the Malformed Chosen One:** A heavy iron gate blocks entry to this cell. An old iron lever, set into the western wall, operates this barely functional mechanism. The guards in **10** will open the cell to free its inhabitant only if seriously threatened, for getting Crazy Clonk back into his cell is a difficult undertaking. Crazy Clonk is a horribly misshapen Crab-Man, formerly one of the Tribe's most promising Chosen members. Over a year

ago, Clonk broke taboo and picked up a glowing sword from some slain men of light. The sword caused Clonk to become a raving lunatic. Perhaps as punishment, Clonk has had his form ravaged in an unexpected manner during the course of his crab-metamorphosis. As soon as the gate is opened, Clonk will rush out and attack anything that moves. Clonk is severely stooped, with a spiny, lopsided shell, an oddly curved massive claw which drags on the floor, great bulbous eyes red with rage on bent stalks of uneven length, and a haphazard, crooked, sideways-lumbering gait. The only remnant of Clonk's former self is a long, sinewy arm, clutching a dimly glowing bronze sword. **Crazy Clonk (Crab-Man)** DC 4, Speed 6, WD 4, wp 17. +1 to hit from *Grog the Gladius*. *Grog the Gladius* is a finely crafted short bronze stabbing sword. Grog glows a dim violet when held by a living being. Grog is a *Lawful Sword +1, +3 vs. Dragons. Intellect 7, Egoism 12, with the power to See Invisible*. Grog will communicate the presence of such things via *Empathy*. Clonk was able to survive the initial blast of damage from grasping Grog, but has since been overpowered by the egotistical sword.

**The Crab-Men Tunnels (areas 12-19)** are the uppermost caverns, inhabited by the transformed Crab-Men and their Tribe of the Claw attendants. The flooring here is well-worn and flat for the most part, but constantly wet. It is treacherous footing, like most of this dungeon. Anyone taking flight will run the risk of losing balance, as determined by the referee. At regular intervals, the cavemen have placed vessels housing crushed Dim Shrooms to provide lighting. It is within this region that the Crab-Men prepare to hear the call of Seskiima, when they lose their link to mankind and move lower into Seskiima's Den to serve the Great Crab directly. The role of Caveman attendant is thus rather dangerous, as when this call is heard, the Crab-Men sometimes turn on their own kind.

**12-13: Crab Young.** Both of these areas house the youngest Children of Garaskis, packs of Scavenging Crabs. Both areas hold two packs of these ravenous crustaceans. In **12** there are 15 **Scavenging Crabs**, wp 1 each, and in **13** there are 17 **Scavenging Crabs**, wp 1 each.

**14. Steps Down.** Three Crab-Men and their attendant cavemen are hunkered down in this room. The cavemen retrieved a Troglodyte corpse from **13** and brought it here for their masters to devour. To the west is a narrow set of rough-hewn steps which lead down to Seskiima's Den. **Crab-Men:** wp 6, 9, 9; **Cavemen:** wp 5, 4, 6.

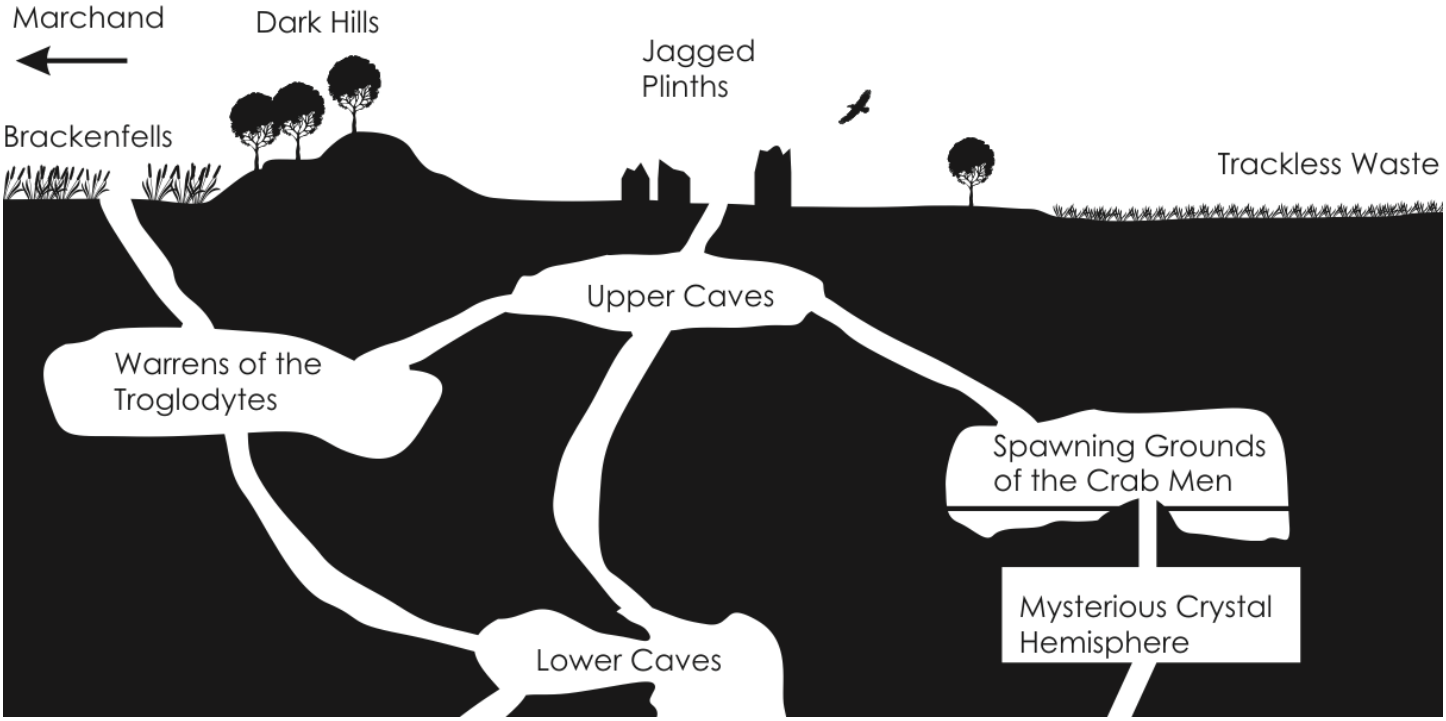
**15. Central Cave.** The Crab-Men congregate in this cave to listen for Seskiima's call. The Crab-Men here are some of the older members of the Transformed, who might at any time hear the call and move into Seskiima's Den to directly serve the Great Crab. The Crab-Men here will move to defend **15B**. **Crab-Men:** wp 12, 9, 11, 7, 8; **Cavemen:** wp 8, 7, 9, 3, 8.

**15B. Drop to Seskiima's Pit.** At the southwest end of the Central Cave is a massive plunge downward which opens atop Seskiima's Pit (**24**) 20' below.

**16. The Call.** One of the Transformed recently heard the call of Seskiima, and a Crab-Man and two cavemen are attempting to help him down the steps without being attacked in order that he might make his way to the Molting Cave (**28**). **Crab-Men:** wp 11, 8; **Cavemen:** wp 10, 8.

**17. Calm Pool.** One of the channels of The Winding River ends calmly here in this shallow 8' deep pool. Currently, there are a half dozen Crab-Men gathering fish in these waters as their cavemen attendants look on from the beach to the south. To the northeast is another beach, littered with rubble and a few hewn blocks, sunk halfway into the sand. High in the darkness of the ceiling above this northeast beach is a well hidden rift, 12' up and only 3' high x 10' wide. If noticed, adventurers might be able to devise a method for attaining and entering this unknown

*This schematic shows the uppermost five levels of the full* ***Darkness Beneath*** *megadungeon. A full map was printed in issue #2. – Ignatius*




entrance to The Forgotten Rooms (**50-53)**. **Crab-Men:** HP 8, 9, 8, 12, 8, 10; **Cavemen:** HP 7, 7, 5, 6, 8, 5.

**18. The Wet Stone.** At the center of this cave is a large round stone, 4' high and 9' across, onto which water steadily drips from above. The stone is constantly wet and the water has smoothed it out over the years. All of the Crab-Men come to this cave nearly every day to spend time scraping their claws or rubbing their shells upon the wet stone's smooth sides. Currently there are four Crab-Men here doing just that, being watched over by their cavemen attendants. In the southeast niche of this damp cave is another large stone, not worn by the ravages of time. Behind this stone is a recessed area concealing a long dead adventurer (an elf), now a skeleton, wearing a helmet inset with a pair of small rubies, a moldy, musty old leather hauberk, a crumbling backpack, and a rusty, broken sword. Inside the pack is found a bone scroll tube and two filth-coated bottles of liquid. The helmet is a *Helm of Chaos*, the bottles hold a *Potion of Invulnerability* and a *Potion of Healing*. The tube holds a *Scroll with the spells Sleep, Knock and ESP*. **Crab-Men:** HP 10, 11, 6, 7; **Cavemen:** HP 6, 4, 6, 12.

**19. Dumping Cave.** To this location the Crab-Men bring the taboo items of the men of light and the Troglodytes. Such items are tossed out of the cave mouth, and down to the river, 15' below. If this area is approached from The Winding River, masses of broken, rusty discarded gear will be found, including bone Troglodyte Macanas, and all manner of now useless equipment. If a character can somehow search the 10' depths of the river here, there is a small chance that one particularly valuable piece of equipment might be found buried amidst the junk. A long-ago discarded *Spear +1* is just waiting for a new owner. There is a chance that a Giant Crab will be in the river here (see random location table just below).

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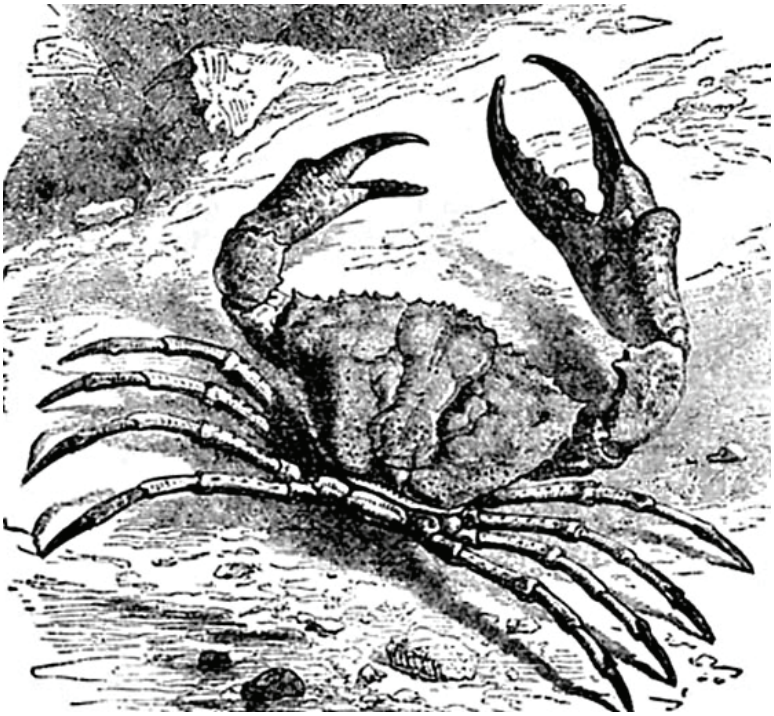
**Seskiima's Den (areas 20-31)** is the region beneath the Crab-Men Tunnels which Seskiima calls her own. This region is abundant with crabs of all sorts, as it is home to the Mature Crab-Men, Soldier Crabs, the three Giant Crab Seskiima-Mates, and various Children of Garaskis. The flooring here is the most treacherous, lacking any amount of hand work or wear, and constantly awash in water and debris. Movement for all is at ½ normal. As noted on the map, there are three keys with the ST designation. These are submerged tunnels, short shafts in the very rock which are filled with water. Each is no more than 10' deep, but it is impossible to see what is in them, or to tell where they lead to unless they are entered. Packs of Scavenging Crabs frequently rest in these dark shafts, and anytime a PC enters said area, there is a 3 in 6 chance of encountering a pack of these aggressive, hungry crustaceans. The four largest inhabitants of this region move about quite frequently, and the referee should determine what activity each is performing when the PC's enter this region.

**Mates** (roll d8 for each of the three):
1: Resting in Lair **22**, **23** or **25**.
2: Fishing for Glow Scales in **21**
3: Having Shell cleaned on **30**
4: Eating a snack at **29**
5: Swimming near **19**
6: Swimming near **28**
7: Sharing a meal in **24***
8: Mating in **26** or **27***

**Seskiima** (d8):
1-6: In Lair, resting, eating or having shell cleaned.
7: Mating in **26** or **27***
8: Speaking to Garaskis on **30**.
*Seskiima and a Mate are sharing this activity. If one of these is rolled adjust other rolls accordingly.



**20. Fishing Beach.** The cave floor becomes somewhat sandy here, as it terminates in a beach on the north side of **21**. From this area, the cavemen brave the voracious crabs to collect Glow Scales. There are seven shell canoes here, and scattered about on the beach and in the canoes are two dozen shell javelins, some attached to lengths of plaited trog hide, 10-15' in length. A tunnel to the west leads off into depths uncharted, and might be a dead end, or a passage to further adventure, as determined by the referee. To the east of this cave is a shallow pool and half-flooded tunnel mouth, an opening into a submerged tunnel (ST). There is a chance that one of the Seskiima-Mate Giant Crabs is currently fishing for Glow Scales in **21** (see the random location tables), and there are always at least two Large Crabs doing so. Anyone in this area has a 2 in 6 chance per round of attracting a crab from **21**.

**21. Glow Scale Pool.** This large, deep pool of water is alight with bluish-green hues from the large clusters of Dim Shrooms and the numerous, slow swimming Glow Scales who eat the fungi growing here. These Glow Scales are the primary food source for both the cavemen and crabs in this dungeon. They range from 1' to 2' long, and their appetite for Dim Shrooms causes them to give off a faint green glow. At all times there are two or more Large Crabs fishing here, and there is a chance for one or more Giant Crabs as well. **Large Crabs:** wp 7, 5.

**22-23: Seskiima-Mate Lairs.** These two caves both serve as lair for one of the three Giant Crab Seskiima-Mates in this region. They aren't often found here, but there is a chance as determined on the random location tables. Both caves are littered with bones and crawling with tiny hermit crabs. **Giant Crabs:** wp 15, 13.

**24. Seskiima's Pit.** This vast cave has two tunnel entrances and a submerged entry (ST) to the east. At the center of the cave is a huge 5' high by 15' wide pile of splintered bones, directly below a gaping opening in the ceiling 15' above. There is a good chance (see random location table) that Seskiima is here, resting, eating or having her shell cleaned by the masses of tiny, crawling hermit like crabs which cover the walls and floor of this lair. At all times, a trio of Soldier Crabs guards this cave. There is also a chance that a Giant Crab will be found here (see random location table). If Seskiima is in her lair, she will be along one of the walls, laying low and entirely covered in hermit crabs and her entourage of Scavenging Crabs. When Seskiima rises to greet her intruders, she is a terrifying sight to behold. *Fully 12' across, 8' wide and 8' tall, with massive claws that reach 6', great glowing blue eyes and an almost grinning fang-filled maw*. Seskiima has lived long and ruled well in no small part due to her intellect, craftiness and guile. If severely outnumbered, Seskiima will attempt to escape through one of the exits here, preferably the submerged tunnel. If she can make it to the river, she will be impossible to catch, and will take that opportunity to double back and pick off intruders who aren't as adept at dealing with the waters. Seskiima has two powers granted from the Crab Demon Garaskis, the first is a 30' wide, 60' long cone shaped **Wave of Terror** which she can use three times per day. Any missing their Save vs. Spells will enter a state of shock and fear, fleeing in a random direction for 2d6 rounds. The second is a targeted empathetic **Cry of Despair**, which can be used once per turn. The victim hears a woman's soul-searching cry of misery, and must Save vs. Spells or be overcome with despair, unable to act or move for 1d6 rounds. Seskiima commands a large pack of 24 **Scavenging Crabs**: wp 1 each, which cling to her when she moves. Lastly, Seskiima can attack with her massive claws for 1d6+2 damage. On a natural RTH of 18+, the victim is seized in Seskiima's mighty claw and will sustain 1d6+2 damage per round thereafter. Seskiima will often snatch a target and dive into deep water in order to drown and devour the hapless victim. Hidden within the massive pile of bones Seskiima has stowed away a massive sea chest holding 2,400 silver, 3,100 gold, a suit of *Plate Mail +1*, and a collapsible, telescoping *Staff of Healing*. **Seskiima:** DC 2, Speed 6, WD 4+1, wp 22. (Wave of Terror, Cry of Despair, Control Crabs, Seize Target). **Soldier Crabs:** wp 11, 9, 8.

**25. Seskiima-Mate Lair.** This cave serves as lair for one of the three Giant Crab Seskiima-Mates in this region. It isn't often found here, but there is a chance as per the

random location tables. The cave is littered with bones and crawling with tiny hermit crabs. In the east wall of this lair is a niche which is far too narrow for Giant Crabs to reach which can serve as a safe spot for up to three adventurers to squeeze into. At its end is a long-dead human warrior, crouched down behind a *Shield +1*. **Giant Crab:** wp 12.

**26-27: Spawning Caves.** Each of these two wet caves has a shallow pool of water at its center, normally filled with small clusters of eggs laid by Seskiima. Each Spawning Cave is guarded at all times by a trio of Soldier Crabs. There is a chance that the adventurers might stumble upon Seskiima mating here. In **26**, **Soldier Crabs:** wp 13, 6, 8. In **27**, **Soldier Crabs:** wp 10, 11, 12.

**28. Molting Cave:** This area consists of a long stretch of beach along The Winding River and a large, low cave mouth to the north. This area is where all of the crabs of this region come to molt. Scattered about are crab shells of various sizes. There is a chance a Giant Crab will be nearby (see random location table). 4 Large Crabs are here taking a rest from fishing. **Large Crabs:** wp 3,4,4,3.

**29. Bone Beach.** This gruesome stretch along The Winding River is a bleach-white beach of splintered bones, littered with the skeletal remains of victims dragged here by the Crab-Men for their cousins below to feast on. There are currently nine Large Crabs here feasting, and there is a chance that one of the Seskiima-Mate Giant Crabs will likewise be found. There are two shell canoes along the beach, one of which has a leather sack at its bottom. The sack contains a *Potion of Healing*, a *Potion of Resisting Fire*, and two scroll cases: *Scroll with the spells Cure Mild Wounds, Detect Traps and Hold!*, and a *Scroll with the spells Detect Magic, Charm and Levitate*. **Large Crabs**: wp 7, 2, 3, 7, 5, 4, 5, 4, 2.

**30. Lonely Isle.** This sandy, rocky chunk of land bisects The Winding River into two channels. The current is much stronger to the south. Shell canoes passing this island while on the southern channel will be swept along at an ever-quickening pace until they are plunged toward the waterfall to the west at **31**. Characters will have an opportunity to throw themselves to 'safety' upon this island before they are taken away by the river. In addition to the masses of tiny hermit crabs ever-present here, there are two packs of Scavenging Crabs and three Large Crabs (and possibly Seskiima or a Giant Crab, as per the tables). If Seskiima is here, she will be at the island's center beneath the massed crabs, deep in meditation communing with Garaskis. At the center of this rocky island is a low flat stone, worn with age. Upon it are carved many strange symbols. This is the Communing Stone used by Seskiima and is a crude altar to the Crab Demon Garaskis. While here, Seskiima may regenerate wounds at a rate of 6 per turn. Five Speci-Men corpses are here, rotting and decaying, as even the crabs refuse to eat their tainted flesh. 16 **Scavenging Crabs:** wp 1 each. **Large Crabs:** wp 3, 3, 6.

**31. Waterfall.** This treacherous waterfall is located just off the map. In the full dungeon it leads down to level 4, The Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere; if using this as a stand-alone it may lead to wherever the referee desires.

**Quimlin's Manse (areas 32-49)** constitutes the eastern portion of the ancient brick and block dungeon on this level. Quimlin took up residence here years ago, as he found it the perfect base camp for his experiments and ultimate goal of discovering the secret of the Crystal Hemisphere below. If this adventure is being used as a stand alone module, the referee may just assume that Quimlin is here to conduct his experiments and assemble a force capable of assaulting some deeper darkness. The flooring here is normally slippery and dank, constructed of well-worn slate, cracked, broken and upturned in areas. It is treacherous footing, like most of the areas in this dungeon. Anyone taking flight will run the risk of losing balance, as determined by the referee. At regular intervals, Quimlin and his Speci-Men have placed vessels housing crushed Dim Shrooms to provide lighting. *A note about Quimlin's forces (Speci-Men and Metheled): they have instructions to subdue and abduct any Humans they encounter. They will attempt to slay other targets first, and then knock out or overpower Humans and return them to **47** in order that Quimlin might add to his Speci-Men army.* The four major inhabitants of this region move about quite frequently, and the referee should determine what activity each is performing when the PC's enter this region.

**Metheled** (d8):
1-2: In Lair **41**
3-4: On guard, perched in **40**
5: Speaking to the Face in the Rift in **34**
6: Perched high above the river between **3-4**
7: Taunting Cavemen from a perch at **3**
8: Getting the goods in **47**

**Quimlin's Eyes** (d8):
1: In Lair **44**
2-3: Watching in **43**
4-5: Watching in **32** 6: Watching in **35**
7: Roaming area between **3-4**
8: Roaming area between **28-30**

**The Thing From Beyond!** (d8):
1-4: In Lair **48**
5-6: In Laboratory **47**
7: In Speci-Men Chamber **46**
8: Relaxing in **38**

**Quimlin** (d8):
1: In Lair **49**
2-3: In Laboratory **47**
4: In Shrine **48**
5-6: In Speci-Men Chamber **46**
7: In Chamber of The Eyes **44**
8: Roaming his Manse.

**32. Intersection.** A group of eight Speci-Men are here waiting for Metheled to lead them on a raid of the Cave-men. Having grown impatient, they are in the midst of rough-housing: wrestling, kicking, punching, biting, bashing each other's heads into the floor, etc. The ruckus they are creating can be heard from 60' away before this chamber is even entered. These Speci-Men will be surprised on a 5 in 6. **Speci-Men:** wp 7, 9, 11, 5, 5, 10, 3, 6.

**33. Lab Rat Nest.** This room has a collapsed ceiling and is littered with stone and blocks. To the west is a totally collapsed stairwell. Clearing this passage would require 80 man-hours of labor, and there is a 1 in 6 chance of collapse every 10 hours. What lies beyond is left to the referee. Hidden amidst the rubble here is a network of small crawl holes and tunnels; the nest of mutated, escaped Lab Rats from Quimlin's earliest experiments. When gathered in such a large pack, these Lab Rats form a hive mind, and ruminate together on such lofty ques-tions as how to trap Quimlin and demand more Liquid Joy. They will scurry into their holes when the door to the south is opened, thinking that the Speci-Men are on their way to catch a few of their number. The Lab Rats might take this opportunity to communicate with the party, or they might view them as a tasty meal. 21 **Lab Rats:** wp 1, 1, 5, 1, 1, 2, 4, 3, 2, 1, 3, 1, 3, 2, 5, 5, 4, 1, 5, 4, 3.

**34. The Face in the Rift.** This chamber has a huge crack in its floor, roughly 35'x12' in size. Currently, there is a large pack of Lab Rats here attempting to converse with the mysterious Face in the Rift. The Face is currently biding his time in silence, as he finds speaking to the Lab Rats a total bore. This particular pack of rats is suffering severely from Liquid Joy withdrawal at this time, and although they might converse with adventurers stumbling into this room, they will likely assume they have some of the concoction on their persons and act accordingly. Once the Face in the Rift watches what transpires between the rats and the adventurers, it will materialize and ask them some questions. The Face is friendly with Metheled, but despises Quimlin, and cannot understand The Thing From Beyond! There is a chance that Metheled is here when the room is entered; if so the Gargoyle will be conversing with the Face in the Rift while the Lab Rats wait their turn, as they are fearful and respectful of the terrible Gargoyle. The Face in the Rift appears as a ghostly visage of a huge semi-human face. It speaks hundreds of languages and can read just as many. The mysterious immaterial spirit seeks knowledge of his own environs, and what little it knows it has learned from Metheled and Quimlin. It suspects, rightfully, that nearly everything Quimlin has told it is a lie. The Face has been consoling Metheled in his plight, and might tell the adventurers that they should intervene and aid the Gargoyle in his bout with addiction in order to exact some revenge upon Quimlin. None of this information will be revealed until the adventurers answer a long series of questions. If the adventurers slay Metheled, the Face will still speak to them, but will warn them to beware Quimlin, and tell them that they will be rewarded if they bring him Quimlin's lifeless body. The Face has little to offer as far as exactly how the group might intervene with Metheled. If the adventurers do in fact return here with the slain Quimlin, the Face in the Rift will tell them about the secret treasure (**53**) in the Forgotten Rooms. 14 **Lab Rats**: wp 2, 3, 1, 1, 1, 3, 3, 3, 2, 1, 3, 1, 3, 2.

**35. The Statuary.** A pair of small balconies and a short flight of steps overlook this large room. The domed ceiling is 30' up. The room below has a score of granite statues depicting humanoids in different poses, some toppled and some erect as they have been for centuries. The east tunnel leads off into the unexplored reaches of the caverns beyond, or at GM discretion to a dead end. The caves serve as lair for a family of 7 **Notalisks**: wp 9, 7, 7, 12, 9, 13, 9.

**36. Shaft Down.** A shaft lined with crude hand-holds drops straight down 25' to a tunnel below. Anyone using this shaft will alert the inhabitants of **37**, who have posted a sentry to watch for any of Quimlin's forces.

**37. Lost Patrol.** Holed up in this cave is a group of adventuring Kobolds. Having realized they are in over their heads in this part of the dungeon, the Kobolds have taken shelter until they can decide how to extricate themselves from this mess. There are 13 of the little codgers here, each armed with Javelin, Dagger and wicker Shield. Their leader, one Scrondo, is willing to bargain with adventurers provided he thinks they might make good his escape. The Kobolds have a few sacks with foul-smelling food and skins of the bitterest wine. Each Kobold has a purse with 1d6 gold, and Scrondo has 18. **Kobolds:** wp 1, 1, 3, 2, 1, 2, 2, 1, 3, 1, 3, 2, Scrondo: 4.

**38. Steps Up.** This cave overlooks the pool in **4**. At its east end is a narrow set of steps hewn from the very rock, leading up. At all times a group of four Speci-Men is posted here to watch for intruders. These Speci-Men prefer to spend their time splashing about and dunking one another in the waters of the pool in **4**, though. They have a 5 in 6 chance to be surprised. There is a chance that The Thing From Beyond! will be found here (see random location tables). **Speci-Men:** wp 13, 9, 5, 8.

**39. Two Shafts Down.** This three-way intersection has a narrow set of hewn steps leading down to **38** to the west, and a pair of shafts, lined with crude hand-holds, which drop straight down. The shaft to the south leads straight down, and a stiff breeze can be felt blowing up occasionally through the vertical hole, which terminates 60' lower in the ceiling of an area in Level 4, The Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere. If this adventure is being used as a standalone module, its destination is left to the referee. The shaft to the east appears to be identical, but there is a chance that the faint odor of carrion might be sensed

when the shaft is entered. The shaft descends 50' to a floor lined with two dozen long iron spikes. Anyone descending 20' has a 2 in 6 chance of triggering a trap (it can also be triggered when climbing back up). Once triggered, all of the hand holds sink into the wall and a scything blade cuts across the shaft at a depth of 10'. At the bottom of the shaft is a pair of rotting human corpses, dead adventurers, amidst some skeletal remains. Each corpse has a pack with basic delving supplies (torches, tinderbox, hatchet, iron spikes, rations), 42 and 58 gold, pierced and ruined Chain Mail, shields, a mace and a *War Hammer +1*.

**40. The Flooded Shrine.** The floor of this one-time temple is collapsed and flooded with murky brown water. The water lies 5' below the broken entryway floors to the east and west. From the water rises a large central ruined altar, 15' high. It is surrounded by 4 large stone pillars, also rising above the water to 18'. Metheled is often in this chamber, perched upon the altar watching for intruders. Beneath the water in the southeast corner, 8' deep is a submerged tunnel (ST). It leads to Metheled's Lair, **41**.

**41. Metheled's Lair.** Through the submerged tunnel is a cold, damp cave. This is Metheled's Lair. Metheled serves Quimlin rather grudgingly, but does so in order to satisfy his hungry addiction to Liquid Joy. The Gargoyle wishes to leave this place eventually, and has made plans to do so, but cannot seem to overcome his magical addiction. If the adventurers are somehow able to parley with the Gargoyle and convince him that he doesn't need the alchemical concoction, Metheled might agree to help the adventurers hunt down and slay Quimlin. How this actually plays out is left entirely to the referee. **Metheled (Gargoyle)** DC 5, Speed 9/15, WD 4, wp 17; only affected by magical weapons/attacks. *Ring of Regeneration* on left hand. Metheled will reward the adventurers with his treasure if they do in fact aid him and help to slay Quimlin. Beneath a boulder buried in the floor of this cave is the Gargoyle's secret treasure trove: *Potion of ESP, Potion of Healing, Potion of Invisibility, Scroll with Evil Protection and Hold Portal, Wand of Magic Detection*, and 7 Gems (gc 2x50, 4x100, 1x500).

**42. Shattered Span.** The cold waters of the river wend their way through the tunnel; 20' below. At one time, a large stone bridge spanned the Winding River here. Quimlin ordered the bridge dismantled as a defensive precaution when he first wrested control of the eastern portion of the dungeon. Currently, there is a group of 8 Speci-Men here, horsing around instead of guarding the hall north of **43** and **44** as Quimlin ordered. With their superior, genetically enhanced agility, these Speci-Men find great sport in taking running leaps and jumping across the shattered span. These 'guards' have a 5 in 6 chance of being surprised. When encountered here, roll to see how many are on either side of the bridge. **Speci-Men**: wp 3, 7, 8, 6, 12, 7, 10, 7.

**43. Shaft Down.** At the east end of this chamber is a shaft leading down 50', the last 10' of which is filled with foul, rank water. Set into the side of this shaft are crude hand-holds. There are three iron spikes driven into the floor at the edge of the shaft, around which is knotted a 50' long rope, coiled in a pile next to the opening. Inspection of the rope might reveal the fact that it is coated in dried blood in the middle. Anyone climbing down the shaft has a 2 in 6 chance of triggering a trap once they descend 20' (it can also be triggered when climbing back up). Once triggered, all of the hand holds fire out with great impact, revealing that they are in fact long stout lengths of iron, before resetting in 1 round. While this trap will not sever ropes, it will cause 2d6 damage, and victims have a good chance of falling down into the water. At the bottom of the water, along with a handful of smashed skeletons, is a recently deceased, bloated and rotting Dwarf corpse. The corpse has a suit of Chain Mail, a round wooden shield, an axe, and a pouch with a *Draught of Heroism* and 72 gold.

**44. Chamber of The Eyes.** At one time this was a chamber of worship of some sort. Alcoves in the north-west and southwest corners of the room hold all that remains, two shattered and dismantled altars to some unknown power. The walls of the room are totally defaced now, making the murals which once adorned the chamber unrecognizable. In the center of the room is a large roundish contraption of wood, decorated with long feath-ers and baubles. It is fully 6' around and roughly circular. This *Dream Catcher* floats magically in place. Quimlin erected it in order to summon forth Quimlin's Eyes. If it is destroyed, that roaming magical spirit will be dispelled, and sent back to its extraplanar home. **Quimlin's Eyes:** DC special WD special. Quimlin's Eyes is a roaming intelligent otherworldly servant of Quimlin, attracted by the promise of rewards plundered from below. Immaterial and impervious to attacks, the telltale sign of this being's presence is its habit of watching from the dark periphery. Its only visible manifestation is a collection of yellow and red glowing eyes, 5-10 pairs at a time, which gaze at intruders from the shadows. If approached or if light is brought to bear, they fall back or shut as Quimlin's Eyes moves away. It prefers darkness and will never allow itself to be lit up. Whenever it spots intruders, it will send a mental image of them to Quimlin, who will then devise a plan to abduct Humans in the party and slay the rest.

**45. Trap.** Quimlin has set up a trap in this room. A hidden tripwire will release a large weighted net suspended in the dark recesses of the ceiling. Anyone in the room must save vs. poison or be trapped for 2d4 rounds. Anyone not so trapped can aid in removing their mates from the net, which cuts the time to get out by half. However, suspended above the net, and falling when the trap is sprung, are a handful of vials holding Quimlin's *Flash Boom Stuff*. The bottles will burst, causing a loud boom and a cloud of smoke. These clouds will obscure vision in the

room for 1 turn, reducing sight to 5'. The noise created will alert nearby monsters (referee determines).

**46. Speci-Men Flop House.** Speci-Men who have recently received their daily dose of Liquid Joy retire to this chamber to enjoy and sleep off the drug. The sound of snoring fills the area. Currently there are eleven Speci-Men here sprawled about the floor. They require 3 rounds to gain their senses if roused. Otherwise, they will sleep through a crashing tree. In the southwest corner there is a secret hatch on the floor which hides a ladder down to **47**. **Speci-Men:** wp 11, 8, 8, 8, 6, 8, 9, 9, 6, 7, 10.

**47. Quimlin's Laboratory.** This cave serves as Quimlin's arcano-tech lab. Entrance to the room from above is achieved via a pair of secret hatches in the ceiling. The cave contains a pair of long wooden work benches, each littered with Quimlin's tools and devices. Vials, beakers, bottles, tubes, dishes, tongs, gloves, magnifying glasses, bowls, knives, mortar and pestle, large and small liquid filled vessels, distillation devices, corks, and a rubber mallet may be found here, most of which are strangely alien in construction. Most notably, on one of the benches rests *Hog Hug's BB Gun*. This odd device is a small, partially smashed air gun with the words 'Hog Hug' carved into its old wooden stock, which Quimlin has been trying to retrofit into a weapon for his personal use. Currently, the device has not been perfected, and it has loose wires and cables of copper tied to it and strung through its crooked barrel. It's only moving part is a small pumping lever, which builds up the air in the BB gun until it hums, crackles, and a dim light emits from the barrel. In exactly one round, the device will fire a small whirling ball of electricity in whatever direction the barrel is pointed, to a range of 60', hitting unerringly and causing 3d6 damage. There is a 1 in 10 chance that, with each activation, the device will malfunction and instead shock its user for 2d6 damage. *Hog Hug's BB Gun* has a battery which will allow 60 discharges, and is essentially a wand, usable only by Mages and Elves. At the center of this cave are three large wooden and metal contraptions of alien origin. Each contraption consists of a leather chair, straps, wires, cables, liquid filled vats, dials, knobs, bells, and meters. These contraptions are used by Quimlin to turn captured humans into Speci-Men, and are *The Mind Erase Machine* (used to turn the victim into a brain-washed imbecile), *The Thought Amplifier Machine* (used to ingrain Quimlin's basic orders into the freshly brain-washed minds) and the *Muscle Expander Machine* (used to mutate the soon to be Speci-Men into genetically altered super ape-like servants). When used in conjunction with Quimlin's Concoctions, hapless victims are slowly turned into the mindless raging Liquid Joy addicted Speci-Men, loyal to the devious Quimlin to the end. None of these machines is of any use to the adventurers, and it is suggested that the referee award the players with an experience bonus if all of the above (except *Hog Hug's BB Gun*) are destroyed. A large cubical iron safe is set on the floor near the east wall. It requires a key to open (carried by Quimlin) and weighs over 500 lbs. Within are several glass bottles filled with Quimlin's Concoctions. Eight are filled with a reddish liquid (*Dread Pull*), seven with a yellowish mixture (*That Extra Oomph*), and nine with a thick pink concoction (*Liquid Joy*). These are set on the shelves amidst various empty, corked glass bottles. *Dread Pull* is an instant energy potion. It provides +1 to hit and +1 on saving throws for 6 turns, and then -2 to hit and -2 on saving throws for another 6 turns. *That Extra Oomph* provides a Strength boost for 6 turns, conferring +1 to damage in melee when a hit is scored, with a period of weakness afterwards of 6 turns, reducing all melee damage by -2. *Liquid Joy* (6 doses per bottle) is a potion that provides an instant wave of euphoric bliss. Imbibers are essentially incapacitated for 6 turns, and unable to function properly for another 6 turns thereafter. After these two hours of pure mind numbing exhilaration, the drinker must save vs. poison at -1 or become hopelessly addicted. Addicts will do basically anything in order to again experience Liquid Joy's effects.

**48 Forgotten Shrine of The Thing From Beyond!:** This massive chamber was, at one time, a shrine dedicated to some now long-forgotten deity. It currently serves as the lair of **The Thing From Beyond!** DC 8, Speed 9, WD 5. The Thing From Beyond! is an 8' long amorphous translucent blue, semi-gelatinous blob. This oddly formed monstrosity has three 6' long appendages and five great 5' long eye stalks. Its bulbous pink eyes emit dim white light in a cone 30' long and it communicates with whale-like mewls and songs as it slithers about, moving on thousands of tiny cilia on its underside and leaving a trail of gooey blue slug-like slime. TTFB! is a reluctant, apathetic, and bored servant of immense power. TTFB! attacks as a 10 WD Monster and can deal 2d6+2 damage per round, but only in self defense. TTFB! will only attack if Quimlin is present and he directly orders the alien to do so. Even then, TTFB! will subdue and toy with foes rather than devour them. When attempting to subdue, any hit upon a target results in that victim being coiled in TTFB!'s massively strong tentacle, at which time the target is removed from melee while TTFB! tickles him or her and encourages the captive to obtain the Multi-Levered Device to set it free. Only the possessor of the Multi-Levered Device can actually understand what TTFB! says, alas. Quimlin uses this device to communicate with TTFB!, but the regular communication has slowly driven Quimlin insane. TTFB! will happily devour Quimlin if the device used to control it is somehow taken. TTFB! knows that eventually it will get its wish, and in the meantime it bides its time dreaming of home, wherever that might be. TTFB! normally rests on the large stone dais at the room's center, next to which is its toy chest. This wood chest, 3'x4'x3' is painted in a colorful, whimsical pattern. Within this chest are the Thing's toys; an inflated plastic purple bouncy ball 2' across, a dozen miniature TTFB! figures, 6" tall and

made of plastic, depicting similar aliens carrying various bizarre weaponry, an enormous brightly painted heavy plastic rattle (fully 3' long) which can be used as a noisy, non-magic *Mace +1*, a very messy slime-caked blanket fully 8'x8' in size and covered in strange yellow designs, a large coil of lightweight metal, 1' tall when collapsed (TTFB!'s 'slinky'), and lastly a 2' cubical box with a hand crank on its side and a sealed lid on its top. This *Pod In A Box* will play bizarre music when the crank is turned, and then suddenly its lid will spring open and a 6' long tentacle will spill forth. The tentacle will seek to grab and constrict anything in its path; potential targets in front of the opening lid will have to make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or be grabbed by the tentacle and constricted for 1d6 damage per round. The tentacle can sustain 8 wp before it recoils into the box, and when so damaged will require a full day to regenerate. Once the tentacle has been sprung, winding the crank in the opposite direction will cause the tentacle to recoil and close the lid. The *Pod In A Box* only weighs 5 lbs, and could possibly be a useful item in the hands of a Mage. TTFB! has outgrown these toys, and will leave them behind if it is able to return home.

**49. Quimlin's Refuge**. This cave is Quimlin's Inner Sanctum and lair. Quimlin never sleeps, and is normally making plans here or conducting experiments in **47**. In the center of this room are three upright 8' tall brass vessels, each filled with a foul-smelling liquid. At the top of each cylinder is a tightly screwed-on hatch and a small 8"x4" vent. Floating in each vessel is a preserved human corpse, ready and waiting to act as a future host for Quimlin should he require one. Quimlin, unbeknownst to all of his minions, is actually a diabolical parasite, a Bloated Alien Brain Mite. Quimlin devours his victim's brain, lodges himself in their skull, and assumes control over the host's body. If Quimlin dislodges himself from his host they will die on the spot. If 'slain', Quimlin will wait for an opportune time to dislodge and scuttle back to this room in order to select a new host. Along the south wall of the cave is a solid and locked iron chest. The locking mechanism is trapped, and if the chest is opened without using the key, a jet of green gas will spew out, quickly forming a 10'x10' cloud of deadly poisonous fumes. Within the chest Quimlin has stashed 2,800 sc, 3,100 gc, a *Potion of Healing*, a *Scroll with the spells Slow, Fiery Ball and Hold!*, and 9 Gems (gc 2x50, 4x100, 3x500). **Quimlin (Bloated Alien Brain Mite)** DC 9(7), Speed 9, WD 4, wp 19. Quimlin's Host, regardless of actual WD, is able to withstand 4 WD in damage before being slain. *Currently Quimlin is housed in the brain basket of an 11 year-old human boy*. Quimlin has the following items on himself at all times: *The Multi-Levered Device**, a neck-lace with a pair of keys (one for the safe in **47**, and one for the chest in **49**), a strange metallic *Dodge-o-Matic Belt* (acts as a *Displacing Cloak*), a *Mesh Field Pack* (acts as a Holding Bag), an odd metallic device, the *Immobilizer* (essentially an arcano-tech pistol that acts as a *Wand of Paralization* with 30 charges), and a supply of three bottles each of *Flash Boom Stuff* and *Liquid Joy*. *Flash Boom Stuff*, when agitated, bursts in an ear-deafening bang, and creates a thick cloud of smoke which reduces vision to 5' in an area 20'x20', dissipating in 1 turn. **The Multi-Levered Device* is a complex tool, and will require significant research to understand and use properly. TTFB! will simply demand the device once it is wrested from Quimlin, create a shadowy magic portal, and exit this world forever, returning home to be with its own family. ***Note to the referee: If the alien nature of the arcano-tech devices in 47-49 upsets your campaign, feel free to replace them with fantasy equivalents.***

**The Forgotten Rooms (areas 50-53)** are just that, an area of the ancient brick and block dungeon separated from the rest of this level by a forgotten access point from **17** and the Shattered Span at **42**. The slate flooring in this region is in surprisingly good shape. Aside from some brief descriptions, the four rooms here are intended to be used as available creative space for the referee. As provided here, this region also makes a fine base camp for a party of adventurers. Quimlin's Eyes is the only Wandering Monster which might be encountered in this area, and the referee should make such a chance slim as the probing Eyes seldom checks here any longer. Quimlin will seek to abduct any men that his Eyes locate, and if the Eyes are encountered here, the referee should devise some scheme by which Quimlin will attempt to achieve this goal.

**50. Entry Hall.** This chamber is dark and dusty.

**51. Hall of Arms.** The walls of this chamber are adorned with various weapons and shields.

**52. Bedroom.** A long-abandoned bedchamber, dusty and full of crumbling furniture.

**53. Secret Chamber.** Beyond the secret door from **52** is a disused treasure vault. What lies herein is for the referee to determine.

**End Notes:** *Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men* provides ample creative opportunity for a referee to expand beyond what is presented here. Certain plot details can be fleshed out to provide future connected adventures. For example, the Tribe of the Claw is only represented here by their members charged with protecting the Shrine of the Claw. Their kin will return at some point. Garaskis might want to seek some sort of revenge upon those who defile his Shrine, or worse yet, slay his favorite daughter, Seskiima. Quimlin's arcano-tech devices and concoctions aren't explained in full; perhaps this aspect of the plot could lead to further adventures. The two tunnels that lead into uncharted reaches of the underworld could also be used to develop this area. The western tunnel could lead to the Tribe's Domain, while perhaps Quimlin brought his Laboratory here from the eastern tunnel. How you utilize this dungeon level is limited only by your imagination: nothing presented here is essential or vital, and referees are encouraged to alter to taste or make things up as they go.

## Monster Details and Statistics:

**Caveman (Claw Tribe):** Chaotic, DC 8, Speed 12, WD 2.

**Crab-Men of The Darkness Beneath:**
**Transformed (Crab-Men)**: This is the stage wherein the Chosen has undergone the transformation, and begins walking sideways. Immediately the Transformed begins to take on crab-like manifestations. First and foremost is the development of a large pincer-claw on one arm and the slow growth of a hardened exoskeleton shell. Through this developmental stage, which takes years, the Crab-Man must visit the Molting Cave to shed his old carapace and begin growing a newer, more crab-like version. Crab-Men can still communicate with their cavemen brethren. Crab-Men are true abominations of nature and should be described as vile, foul, unholy half caveman-half crustacean...things. DC 5, Speed 9, WD 2+1.

**Mature** (**Soldier Crab** or **Giant Crab**): After years of molting, the Transformed slowly begin to lose their link to their human origin and become almost completely crab-like, unable to communicate with or understand their own tribesmen. Now they heed the call of *Seskiima*, and leave their former brothers behind, venturing forth to serve the Great Crab. The Mature begin as Soldier Crabs, and years later, provided that *Seskiima* selects them, molt into Giant Crabs, becoming one of *Seskiima's* mates. **Soldier Crab:** DC 4, Speed 9, WD 2+1, damage 1d6+1. **Giant Crab:** DC 3, Speed 6, WD 3, seize target on 18+, damage 1d6+1.

**Elder** (**Great Crab**): There is but a single Great Crab, *Seskiima. Seskiima* possesses a unique link to the demon *Garaskis*. It is through her that the demon is able to empower the dark rituals of the Tribe of the Claw. *Seskiima's* purpose is to foster the growth of the Children of Garaskis in this dungeon. **Great Crab:** DC 2, Speed 6, WD 4+1, seize target 18+, damage 1d6+2, control crabs.

**Children of Garaskis:**
**Scavenging Crabs:** DC 8, Speed 6, wp 1, damage 1. Travel in packs of 1d6+4.

**Large Crabs:** DC 6, Speed 6, WD 1+1. 4' to 5' wide.

**Lab Rats:** DC 7, Speed 9, WD 1-1, damage 1d3. Giant rabid albino rats with pink eyes. Their bite has an insidious, cumulative effect. Save vs. Poison or begin itching. After two such missed saves, victims must discard armor and scratch in non-combat situations. After four such missed saves, victim is incapacitated, and writhing about trying to scratch even during combat for 10 minutes. When Lab-Rats are in a pack of 12, they can form a hive mind intellect equal to INT 5, capable of very rudimentary, high pitched speech. They will single out and eat Quimlin if he doesn't offer them Liquid Joy whenever they see him.

**Speci-Men:** DC 5, Speed 12, WD 2+1, so drugged out that they fight one round after slain. These horrific beings are genetically mutated men with chemically en-hanced reflexes. Muscular, twitching, crazed, drooling, and wild-eyed, they are addicted to Liquid Joy. After being abducted, human victims are subjected to Quim-lin's devious arcano-tech, erasing their minds and turning them into hulking, muscular, ape-like men, bristling with savage strength and catlike agility. These abominations posses long talon-like nails and preternaturally strong jaws with massive fang-like teeth. Semi-intelligent, but given basic commands by Quimlin via Brain Implants.

**Notalisk:** DC 6, Spd 6, WD 3. 7' long, brown skinned, yellow-bellied lizards with eight legs and piercing green eyes. Slow and menacing, the Notalisk has a habit of staring down prey while its mates circle around to ambush. They prefer the company of old stone statues.

**Troglodytes of The Darkness Beneath:** These will be described in more detail in *FO!* #4. Standard Trogs are DC 7 Speed 9, WD 1+1. They can Screech, which causes all henchmen with 60' to make an immediate Morale check or take flight away from the vile flesh eating reptiles. Troglodytes craft weapons from bone and obsidian, wielding the Macana and the Dart-Thrower. The Macana is a short sword of carved bone with jagged obsidian shards embedded into its edges. Dart-Throwers are 3' long hollow bone tubes into which a heavy bone obsidian-tipped dart is placed for flinging to a range of 60'. **Troglo-Knights** are DC 6, Speed 9 (6 on Iguana-Mounts), WD 2. They can Screech as regular Trogs and wield Macanas as well as carefully crafted giant tortoise shields and heavy barbed lances of carved dinosaur bone. Barbed lances are heavy and cumbersome, but deal 3d6 damage to large foes who move to attack a stationary Troglo-Knight atop an Iguana-Mount. If employed against

smaller foes, the lance is at -1 to hit and deals but 1d6 damage. Their **Iguana-Mounts** are DC 6, Speed 6 (can go up walls), WD 2+1. Their only attack is a Tongue Lash with a range of 15'. If hit, the target must save vs. poison or be entangled. Targets will be drawn to the Iguana-Mount's mouth, and sustain 1d6 biting damage per round thereafter (Open doors to break free). Victims slain by these massive bites are swallowed whole and digested in 6 hours. Iguana-Mounts will only attack when urged by their riders, and even then there is a 2 in 6 chance they will not fight. **Leaping Lizards** are DC 8, Speed 12 (run or leap), wp 1, damage 1. These are 2' monitor lizard types, extremely quick of foot. Up to four such reptiles are able to attack a single target at once. Leaping Lizards have a 4 in 6 chance to immediately begin feeding on any fallen prey, even in combat. **Ω**

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compiled by Jeff Rients

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**Bill Owen's Ebay Stuff:**
search.ebay.com/_W0QQsassZgamedesign4u
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# Tribute to The Invincible Overlord

by Bill Webb, Necromancer Games

*Nothing brings me more satisfaction than to hear that individual Judges' copies of these products have become dog-eared or filled with notes necessitating new copies. It is like a grand symphony. To inspire others to create is my fervent hope. Your players will respond to your delight in seeing your creation take on life and enthusiasm will increase the fun. All within is merely inspiration for the active and pontifical judge of the guild. Please alter, illuminate, expand, modify, extrapolate, interpolate, shrink and further manipulate all contained to suit the tenor of your campaign.* - Bob Bledsaw, 2005.

This summer made me think of a summer long ago. It was only recently that we lost the two greatest giants of role-playing legend, Gary Gygax and Bob Bledsaw. Never before and never again can our hobby lose so much in so little time. Millions of people over three or more generations were influenced by these men, and I for one shall greatly miss them. I had the privilege of getting to know and work with both Gary and Bob. While I am writing this to speak about my friend Bob, they were also friends, and I find it nearly impossible to talk of one without the other.

In the summer of 1977, I was 11 years old and had just learned about this new storytelling game with dice and weird little lead soldiers. I had taken a trip with several of my friends across the state in a motor home, and between sneak peaks at my friend's dad's hidden stash of Playboy magazines (we had to be careful not to get caught, mind you), we needed something to fill our time. One of the older kids, Richard (he was 15 at the time), asked if we wanted to learn how to play this game he had. Being as bored as a cooped up pack of 11-15 year olds could be, we agreed and he started to explain how to play.

An hour later, my cleric (whatever the heck that was) was running in terror from a skeleton that had attacked me when I pulled an arm-lever on a statue. I had no idea what to do, and the thought of a Harryhausen-like skeleton chasing my poor guy through dark halls of a haunted house terrified me. I was too new to understand turning the dead away, and first level clerics had no spells in the early days. All the rest of the guys had been killed by various monsters, pulled down by manacles and chains that had a life of their own or impaled on spikes in a pit. We had even watched one guy turn to dust as a ghostly image withered and aged him. I managed to evade the shrieking pile of bones by running through and barring the door with my 10-foot pole (I did not know why I bought a 10-foot pole, but was thanking my lucky stars I had), when the bed sheet came to life and started trying to wrap me up. I don't remember what happened next, only that I escaped and ran back outside, and then ran to the town we had started the story in.

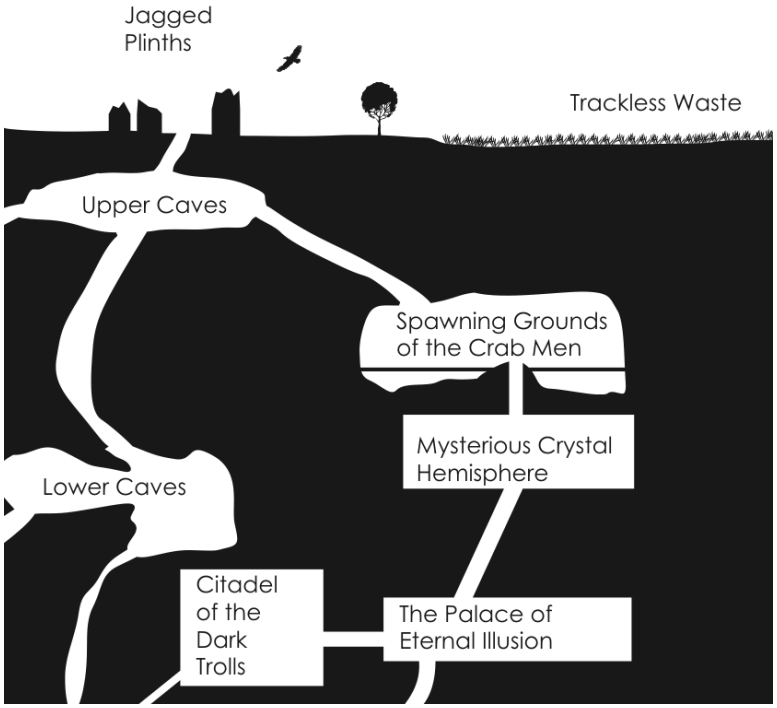
# THE DARKNESS BENEATH

## Level 4: The Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere

by James Maliszewski

**Introduction:** Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere is a dungeon level designed for a party of 4th-level characters. Though written as the fourth level of *The Darkness Beneath*, it's an "interloper level," which is to say, it's a later addition to the megadungeon, having been created as a result of an extraordinary event in the comparatively recent past. Consequently, this level could easily be used either as a standalone adventure or as an addition to one of the referee's own dungeons, using the background presented below to explain its origins. Indeed, this level is based on an interloper level in my own *Dwimmermount* megadungeon.

**Background:** This level of *The Darkness Beneath* is wholly unnatural and literally otherworldly. Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere owes its name and its existence to a remarkable event: a failed incursion into this world from Outside spearheaded by a hateful alien species known as the Thelidu. The Thelidu are a race of conquerors who use their weird magicks to travel to other spacetimes in search of resources and slaves. Though feared on countless worlds and worshipped as gods on others, the Thelidu are neither omnipotent nor omniscient. They are, in fact, quite mortal and fallible, even if their minds are so utterly unlike most other beings as to render their actions largely unintelligible.




Some time before the present day (the referee can decide for himself or herself), a Thelidu dimension ship set off on a scouting mission to the spacetime point *The Darkness Beneath* occupies. Unfortunately for the Thelidu, something went wrong and their vessel "crashed" -- partially entering several spacetime points at once and in the process creating instabilities in each of those points that rippled outward away from the dimension ship and threatened to destroy them all. From this accident was born this dungeon level. Recognizing their predicament, the surviving Thelidu used their mental powers to place themselves in hibernation, while they entrusted their vessel's Brain Complex with the task of effecting repairs. The Brain Complex is a network of cerebral tissue, suffused with alien magic so as to give it the vast, if singelminded, intelligence needed to operate a dimension ship. Acting on the orders of the Thelidu, the Complex employed a small army of artificial constructs and newly-acquired slaves to stabilize local spacetime and restore the vessel to full operation. To date, the Brain Complex has found both these tasks quite difficult, having only limited success at the former and no success at the latter. It is into this situation that the player characters inadvertently stumble when they venture into the Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere. It should be noted that Quimlin, the Bloated Alien Brain Mite found in the Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men (see *Fight On!* Issue #3 for details) is in fact a portion of the Brain Complex that attained an independent existence after the dimension ship's crash. Manifesting physically at this spacetime point as a creature that takes over the bodies of other beings, Quimlin suffers from a kind of amnesia that prevents him from remembering his origins. His obsession with the Hemisphere is an attempt to remember who and what he is, although he does not realize this. Referees using this dungeon in a different setting may feel free to ignore this information, as it does not effect the content below.

**Features:** This level consists of three distinct areas: a series of natural caverns into which the Thelidu dimension ship partially materialized, the chambers the Brain Complex is in the process of stabilizing through alien technology, and the eponymous Crystal Hemisphere itself. The caverns are natural limestone, much like the level above it, and their ceilings vary in height. Many of these caves contain lichens, molds, and fungi. The destabilized areas, on the other hand, generally have a more uniform appearance. They possess smooth, "organic" walls, ceilings, and floors that seem to glow with a dim greenish luminescence. The weird substance that covers these areas is quite obviously growing, coating

and transforming the limestone that can still be seen beneath. As their name suggests, the destabilized areas suffer from weird and unexpected effects – the result of the partial materialization of the Thelidu dimension ship. The Crystal Hemisphere is a semi-permeable bubble of green extraterrene crystal under which the Brain Complex has established an even greater degree of stability. As the Hemisphere expanded outward, it destroyed the surrounding rock, creating a comparatively smooth, vaulted ceiling under which the dimension ship now rests. Each area is governed by slightly different rules, as described below. All rooms include a parenthetical notation indicating the area to which they belong.

**Natural Caverns:** This area operates according to the usual natural laws. No special modifications are necessary. When rolling for wandering monsters in natural caverns, use the following table (d8):

1 Gray Ooze (1)
2 Ochre Jelly (1)
3 Troglodyte (1d8)
4 Cockatrice (1d4)
5 Cave Bear (1d4)
6 Giant Fire Beetle (3d4)
7 Giant Spider (1d4)
8 Giant Tick (3d4)

**Stabilizing Chambers:** This area is in the process of being assimilated to conditions more conducive to the Thelidu and, consequently, operates according to slightly different laws. Within these chambers, magic functions differently, owing to the unstable nature of space/time in the vicinity of the crashed Thelidu ship. Any time someone attempts to cast a spell or use a magic item that produces a spell-like effect, the caster/user must make a saving throw of a type appropriate to the spell/item being cast/used. If the saving throw is successful, the spell/item works and does so at 120-150% (1d4+1) normal efficacy. A roll of 20 on the saving throw results in double efficacy. If the saving throw is unsuccessful, the spell/item works only at 50-80% (1d4+4) capacity. A roll of 1 on the saving throw results in the spell/item affecting its caster/user (if it has a detrimental effect) or not working at all (if it has a beneficial effect). Spells which cannot realistically have a partial effect also fail on a missed saving throw. Because these effects are the result of the chambers being only partially harmonized to one space/time or the other, they cam be avoided through the use of key bands (see below). Within the Stabilizing Chambers, use the following wandering monster table (d6):

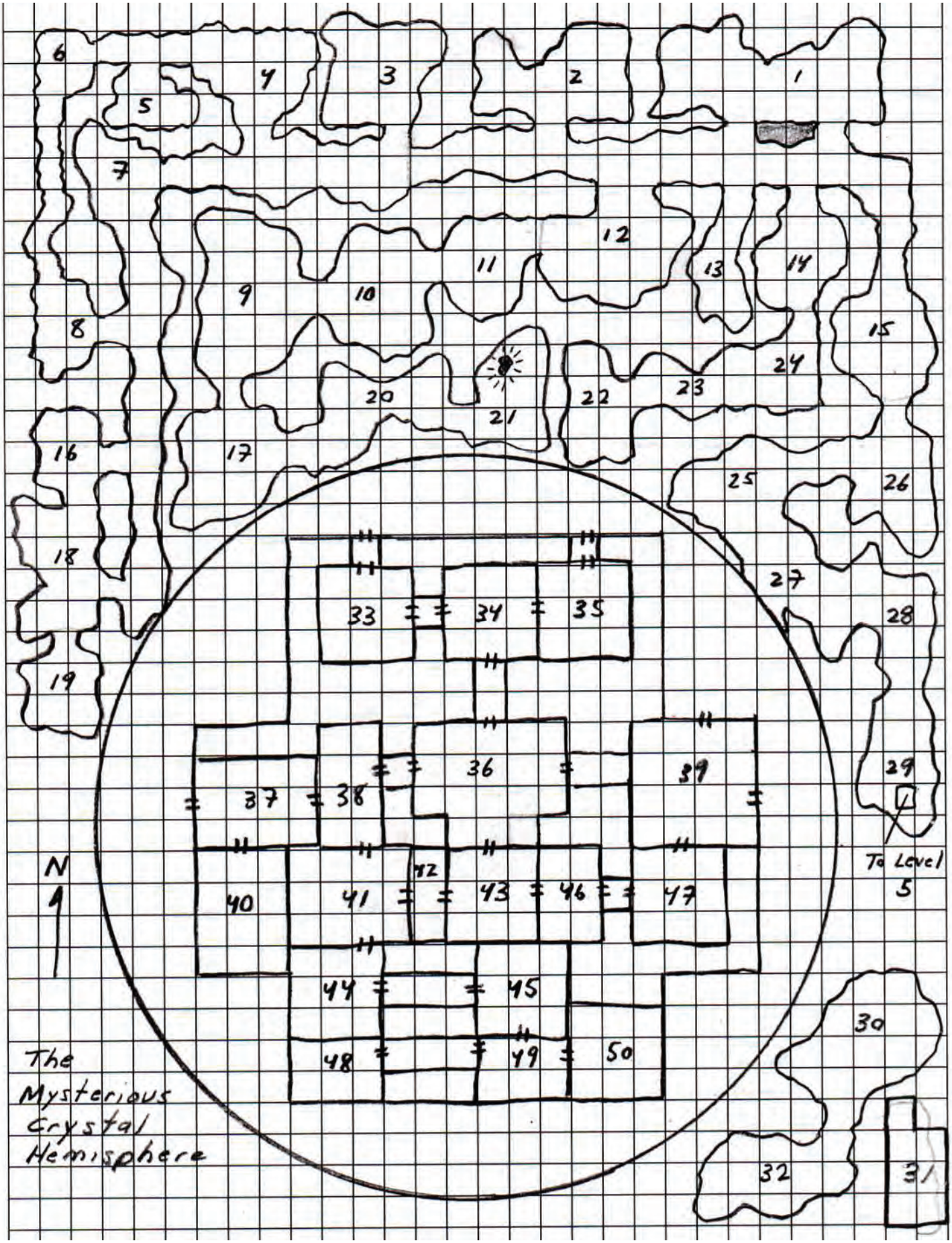
1 Adamantine Guardian (1)
2 Black Pudding (1)
3 Troll (1d4)
4 Doppelganger (1d6)
5 Owl Bear (1d4)
6 Enslaved Troglodyte (1d10)

**Crystal Hemisphere:** The Crystal Hemisphere itself is that area where the Brain Complex has seized near-total control, fully assimilating the environment to the native space/time of the Thelidu. This area consists entirely of smooth, organic-looking walls and floors glow dimly green. Characters can also hear a regular, if faint pulsing sound, almost like the beating of a human heart. The pulsation seems to grow louder the longer a non-Thelidu spends in the area. After 1d6 turns, if the characters are not wearing key bands (see below), the sound will slowly drive characters to distraction, resulting in a -1 penalty to all rolls while in the Hemisphere. Likewise, the rules for magic noted under Stabilizing Chambers above apply here as well, but all saves are made at a -2 penalty (again, unless key bands are worn).

The Crystal Hemisphere is a protective bubble of otherworldly crystal, a manifestation of the energy the Brain Complex has transferred outside the Thelidu dimension ship to provide stability to the damaged local space/time. Being made of extra-tellurian material, it does not permit objects and beings from the local space/time to enter it. This makes the Hemisphere an effectively impenetrable barrier – or rather it would if it weren't for the fact that the Brain Complex requires the assistance of non-Thelidu beings to achieve its goals. To that end, the Brain Complex has enslaved many species, most notably troglodytes, to serve as its "hands" in the caves beyond the Hemisphere. These slaves can pass in and out of the Hemisphere if they possess one or more Thelidu devices that harmonize them to its alien space/time. The characters must obtain these devices if they are to pass through the Crystal Hemisphere and make their way into it. The Hemisphere is, however, completely impenetrable by magic such as teleport, dimension door, etc. Within the Crystal Hemisphere, use the following wandering monster table (d6):

1 Adamantine Guardian (1d4)
2 Enslaved Troglodyte (1d12)
3 Enslaved Troll (1d6)
4 Adamantine Assassin (1)
5 Adamantine Worker (1d8)
6 Cerebral Sentry (1d4)

**Key Bands:** Throughout this level, the characters will encounter creatures wearing wristbands made of strange multi-colored metal unlike any they have ever seen. These bands serve two purposes. First, they harmonize the wearer to Thelidu space/time, allowing entry into the Crystal Hemisphere. In addition, each level of band acts as keys to compartments in the Thelidu dimension ship. There are three levels of key bands. They are, in ascending order: red, yellow, and orange. Each level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To Level 5
The Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere

subsumes the functions of the levels beneath it, so a character who possesses a yellow band does not need to use a red one, while a character who possesses an orange band needs no other colors at all.

**1. Entry Chamber (Natural Caverns).** This cavern connects to room 48 of Spawning Ground of the Crab-Men (or an alternate setting of your devising) and is devoid of any inhabitants. There are, however, numerous glowing lichens and fungi here, which gives the cavern an eerie countenance.

**2. Subterranean Pool (NC):** This chamber contains a small freshwater pool fed by a spring that wells up from the northern wall of the cave. The water is potable and except for a metallic tang has no unusual properties.

**3. Abandoned Lair (NC):** This largish cave looks as if it was inhabited by some creature or other in the recent past. Scattered about the room are the bones of numerous species, especially troglodytes. If the characters take time to search the bones, they will find a red key band.

**4. Troglodyte Lair (NC):** A dozen troglodytes (DC 7, HD 1+1, hp 7, 7, 6, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 4, 3, 3) can be found in this cavern. Their hatred and fear of the servants of the Brain Complex (including enslaved troglodytes) is so great that they have allied themselves with two unscrupulous adventurers named Aralar and Mariaka, who promised to protect them from harm. Consequently, they will attack anyone who enters their chamber unbidden. They are not totally unreasonable, however, and they can be bargained with, particularly if offered evidence that their interlocutors hate the Brain Complex as much as they do. In such a case, they will deliver the characters to Aralar and Mariaka in **5**.

**5. Evil Adventurers (NC):** This smallish chamber is the temporary home of two venal adventurers who, through force of arms, have convinced the nearby troglodytes that they will protect them from the Brain Complex and its minions. In truth, the adventurers, a male fighting-man named Aralar and his paramour, the magic-user Mariaka, are completely uninterested in the troglodytes, except to the extent that the trogs can be used to collect treasure for them, including Thelidu devices. The evil pair intend to stick around on his level of *The Darkness Beneath* until they have amassed what they deem a large enough fortune or until their efforts have resulted in the deaths of all the remaining troglodytes. Aralar will attempt to gauge the strength – and wealth – of the characters. If he sees them as a serious threat, he will use the troglodytes to attack them, hoping to kill them and steal their possessions. If he sees the characters as too powerful, he will instead offer to ally with them, offering up his "extensive knowledge" of the level to assist them in their explorations. In truth, Aralar does know a great deal about the caverns on this level and will be as "helpful" as he can. Of course, he intends to lead them into various traps so that he and Mariaka (and the troglodytes) can slay them while they are otherwise occupied. Both Aralar and Mariaka are cowards and will flee if the situation turns against them.

Aralar (L6, DC 2, hp 40). He wears plate mail and carries a shield. He wields a flaming sword +1 and has two potions of healing in his possession. He also carries a Thelidu disintegrator (see below) with six charges. He also possesses a yellow key band.

Mariaka (L6, DC 8, hp 20). She wears a ring of protection +1 and a red key band. She has memorized the following spells: *charm, mage shield, mystic missile, slumber, levitate, webcast, fiery ball, hasten.*

**6. Cobwebbed Cave (NC):** This cavern is filled from top to bottom with enormous spider webs. The giant spiders who spun the webs were slain weeks ago and their rotting carcasses can still be seen hanging in them, which may give the false impression that they are still alive. There is otherwise nothing of value here.

**7. Slimy Trap (NC):** This circular chamber appears to be empty, but there is an ochre jelly (DC 8, HD 5, hp 28) hanging from the ceiling. The jelly will drop down on the first creature that enters the cave; no treasure.

**8. Dimension Ship Compartment (Stabilizing Area):** This chamber contains a single compartment of the Thelidu dimension ship. Characters who enter this area will see a strange, metallic object of undeterminate size that is "superimposed" over most of the natural cavern it occupies. In practical terms, it means the dimension ship compartment takes up space – that is, the characters can't pass through it – but it's also semi-transparent, allowing anyone who looks to see what's beneath it, which in this case is just an empty cavern, albeit one whose walls, ceiling, and floor are slowly being assimilated to Thelidu space/time. This semi-transparency does not allow anyone to look through its walls to see its contents, though. Somehow they only allow one to see what's "beneath" or "behind" them, creating an optical effect unlike any the characters will ever have seen before.

**9. Teleportation Room (SA):** This large cavern also contains a piece of the Thelidu dimension ship – a teleportation pad. When the characters enter it, they will find it mostly devoid of anything noteworthy, except a large reflective piece of circular metal that hums quitely. Should anyone step on it who is not wearing a key band, consult the following table (d6) to determine the result:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | No Effect |
| 3 | The character is teleported inside the dimension ship compartment (**15**). |

4 The character is teleported to a random room in Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men (or to another nearby dungeon area)
5 The character is transported to the Jagged Plinths above *The Darkness Beneath* (or to an area in the wilderness/town above the dungeon).
6 The character is transported to another plane/dimension of the referee's choosing.

If a character steps on the pad while wearing a key band of any type, he is transported to **19**, inside the dimension ship compartment present there.

**10. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA):** This cavern contains another compartment of the dimension ship, although this time it bisects the floor of the room at an odd angle, emphasizing that it is not in phase with normal space/time. A single Adamantine Guardian (DC 2, HD 6, hp 36) can be found here. It will attack anyone not wearing a red or higher key band.

**11. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA):** Yet another compartment of the dimension ship can be found here. This one is unusual in that there is an iris valve present on one side. If a character with a red or higher key band touches the valve, it will cycle open, allowing entry. The compartment beyond is small and somewhat cramped. It's filled with all manner of strange devices made from a combination of metal and the weird organic material found on the walls, ceilings, and floors of stabilizing areas. Every turn the characters are inside the compartment, roll 1D6. A roll of 1 indicates that the Brain Complex has managed to make contact with this disconnected compartment and is now aware of the characters inside. It will then send 1d4 Adamantine Guardians to slay them. The Guardians will enter through a single door in the compartment, which is accessible to anyone with an orange or higher key band. Should the characters go through the door, they will find themselves inside the compartment in **30**.

**12. Troll Lair (NC):** Four trolls (DC 4, HD 6+3, hp 32, 29, 24, 20) make their home in this large cavern. They have so far resisted attempts by the Brain Complex to enslave them, which makes them even more vicious in combat then usual. If any of the characters wield Thelidu items or otherwise visibly give indication of being in league with the aliens, the trolls gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage against them. The trolls have a small treasure trove, consisting of 600 gold pieces, 3 gems worth 100 gold pieces each, 10 arrows +1, a potion of growth, and a pair of red key bands.

**13. Enslaved Troglodytes (SA):** 10 enslaved troglodytes (DC 7, HD 1+1, hp 7, 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3), overseen by a doppelganger (DC 6, HD 4, hp 21), who also appears as a troglodyte, can be found in this room. The trogs are setting up some strange devices whose function is completely unknown to the characters. The doppelganger is armed with a Thelidu mind stunner with 10 charges (see below). Unless the characters surprise the creatures in this chamber, the doppelganger will hide in the shadows, looking to assess the situation. If things turn against the troglodytes, it will assume a form designed to elicit sympathy from the characters until it has a chance to betray them by leading them into a cave inhabited by minions of the Brain Complex, at which point it will use its stunner to try to slay them.

**14. Beetles (NC):** This cavern contains 12 fire beetles (DC 4, HD 1+2, hp 8, 8, 7, 7, 6, 6, 6, 6, 4, 4, 3, 3). They are voracious opponents, but have no treasure.

**15. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA):** This cave contains another fragment of the shattered Thelidu dimension ship. This fragment might not be visible upon first entering the cave, because it is transposed with the ceiling, approximately 10 feet above the ground. The compartment has an iris valve visible and, provided the characters can find some means to reach it (and have a yellow key band or higher), they can open the valve and climb inside. Once inside, their orientation relative to the rest of the world will initially seem odd, but they can quickly right themselves and move about normally. The compartment contains a variety of strange devices, including three fully-charged power discs for use with Thelidu weapons. Every turn the characters are inside the compartment, roll 1D6. A roll of 1 indicates that the Brain Complex has managed to make contact with this disconnected compartment and is now aware of the presence of the characters inside. It will then send 1d4 Adamantine Guardians to slay them. The Guardians will teleport into the compartment, having been sent them from a location inside the Crystal Hemisphere.

**16. Poison Gas (NC):** This natural cavern contains a natural gas vent that, when it comes into contact with the lichens and fungi also present produces a noxious, invisible gas. Fortunately, the gas exudes an acrid smell that is hard to miss, even several feet outside the cavern. Any character who enters the cave and does not take appropriate precautions must make a saving throw against poison at -1 or die. The cavern has no inhabitants but it visibly has a small cache of items located against its western wall. The cache consists of 300 silver pieces, a scroll of protection against undead, and an orange key band.

**17. Empty Cavern (SC):** This chamber is completely devoid of any permanent inhabitants. It is, however, very close to the Crystal Hemisphere and there is a 2 in 6 chance every time the characters enter it that a creature from the Crystal Hemisphere wandering monster table

(not the Stabilizing Chamber table) is either entering the Hemisphere from this room or exiting into it (50/50).

**18. Shadowy Chamber (NC):** This natural cavern has a similar smell to **16** above, but is in fact devoid of the poisonous gas. Lurking inside, there are 8 shadows (DC 7, HD 2+2, hp 14, 14, 12, 11, 11, 10, 9, 6) which attack anyone entering. The shadows prefer to conceal themselves in the dark areas of the chamber, waiting until an entire party is within and then striking from surprise.

**19. Empty Cavern (SC):** Except for its shape, this cavern is very similar to **17** above, including the chance of encountering creatures entering or exiting the Crystal Hemisphere.

**20. Work Area (SC):** In this cavern, four adamantine workers (DC 4, HD 2+2, hp 14, 13, 11, 10) are placing numerous Thelidu devices in order to assist the assimilation of this chamber. Overseeing them are two cerebral sentries (DC 6, HD 4, hp 23, 19), which, if not destroyed within 3 rounds of the characters entering, will summon 1d4 adamantine guardians to deal with the intruders.

**21. Chimney (SC):** This cavern is empty save for a natural chimney that leads down toward Level 7, The Palace of Eternal Illusion (or a deeper level in a dungeon of your own devising).

**22. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA):** Another compartment of the Thelidu dimension ship can be found here, this time an engineering section that is accessible through an iris valve keyed to a yellow or higher band. If the characters manage to enter, they will find the compartment is inhabited by six adamantine workers (DC 4, HD 2+2, hp 13, 13, 12, 11, 11, 9) who are attempting to repair some devices found within. There are two iris valves located within the room, both of which open only to characters who possess an orange key band. The left door leads to a compartment transposed over **24**, while the right door leads to a compartment transposed over **32**.

**23. Empty Cave (NC):** This natural cave is uninhabited and, aside from some lumiscent lichens and fungi, contains nothing of any value.

**24. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA):** This chamber is entirely filled with a compartment of the Thelidu dimension ship, but it's one that has no iris valve or other means of ingress. The only means to enter it is through the compartment found in **22** nearby. If the characters enter the compartment by that means, they will find themselves inside a large room filled with a wide variety of crystals of all shapes, sizes, and colors. These crystals, if touched, will change hue and activate, creating illusory projections that depict alien landscapes and creatures. The projections are accompanied by telepathic voices that speak in a language that is utterly indecipherable, even by magical means. If the referee wishes, these projections could depict locations with which the characters are already familiar or they can be wholly mysterious alien vistas. There is a single iris valve in this compartment that requires an orange key band to open. The valve leads to a compartment in **30**.

**25. Rubble (NC):** This large cavern is filled with rubble – a consequence of the dimension ship's crash. For every turn the characters search through the rubble, there's a 2 in 6 chance that they will uncover 1d6 gems worth 50 gold pieces each. These gems can only be found once.

**26. Spider Lair (NC):** This cavern is the lair of 3 giant spiders (DC 4, HD 4+2, hp 26, 24, 20) that lie in wait for any creature unfortunate enough to enter the cavern. The spiders are quite cunning and will use surprise if possible. If faced with overwhelming odds, they will flee up into the recesses of the cavern's 20-foot high ceiling, hoping that their opponents will not pursue them. The enormous webs that fill the cavern contain the dried up husks of previous victims. If the characters take the time to search these, they will find 13 copper pieces, 16 silver pieces, 93 gold pieces, a dagger +1, and a red key band.

**27. Sentry Post (NC):** This section of cavern is very close to the Crystal Hemisphere, but has not yet been assimilated. Consequently, the Brain Complex has posted 6 cerebral sentries here (DC 6, HD 4, hp 23, 22, 22, 21, 20, 17). These sentries are assisted by an adamantine assassin (DC 6, HD 3, hp 17) that uses its invisibility to remain unseen until it can position itself to strike from behind against any intruders. The sentries will summon 1d4 adamantine guardians from inside the Crystal Hemisphere if not destroyed within 3 rounds of being engaged in combat. The surface of the Crystal Hemisphere is noticeably thinner here, almost to the point of transparency. If the characters possess any technological devices (like disintegrators, etc.) and use them against the Hemisphere in this area, they will punch a hole into it that remains open for 1d6 rounds, after which it closes again. The hole is large enough for the characters to pass through, enabling them to enter **43**.

**28. Work Detail (NC):** 10 enslaved troglodytes (DC 7, HD 1+1, hp 7, 6, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 3, 3) are hard at work here, placing star-shaped metallic objects on the walls, floor, and ceiling of this chamber. These objects are the first stage in the Brain Complex's efforts to assimilate this area to Thelidu space/time. The troglodytes, because of their enhancements, are totally loyal to their Thelidu masters and will fight to the death if confronted. Should the characters remove any of the star-shaped objects from their locations, there's a 2 in 6 chance that the Brain Complex will take notice and send a creature from the Hemisphere wandering monster table to investigate.

**29. Chute (NC):** This narrow cave terminates in a steep chute that descends down into the depths of Level 7, The Palace of Eternal Illusion (or a deeper level in a dungeon of your own devising).

**30. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA):** This chamber contains another portion of the fragmented dimension ship, which is lodged primarily in the eastern wall of the cave. There is no means to enter this compartment from the outside. The only way in is through the compartment transposed over **11**. The compartment here is obviously a laboratory of some sort. The room is filled with all manner of strange devices, gigantic multicolored crystals, and pallets on which one can assume vivisections might take place. At present, the room is uninhabited. A careful search of the room will uncover a small container of six blue pills. These pills act like potions of healing if consumed. The characters may also find a multi-tool (see below). There is a single iris valve that leads to **31**. This room is accessible only through the use of an orange key band.

**31. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA):** This compartment is located within solid rock and cannot be reached except through the iris valve in **30**. This room is a menagerie of sorts, where the Thelidu keep various species on which they wish to experiment. The room has six stasis tubes – large crystal cylinders pulsating with green energy – in the chamber, although, at present, only two are occupied. One contains a strange multi-limbed insectoid creature from another space/time. If freed (through the use of an orange key band to open its stasis tube), the creature will attempt to demonstrate gratitude to his rescuers, even though it speaks no known language and its language is beyond the capacity even of magic to decipher. The creature (DC 6, WD 7, wp 35) will accompany the characters and will use any weapons given to it to fight against the inhabitants of the Crystal Hemisphere. Its exact origin and nature is left to the referee to decide. The other stasis tube contains an elf named Ilerthian (L6, DC 9, hp 29). He has no possessions and has memorized no spells, but will gladly assist the characters if they free him. He explains that he was captured by the Thelidu (whom he describes as "vicious octopoid beings") a very long time ago, although he has no idea precisely when. He has been subject to many experiments by these creatures, some of them quite painful. They seemed very interested in learning more about the natives of the world so that they might better prepare themselves for a full-scale invasion. He is grateful to the characters for rescuing him and promises them a reward (decided by the referee) if they take him back to his homeland on the surface.

**32. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA):** The dimension ship compartment is lodged in the floor of this cavern and thus inaccessible to anyone who does not enter through **22**. Within it, the characters may find what appears to be a storage area that contains 2 disintegrators, 1 mind blaster, 2 Thelidu jumpsuits, and 5 fully-charged power cells. Astute characters will see that the room once contained a great many more items but they seem to have been removed.

**33. Cargo Area (Crystal Hemisphere):** This chamber is filled with a large variety of seamless containers. They appear to be made of the same greenish organic material as the rest of the Thelidu areas. Examining them reveals no way to open them whatsoever. However, a character with a yellow key band or higher can place his palm on top of a container and cause it to slide open, revealing its contents. Roll randomly to determine what is inside (d6):

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Metallic seals (see **42**) |
| 2 | Red tablets (poison) |
| 3 | Metallic cubes |
| 4 | Thelidu jumpsuits |
| 5 | Crystalline spheres |
| 6 | Soil samples |

**34. Teleportation Chamber (CH):** This chamber contains a functioning set of teleportation pads (five in

all). There is a set of controls that require a red or higher key band to operate. If a character possesses such a band, he or she can activate the pads and any creature or object placed on them will be teleported to another location instantaneously. Since the characters cannot understand the Thelidu language, any use of the teleportation pads results in a random result (d4):

1 Teleported to another random room inside the Crystal Hemisphere
2 Teleported to a random cave outside the Crystal Hemisphere
3 Teleported to the level above (1-3) or below (4-6) this one (levels 3 and 5 in the full dungeon).
4 Teleported to the surface

If the characters activate the pads, the Brain Complex will now be aware of the presence of their inside the Crystal Hemisphere. It will then send 1d4 Adamantine Guardians to slay them. The Guardians will enter the compartment from one of the connection iris valves.

**35. Force Field Room (CH):** Four cerebral sentries occupy this room (DC 6, HD 4, hp 22, 22, 19, 15). If the characters enter the room and are not wearing an orange key band, the sentries will activate a force field to trap them in the room until 1d4 adamantine guardians can be summoned to apprehend them. The guardians arrive 1D6 rounds after the activation of the force field. The force field cannot be harmed by physical means by magical effects may succeed in bringing it down if they deal 100 or more points of damage in total. Once the guardians arrive, they will try to subdue the characters in order to bring them before the Brain Complex in **45**, where they will be interrogated before being enslaved and put to work in the stabilizing areas.

**36. Bridge (CH):** This room was, before the crash, the bridge of the dimension ship, from which the Thelidu captain and crew commanded the vessel. Now it is badly damaged, showing evidence of a vast conflagration – scorched surfaces, melted plastic and metal, etc. Entry into the bridge is only possible through the use of an orange key band and, even then, entering will immediately alert the Brain Complex to the characters' presence, resulting in 1d6 adamantine guardians being sent to apprehend them. The bridge contains comparatively little of use, since its contents were thoroughly removed after the crash.

**37. Hibernation Chambers (CH):** This room has several thick rows of crystalline tubes filled with a gelatinous green liquid. In the past, it was here that the Thelidu crew members of the dimension ship retired to rejuvenate themselves after many hours of activity. Currently, the tubes are all empty but can be opened by anyone possessing any type of key band. The green liquid paralyzes any non-Thelidu who touches it and fails a saving throw. This paralysis last 2D6 turns. If the characters search the chamber, they will find a discarded Thelidu jumpsuit, inside of which is a yellow key band.

**38. Healing Pool (CH):** This large chamber is dominated by a pool filled with a grayish viscous liquid. Two enslaved trolls (DC 4, HD 6+3, hp 35, 30) are lowering an unconscious Thelidu into the pool while a pair of admanatine guardians (DC 2, HD 6, hp 32, 26) look on. If the characters enter, the guardians will move to attack in the first round and the trolls will do so on the second, after submerging the Thelidu into the liquid. Combat will automatically alert the Brain Complex to the presence of intruders, resulting in the sending of two more admanatine guardians in 1d4 rounds. The Thelidu, while alive, is unconscious and badly wounded. He can be revived through the use of healing magic (currently at 0 hp), which will result in its attacking the characters. If it is not revived and left in the pool, it will regain hit points slowly (approximately 1 every 12 hours) until it reaches maximum hp. The Thelidu is beyond the capacity of even magic to communicate with, but any spells that detect alignment will ascertain it to be an extremely malevolent creature. The liquid neither harms nor benefits non-Thelidu who submerge themselves in it.

**39. Communications Room (CH):** This room is the trans-dimensional communications room for the Thelidu vessel. Characters who possess an orange key band can activate one or more communications crystals, which enable the user to send both visual and auditory messages across dimensions to other communications devices operating on the same principles. Since the characters are unlikely to know of any beings to contact in this fashion, the referee is free to have them accidentally contact anyone, from Thelidu in their native space/time to demon lords to the gods themselves. What consequences such contact might have is left to the referee's imagination. Activating the communications crystals will alert the Brain Complex to the characters' presence and it will send 1d4 adamantine guardians to subdue them in 1d4 rounds.

**40. Meditation Chamber (CH):** This room functions as a meditation chamber for the Thelidu. Here these beings relax and re-focus their minds to the task ahead, regaining much needed psychic potency after times of stress. Unlike the rest of the dimension ship, the meditation chamber is not organic in appearance. Instead, it is a bright – almost blinding – white and utterly devoid of any features except the two iris valves that allow entry into the room. Characters will find that the room is completely sound-proof, to the extent that no sound of any sort can be generated while in the room. Characters who spend at least 2 turns in the room will find their memorized spells have been refreshed and

everyone, including non-spellcasters, will regain 1D6 wound points.

**41. Adamantine Factory (CH):** It is here that the Brain Complex produces the adamantine servants it uses to exert it will over the dimension ship and the stabilizing areas. Inside there are multiple large vats filled with a molten silvery liquid, as well as devices that seem to be controlling the process by which the liquid is shaped into solid automatons. In the room are four adamantine guardians (DC 2, HD 6, hp 35, 33, 30, 30, 29, 21), which will attack anyone who enters the room and attempts to interrupt the process. The vats and related devices can take 200 points of damage before they cease to function, after which the Brain Complex will no longer be able to construct adamantine servants of any kind. That means that no further wandering monster encounters with these creatures is possible and that the referee should likewise ignore any references to the summoning of adamantine servants.

**42. Sealed Compartment (CH):** While every other compartment of the dimension ship under the Crystal Hemisphere is intact, this one is not. Unlike the other compartments that were ripped from the ship when it crashed and deposited elsewhere in the caverns, this one remains "attached" to the rest of the vessel. Unfortunately, it's attachment is a source of grave instability, as it exists halfway in *The Darkness Beneath* and halfway in a roiling, chaotic space/time that is largely inhospitable even to the Thelidu. Both iris valves have been covered with larger, metallic seals that are emblazoned with purple glyphs that, while unintelligible to the characters, send out a subtle telepathic signal that they understand instinctively as "Danger!" The seals can take 150 points of damage before breaking, at which point the iris valves can then be opened with an orange key band or higher. Anyone who does so exposes the rest of the ship to the chaotic space/time, which attempts to suck in anything – and anyone – within 10 feet of the open valve. Characters within that distance must make a saving throw to avoid being sucked in. If they are, they are lost, presumably forever, in the chaotic space/time (though expeditious characters may be able to journey to this other realm and rescue them, at the referee's discretion). Unless the iris valve is closed, the chaotic space/time slowly begin to take over the dimension ship, advancing one 10-foot square per turn until it has consumed the entire ship, the Crystal Hemisphere, the caves, and eventually the entire world, if not stopped. The only way to stop the spread of the space/time is to close the iris valve and apply a new seal. New seals can be found in the cargo area in **33** and **48**. Naturally, any breaking of the seal will alert the Brain Complex, which will send 1d6 adamantine workers to deal with the problem.

**43. Micro-Gravity Room (CH):** This large, almost empty room contains a panel on its wall that may be activated through the use of a yellow key band or higher. If activated, the room's natural gravity will decrease quite rapidly, resulting in any occupants becoming near-weightless. All actions, including combat, undertaken while in this room incur a -2 penalty to the dice roll. The room's gravity can be restored by re-using the panel.

**44. Guard Post (CH):** This room holds 4 enslaved trolls (DC 4, HD 6+3, hp 38, 35, 30, 29), armed with Thelidu distintegrators. They are under orders from the Brain Complex not to allow no one but the Thelidu or their servants to enter **45**. They each have an additional fully-charged power cell to use in emergencies. The trolls, whose actions are at least partially under the control of the Brain Complex, will fight to the death rather than allow the characters to enter **45**.

**45. The Brain Complex (CH):** Located in this room is a gigantic vat filled with a liquid that bubbles unpleasantly and exudes greenish smoke. Connected to the vat is a network of crystalline webbing that pulses periodically with lights of various colors. This is the Brain Complex, the collection of cerebral tissue that acts as the "computer" of the dimension ship and has been attempting to repair the dimension ship after its crash. The Brain Complex has the following stats: DC 8, HD 8, hp 48. It has no weapons of its own, but it can produce a charm effect once per round, which it will use to enslave intruders. Protecting the Brain Complex are two adamantine guardians (DC 2, HD 6, hp 30, 26), but it can summon 1d4 additional guardians every three rounds, provided the Adamantine Factory in **41** is still functioning. The Brain Complex cannot communicate with the characters, as its thought processes are simply too alien. Nevertheless, the characters have an inexplicable sense of an intelligence occupying the vat – an evil and insane one at that! If the Brain Complex is defeated, the Crystal Hemisphere will cease to exist and the stabilizing areas will again return to their former status as natural caves. All adamantine servants will likewise cease to function and enslaved creatures will be free to act as they wish. Of course, this also means that the Thelidu survivors in **50** will be awakened and, weak though they are, they will be most displeased to discover that intruders have wrought such damage to their dimension ship.

**46. Laboratory (CH):** This chamber contains another laboratory, this one dedicated to the physical properties of worlds the Thelidu wish to invade. Characters who spend any time searching the room will discover a wide variety of rocks, gems, crystals, and bits of soil, as well as samples of plants, water, and other similar matter, all collected in many oddly-shaped containers. The precise value of these various items is uncertain, as most come from dozens of worlds, dimensions, and space/times

unknown to the characters. At GM discretion one or more of these items may be of value, monetary or otherwise, if taken to the right person.

**47. Viewing Room (CH):** This compartment is filled with a variety of large multicolored crystals that work together to produce an image of the world outside the dimension ship. Through the use of various controls (accessible to anyone with a key band of any sort), the image can shift from one location to another, showing exactly what's going on in that space. Anyone with an orange key band or higher can use the controls to look inside the dimension ship as well. Inside the room are three doppelgangers (DC 5, HD 4, hp 20, 19, 15), each armed with a mind blaster. They will assume the forms of humans, dwarves, elves, etc. in order to trick the characters into believing that they are escaped prisoners who are trying to make sense of the viewing crystals to aid their return to freedom. They will then falsely aid the characters in finding a room or object they have been looking for by leading them into places filled with Thelidu servants, at which point they will reveal their true forms and attack as well.

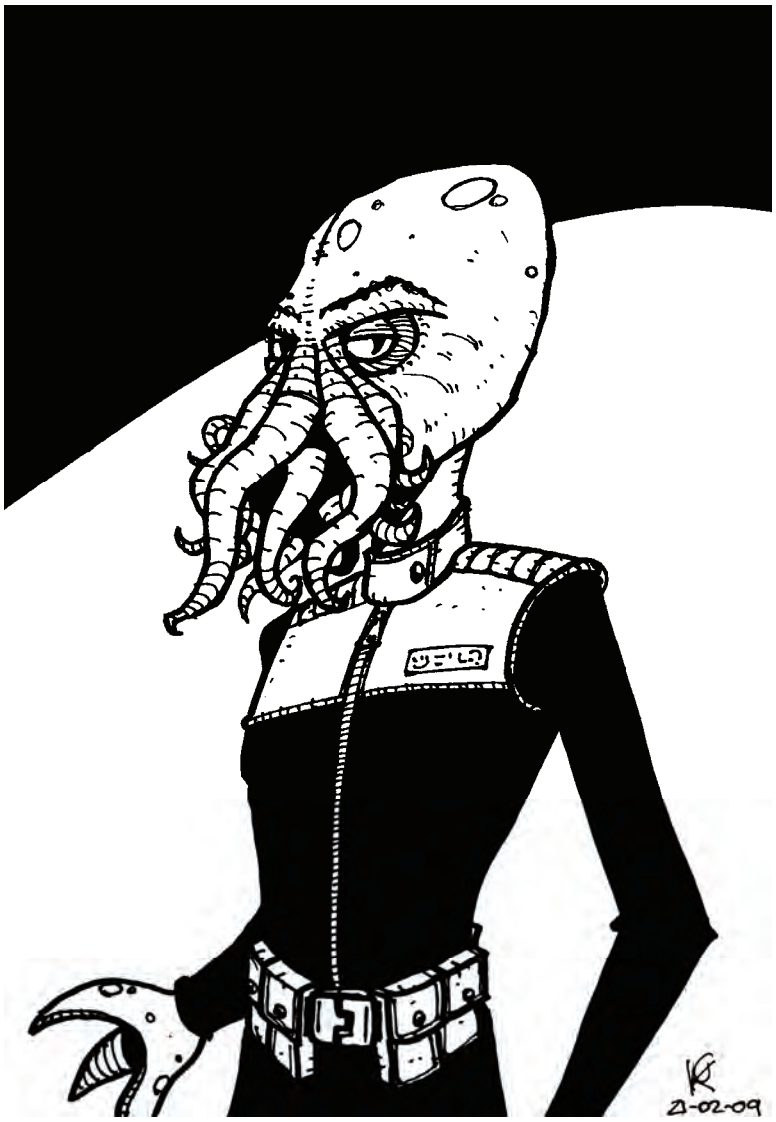
**48. Cargo Area (CH):** Except for its size and shape, this room's contents are identical to those of **33**.

**49. Guard Post (CH):** This room contains four adamantine guardians (DC 2, HD 6, hp 31, 31, 26, 22) that protect the entrances to **45** and **50**. They will attack relentlessly in order to ensure that no intruders enter either room alive.

**50. Thelidu Chamber (CH):** This chamber contains three wounded Thelidu (DC5, HD 4+3, hp 15, 13, 11), the survivors of the crash. Until the destruction of the Brain Complex, they were kept in hibernation – there are several tubes in the room – so that they could slowly heal until they were again ready to resume their mission of conquest. Now that they have regained consciousness they are preparing to deal with the intruders that have wrought so much turmoil on their vessel. The Thelidu are armed with disintegrators and wear jumpsuits. They will make good use of their mental abilities to turn the characters against one another before making use of their technological devices to slay them and extract their brains (with the intention of using their cerebral tissue to repair the Brain Complex).

**New Monsters**

**Adamantine Servants:** Adamantine servants are automatons created by the Thelidu to serve as soldiers, workers, and assassins. All types are quite intelligent, but somewhat singleminded, obeying their masters' commands to the letter. Nevertheless, the Thelidu have found them extraordinarily useful and adamantine servants form the nucleus of any Thelidu invasion.



**Adamantine Assassin**
Defense Class: 6
Hit Dice: 3
Attacks: 2 Fists (1d6 each) or 1 weapon (varies)
Special: Invisibility
Speed: 12
Adamantine assassins are rarely seen in their true form, as they can create an invisibility field at will that cloaks their presence. These stealthy automatons prefer to attack from surprise, sneaking up on their targets and catching them unawares or while in the midst of fighting another creature. The Thelidu consider assassins extremely useful and tend to place them in high security areas to ensure that intruders who enter them do not escape alive.

**Adamantine Guardian**
Defense Class: 2
Hit Dice: 6
Attacks: 2 Fists (1d8 each) or 1 force spear (1-10)
Special: Liquid Metal Blast
Move: 18

Adamantine guardians are the largest and most impressive of the Thelidu adamantine servants. Looking like hulking humanoids in skeletal armor, these automatons are relentless in their duties. They fight until destroyed and pursue intruders without tiring. Their great strength is maintained through a liquid metal hydraulic system. Any hit made with an edged weapon on an adamantine guardian sprays this metal at the attacker, resulting in 1d8 points of damage from the heat, unless the attacker makes a successful saving throw.

**Adamantine Worker**
Defense Class: 4
Hit Dice: 2+2
Attacks: 2 Fists (1d6 each) or 1 weapon (varies)
Speed: 12
Adamantine workers are mainstays of Thelidu invasions. They operate machinery, devices, and other technological artifacts, as well as constructing and repairing structures. They will attack if disturbed or ordered to do so, but they otherwise stay on task regardless of the situation around them. This quality makes them poor sentries, which is why the Thelidu rarely leave them unaccompanied in important areas.

**Cerebral Sentry**
Defense Class: 6
Hit Dice: 4
Attacks: Tentacles (1d4)
Special: Flight, Paralysis
Speed: 18
Cerebral sentries look like small floating eyes, with a mass of metallic tentacles hanging beneath their spherical bodies. Made entirely of metal, their role is to delay intruders and alert the Thelidu of their arrival. This they do by swooping down to paralyze their targets with an electrical charge emanating from their many tentacles. A failed saving throw paralyzes a target for 1D6 turns.

**Thelidu (Brain Demons)**
Defense Class: 5
Hit Dice: 4+3
Attacks: 2 Claws (1d6 each), Tentacles (1d4)
Special: Mental powers, Brain extraction
Move: 13
The Thelidu (the term is both singular and plural) are a hateful species of conquerors from Outside who use weird devices to travel to other worlds in search of slaves and resources. Possessing scaly, rubbery, vaguely humanoid bodies, the Thelidu have octopus-like heads and faces that are masses of feelers. Gelatinous green in color, these monstrosities are worshipped as near-gods on countless worlds -- and feared on countless more. Obsessed with the purity of their own species, the Thelidu regularly engage in internecine wars to exterminate the "unfit" in their midst, an activity they enjoy even more than conquering and enslaving other species. This trait is one of the few things that have saved worlds from Thelidu conquest, as these alien beings are relentless in their campaigns of domination.

Thelidu are masters of the mind, which has earned them the sobriquet "brain demons," even though they are not in fact demons of any kind and indeed view demons are just another species to be conquered. All Thelidu are capable of using several abilities that mimic the effects of magic: charm (persons or monsters), clairaudience, clairvoyance, ESP, levitate, hypnotic suggestion. In addition, a successful melee hit on a single target with both claws and tentacles results in death in 1d6 rounds, as the Thelidu cracks open the victim's skull and extracts its brain, resulting in immediate death. The extracted brain is then added to cerebral devices known as Brain Complexes, of which every Thelidu band possesses at least one. The precise purpose of the Brain Complexes is unknown but some sages surmise that they create and/or power many of the other queer devices the Thelidu carry with them as they scour the cosmos for worlds to conquer. Whatever the truth of the matter, the appearance of these beings on any world ought to be a cause for alarm and swift retaliation, lest they gain a foothold from which they can never be dislodged.

**New Treasures**
Being creatures of an alien space/time, where the laws of reality function differently, the Thelidu employ a variety of technological devices instead of the magical items favored on some other worlds. A few of these items are described here.

**Disintegrator:** This wand-like device shoots energy blasts at a range of up to 240 feet without penalty. Each blast deals 2D12 damage and drains two charges from a power cell.

**Jumpsuit:** This form-fitting outfit is made of a strange "living" material and so grows or shrinks to match the size of its intended wearer. Anyone wearing a Thelidu jumpsuit gains a +1 bonus to saving throws against fire, electricity, and other energy attacks.

**Mind Blaster:** This thin, tube-like weapon paralyzes a single target within 180 feet. The target must make a saving throw to avoid paralysis. Each shot drains one charge from a power cell.

**Power Cell:** These disc-like objects contain 20 charges which can provide energy for Thelidu devices. Ω

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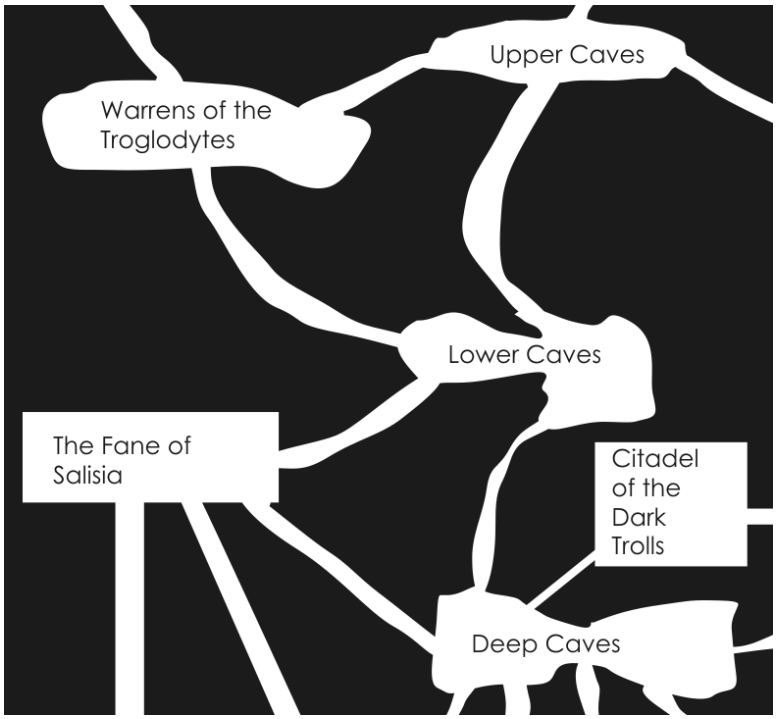
**Equipment:** Spear, Bronze Tooth File, Bunch of coloured strings
**Description:** Bluehead, so called because he has patriotically painted his carapace Imperial azure, works at the Jakálla Zoo as a keeper-cum-exhibit. He is the only member of staff with a strong enough stomach to muck out the Kurukú pit and is immune to the bites of some of the smaller poisonous critters. He is also cheap to employ, getting a roof over his head and his meals and nothing else. As a side line he lets kids ride round the zoo on a cushion he places on his head for a few coppers, amusing them with his hooting and drumming as he goes, and for a silver coin he will grab a live Kurukú out of its cage to drop into the Dnélu enclosure to tempt it out of its subterranean lair. Unbeknownst to anyone this amiable goon is in fact a spy for the Loudest Grumbler of Ónmu Tlé Hléktis. He may be observed from time to time tying knots into the coloured strings that hang from his leather belt, but unless an observer knows about Ahoggyá knot-writing it is unlikely they will read anything sinister into this.

**Many Scars on Big Knuckles**
Level VII Warrior
Str 102 Int 61 Con 65 Psy Ab 21 Dex 45 Com 64/12
+3 to hit, +2 damage, AC 4, HD 7+1, HP 22
**Abilities:** +2 AC due to horny carapace; **u**se two weapons against different targets at -1 to hit each, -2 if using a double handed weapon; 360 degree vision; **s**urprised only on a roll of 1; no movement penalty in swamps; **s**peak human languages in a garbled and 'broken' form; hates and hated by Shén – a fight between the two species is inevitable if they meet; +2 save vs any magic that causes physical damage of any kind, -5% spell casting success
**Skills:** Speak Tsolyáni, Speak Salarvyáni, Fist, Mace, Shield, Axe, Military Service, Advanced Two Weapon Use, Elemental Resistance, Military Command
**Equipment:** Two-handed axe, Mace, Shield, heavy bronze limb armour, bag of malachite
**Description:** Many Scars is a Heréksa commanding 100 Ahoggyá in The Legion of Guruggma, the Des Imperial Ahoggyá Auxiliary Heavy Infantry, based just outside Jakálla. He is nobody's fool and knows the low opinion humans have of his species, doing his best to keep new recruits just out of the swamps away from town. He is usually in a bad mood due his bad digestion, and troopers who get out of line are in for a brutal pummelling. He is a vegetarian because in his early days in Tsolyánu he spent a lot of time in sleeping out with the animals and saw how cruelly humans treat their domesticates – he will eat meat he has hunted himself though. He also does not like seeing chlén peeled, and uses bronze and wood rather than chlén hide for his own personal equipment. On the other hand, when there is an enemy handy he is a whirling mad-Ahoggyá, gurgling bloodcurdling insults and laying into all and sundry with his heavy bronze poleaxe, especially Shén, for whom he has an unreasoningly vicious hatred. **Ω**

*Although Lower Caves is designed to be used as Level Five of the megadungeon The Darkness Beneath, it could easily be placed in nearly any subterranean locale in your own campaign world. - David*

**Background**: Before the shadow of man stretched across this land, the world was governed by the laws of Fae. The Fae ruled the Four Corners; the Seelie Court oversaw the Day, and the Unseelie Court, the Night. The inevitable Dawn of Man heralded change, however. Fae magic began to lose its sway over the world and the young magic of Man slowly drained away their power. The Graeth, a proud, ancient race led by their monarch, Hjorvart, were one of these dwindling Fae lineages. Hjorvart Graeth-King knew that the once-potent magic which held this world together and was the very life force of the Fae was diminishing. In his desperation, the King searched high and low until a suitable locale with still-potent wellsprings of Fae magic was located, deep within the earth. These three springs, known as the *Stone Circle*, *Spirit Pool,* and *Ancestral Oak*, worked together to enrich this entire area with potent, life-preserving energy for the former surface-dwellers. The presence of the Graeth in the underworld helped maintain a certain balance between the burgeoning dark forces below, and the young chaotic race of man, still groping and feeling its way to civilization. Here the Graeth could return to their self-serving ways, far enough away from man and the young magic to go about their Fae pursuits in relative seclusion.

Graeth-Queen Ylfrit, wife of Hjorvart, found she was not content with this new *Graeth-Home*. Ylfrit longed to see the Night once more, the Moon and the Stars, and to dance in the cool air of evening. This desire drove her to be tempted by the forces of the Unseelie Court. Ylfrit was encouraged to overthrow her Husband, and lead the Graeth against the savages on the surface. Behind the scenes she secretly sowed tension and distrust amongst the remaining Graeth, and sought to strike bargains with the Dark Trolls below, themselves not keen on the races of Man wresting control of the Day. When Ylfrit's treacherous plot was uncovered, a rift grew between the once-united Graeth. The Loyalists behind Hjorvart and the Denouncers of the Queen split into two contentious factions. The long struggle reached a conclusion when the two forces met in what is now the *Grove-Bog* for a final clash. Much Graeth blood was spilled, and the day was decided when the Dark Trolls, who had sworn to come to the Queen's aid, failed to do so. Hjorvart, beseeching the Seelie Court, was able to bind his former love with a *Hex of Unending Dream*, hoping that one day he might awaken her and rid her mind of the despicable Unseelie influence she had fallen under. Drained by this mighty grammarye, Hjorvart led what were left of his Loyalists back to the *Spirit Pool*, while the scat-tered forces of the Queen's Denouncers returned to the *Stone Circle*. Waiting in ambush, as instructed by Ylfrit, was a Graeth more corrupt than his own Mother, the Prince Rognvald. There to claim




Kingship should the Denouncers fail, the Prince had feigned loyalty to Hjorvart during this struggle, and now avenged what he assumed was the Queen's defeat. In an instant a blade of silver, ensorcelled by Unseelie Spirits, brought an end to the reign of Hjorvart. With maniacal laughter the Prince fled through the *Grove-Bog* to the *Ancestral Oak*, where he was finally slain himself. Rognvald took his last breath while gazing upon his sleeping Mother, seeking unrequited approval as his disemboweled body crumpled on that age-old node of Fae. With their monarchs gone, the Loyalists and Denouncers were split for all time. The Loyalists were able to claim the slumbering form of Ylfrit and cast her into the *Oubliette*, where she yet dreams her torment. The *Ancestral Oak,* stained by the blood of treachery, became a place of tainted, twisted energy, bringing an end to the magical balance of this place. While many Graeth chose to forge deeper into the depths, most long ago became one with the earth, returning from whence they came. The Graeth legacy is all but forgotten to mankind. If the *Ancestral Oak* were ever reattuned, the three nodes might once again work in conjunction to envelop the entire dungeon level in Fae magic. Perhaps then the Graeth would rise once more, unite and claim back their long abandoned *Graeth-Home* stronghold, now controlled by Jalen Longspear.

Jalen Longspear is something of a legend amongst the peoples of this land. Jalen made his fame and fortune through deeds of daring and adventure. The stories that surround his exploits have been exaggerated with time, with some claiming he is mad, or cursed, or serving the Dark Trolls themselves. The mighty Warrior himself will admit he is somewhat unhinged after seeing so many sights not meant for mortal eyes! Jalen feels he is now not able to

live amongst his fellow Man; visions, voices and violent dreams have driven him to forge a permanent home here in the deep, dark underworld he once sought to plunder for treasure. The once mighty *Graeth-Home* has been turned into a safe haven of sorts by Jalen and his fellow *Trap-Springers*. Dubbed the *Halfway Inn*, this place of comfort and rest amidst a world of chaos truly is *half way in*. Jalen maintains an Inn for adventurers or a hide-out for ne'er-do-wells; if the gold is handed over, no questions are asked, and Jalen is known as a square bargainer. One of Jalen's motivations for founding the Halfway Inn was to create a home away from home for the bravest men of the land; a home away from the criminal corruption, treachery and deceit found on the surface. It is his theory that the only honesty to be found in this world is beneath it, in the underworld, where one knows who the enemy is right off. From time to time the now semi-retired adventurer will gather his men to him for another foray into uncharted regions below, but something about his dreams in the *Lower Caves* keeps Jalen coming back each night, something alluring, something enticing: something named *Ylfrit*.

It is to this complex of caves and tunnels of ancient stone that the player characters now come. Perhaps they have been sent to deliver a message to one of Jalen's guests; perhaps they have been sent to locate a villain rumored to be hiding here; perhaps they have heard the riddle of the Faerie Queen; or perhaps they are simply stumbling, blindly, into a world of unreason here in *The Darkness Beneath*.

**Level Overview:** There are five distinct regions within the Lower Caves; the *Troll Highway,* the *Halfway Inn,* the *East Tunnels,* the West *Tunnels*, and the *Oubliette*. There are a number of Specific Personalities found upon this level. Their descriptions are located within their 'lair' or room, but they often roam. It is left to the Referee to determine when and where these individuals are encountered. No matter what is suggested, don't be afraid to have them pop up whenever you deem it appropriate.

**Inter-level Connections**: Troll Highway up to Level One (1), Back-door up to Level One (11), Slippery Tunnel up to Level Two (38), Winding Passage up to Level Two (24), Guarded Hall down to Level Six (7), Forgotten Steps down to Level Six (40), Troll Highway down to Level Eight (8), Secret Passage (circumvents Troll Outpost and connects with the Troll Highway to Level Eight) (38C).

**The Taint:** The tragedy which befell the Graeth many ages past upset the delicate balance of Fae magic here, utterly corrupting the *Ancestral Oak*. Betrayal and deception had been an unknown to the Graeth until then. The roots of the ancient tree drank from now-bloodied waters while the maniacal Prince met his demise almost within reach of the powerful node's branches. Instead of returning from whence he came, as Graeth do, Rognvald's spirit became one with the *Ancestral Oak*. The psyche of the Prince perceived the fact that his Mother was still alive, and watched helplessly as the Loyalists dragged her slumbering form away from him forever. Through the countless years, Rognvald's vile presence festered and polluted the caves and tunnels around the *Grove-Bog*. The result has been a deviant, chaotic force of supernatural origin called the Taint. The roots of the *Ancestral Oak*, now gnarled and deformed, have been able to burrow under many areas in the *Lower Caves*, seeking out Ylfrit while spreading the Taint. *Foul Saplings* grow in areas with particularly high concentrations of Taint. *Evil Roots* protect and expand Rognvald's influence. The Taint causes ruptures in the natural order of things. The resulting breaches of reality in both time and space have caused many inexplicable occurrences, most importantly the amplification of Ylfrit's dark dreams and her search for a new King.

**Ylfrit's Dreams (Sleeping in the Lower Caves)**: Any male character that sleeps in the Lower Caves has a small chance to be visited by Ylfrit in their dreams. A sultry, elf-like Graeth with cascading raven hair and deep brown eyes will enter by dream and speak in hushed tones. Ylfrit is searching for a new King to join her and her court of dreamers in escape from *The Darkness Beneath* to rule over the surface world once more. These dreams are never lucid, and upon waking, the victim might recall one or two details about a beautiful Queen and the promise of vast riches. If the visits continue, the dreamer will begin to remember more and more, and will soon be falling for Ylfrit and her false promises. Once in the final stage, Ylfrit's Embrace, individuals are completely bound to the Lower Caves and will not spend a night away from Ylfrits' influence. Whether or not the character acts upon these invitations is for him to decide. Ylfrit instructs those who wish to become King to find her place of imprisonment. Ylfrit truly believes that she is searching for a King to lead her out of this place, but she makes empty promises concerning riches or Kingship; only a Graeth may actually become King. The Twisted Faerie Queen has been living this lie for centuries, and has no idea what has transpired since she was placed in the Oubliette. Eventually, those who do not act on their desires and seek Ylfrit will become unhinged and possibly stark raving mad as the Queen torments them and attempts to prod them to action. The referee is free to use this information or ignore it, and the chance of visits or further effects is to be controlled in the manner which best suits the individual game.

**Cleansing the Caves**: A *Remove Curse* spell cast upon the *Ancestral Oak* will cause Rognvald (and all *Evil Roots*) to become dormant for one day provided he misses his save vs magic (needs a 12). If a second *Remove Curse* is cast while Rognvald is dormant, he will be expelled from the *Ancestral Oak* for good. The Taint will remain for many more months, but the *Evil Roots* and *Foul Saplings* begin to wither away. Once Rognvald is displaced his memory will fade and he will cease to exist. With Rognvald gone, both the

*Spirit Pool* and the *Stone Circle* may be cleansed with further *Remove Curse* spells. Once all three wellsprings are so cleansed, Ylfrit's dreams will slowly lose their power. The Twisted Faerie Queen will continue to search for her King, but only in her mind. The area might require years to rid itself entirely of the Taint, as other evils from depths yet unexplored gradually take up new residence.

**Area Descriptions by Region**

*All new monsters, and much besides, are detailed in the appendices.*

**A. Dark Troll Highway (1-8)**: The reach of this enormous tunnel extends beyond the map provided, creating a gargantuan road for the self-proclaimed Lords of this dungeon, the Dark Trolls. The long stretch of that tunnel depicted here, in **1** through **8**, is marked by rubble, but for the most part the floor is smooth from the ancient river which once ran through and the regular travel to and fro of the Dark Trolls and their heavy Blood Thump mounts.

**1. Dark Troll Highway East End**. This massive, cavernous tunnel winds its way up through the earth to Level One (or a higher dungeon level of your own).

**2. Halfway Inn North Entrance**. Along the south wall here is a tunnel of winding steps hewn into the very rock. Just outside it is a pile of carefully placed stones which supports a wooden sign. Painted upon the sign, in the common tongue, are the words "*Longspear's Halfway Inn. Privy for paying customers only – no exceptions.*" The steps wind down to the heavy iron gate at **9**.

**3. The Howling Rift**. Characters approaching this area will hear a swirling, whistling wind which constantly howls from a hole in the floor ahead, a 50' long crevice in the stone floor fully 10' wide at its center. It continuously tosses about sand, dirt and pebbles; the air it releases is hot and dry. At its very center is a 5' round column of pressure which has the force to blow small objects up and out toward the ceiling before they careen off in a random direction. Every so often the terrors below will toss a handful of coins into this air stream, hoping to attract the foolhardy. There is a small chance that silver and gold coins are scattered about in the tunnel here. Heavy objects of 120-180 lbs able to get inside the central pressure column will sink slowly down into the rift at a rate determined by their weight and mass. Thus, brave adventurers might be able to devise a method to slowly descend, riding the air current down into this deep rift. The rest of the rift offers no more than a dangerous descent of jagged rocks to the strange geological phenomenon some 120' below. Egress is another matter entirely, as the air flow is not of high enough pressure to blow a character back up and out. There is a pack of foul Chasm Creeps haunting this deep, dark rift. **Chasm Creeps** (13): DC 6 (only hit by magic), Spd 9, HD 3+1, Dam 1 die+Exhaustion. Scattered silver and gold is all that remains of past unfortunate delvers devoured by the Creeps. To the north of the Howling Rift is a tunnel atop a shelf 12' up on the stone wall leading to **3B**. The area immediately below the shelf is littered with large boulders and rubble. It is a navigable, but extremely difficult to climb using the loose rocks as footing to access the tunnel from below. Just beyond the shelf is **3B**, the Keyhole Pass.

**3B. Keyhole Pass**. This long tunnel is remarkable for its distinct keyhole shape. A deep single-file trench guides travelers through its center while the walls and ceiling above open into an airy, tube-like space. A hungry pack of **Claw Maws** (16) **(**DC 2/7, Spd 18, HD 2, Dam ½ die+special) prowls this area. Able to take advantage of the open space above, the Claw Maws will attempt to attack from behind with surprise so that their prey may not easily retreat.

**4. Five Way Intersection**. This area offers numerous paths, two of which are not immediately obvious. To the south cut into the wall is a tunnel filled with hewed steps descending down to the heavy-iron gate at **23**. A pile of carefully placed stones just before the tunnel supports a wooden sign, painted with a message in the common tongue: "*Longspear's Halfway Inn. And now, so are you.*" The other two obvious directions are the highway proper, leading north or south-west. To the east is a craftily hidden and magically-locked secret door leading to **21**, and to the west, high in the dark recesses of the wall 18' up is a small 3' wide by 4' high tunnel leading to **28**.

**5. Shaft Down**. Directly to the east is a shaft with a 30' drop to **38** below. To the west is a concealed shelf in the stone wall 15' up, beyond which is a tunnel leading west to **32**. Inspection of the loose rubble and stones below this shelf will reveal that a carefully constructed but crude set of steps has been formed from the rocks.

**6. Rocky Slope**. To the east is a sheer ramp to a tunnel below. This drastic slope has a steep incline, and there are numerous loose boulders and rubble above, below and along the slope. Climbing up or down here is a challenge, and there is a good chance to dislodge stones, which might cause severe damage from sliding rocks and will create a significant amount of noise (check for Wandering Monsters in case of such an event).

**7. Iron Grate and Steps**. A shaft in the floor has been covered with a large, heavy iron grate of thick bars. The grate is locked, and an opening mechanism can be seen below at the bottom of a short, narrow flight of stone steps. This grate and stairwell leads to a long tunnel which is guarded by the servitors of Salicia on Level Six (or the inhabitants of your own fell shrine).

**8. Dark Troll Highway West End**. The cavernous tunnel continues here, leading farther down and eventually to Level Eight (or a level of your own device). Just beyond

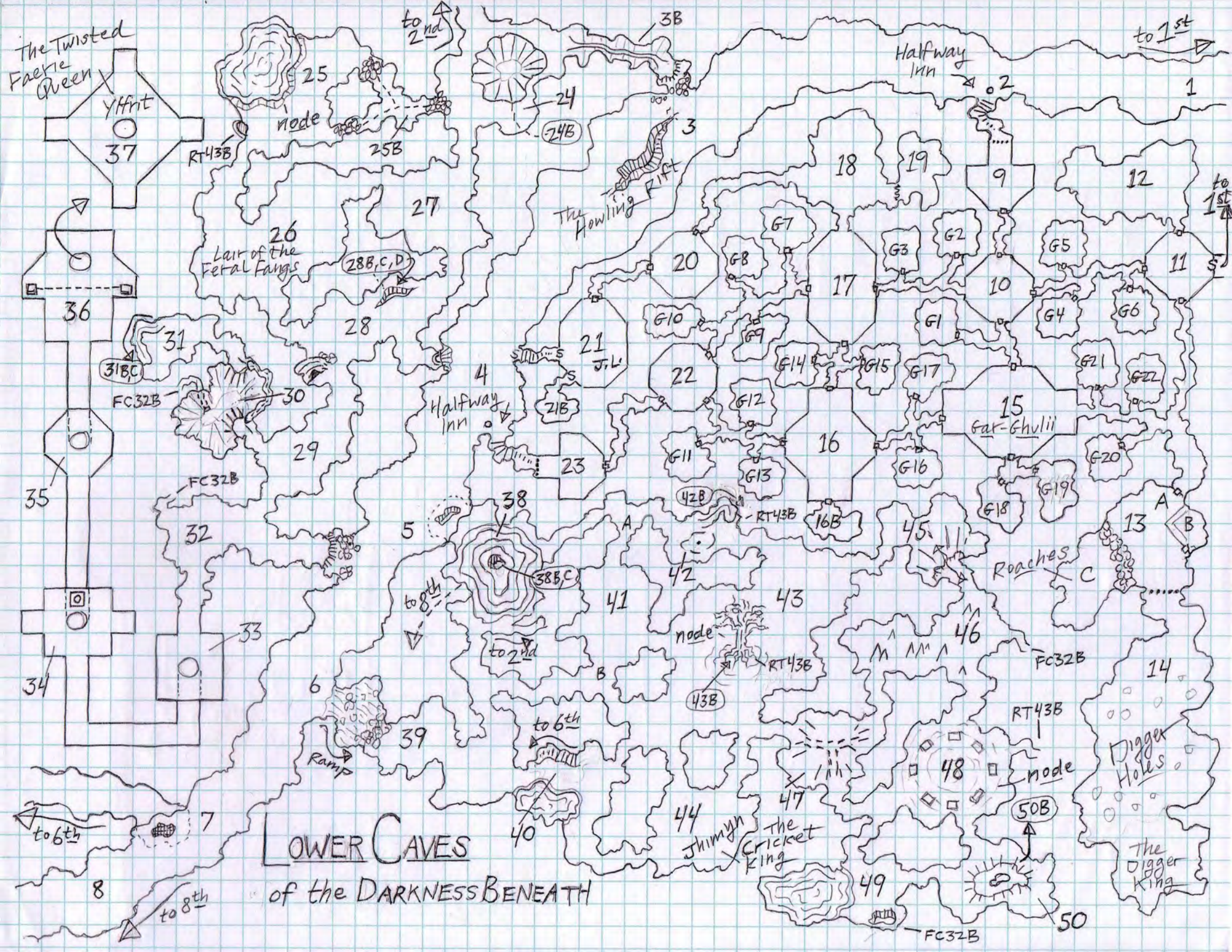
the edge of the map is a six-foot thick stone wall constructed of heavy boulders, at the center of which is a single, large passageway. This wall is constantly under guard by no less than half a dozen **Dark Trolls** (DC 4, Spd 12, HD 6+3, Dam 1d+2, Regenerate). Anyone attempting to pass this way will be eaten unless they present a *Multiversal Bazaar Token* or are accompanied by an authorized escort. If characters have not yet encountered Tagart, this might be a good time. The Envoy will gladly sell passage for 500 gp per man. The guards are not authorized to do so, being under strict orders to kill intruders.

**B. Halfway Inn** (**9-23** and **G1-G22**): This region is Jalen Longspear's establishment, the onetime *Graeth-Home*. The entire area is lit at all times by lamplight from hundreds of oil-burning vessels set into hand-hewn sconces throughout. Most of the region was formed by the Graeth centuries ago. While the Graeth favored carefully hewn chambers of exacting dimensions featuring portals, floors, walls and ceilings etched with intricate designs, they contrasted those with rough passages and personal quarters. The Graeth style of architecture displays both skill at stonework and appreciation of nature. Dwarves will marvel at the chambers and be confounded by the doors, while historians and scholars will be astounded by the intricate carvings in each chamber. The doors are all perfectly balanced heavy stone portals which, unless altered, swing open and shut with but a push. All of the normally 'evil' members of Jalen's Staff and Crew here are on his payroll, and while not the most polite employees are nevertheless willing to work for the powerful warrior. Employment with Jalen provides a steady source of gold, food, and protection here in the underworld. The Goblins have been allowed to establish a full hall here, complete with King and families, and the Ogres employed here come from other reaches of the underworld. The Ogres respect and fear Jalen and his *Trap-Springers*, as that adventuring group conquered and captured countless Ogres in days long past. For a short time, Jalen served as the Ogre Overlord, and before establishing the *Halfway Inn* used the Overlord's Stronghold in the Ogre Downs as a base of operations. Upon agreeing to crown a new Ogre Overlord, Jalen reached a long term pact which assured him aid from these violent, often chaotic enemies of man. The *Halfway Inn* is a busy place; and Jalen has done his best to bring a slice of surface life to this region of the underworld. Attempting to take the Inn and its residents by force is likely suicidal, but would certainly provide the referee with an opportunity to plan an entertaining sequence of events.

**Running the** Halfway **Inn**: The Inn is a hub of constant activity, as there is no proper day or night here deep beneath the surface. Referees should read each area description and gain a general understanding of the inhabitants who mill about the Inn. The Roaches, The Diggers, the Inn guests, the Ogres and the Inn staff should be a living, breathing part of this establishment as PCs go about their activities. The referee will find limitless side stories and possible paths to adventure here in Jalen's Inn. This level of *The Darkness Beneath* should provide an entertaining setting which invites continued play as characters return to the Inn's warm confines from session to session.

**9. North Gate**. At the dotted lines on the north side of this room is a heavy iron gate which rises in front of a narrow stone walkway crossing a shallow pool of oil. South of this gate is an iron lever which opens it. The guards are under orders to ignite the oil pool when threatened. Doing so creates a raging pit of fire all around the heavy gate and enough roiling, thick smoke to fill the tunnels and chamber. It will burn for hours before cooling and being refilled. Anyone caught in the conflagration will sustain 6d6 from the initial blast, and the flames will create a curtain of fire 10' thick which burns for 4d6 if entered. Needless to say, the use of the oil is for extreme emergencies only. At all times there are a pair of **Goblins** (DC 6, Spd 6, HD 1-1, Dam 1 die) and an **Ogre** (DC 5, Spd 9, HD 4+1, Dam 1 die+2) posted here. The Goblins are charged with greeting potential guests in the common tongue and collecting the 25 gp entrance fee. The gate will not be lifted until enough gold has been handed over. They will instruct visitors to register in **10**, past the south door.

**10. Halfway Inn Registry**. Carved stone benches, shelves, and blocks serve as a waiting area, storage space and registration desk for Jalen's establishment. Normally this room is staffed by Falltee (**G1**), Nyles (**14**), an Ogre Porter (either Goomba or Serios from **G6**), and a trio of Goblin Runners. The entry fee of 25 gp paid in **9** or **23** includes a complimentary meal and day of rest at the Inn. If guests wish to remain longer, lodging is available at 20 gold per day in one of the Inn's eight vacant, double-occupancy Guest Rooms. Long-term lodging is available at a discount, but all fees must be paid in advance. Large brass room keys are presented to those paying to become lodgers. If further services are required, Nyles sends a Goblin Runner to fetch Les Clefdors, the Concierge, from his normal station in **17** to the west. Guests are registered in a large troghide bound log* with quill and ink. Coins are deposited into a slot atop a heavy iron chest with three locks (the keys for which are either with Jalen or Pullo). The chest is emptied every few days and the gold is transported to **13**. On the wall behind the desk are the following posts, painted in the common tongue: "*Welcome to Jalen's Halfway Inn! May your stay be safe and your dreams fulfilled. Absolutely no manner of threat or offending action shall be permitted within the Halfway Inn! Violators will be removed from the premises…or beaten…or decapitated…or fed to Gar-Ghulii…or worse*!" Below this message are 14 hash-marks etched into the stone; a count of past guests who have in fact been fed to Gar-Ghulii (see **15**). A row of carved message box niches in the wall behind the desk are numbered 1-22, each with a hook set into the stone below it. Observant characters might notice that box 13 is not marked, and there is no key hang-


The Twisted Faerie Queen
Yffrit
37
RT43B
25
node
25B
to 2nd
24
24B
3B
3
The Howling Rift
Halfway Inn
2
1
to 1st
18
19
9
12
to 1st
26
Lair of the Feral Fangs
28B,C,D
27
28
20
G7
G8
17
G3
G2
10
G5
11
5
36
31
31B,C
FC32B
30
29
21
J.L.
S
21B
4
Halfway Inn
22
G10
G9
G14
G15
G17
G1
G4
G6
G21
G22
15
Gar-Ghulii
23
G11
G12
16
G13
G16
G20
G19
G18
35
FC32B
32
38
38B,C
5
A
42B
RT43B
16B
45
13
A
B
42
Roaches
C
to 8th
41
43
node
RT43B
43B
46
FC32B
14
34
33
6
B
to 2nd
39
to 6th
Ramp
RT43B
48
node
Digger Holes
7
to 6th
40
44
Jhimyn
The Cricket King
47
50B
The Digger King
8
to 8th
LOWER CAVES
of the DARKNESS BENEATH
49
FC32B
50

ing there. Vacant rooms have a pair of keys for potential guests hanging from a hook. (*If characters are able to read the registry they might gain knowledge of the current guests, the names under which they are registered, and their room numbers. The referee should feel free to expand on the older pages and records in the log if desired.)

**11. Coat Room.** This chamber stores gear, packs, armor, and other heavy equipment for day guests or those lodged at the Inn. There is all manner of adventuring miscellany here, hung on pegs or stowed in piles, many covered in dust. There is nothing magical here, just standard gear – enough to open an outfitting store, in fact. Ropes, Sacks, Packs, Poles, Spikes, Mallets, Grappling Hooks, Chests, Spears, Halberds, Picks, Torches, Lanterns, Helmets, Armor, Shields, Boots, Bows, Arrows, Crossbows, Bolts, a large wooden Litter, a pair of wicker Bird Cages with long deceased canaries, a crude Mining Cart, a ramshackle Wheel-Barrow, a heavy Battering Ram, a malfunctioning Greek Fire Cart, four Kegs of Naphtha, a mummified Dwarf, a brass Trumpet, and a bag with seven Human Skulls are just the beginning; the referee should feel free to add to this list. All of the equipment is sorted by living and deceased or missing guests. The above miscellany all falls into the latter category, and is available for use by guests provided they slip the pair of Goblin Runners here a bit of gold to 'look the other way'. Jalen wishes to see most of this junk disposed of, and if he is approached about the equipment, he will happily give it all away as long as it is removed and not returned to his Inn. On the east wall is a secret passage which eventually leads to the **back door** entrance on Level One (or a dungeon of your own devising).

**12. Coop's Workshop**. This cave serves as Coop's magical workshop and tinker room. Coop is normally found here, in his room at **G5**, or in the Pub at **17-18**. Members of *The Roaches* (**13C**) are often present, helping Coop with errands and odd jobs or just keeping an eye on things for him. Coop has developed a form of conjuring and enchanting called *Tinker Magic*. Through the use of this unique sorcery, Coop has been able to create life-like miniature production facilities. *Tinker Magic* is the creation of a world in miniature which is carefully controlled and monitored by Coop, and tended to by miniature life forms called *Tinks*. Recently, Coop has begun infusing the *Tinks* with human-like traits and personalities. In fact, Coop is becoming so engrossed with his *Tinker Magic* that more often than not he is to be found in either the *Micro-Farm* or the *Micro-Brewery*, observing and interacting with his tiny creations. The cave is a haphazard mess of tables, desks, shelves, stands, chairs, papers, diagrams, books, scribing materials, raw clockwork materials, spare parts, tools, magnifying glasses, jeweler's loops, etc. Of note is a long workbench on the north side of the cave, over which is suspended a *Sun Globe*. This delicate brass and glass device is designed to replicate day and night for the *Tinker World* creation resting below it. *Tinker World* is home to Coop's *Micro-Farm* and the *Micro-Brewery,* both populated with life-like *Tinks*. A magic *Clockworks Box* of brass rests on a desk near the workbench. It holds 42 charges of *Tinker-Passage* which shrinks the user and his items, sending him to *Tinker World*. On a book-stand near this workbench is Coop's *Tinker Magic Book*, which contains the spells for creating his life-forms, as well as the spells *Tinker-Passage*, *Tinker-Growth* (this spell transforms anything micro-item retrieved from Tinker World to 100 times its size), and *Tinker-Mule* (usable only in Tinker World, summons a mule for loading supplies. All supplies so loaded will be transported back to the cave when the caster exits Tinker World). *Tinker World* itself looks like a tiny replica diorama of the surface world beneath a thick glass dome some 4' round. Amongst other details *Tinker World* includes both the *Micro-Farm* and *Micro-Brewery*. The farm is a 'real life' operating farm and orchard in miniature. It is used to supply the Inn with produce, water, meat, dairy products and herbs. The brewery is a 'real life' operating brewery and distillery in miniature. It is used to supply the Inn with beer, ale, lager, stout and liquor. Output is limited only by Coop's daily spell usage. The rest is left to the referee to flesh out, but many potential adventures in *Tinker World* await.

**13. Inn Bank and Roach Hide-out**. This room is controlled by the Banker, **Cici** (aka CC, The Crafty Cozener), and her reluctant minions *The Roaches*. The inhabitants of this room are present due to dealings Jalen has with the organized crime network in Marchand. Cici is an attractive woman of 28 years, cunning, convincing and confident. Cici operates the Inn Bank and Vault here, and is charged with turning a profit by undervaluing treasure during transactions, charging hidden fees, miscounting coins, and charming customers with her disarming demeanor. Cici claims to be Jalen's niece, but she is actually a fugitive from Marchand who skims all of the treasure here, sending along a smart profit to the crime organization on the surface. *The Roaches* are a gang of street urchins based in Marchand: a junior thieves' guild of sorts. Members are human children from nine to twelve years of age. As far as Guests are concerned, they are the orphaned children of slain adventurers. *The Roaches*, aside from their 'leader' **Bonedust**, have come here to hide out from the heat. *The Roaches* are ornery, smart-mouthed, ill-mannered hoodlums. Jalen calls them the "*Surly Youts*", but puts up with their antics as a favor to his surface connections. *The Roaches* reluctantly help and perform duties here in the Inn, and they actually have taken to both Coop and Pullo. They respect Jalen, but dislike most other adults. At every chance they will play games and tricks or test out their skill at pilfering. Members of the gang carry juvenile devices for creating diversions or making hasty retreats: slingshots, marbles, 'jacks'-like mini caltrops, oil vials, glue pots, trip wires, pocket knives, etc. Other members of *The Roaches* are the girls **Sunshine, Pineapple, Farina** and **Breezy**, and the boys **Wheezer, Chubby, Woim, Waldo, Junior,**

**Stinky** and **Froggy**. These children retreat or beg for mercy rather than fighting when cornered. Jalen often has to step in to reprimand his 'niece' Cici, or the youngsters, to keep the peace here in the Inn, as they seem to be getting into shenanigans and chicanery at nearly every turn.

**13A. Banker's Desk and Guard Post**. Cici sits on a bench behind a stone table here when conducting business. The table is flanked by a pair of **Ogres** (DC 5, Spd 9, HD 4+1, Dam 1 die+2) at all times. Cici keeps the Vault Key on a necklace. Services include converting coins into gems or silver into gold, evaluating and purchasing loot, storing deposited treasure, investment accounts, and loans. Optionally, Cici might have a limited stock of potions and scrolls available for purchase at ridiculously high rates, perhaps even an unclaimed magic weapon or other device which could aid the PCs if they can weather her gouging.

**13B. Inn Bank Vault**. This stout block room consists of mortared stones 3' thick, with a locked door to the south. It also serves as Cici's bedroom. The exact contents of the vault are left to the referee. It does contain quite a small fortune; mostly the valuables of the Inn's current guests. Unclaimed treasure becomes the property of Jalen after Cici takes a 10% cut; this form of income is perhaps the most lucrative of all the Bank's enterprises.

**13C. Roach Hide-out**. The west wall of this area appears to be no more than rubble and large stones. There are actually three concealed crawlways here, barely large enough for *The Roaches* who use them to access their hideout beyond. The hideout is what one might expect from a gang of children. Of note is a large painted message here, which quotes their true leader in the common tongue: "*Per Cici: This is not My Gang, this is* ***Our Gang****! Remember that, Roaches*!" There are various cots and bedrolls here, and the whole place is an absolute mess, organized to provide hiding spots for both the children and their valuables.

**14. Digger Holes**: A large cavern, absolutely off-limits to guests, serves as home for *The Diggers*. These **Goblins** (DC 6, Spd 6, HD 1-1, Dam 1 die) are the miners and construction crew for the Inn. Diggers may be hired as henchmen provided Jalen gives consent. The cost is 200 gold, of which one-half is paid to Jalen and one-half to Magwire. The Goblins are only good for carrying packs, torches, or shields as well as providing limited knowledge of mining and construction. They will of course defend themselves, but will not lead any attacks. They live in dug-out holes in the floor here and tend to the oil pools to the south. A large natural well contains enough oil to keep the Inn alight for centuries. There are 88 Goblins here; most are nondescript and provide labor under the command of **Magwire**, King of The Diggers. Magwire's personal

guards are the Diggers **Wortle, Katrinka, Bang, Skipper** and **Hogg** (Magwire and his bodyguards all fight as **Hobgoblins**: DC 5, Spd 6, HD 1+1, Dam 1 die). **Nyles,** the Inn's Valet, also has a smartly appointed hole dug here. Magwire is kept happy with gold payments and a safe place to order his subjects around. Magwire's Goblin Hole is large, essentially a sublevel beneath this cave, and contains a Goblin's fortune in silver, gold and gems. Many of the Diggers have begun worshiping Gar-Ghulii (**15**), thinking it an awakened Elder One. Although Magwire does not approve, the Cult of the Pit, led by the witch-doctor **Woo-woo,** meets regularly to propitiate their god, sacrificing valuables, naughty Goblins, and fancy pebbles.

**15. Water Closets and Waste Pit**. This chamber holds a half-dozen crude water closets and a large central well used for waste disposal. Both the WC waste and the well drop down 15' to the ceiling of a much deeper cave. This Waste Pit, which is flooded with dank, murky water 6 feet deep, serves as Gar-Ghulii's lair. Jalen has ordered 14 guests to their death by having them dropped into the well here to be devoured by Gar-Ghulii. The foul creature's presence aids in the disposal of the Inn's rubbish, from which it gains nourishment between rare living snacks. Countless Goblins have either fallen or been pushed into this well, so many that the Diggers have a superstitious fear of what lies below. Gar-Ghulii requires a few minutes to awaken, but then stalked eyes, a dozen tentacles, and razor-sharp scythe-like appendages will arise from the water all around the room. Gar-Ghulii can attack up to twelve targets each round and its body forms a floor beneath the pool of water here. Treat the tentacles as Hydra heads with Troll-like regeneration. (**Gar-Ghulii**: DC 5 Spd 0 HD 12 Dam 1 die, 12 attacks/round). Lodged in Gar-Ghulii's innards is the fist-sized Big Honkin' Pearl (50,000 gp value). There is graffiti throughout the upper room. In common: "*Old Tekkos shat here*" beneath which is "*Young Zhoolg had an accident here*", and then "*Yeah...he was polishing his wand and it went off in his hand*". In Goblin: "*Gar-Ghulii is watching you have stage fright*", and "*Flush twice, it's a long way to the Dark Troll Citadel*", also "*For a good time, visit room 13*", and, "*Gar-Ghulii ATE your god of men*", lastly "*As well as the world's biggest honking Pearl*". Old Tekkos and Young Zhoolg are friends and one-time Inn guests, both now supposedly adventuring deeper in *The Darkness Beneath*.

**16. "Shady" Schamn's Game Parlor**. Various tables, benches, stools and chairs fill this gaming room. There is activity here around the clock as the gambling action attracts Ogres, Goblins, guests, staff members, and sometimes even Dark Trolls! A large sign is posted to each wall stating in the common tongue that "*Cheaters shall be punished to the fullest extent of the CLAW*". The CLAW is Jalen's version of running the gauntlet, comprised of two assembled lines of 20 Diggers armed with pick-axes. "Shady" Schamn (**16B**) has a well-trained crew to run the tables, and they are reliable even when he is not present. The staff is comprised of Vaettes (see Appendix) who return to their invisible homes when not working for Schamn. No one is sure how Schamn is able to control the Vaettes, and anyone who knows enough about them is not going to pry. Although the Vaettes could easily cheat customers, or even aid them, they do not care whether customers win or lose. They can, however, easily detect when someone is cheating. There are six main tables running bets, and the staff of bankers always has a large mound of gold at each table. The basic rules for the six standard "bones" games (with their real world names in parentheses) are as follows:

**Hydra** (*Klondike* with no Full House or Straight): Normal Limit is 100. Bettors make wagers against the bank. Once wagers are placed, the banker rolls 5d6, then the players in turn roll the same dice, once each, trying to beat the banker's roll. Combinations are ranked, lowest to highest, as one pair, two pair, three of a kind, four of a kind and five of a kind. The banker wins ties, and the numerical value of the rolls is not relevant, just the combinations. *Payoff is 1 to 1.*

**King's Coin** (*Coin-Die Game*): Limit is preset to 1, 5 or 10 per unit. Players flip a coin and then roll the die. If the coin comes up heads, the player wins and receives twice the number of units shown on the die. If the coin comes up tails, the banker wins and is paid four units plus the number of units shown on the die. This is normally a game with unit value set at 1, 5 or 10 gold. Thus, when the unit is set to 5 gold, a bettor who flips tails and rolls a 5 owes the banker 45 gold. *Variable Payoff.*

**Twenty-five** (*Qualify*): Normal Limit is 100. Players place wagers before dice are rolled. Each player in turn has five throws, the first with 5d6, putting the highest die to one side after each roll and throwing with the remainder. After the last throw the five dice put aside are totaled. If the sum is 25 or more, the player wins and takes his stake back with an equal amount of the banker's. If the sum is 24 or less, the banker collects the player's stake. *Payoff is 1 to 1.*

**Two Bones** (*High Dice*): Normal Limit is 10. The most basic game played here. Players lay a wager and the banker rolls 2d6. Then the players in turn roll the same dice, once each, trying to beat the banker's total. The banker wins ties. *Payoff is 1 to 1.*

**Dagger** (*Twelve Up*): Normal Limit is 10. A simple game played with 1d6. Players lay bets against the bank and pick a number between 14 and 18. They then roll a single d6, continuing to do so while totaling the values thrown until they reach a sum over twelve. If the total is 13, they lose and the banker takes the wager. If the total is the number they chose, they win and receive back their wager plus an equal amount from the banker. If any other total is thrown, no one wins or loses. A slower moving game with

possible free plays, Dagger is very popular with casual gamblers. *Payoff is 1 to 1.*

**Scepter and Crown** (none): 2d6, one roll. Bettor is attempting to roll a Scepter (3) and a Crown (6) in a single roll of 3-6 or 6-3. This is the lone high Payoff game and normally has no limit. S&C, as it is called, plays so quickly that it is often limited to serious gamblers only despite the poor odds. Payoff is 12 to 1.

**16B. Schamn's Cave**. "Shady" Schamn's bedroom and vault. "Shady" is middle-aged, quick of wit, energetic, and easy to chat with. Somewhat plain, his smile is unmistakable and his handshake firm. Schamn is no adventurer, but is a long-time friend of Jalen. At one time Schamn had amassed great wealth on the surface world, but his less-than-scrupulous means of gaining coin left him with more than a few enemies. Seeking refuge, the gambler couldn't pass up Jalen's invitation to run a Game Parlor here in the relative safety of the Halfway Inn. Still a marked man, "Shady" is protected by the Vaettes who consider him an odds-making genius and welcome him to their secret realm on a regular basis in order to try and best him at games of chance. His nickname is derived from the fact that this hopeless gambling addict has an uncanny ability to create favorable odds for any wager. "Shady" will gamble on virtually any situation, and has a long-standing custom of taking bets as to whether certain Inn guests will live or die. Schamn's dreams have been visited by Ylfrit before, but not in ages. Aside from a pocketful of gems for gambling, Schamn stores his valuables at the Inn Bank. The vault holds the Parlor's daily winnings which are transferred to the bank on a regular basis.

**17. The Trampled Crown**. Tavern and gathering area for the Inn, with tables, booths and chandeliers. The area is staffed by Goblins training under Les Clefdors (**G1**), who serves as host when not attending to his Concierge duties. Standard fare (stew, meat pie and bread from *Tinker World*) is included with lodging, but special dishes, which vary from day to day, are available for 5-15 gp extra. Specials include *Roasted Trog Shank, Broiled Crab-man Claws, Bat Surprise, Dimshroom Pie, Deep Fried Raptor*, etc. At the center of the Tavern is a sunken area which is cleared of tables for a few hours each day. This serves as the Brawling Pit, where individuals have a go at nominally harmless grappling matches. From time to time Jalen will bring a captured monster here and allow Pullo or anyone willing to shed some blood the opportunity to take on a deadly foe in single combat. When the Brawling Pit is open the Tavern tends to be crammed full of gambling onlookers and revelers. At least once every few days Jaxine will perform her erotic *Dance of the Coiled Mystery*. Of late a rivalry has been brewing between Jaxine and current guest Tatjana, who Jalen has allowed to dance as well. Tatjana has quickly become a crowd favorite with her dazzling, hypnotc gyrations. Coins shower down from the crowd after each dance while a typically out of tune Goblin Band supplies strange pipe, string and drum music.

**18. The Moistened Bint**. This roomy cave is nearly always busy with customers. It boasts a curving 25 foot long bar, seemingly carved from the stone floor of the cave, and similarly fashioned shelves of stone line the walls. Nearly all of the Graeth artifacts discovered during Jalen's renovation have been moved here, hanging from the walls, placed in niches, or adorning the bar itself. The central area is open and surrounded by recovered Graeth stone furnishings; low couches, settees, benches, stands and tables. The bar is staffed at all times by one of the Dwarf bartenders in Jalen's employ; **Boyid**, **Melone** or **Pantyuzo** (**G4**). Goblin bar backs keep the booze stocked, and can be seen scurrying back and forth behind the bar and up and down a wide spiral staircase in the back wall. Below the bar is the store room (**18B**). **Fare** (with price) includes *Tangled Ale* (2), *Five Hop Lager* (2), *Gargoyle Stout* (3), *Coop's Own Porter* (5), barley wine (1), rot gut (1), hooch (2), corn liquor (3), and *Eel Juice* (5). All are served from the keg or cask into pewter mugs or jiggers (shots). The bar also serves as the **Inn Tobacconist**, selling *Common* (1) *Aromatic* (3) and *Fine* (5) tobacco by the cup, *Clay* (1) or *Carved Pipes* (5), and *Kindle Sticks* (1) by the box. An iron lock box, the contents of which are transferred to the Inn Bank regularly, lies beneath the bar and accepts coins through a small slot. It has a complex lock and opening mechanism, known only to the three bartenders. The bartenders are the best source of rumors here in the Halfway Inn, and tipping them well is the only way to learn these rumors. See **RUMORS FROM THE MOISTENED BINT** in the **TABLES** section of **The Appendix**.

**18B. Bar Cellar and Ogre Lair**. Accessed by a spiral stair from **18**, this storeroom is lined with stacked kegs of beer and casks of liquor. Shelves and bins hold cleaning tools, drinking vessels and various bar tools. At the far end of the cellar is a large smelly beer stained cave which the **Ogres** (DC 5, Spd 9, HD 4+1, Dam 1 die+2) working for Jalen use while off-duty. These huge monsters are permitted to drink their fill while here, and the lair is always littered with empty kegs which are used like enormous beer vessels by the Ogres. There will be 2 or 3 of them here, drinking, drunk, or asleep. Ogres are sent to work in the Inn by the Ogre Overlord, toiling here for a period of 50 days and consuming as much beer as possible until replacements from the Ogre Downs arrive to relieve them.

**19. Tenhove's Kitchen**. Just off of the Moistened Bint is the steamy, smoky Kitchen run by **Tenhove** and **Teabuck Ten** (Appendix). This cave was selected to be the Kitchen due to the fresh water spring and stone chimneys formed naturally here. Chef Tenhove and his brother the Sous-Chef, Teabuck, truly enjoy cooking and take great pride in their hobby. A few Goblin cooks help roast, steam, simmer, bake, broil and grill various foodstuffs from *Tinker*

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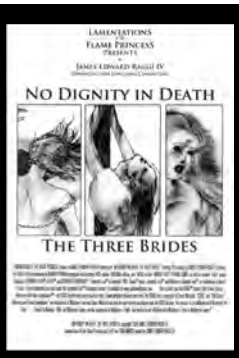


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*World*. There is a huge fire pit at the room's center, a large bronze soup pot, a pair of brick and clay ovens, an iron smoker, and neatly stored ingredients and serving dishes. The Kitchen is well stocked with utensils and tools, including a particularly valuable gold handled cutlery set of finely crafted razor sharp obsidian highly prized by Teabuck (12,000 gold to the right buyer). While Tenhove and Teabuck normally get along very well, they often fall into heated arguments while trying to cook together. It is not unusual to hear shouting and the clanging of thrown pots or pans emanating from the Kitchen.

**20. Pullo's Room**. The black skinned **Pullo** (War 6) is a massively muscled, one-time professional Gladiator who now serves as Jalen's Pit Champion and bodyguard. His elbows, knees, forehead and hamhock fists are an irresistible force in the ring. Gruff and stand-offish, Pullo is a seasoned bully who enjoys mixing it up with all comers. A loyal friend, the former Gladiator owes his life to Jalen. These days Pullo rarely goes adventuring, and when the *Trap-Springers* do venture deep into the dungeons below he tends willingly to be charged with keeping order in Jalen's absence. Pullo's room is a ramshackle mess, containing all sorts of martial training devices. The only order at all to the room is the neat, straight path from one door to the other which is used by both Jalen and Jaxine to pass through. Jalen can often be found here sparring with Pullo or trying to best him in feats of strength. Included in this mess is a chest containing silver and gol, and a pair of closets stuffed with a veritable arsenal of arms and armor. Pullo sees Ylfrit in his dreams from time to time.

**21. Jalen's Room**. Jalen's room is sparsely decorated. His most valuable possessions are locked away in **21B**, but Jalen has placed a not-so-well-hidden chest beneath his bed that might satisfy burglars and prevent them from searching for his vault. It contains silver, gold, and a dozen gems. The chamber holds a bed, closet, desk and a few chairs all resting upon a gigantic *Hydra Hide Rug* (worth 3,500 gp). Both secret doors here are magically-locked and require a password to open ("Tirfly"). Jaxine, Jalen's current love interest, sleeps here as well. Jaxine is a stunningly attractive, exotic woman from a far-off culture. The temptress loves to flirt, and even the famous Longspear will not be able to keep her happy forever. Of course, Jalen is the only one who knows her true nature. **Jaxine the Werepython:** DC 4, Spd 6, HD 6, Dam 1 die+2, Special: Constrict. Jalen's full description is in the appendix.

**21B. Jalen's Vault.** The exact contents are determined by the referee, if necessary. The vault holds half a dozen chests loaded with gold and gems, as well as Jalen's personal adventuring gear (described in the appendix). A *Bag of Holding* in one of the chests contains all that is left of Jalen's famous adventure into the Valley of Giant Diamonds, four enormous rough uncut diamonds. The actual value of the Giant Diamonds is difficult to estimate, if it is even possible. Most important is Jalen's prized possession, his magic spear *Crimson Hate*. Note that whenever the spear sits idly for an hour, its masks itself with invisibility.

**22. Trophy Room**. This chamber serves as a quiet relaxation spot away from the bar or tavern. There are unusual pieces of carved Graeth furniture here, including chairs, couches and tables. The floor is covered with a woven *Roc Feather Rug* (2,000 gp) and the walls are decorated with portraits (mostly of Jalen, detailing his adventures), curios, skulls, pelts, skins, shields, weapons and other items of note. Chief among these trophies are the following items (with approximate collector's value): a massive *Dragon Skull Chandelier* (8,000), a *Black Pudding Bean Bag Chair* (2,800), a stuffed and mounted *Human-headed Chimera* (3,500), a *Cockatrice Feather Coat* (4,000) worn by a *Deactivated Bone Golem* (1,800) with a sign saying "Do Not Touch", an enormous *Big Skull Throne* (6,500), a *Solid-Ivory Pedestal* (5,000) atop of which is a stasis globe holding a *Miniature Black Golem* (12,500), a huge *Gold Plaque* (12,000) upon which Ylfrit's Poem (see Appendix) is etched in an ancient tongue, a mounted *Frost Giant Claymore* (4,000) broken in three pieces and still covered in ice, a *Petrified Elder Sphinx* (6,000) adorned with a *Scarf of Medusa Serpent-Heads* (4,500), a carved *Jade Sarcophagus* (38,000) which is opened and filled with the fangs, horns, talons, claws, pincers, eyes and stingers of various underworld monsters, 12' up a *Shelf of Blue Quartz* (3,500) lines the room holding 200 Ettin skulls, a *Floating Vampire Statue* (5,000) is chained to the floor, etc. There is plenty more to be discovered by the characters, and Jalen can tell the story behind each trophy.

**23. West Gate**. This area is identical in all respects to the North Gate at **9**, save those detailed on the map.

**Guest Rooms (G):** Each of these natural caves is smartly appointed with a pair of cots, a pair of carved and curtained closets, a pair of lockable anchored large chests, a pair of wash basins with toiletries, and a pair of under-bed chamber pots. Goblin attendants with passkeys empty pots and change water daily. The Graeth-designed stone doors have been fitted with stout iron locks and interior dead bolts for privacy, and each bears a brass plaque identifying the room number (1 to 12 and 14 to 22). Many of the guest rooms are leased by various semi-permanent lodgers, including members of the Trap-Springers and Inn staff.

*Vacant Rooms*: **G7, G8, G9, G11, G15, G17, G21, G22**. These are all available. **G8** and **G9** were recently cleared out of possessions left by the former lodgers, The Marchand Rovers. The four adventuring mates have still not returned from their last delve into the dungeon over two weeks ago (see **28B**).

**G1**. **Falltee** and **Les Clefdors**. The Elf Falltee is the Inn Manager. Overworked, jittery, sarcastic and often sneering.

Les is the Concierge. A man of 35, polite, accommodating and overachieving unless tipped poorly by guests.

**G2**. **Orlaith the Younger**. See Appendix.

**G3**. **Tenhove Ten** and **Teabuck Ten.** See Appendix.

**G4**. **Boyid**, **Melone** and **Pantyuzo**, the three Dwarf bartenders. Boyid is the youngest and somewhat thick-headed. Melone is the self-proclaimed Bar Manager and is well-liked but bossy. Pantyuzo, the eldest, is somewhat forgetful and prone to nonsense.

**G5**. **Coop Falter** and **Gargo Greengas**. See Appendix.

**G6**. **Goomba** and **Serios**. These two Ogre Porters (DC 5, Spd 9, HD 4+1, Dam 1 die+2) are charged with carrying packs and chests for guests to and from their rooms, the coat room, the vault, or wherever else is necessary. They both work for tips and get paid in room and board. Both were hired by Jalen after they worked as Guards for him here at the inn. Serios is convinced that he has strange, alien mental powers. Goomba is quiet and moody.

**G10**. **Marholm** (War 4) and **Triggs** (War 5). Marholm is a shady dealer, Triggs his bodyguard. Marholm is more or less a permanent guest, and has managed to establish a good business dealing in poisons, acids, potions, scrolls and other hard-to-find goods. Given time and gold, he can acquire nearly anything. Marholm has secured Multiversal Bazaar Tokens which he sells for 250 gp each. These allow passage to the Multiversal Bazaar deeper in the dungeon. Triggs is very loyal to Marholm and always sleeps with one eye open, though he has begun to see Ylfrit in his dreams.

**G12**. **Quigmoor** (Mage 5) and **Darmley** (War 3). Quigmoor is a nerdy, daydreaming bookworm prone to minor accidents. He arrived here in his search for Jhimyn (**44**) to learn about the lost Wizard's magical research. Darmley is Quigmoor's overworked eyes and ears and is normally burdened with the Thaumaturgist's books, quills, ink pots, parchment and other tools. Darmley is always keeping Quigmoor out of trouble. To complicate matters, Quigmoor is a notorious sleepwalker, prone to roaming the halls in a deep slumber while Darmley follows behind. Waking him while he's sleepwalking induces a fit of rage.

**G13**. **Sealed Guest Room**. Rognvald's Memory is here. The door to this guest room has been sealed and off limits for over a year now. The door itself is well-concealed but a Dwarf or Elf would sense it rather easily, and inspection could locate the shoddy Goblin mortar job. Inside the room, and arising from time to time, is a strange haunting brought about by the Taint. An unnatural force awakens and paces the room, appearing as a faint ghost-like form. It mumbles and moans in ancient Graeth, and slowly begins to pace faster and speak louder, eventually running about screaming and howling strange words. Included in those words might be smatterings recognized as Ylfrit, Hjorvart, Graeth, etc. Between these fits the form scrawls upon the walls of the room in Graeth. Deciphering reveals that the form is Rognvald, Ylfrit's son and former Prince; seeking his mother's approval and affection.

**G14**. **Valahimt** (War 4) and **Tatjana** (Mag 5). Valahimt and Tatjana are traveling gypsies from another world. Valahimt is a highly skilled tattoo artist, and Tatjana, who poses as her mate's concubine, is an erotic dancer and seductress. Valahimt will ink customers, and for the right price will work with Tatjana to create magic tattoos. Both guests are evil but have no defined motivations here. Valahimt is being visited by Ylfrit nightly now, and is on the path to accepting her embrace, much to Tatjana's dismay. Tatjana has caught Jalen's eye while Valahimt is ignorant of Jaxine's jealous advances.

**G16**. **Sleeping-Bear** (Pr 5) and **Silent-Wolf** (War 2). Sleeping-Bear is a large, burly shaman from another world. Normally performing odd rituals in his room, the Chief, as the other guests call him, is quiet and brooding. Silent-Wolf is betrothed to the Chief, and is certainly his better half. Charming and friendly, she is worried about what is happening to her husband. Sleeping-Bear has one spell-like power allowing him to shape shift into a huge **Grizzly Bear** (DC 7, Spd 9, HD 6+1, Dam 1 die+2) three times per day for 60 minutes. He is currently enthralled with Ylfrit, and will likely seek her out soon if he can recruit aid.

**G18**. **Shenydar**. Shenydar the Orc (DC 6, Spd 9, HD 1, Dam 1 die) is Inn Custodian. The mustached handy-man performs all sorts of odd jobs while sauntering around acting like a lady's man. His every step is accompanied by the jingling tools hanging from his belt, and he wears a leather vest covered with buttoned pockets. Jalen captured Shenydar when he was a wee Orc-lad and raised him while adventuring with the *Trap-Springers*. Eventually no trap or locked door could slow Shenydar down, and Jalen still calls on him in times of need.

**G19**. **Gloam**. Gloam once roomed in **G13** until the nightly visits of Rognvald's Memory drove him out. Gloam wanders the Inn babbling gibberish and having jerky spasms. Having arrived with a vast fortune, Gloam's room is more than paid for. Unfortunately, all of Gloam's retainers abandoned him long ago. Something of a novelty here, Gloam never hurts anyone and seldom stays in one spot long enough to annoy. Jalen calls him the Whale Prince, and no one remembers how he got the nickname Gloam. Driven mad by Ylfrit's Embrace, Gloam wishes the Queen would visit his dreams again; alas she no longer does. Gloam is in actuality *Owain Glyndwr, former Prince of Wales*.

**G20**. **Rum-Tum** and **Morto**. This pair of Ogres (DC 5, Spd 9, HD 4+1, Dam 1 die+2), Rum-Tum (the Wrecker)

and Morto (the Maker), are posing as envoys from the Ogre Overlord, sent to negotiate with Jalen. They are actually in the employ of a nefarious crime boss in the Ogre Downs and are here to abduct Jaxine and return her to her former lover in a distant land across the sea. The two are getting cold feet now that they see the difficulty the job presents, but aren't brave enough to return empty-handed. The pair did not arrive here ill-prepared and each is an accomplished thug. Morto is the brains and Rum-Tum the brawn of the outfit.

**C. West Tunnels** (**24-32**): The natural, ancient cave formations of both the East and West Tunnels present navigational challenges which the referee may choose to ignore should a more traditional dungeon crawl be desired. The wild variation in floor depth and ceiling height produces a maze of horizontal and vertical obstacles which slow movement to a maximum of 6 and severely limit the effectiveness of light sources. The age-old cavern network is marked by looming stalactites, teetering stalagmites, ominous columns, massive flowstones, jagged concretions, dead drop shafts and other natural formations. Unless an area is specifically described as flat, assume that travel throughout demands careful and cautious footsteps. Strange sounds echo all around; the fluttering of wings, the dripping of water, the sliding of stones, and sometimes the distant call of the unknown. The very weight of the world threatens to crash in on the characters as they explore these hazardous caves and passages.

**24. Pit of Never**. This gaping 30' wide hole in the floor drops to a narrow crevice, filled with scree and jagged stalagmites. The walls slant ever slightly inward, meeting at the bottom 90' below. Hidden from plain view, 60' down, is a crawlspace tunnel which runs haphazardly 35' and opens into the Great Guano Gallery (**24B**). During the night there is a chance that thousands upon thousands of bats will be traveling through here from the crawlspace to the chimney above or vice versa depending upon the hour. **Bat Chimney**: High in the ceiling above the Pit of Never, concealed by stone boxwork, is a small chimney which eventually squirrels up to the surface in the Jagged Plinths. Negotiating this chimney would require great climbing skill, stamina, courage, and hours of exhaustive exertion. The tunnel to the west appears to be caved in (see **25B**). To the north is the **Winding Passage** which connects to Level Two (or a dungeon level of your own devising).

**24B. Great Guano Gallery**. The only entrance to this area is from the crawlspace in the Pit of Never, which opens 60' above the floor here at the top of the wall. A cacophony of bat wings fluttering bombards this area with constant echoes during the day. The floor of the cave forms a mound in the center. Further inspection will reveal that the entire floor is layer upon layer of (mostly dried) guano. Beneath ages of deposit, in the mound, is a long-forgotten stone carving of a great face (Easter Island Head). It will require many hours of labor to excavate the Stone Face. Anyone taking the time to do so will see that it is carved with unrecognizable hieroglyphs. Studying the hieroglyphs will give the vague impression that this huge carving was transported here centuries ago, from a remote island filled with similar such carvings by what would seem to be bat people. The bat people worshiped the Stone Face and brought men to it for ritual sacrifice. What became of the bat people is not known, nor is the reason for moving the carving here. If the Stone Face is toppled, which requires great force, a recessed niche will be revealed in the floor below. This niche holds the mummified remains of Anyoodwei, a long-dead bat person, along with 52 large gold discs (each worth 25 gold) and a jeweled amulet on a gold chain (***Amulet of Memory***: allows Mag or Pr to cast one 1st and 2nd level spell each day without removing it from his or her memorized spell list. Must be worn while memorizing and may not be "shared" between characters).

**25. Spirit Pool.** One of the three ancient Fae magic nodes, the Spirit Pool is now corrupted by the spread of Taint. This large natural pool was once clean and clear with vibrant power, but is now swirling and murky from a dark green glow within. Huddled around the pool is a mass of Pale Spawn, some chanting ominously. These savage, devolved Fae will notice intruders on a cumulative 1 in 6 chance each round. The characters will be attacked by the entire group if spotted. (**Pale Spawn** (22+11): DC 7, Spd 9, HD 2+1, Dam 1 die, each round 1d3-1 more appear.) Anyone coming within 10' of the pool must save vs. magic as they subject themselves to an arcane attack from the Tainted Spirit Pool. Failure indicates that a Psyche Swap has occurred. One of the long-dead spirits within the pool has traded places with the victim. These spirits are random psyches from other worlds and times. The Psyche Swap will last for 1d6 minutes, at the end of which victims will emerge exhausted and jabbering about a near-death experience and how they remembered to not "go towards the light". Other entities present include **Evil Roots** (8): DC 7, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special, protect the edges of the Spirit Pool. There are four **Foul Saplings:** DC 9, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special, within the room, and a large Root Tunnel is in one of the walls. **Root Tunnels** (see **43B**): 8' diameter Root Tunnels connect this room to **42B**, **43B** and **48**. Referees should make note of **Cleansing the Caves** in **The Taint**, section IV.

**25B. Crumbled Crawlway**. At first glance the tunnels here appear to be sealed off from the collapsed ceiling. However, a safe crawlway worms its way through both passages, provided one is willing to crawl virtually blind along its course. Those entering will hear the sound of a few **Chirping Crickets**. The noise slowly increases in intensity, and soon it will sound as if a swarm of crickets has joined in an insect symphony. The cacophony continues as long as anyone is in the area. Those with INT 13+ will swear they can almost make out words in the cricket song.

**26. Collapsed Gallery**. Stone fragments of every size have shattered on the floor here, including an enormous chunk of stalagmitic floor. A mass of concretions developed long ago in this collapse, and traversing the area is challenging and dangerous. There is no visible path, and every step seems to cause shifting stone and sliding pebbles. A large Feral Fang lair is hidden high in the ceiling. The beasts sense movement and stealthily crawl out from the holes above, seeking to attack with surprise. **Feral Fangs** (26): DC 6, Spd 12, HD 3, Dam 1 die, Paralyzing Gaze. 26 Fangs make their lair here, but a number of their kind might be on the prowl in other parts of the Lower Caves.

**27. Fallen Towers**: Gigantic blocks of stone dominate this cave, the remains of once-strong columns. Water drips constantly from above and has coated the blocks, which range in diameter from 8' to 15', in a damp sheen. The floor of the cave is slippery and unusually treacherous.

**28. Flowstone Nook**. This rocky, jagged cave has two notable features. The first is an unusually large pale yellow Flowstone, 18 feet high, which reaches from wall to floor. Beneath the massive stone is a well-concealed nook, accessed by a narrow gap 2' wide and 4' tall. Within the nook are the remains of a Wild West Bandito with a fancy Felt Sombrero; his boots are missing, but in his tightly clinched fists is a pair of **Six-Shooters** (treat all targets as DC 9, Range 90 feet, Damage 2 dice). Each Six-Shooter has two rounds remaining, and there is a leather bandoleer holding 28 more rounds. Use of these, if they are sorted out, will nearly always demand a Wandering Monster roll. The referee shall decide who, if anyone can use these oddities. Awakening in the dark recesses is a foul **Dread Lurker**: DC 2 (only hit by magic), Spd 6, HD 6, Dam special. The second notable feature is a large crack in the floor to the north, which opens in a straight plunge to **28B**. An anchored rope dangles down into this crevasse, but it extends only 25 feet, having been cut or severed.

**28B. The Yawning Chasm**. The plunge from the floor of **28** opens high above the Yawning Chasm at the very peak that forms the ceiling of this large area. The chasm is so deep it might as well have no floor. It is left to the referee to decide the depth, whether it is bottomless, or whether it terminates on another, lower dungeon level. Directly beneath the plunge and ceiling peak, 70' down, is a stone bridge. Called **Anso's Arch**, this 55' long arch bridge spans the Yawning Chasm in an east-west direction. Anso's Arch is only 8 feet wide, but is solid and sure. The bridge is decorated with four stone statues, one toppled and the others reaching for the ceiling above. At the eastern end of the bridge lies **28C**, and to the west, **28D**. The statues are in fact what is left of **The Marchand Rovers**, all turned to stone by the beast beneath the bridge, the Stone Wretch. These four adventurers, Ephrii Jae (War 5), Gowizch (DWar 5), Ivilmic Aamit (Mag 5), Risnor (Pr 6), might yet be saved. The **Stone Wretch** (DC 2 (only hit by magic), Spd 0, HD 14, Dam 3 dice+3, Special: Breathe, Gaze) awakens as soon as anyone sets foot on Anso's Arch. It begins creating a rumble from below in 3 rounds. By round 5 it will have extended its massive stone-snake like form from the wall of the chasm below, and rise up above the characters in order to slay them.

**28C. Fleyerg's Grotto**. An old stone door at the east end of Anso's Arch opens to a stairwell leading down to Fleyerg's Grotto, at the bottom of which are some items discarded by the Goblins in the pool: two shields, a mace, a short sword, and a sack containing delving sundries. This large 40' diameter nearly spherical cave is adorned with natural pale flower-like halite formations and is half-filled with murky water. At the center of the room, rising 8 feet above the water is a stone pillar, 18' away from the cave walls and the landing beneath the entry steps. Atop this old stone column is a 3' tall squatting imp-like idol carved from quartz, now coated with the grime of ages and difficult to discern. A handful of stones might be seen floating in the pool, and at its bottom, beneath the idol, are three dead Goblin Diggers, former hirelings of The Marchand Rovers. The entire pool has a permanent "reverse buoyancy" effect: that which should float sinks, while that which should sink floats. Moving the idol sets off a trap as the cave rotates with a violent jolt, blocking the entry passage

and exit and possibly toppling the intruders. This rotation also exposes an otherwise blocked water-filled conduit which allows more reverse buoyancy effect water to flood in and fill the room in 6 rounds. 6 rounds later the room will reset and the water will slowly return to its normal level. Replacing the idol during the 6 round initial sequence will reset the trap. Anyone able to see into the pillar beneath the idol will notice it is hollow and creates a steep shaft dropping down 30 feet into darkness. In a small recessed area, at the bottom of this shaft are Fleyerg's remains. A mummified bat person, Fleyerg was buried with 74 large gold discs (each worth 25 gold), and a curved dagger fashioned from a dinosaur hind-claw (**Talon Rip**, Dagger, +1 to hit; if thrown by an Elf or other Fae-kind it has a range of 50 feet, is +2 to hit and deals two dice of damage, returning like a boomerang automatically).

**28D. Sjetnir's Tomb**. An old stone door at the west end of Anso's Arch opens to a stairwell, choked with thick curtains of cobwebs, leading down to Sjetnir's Tomb. The tomb itself is a 30x40 heavy block chamber with a low 4' ceiling, save an area at the center of the tomb where the bottom of a 10x10 shaft opens into it. The slabs and blocks in this room are broken, uneven, dislodged, and the entire place appears about to cave-in. Soaking up the Fae vibes here is a vicious pack of **Cryptlings** (11): DC 7/2, Spd 9, HD 3 (+4 to hit), Dam 1 die, The central shaft rises 20' to a burial niche. Within, very faintly coated in **Yellow Mold**, are the remains of Sjetnir, a mummified bat person interred with 57 large gold discs (each worth 25 gold), a pair of thick serpent-hide bracers (**Venom Creeps**: on a roll to hit of 20, the wearer's sharp or edged melee attacks inject the target with poison), and a dozen loose fangs, each drilled through with a small hole. If these fangs are strung together with a cord they will form a magical necklace (**Cinder's Teeth**, confers cat-like quickness, Spd 15 when unencumbered, +1 DC, and a bonus to saves, surprise and initiative when appropriate).

**29. Hall of Candles**. Sharp stalagmites coated with multi-faceted calcite crystals festoon this cave at varying heights. Light sources reflect and refract brilliantly off the crystals. Rays of golden light shift and dazzle, creating impressive patterns starkly in contrast with the looming shadows formed while moving through this area. Visitors shall hear **Whispers** as barely audible voices speaking in an indecipherable tongue. These voices might be audible to all, a select few, or a single PC only. This twisted tongue will shortly make sense to those that hear it, whispering devious suggestions or diabolical ideas. The voices continue to incite unseemly acts until the cave is exited.

**30. Deepening Pit**. Both of the entrances to this area end abruptly in sharp plunges above a vast round pit, the floor of which is 120' below and choked with stalagmites. Above both entrances, 15' up, are the two ends of the **Treacherous Traverse**: Carved by unknown craftsmen, this narrow path high above the Deepening Pit works its way around the east wall just below, between and through the heavy stalactites dangling from the ceiling. The steep, sheer walls of the pit are impossible to scale without proper gear and great care. Four long-dead explorers lie at the bottom of the pit, their possessions repeatedly picked over. Just beyond these remains is a narrow gap in the north wall of the pit which opens to a tunnel leading to the **Frostwork Conduit** (**32B**), connecting **32B**, **46** and **49** to this one.

**31. Entrance to King's Rest**. This area is decorated with stone carvings depicting the story of Hjorvart Graeth-King. A steep ramp leads down to **31B**. A group of six Gnomes has made camp here along with their packs and supplies. These world spanning Gnomish burglars are the **Madcappers**: Fidget, Og, Randall (L), Strutter, Vermin and Wally. Treat each as D 1 but with *Uncanny Luck*; essentially they are perpetually blessed with survival but not fortune. They have come here to plunder the resting place of the Twisted Faerie Queen. Randall has a scroll with a copy of Ylfrit's Poem (see Appendix) and a sketchy map showing the time-hole that allowed them to travel here. Currently waiting for Randall to formulate a plan, they occupy their time by gambling, arguing, fighting and drinking. Randall is worried that they have in fact once again entered the *Fortress of Ultimate Darkness*, and is weighing whether or not they should return through the time-hole...if only he could sort out his quickly drawn map.

**31B. Sparkling Grotto**. A wondrous sight to behold, nearly every surface in this grotto is covered in multi-hued crystalline spar. Footing is unsafe upon the slick, uneven floor, which surrounds a large stone carving at the center of the cave. Perched atop a wide base is an age-old statue of a Graeth (Giervald-Kingard) chiseled from a natural column extending above the handiwork to meet the ceiling. The statue will summon the spirit of Giervald if Hjorvart's possessions in **31C** are disturbed. A sealed stone door with Graeth carvings leads from the north wall to a narrow tunnel opening to **31C**. Opening this door will require super-human strength, or an *Opening Charm*. Doing so will release a **Wintry Gust;** a powerful blast of super chilled air sweeps through the area, blowing out all open flames as the Cryptlings in **31C** rush out and attack.

**31C. King's Rest**. Hjorvart's tomb has been ransacked by a pack of **Cryptlings** (14: DC 7/2, Spd 9, HD 3 (+4 to hit), Dam 1 die) that have made this their lair. Each and every Graeth artifact here has been smashed to pieces or torn from the walls of this large, roughly 30'x40' area. The floor is covered in piles of loose stone which once bore Graeth carvings. A low slab of stone was Hjorvart's resting place, where his body returned to the earth shortly after his death. The Fae essence that keeps these Cryptlings alive emanates from below this spot. There might be means by which Hjorvart's spirit could be awakened, but none are to be found in the Lower Caves. Beneath the heavy slab is a

cut-out holding a few of Hjorvart's ancient possessions that have survived the ravages of time: a silver tipped spear (*Mjolfipt*: +2 to hit, deals 1d+2 used one-handed and 2d+2 used two-handed, on a roll to hit of 20 target is impaled for 3d+2), a gold crown (*Life-bond Diadem:* +1 per HD or level to hp total), and a crystal eye (*Eye of the Tiger*: must be inserted into empty socket, provides normal and low-light vision, user may conduct melee as a 6 HD Monster/Level +1). Disturbing these items will awaken the guardian spirit of Giervald-Kingard in **31B** who will attack with surprise. **Giervald-Kingard**: DC 5 (only hit by silver), Spd 12, HD 7, Dam 1 die+1, Special: Sleep or Hold Person.

**32. Breghoneir's Post**. Little remains of Breghoneir's worldly possessions, and his post is nothing more than ancient Graeth carved stone seats. In the west wall here is a small tunnel which leads beneath this cave to the **Frostwork Conduit** (**32B**). Finally in the twilight of his existence, the Graeth outcast Breghoneir spends his last decades here warning those under Ylfrit's Embrace to turn away. Breghoneir also roams these tunnels, and the Dark Trolls have learned to avoid him if at all possible. Although not able to speak the tongues of men, Breghoneir can communicate via telepathy. If encountered here, while watching over the entrance to the Oubliette at **33**, Breghoneir will read the thoughts of intruders, and will sternly implore fortune-seekers to turn away or face his wrath. Only those actually under Ylfrit's Embrace will be permitted to pass, but Breghoneir's strong warnings might give pause to those misguided victims of the Taint. Breghoneir will not pursue those who flee from this encounter as his only concern is to deter those seeking the Queen's resting place. See Graeth in the Appendix for full description. The outcast wears a heavy intricate robe and the lone device he wields, which is only drawn to shed blood, is a silver falchion (*Vigil's Edge*: Sword, +1 to hit, deals two dice of damage). **Breghoneir:** DC 5 (only hit by silver), Spd 12, HD 7, Dam 2 dice, Special: Sleep or Hold Person. If probed, Breghoneir might relate details about the events outlined in the **Background.**

**32B. Frostwork Conduit**. This Frostwork-lined dried river conduit forms a large, smooth tunnel, connecting **30, 46**, and **49** to this area. Breghoneir often roams this tunnel, and there is a good chance to encounter him here.

**D. The Oubliette** (**33-37**): The true power and capabilities of the Graeth may be realized if adventurers traverse these rooms. Built to protect and imprison Ylfrit, the Oubliette refers to both the actual oubliette and the four rooms designed to prohibit passage in or out. The walls, ceilings and floors of this region are graced with intricate stone carvings, and rife with **Graeth Glyph-magic**, detailed in the **MISCELLANY** section of the **Appendix**. Furthermore, Ylfrit's dreaming impinges upon reality in this region. The Twisted Faerie Queen wields some influence here in these chambers and shafts, to the point that she may alter the outcome of the encounters in **33, 34,** and **35** (though not **36** or **37** in most cases). It is her desire that those who have succumbed to Ylfrit's Embrace shall find their way through these obstacles and rescue her from internment. Ylfrit will immediately gain awareness of the presence of characters within the Oubliette. If any of these interlopers are in her embrace, she will employ her tainted dream power to embolden and build resolve in her devotees. This effect will essentially augment vigor and drive to the point that the recipient will be healed of 1d6 damage when the referee deems it appropriate. The benefactor will understand that Ylfrit is looking after him or her, and might have further bonuses as determined by the referee.

**33. Entrance to the Oubliette**: Past Breghoneir's post is a 30'x30' block room with a large round hinged bronze trapdoor covering an 8' diameter shaft dropping down 15' to a hallway below. Guarding the area in front of the shaft is a **Time-lost Glyph-magic** sentinel who appears as soon as intruders are 15' away from the shaft. The sentinel is a Living Statue (Mercury). Its Time-lost interval is 10 minutes, so if melee is still raging at that point the statue will blink out and back in, fully rebuilt, provided intruders are still within 15' of the shaft. **Living Statue (Mercury)**: DC 3, Spd 6, HD 12, Dam 1 die x2.

**34. The Accursed Statue**. This room is under the watch of a **Time-torn Glyph-magic** trap called the Accursed Statue (courtesy of Gabor Lux). A large, round hinged bronze trapdoor covers an 8' diameter shaft dropping down 15' to a hallway below. A large stone statue of a bearded, ominous-looking old man stands on a pedestal to the north of the trapdoor, overlooking a floor strewn with weapons – maces, swords, scimitars, daggers, halberds and axes. When the adventurers enter the chamber, the will of the statue commands the weapons to rise and fight the intruders. Altogether, the weapons have 16 levels of fighting ability: there may be sixteen fighting as HD 1 monsters, four as HD 4 monsters, or any other combination. Each combination which forms a monster will deal a minimum amount of damage equal to the number of weapons it is composed of, not to exceed the normal maximum on the die. Each weapon can have the statue's will knocked out of it via damage: assume each weapon equates to HD 1 and will fall to the floor harmlessly when damage is taken. At the beginning of each round, regardless of damage sustained to its weapons, the statue can recreate 16 levels of weapon fighting capability. To make things worse, the statue can and *will* animate the weapons of the characters, who must roll an open doors check to hold onto them! *Dispelling of Magic* counters the enchantment for 1d3+3 minutes, and destroying the statue (requires a +1 weapon, has 50 hp) will allow passage through until the Time-torn Glyph activates and "rebuilds" it, once per hour. Some spells may alter the enchantment's effects (avoid *haste* if you know what's good for you!). At the base of the pedestal, beneath the intricate

Graeth glyphs, is some alien writing, "*Made in Hungary*". Of the various weapons present, three are of note: *Silver Headed Mace +1*, *Halberd +1* and a *Cursed Sword -2*.

**35. Rain of Darts**. Like those before it, this room houses a large round hinged bronze trapdoor covering an 8' diameter shaft dropping down 15' to a hallway below. The entire floor of this room is covered in hundreds of heavy darts of iron and wood. Scattered about as well are miscellaneous iron weapons, shields and tools. Once intruders approach, the **Time-torn Glyph-magic** trap will warm up. The ceiling and floor here are in fact magical super-magnets, both of which alternate activation, generating power with a low humming sound which quickly increases in intensity and climaxes with a violent rumble through the room as the magnetic force pulls the darts, and any other iron (or magnetically attracted item) toward it with great velocity. As the magnet gains momentum, the darts will slowly begin to move, the tips pointing at the opposing magnet, lining up and then WHAM! striking the surface with deadly force. The cycle has roughly 30 second intervals as the magnets take turns building power and drawing the darts to them, so it "fires" twice each minute, repeating this pattern continually while intruders are present. *Dispelling of Magic* counters the enchantment for 1d3+3 minutes, possibly long enough for the adventurers to open and scramble through the hatch. Any in the volley of darts will sustain 6d6 damage, save for ½. Weapons and armor might be torn away, or cause the victim to be slammed into the magnet for 3d6. Items charged by the magnets will be impossible to remove from the ceiling or floor as long as the trap is running.

**36. Above the Oubliette**. As the characters enter this area those in the Queen's embrace will hear her voice urging them on: "You have come for me, now claim your rightful place, my King!" A large round-hinged bronze trapdoor is opened above an 8' diameter shaft which drops down 25 feet to **37**. Secured to the cover is a heavy knotted rope for climbing into and out of **37**. If the adventurers have made it this far, they might witness the last of three figures emerging from below through this portal. Protecting the shaft and the now assembled **Time-locked Dreamers** is a **Time-torn Glyph-magic Barrier**, stretching between two basalt columns in the east and west niches. Coursing back and forth in a continuous cycle are purple lightning-like discharges of negative energy. These bolts crackle and spark, filling the room with an eerie glow of unearthly light. **Adventurers in Ylfrit's Embrace**: As soon as any character in Ylfrit's Embrace enters this area, and once each round while in **36** or **37**, a save vs. spell must be made. Failure indicates that the victim's mind is controlled by the Queen; such a character will either aid the Time-locked Dreamers in their possible struggle against uninvited adventurers or descend the knotted rope to the floor of **37** and join the Twisted Faerie Queen's dreams forever. No saves are permitted once the floor of **37** is reached. Any action which might jar the recently controlled character will allow another save vs spell to break the control; this includes such things as damaging a party member, taking damage, and each round climbing the knotted rope. **Climbing the Knotted Rope**: This rope can be climbed in or out of **37** in three minutes. Those descending while under Ylfrit's Embrace will be permitted three final saves to avoid reaching the floor of **37**. **Time-torn Barrier**: The barrier may be crossed in three ways; normal movement, carefully timed jump, or by squeezing between one of the basalt pillars and the wall. Moving through normally indicates impact from a bolt. The energy hurls victims back twenty feet, causes 3d6 damage, stuns for one minute, and demands a save vs death to avoid the loss of one level. Once/minute a character can attempt to time the bolts and jump through unscathed. The player must succeed in a DEX check rolled with 4d6 in order to succeed; otherwise a bolt strikes the character as above. Observation might reveal a narrow gap between each pillar and the wall which would allow a slender or small, unarmored character to force his or her way past the barrier. The Time-locked Dreamers are pre-pared for such tactics. *Dispelling of Magic* will halt the barrier for 1d3+3 minutes. **Time-locked Dreamers**: The only surviving members of Ylfrit's dream court, Aleth Enach, Metherym and Vin Phinaar the Odd, are under the Queen's mental control, mere puppets. The Queen awakens her court members at the appropriate time, not only to defend herself, but to usher visitors under the sway of her dreams down to the Oubliette that they too might join her in eternal slumber. Those slain here are tossed into the shaft. If saved from her clutches, the three might become NPC's as they are in fact lawful adventurers from the alien dimension of Evarg-Rah. **Aleth Enach**: DC 4, Spd 9, HD 7, Dam 1 die+2 with scimitar, Special: Cold Scream. Aleth is a silver-skinned Elf-kind. Primary attack is with a blue glowing scimitar (*Cold Scream*, Sword, +1, adds 2 cold damage, on a 20 target is frozen solid until thawed, save or die), optional attack expends one of three remaining missiles (*Thunder Javelins*, quantity three, single use missile creates a booming stroke of lightning, range 60 feet, deals 7d6 save for ½). **Metherym**: DC 5, Spd 12, HD 7+1, Dam 1 die+4 with two-hander, Special: Glitch Gut. Metherym is a huge four-armed, blue-skinned Alien. Primary attack is with a great sword which has rotating serrated edges in melee (*Glitch Gut*, Two-handed Sword, +1, requires regular cleaning and oiling, deals 1 die+4, on a 1 malfunctions and requires major repair), optional attack requires two rounds to utilize (*Pocket Boulders,* quantity 13, STR 18 to throw, on command small stone grows to boulder-size and can be thrown up to 10 feet at +2 to hit, deals 3d6, throwing takes two rounds). **Vin Phinaar the Odd**: DC 2, Spd 12, HD 6+1, Dam 1 die+1 with rapier, Special: Widow Sting. Vin is a tall bipedal green Insectoid. Only attack is with a gold-handled rapier (*Widow Sting*, Sword, +1, each hit injects small poison dose of 1 damage, after five doses or on a 20 target must save vs poison or die). Vin also possesses a pair of

custom-fitted anklets (*Floating Footwear*, wearer always falls like a feather and can activate levitation thrice daily for 10 minutes at Spd 6). During this encounter Ylfrit is so preoccupied with controlling her dreaming puppets that she cannot use her influence. If all of the Time-locked Dreamers are slain and there are none present under her embrace, the Queen is defenseless, lying helplessly below in **37**.

**37. Twisted Faerie Queen's Oubliette**. Ylfrit imagines that she still rules from her throne. In reality she is locked in dream, sleeping in the oubliette after being placed here for her betrayal. She visits the dreams of men, trying to entice them into rescuing her and becoming her King. Some men have been lured to her; they too are now locked in Ylfrit's world of nightmare. Others have died trying to save the alluring temptress, and many have been driven to madness by her dreams. This entire area is a **Time-locked Glyph-magic Chamber**, aging simply does not occur. The eternally youthful, age-old former monarch of the Graeth now lies calmly slumbering upon a rune-carved stone dais in this, her prison. Ageless and beautiful, the Queen's raven hair and lithe beauty are capable of melting the staunchest of hearts. Should the adventurers arrive here after dealing with her guardians, Ylfrit will be expending all of her dreaming capabilities to lure some hero to save her from these usurping invaders. Remember that even now, those under Ylfrit's Embrace will become Time-locked Dreamers as soon as they step onto the floor of this room; meaning, of course, that the Queen suddenly has a puppet hero to save her. The chamber has been organized under Ylfrit's direction, with piles of slain would-be Kings to the south, a mass of treasure from same to the west, a pile of items to the east, and an area to the north, at the Queen's feet, where her three dreaming slaves stand guard when not encountered in **36**. Inspecting the corpses will find some frozen solid, some pale from poison, some torn to bloody shreds, and some fried to a crisp; all that died and were thrown here should be treated as recently slain. Forgotten in this pile are *Potions* (*Giant Strength* x2, *Healing* x3, *Heroism* x1, *Invulnerability* x1), *Scrolls* (Random Spells x6, Mag or Pr), and a *Ring of Protection*. The pile of items contains plenty of useful arms, armor and delving gear. Of note is the following: *Staff of Striking*, *Necklace of Rat-shape* (78 charges), a *Magic Bow*, and an *Ifrit Bottle* with a very angry, wholly evil prisoner named Crox. The pile of loot amounts to 7,528 silver, 4,265 gold, and 18 gems (50x4, 100x9, 500x3, 1000x2). Time-locked Dreamers may be rescued in two ways; slaying Ylfrit or ending the Taint, see **Cleansing the Caves** in **The Taint**, section IV. Slaying Ylfrit is rather simple if she is undefended. Doing so might have long reaching effects, determined by the referee, not limited to her dream subjects seeking revenge. Regardless, referees should not hesitate to allow players to gain the satisfaction of doing so.

**E. East Tunnels** (**38-50**): See description for **C** (West Tunnels) above.

**38. Stone Theater**. The floor here resembles an amphitheater of sorts. Multiple tiers, descending to the center of the cave, were formed many centuries past when the very stone sank deeper into the depths. Dozens of wide shelves form the floor and rim the middle of the cave, some 30' below. At the center of the floor is an opening from which heat rises, and beneath it a stone shaft that wends and winds down 25' to the ceiling of **38B**. On the south wall is a steep ramp leading up to the **Slippery Tunnel** which connects to Level Two (or a level of your own creation).

**38B. Sweltering Grotto**. The humid air in this deep cave is palpable. Thermal water condenses below and rises through vents and cracks in the floor, creating a thick, damp atmosphere. A visible column of steam rises from a shaft opening in the floor which drops suddenly 40' down to the Bathtub Stalagmites (**38C**). The Troll Exiles in the cave below have rigged a crude warning system. All around the edges and in various nooks within the shaft they have placed numerous large loose stones. These measures might drop with a thud into **38C** if intruders are approaching, possibly alerting the Exiles in time to react.

**38C. Bathtub Stalagmites**. Beneath the Sweltering Grotto, this cave is remarkable for its bathtub stalagmites. Naturally formed pools of heated water, these bathtubs vary from 3' to 15' in diameter. Each was formed from dripping condensation which now collects in calcite-rimmed pools resembling bathtubs. Vision is reduced to 15' in the heated mist. The **Troll Exiles** lair here and are normally found relaxing in one of the natural hot tubs. These banished Dark Trolls are named Dokh, Eshrek, Grothok and Ogg Grodd (L). Run out of the Dark Troll Citadel many years ago, these four have made this out-of-the-way cave their home. By working as a group, the Troll Exiles have been able to survive the dangers of the Lower Caves and have become somewhat ambivalent regarding normal Dark Troll concerns. Ogg has begun to consider potential foes with more respect as he now feels that any enemy of the Dark Trolls is possibly an ally of his. Ogg has hidden their loot at the bottom of a small but deep tub here; it consists of silver and gold as well as an iron box containing some gems. The Exiles despise the Bogbears but tire of killing them: their numbers are rarely reduced and they are entirely inedible. Former **Dark Trolls**: DC 4, Spd 12, HD 6+3, Dam 1 die+2, Special: Regenerate. Of particular note is a dried tub which now has a very heavy boulder placed upon it by the Trolls. The bottom of this stalagmite is actually a shaft angling down after a short drop, turning into a low passage that eventually connects to the Dark Troll Highway. This **Secret Passage** circumvents the guarded outpost at **8**, and is known only to the Troll Exiles who keep it sealed from above.

**39. The Looming**. Most denizens of the Lower Caves avoid this area. A heavy presence looms here, hanging from the very air with a palpable sensation of doom. The

cave itself is fairly mundane, with a few stalagmites on the otherwise smooth floor. The feeling that deters underworld beings is of an unknown origin, but it does create what might at first seem to be a safe zone for surface dwellers. However, anyone who remains here for more than 10 minutes will be subject to the Looming. Each round thereafter the individual will begin to leak out of time as their existence unravels. There is a chance that if Arazul is nearby he will warn characters to escape immediately. Once the Looming begins, the sensation of doom actually lessens as the cave begins to feel more and more relaxing and comforting. In an amount of time equal to the sum of CON and level, the character shall disappear and cease to exist in the memory of this world, becoming rewoven into a random alternate existence. The current inhabitants of this cave arrived here in this fashion from another world, and are trying to figure out how to get back (they are not affected by the Looming of this world). **Lost Corsairs**: Ank Moaf, El Amn, Kafi, Kimali Zhues, Molif Yot (L), Zliff. Treat all as War 3, and Molif Yot the Leader as War 4. Armed with scimitars and daggers, and wearing sandals and turbans, these Barbary pirates are ill-equipped to survive in the Lower Caves. They speak a stuttering version of the common tongue and are very thirsty. Also of note is the fact that Kafi somehow learned Ylfrit's Poem months before the Lost Corsairs arrived here (See *Ylfrit's Poem* in the Appendix).

**40. Arazul's Cave**. The mysterious stalking black cat Arazul lays claim to this extremely uneven, rocky cave. A pair of bathtub stalagmites are formed here, one at the center of a shallow pool of clear, cool water. Arazul stalks the Lower Caves watching denizens and explorers alike. Like the Lost Corsairs (**39**) he was brought here by the Looming. Arazul has been living off of Mad Crickets and other prey while roaming these caves for many years. Arazul is an otherworldly being, from a place where his kind is worshiped as gods by alien reptiles. Arazul watches visitors, attempting to discern their motives. At times he will be helpful, at other times not. Arazul has gathered much knowledge of both the Graeth and the Dark Trolls. Arazul alone knows the secrets of both Rognvald and Ylfrit. Anyone seeking to cleanse the Taint will be aided by Arazul, but he is loathe to mingle too much in mortal matters lest it upset the higher beings that hold sway over this world. On the north wall are the **Forgotten Steps** connecting to Level Six (or a dungeon of your devising).

**41. Bogbear Dens**. This cave serves as the lair for Urgorin's Bogbears who are charged with preventing anyone entrance beyond this area. There are always at least two lying in ambush at **A** and **B**. The rest will move to eradicate any ambushed intruders by circling around through **38** if possible. **Bogbears** (7): DC 5, Spd 9, HD 3+1, Dam 1 die, Special: see description.

**42. Moonmilk Grotto**. This remarkable cave boasts seven large precarious scalloped stalagmites (called splattermites) surrounding a naturally formed multi-tiered pyramid-like mass of rock. Upon this formation thick globules of mineral-filled mud drop continuously from the ceiling, coating the pyramid and the entire floor in semi-dry moonmilk. This cave is under the sway of the *Eerie Presence* (see Great Bogbear, Appendix). At the cave's edge a wide passage slopes down and winds under the floor, leading to **42B**.

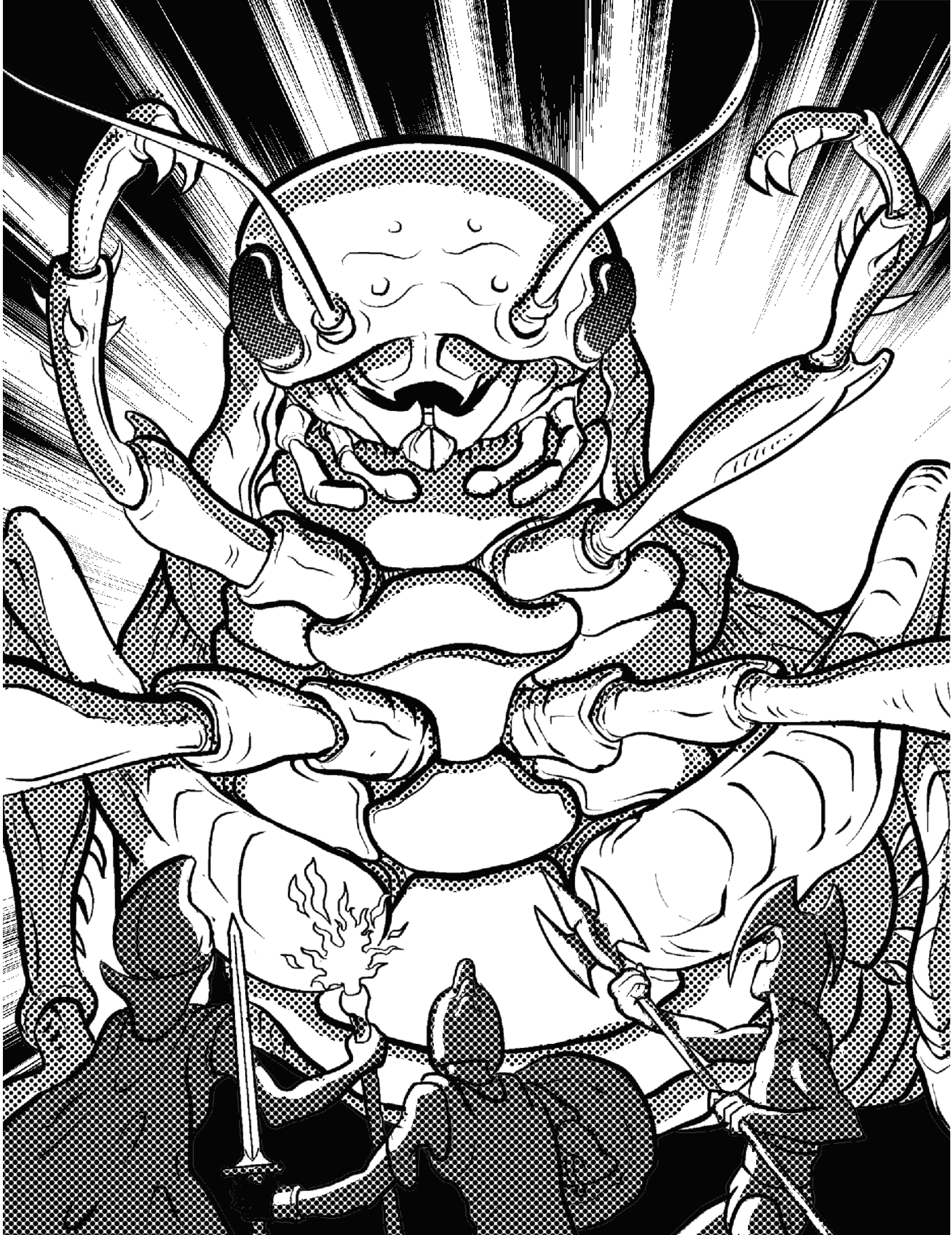
**42B. Urgorin's Pit:** Home of Urgorin, the **Great Bogbear** (DC 4 (only hit by silver or magic), Spd 6, HD 5+1, Dam 1 die+2, Special: see description). This cave is also under the sway of the *Eerie Presence.* At one time this served as Jhimyn's research cave where he grew Bogbears to defend himself, tried to learn the secrets of the Taint, and attempted to decipher the songs of the Mad Crickets. Rognvald found him first, and the Evil Roots spread the Taint, creating a Great Bogbear named Urgorin that tried to slay Jhimyn. Escaping from the cave, Jhimyn attempted to return to the Halfway Inn, leaving all his research materials behind in his desperation. It was then that Jhimyn finally understood the song of the crickets, and before he even got as far as the Dark Troll Highway he had become the Cricket King (see **44**). Now, Urgorin has destroyed much of Jhimyn's work save the Bogbear Pumpkin Patch and various cultivation tools. Jhimyn's Journal is still here as well, and Urgorin will from time to time place Jhimyn's old wizard's cap on his gigantic head and attempt to read that book, thinking that he is a sorcerer of sorts. Jhimyn's Journal contain's a copy of Ylfrit's Poem (Appendix), Bogbear Growth techniques, some random notes on the Taint, and the odd trees which are springing up in the cave, but then reads as if written by a man obsessed with the crickets and devolves into the scribblings of a madman. There are three **Foul Saplings** (DC 9, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special) here, and a large Root Tunnel is in one of the walls. **Root Tunnels** (see **43B**): 8' diameter Root Tunnels connect this room to rooms **25, 43B** and **48**.

**43. Grove Bog**. This enormous cavern is a swampy expanse of tainted, unnatural growth. At its center is the pale Ancestral Oak, twisted, gnarled and seemingly writhing with evil. The bog is a cacophony of cricket chirps and songs; thick clouds of bog flies buzz about, the mushy ground belches out malodorous swamp gas, green fireflies skit about or settle on surfaces throughout, and beneath the various sounds a low moaning echoes along the ceiling. **Every 5 minutes here roll 1d6: 1-5: Mad Crickets attack, 6: Jhimyn (44) and Mad Crickets attack.** The **Ancestral Oak** (as noted earlier in **The Taint**) is corrupted by Rognvald's demented, ancient psyche. This once-enriching Fae magic node is now the source of the Taint which pervades the region. Anyone approaching within 20 feet of the tree will get Rognvald's attention. **Mad Crickets**, **Evil Roots** and **Dread Lurkers** will begin to assail the characters, and will continue to do so until the area is vacated, or they duck directly out of Rognvald's view by going under the tree to **43B**. Referees should make note of **Cleansing the Caves** in **The Taint**.

**43B Beneath the Tree**: A half-flooded murky pit lies beneath the Ancestral Oak, haunted by a trio of **Dread Lurkers** (DC 2 (only hit by magic), Spd 6, HD 6, Dam special). **Root Tunnels**: Formed by the Evil Roots in Rognvald's never ending search for his Mother, these tunnels range in diameter from 2' to 8'. The chaotic network is dug through the very stone below many regions of the Lower Caves. These roots have not yet been able to burrow into the Halfway Inn or the Oubliette. From the area beneath the Ancestral Oak, the tunnels eventually connect four different areas (**25, 42B, 43B** and **48**). Dread Lurkers stalk these larger tunnels and there is a good chance of encountering one or more here.

**44. Jhimyn the Cricket King.** The former Wizard Jhimyn, who let curiosity get the better of him, is here. Now mindless and transformed, Jhimyn is the Cricket King, charged with protecting the Grove-Bog and watching over his Mad Cricket disciples. The cave is home to no less than three dozen Mad Crickets at all times, as well as pair of Foul Saplings, and unless he is on the prowl, Jhimyn himself is here. See **42B** for some background. Jhimyn is an elephant-sized mutated albino cricket monster, able to leap great distances to land on its prey, and once every 10 minutes can spray acid in a cone 30'x10'. **Jhimyn:** DC 4, Spd 9, HD 9, Dam 2 dice, leap 90' space permitting, leap Attack +3 to hit, double damage, acid spit 30 feet for 8d6, save ½, items must save. If slain, Jhimyn will slowly revert back to his true form, but will be quickly devoured by crickets and bog flies unless rescued immediately. In the back of the cave, mostly covered in muck, are the remains of three recently slain intruders. Of note amongst the thrashed and dissolved corpses are a *Helm of Teleportation*, and a *Satchel of Gold Holding* (Acts as a Bag, but ONLY accepts gold coins! Good for foiling counterfeiters, currently holds 2,400 gold).

**45. Golden Gape**. At the southeast end of this cave the ceiling slants sharply downward with a massive slab of immeasurably heavy stone. This slab is coated with a glowing yellowish coating of long-decomposed minerals. Ancient Glyphs, large and small, greet onlookers. Carved into the radiant formation centuries ago by Graeth hands, the Glyphs demand attention. The entire area below the symbols is a field of **Time-toss Glyph-magic** (see Appendix).



Below the pitched ceiling is a 3' low, 13' wide gaping portal yielding egress.

**46. Toothy Maw**. This cave boasts a stalagmitic mass choked with rubble and strewn with fallen blocks between thick, stout columns of stone. Sharp calcite protrusions jut from between the varied formations, creating a blanket of jagged, reflective teeth. Progress through this room is precarious even for the skilled spelunker. A sloping tunnel to the east impinges upon the Frostwork Conduit (see **32B**), connecting areas **30, 32B** and **49** to this one.

**47. Pinching Cave**. The floor of this cave rises rapidly while the ceiling drops at its center, creating a crawlspace no more than 3' high. Passage requires cautious crawling through the jagged pinch, some 20' in length. Those crawling through here will will happen upon a Long Lost Friend of an individual party member. This life-like illusion has taken form from the memories and mental images of someone within the adventuring party. The Friend could be a long-dead relative, a recently slain member of the group, someone's child, or similar. The Friend will greet and interact normally, then plead for help, beseeching the party to unlock him or her from the dark devices of the Faerie Queen Ylfrit and her dream prison.

**48. Stone Circle**: One of the three ancient Fae magic nodes, the Stone Circle is now corrupted by the spread of Taint. Consisting of a carefully arranged ring of large monolithic stones, the Stone Circle floods this entire cave in an aura of strange magic. Dancing in the circle just inside the perimeter are a mass of **Hidden-folk** (19: DC 2, Spd 12, HD 5, Dam 1 die). The magic of the circle causes all viewing it from this cave to save vs spell or be drawn to it. This effect, called the *Lure of the Dance*, will cause the afflicted to join the ritual. The enchanted characters will dance their way around the circle until they become incapable due to reverse aging or are rescued from outside. Each lap of the Stone Circle causes the victim to reverse age one-tenth of his current age. While this sounds like a fabulous boon, it is potentially dangerous, normally protected by Hidden-folk, and will only affect a mortal once per lifetime. A trio of Foul Saplings spread the taint while on the east wall a narrow slope leads down to large **Root Tunnels** (see **43B**): 8' diameter Root Tunnels connect this room to rooms **25, 42B** and **43B**. Referees should make note of **Cleansing the Caves** in **The Taint**.

**49. Crystal Spring**. A freshwater spring of icy cold water has formed a large, shallow pool in the western half of this cave. The bottom of the clear pool is lined with pink tendril-like crystal formations which jut out of the water in certain spots. Darting to and fro amongst the crystalline webs are scores of tiny multi-hued, striped fish. In the eastern half of the cave, perched atop a wide base, is an age-old statue of a female Graeth (Sikke-Qwyngard) chiseled from a natural column extending above the handiwork to meet the ceiling 15' up. From this magic statue the spirit of Sikke will emerge and attack intruders if Ylfrit's Memory, **50B**, is disturbed. Eating any of the rather easy-to-catch fish will heal the individual 1d3 damage. Each of these *Garbb Fish* has a small amount of poison from a tiny gland, and devouring more than six in ten minutes will necessitate a save vs poison to avoid death. There are 86 Garbbs in the pool, and more will fill it provided at least a half dozen are left behind. The healing power of the Garbb lasts but one day once out of the water. Anyone drinking the water from the pool will have all poison in their system neutralized. The water remains usable for one day, afterwards turning into a foul tasting liquid which will induce nausea and pain but will no longer neutralize poisons. The *Pink Crystal* is nourishing, and will dissolve in the mouth or may be crushed and mixed with water (making an addictive substance called *Pinkie*). Anyone eating it will not require rest of any sort for three days, at the end of which the strung out character must sleep for 12 hours straight. Near the center of the south wall a shallow pit drops into the top of the **Frostwork Conduit** (see **32B**), connecting **30, 32B**, and **46** to this area.

**50. Entrance to Ylfrit's Memory**. This large cave has a very uneven floor, littered with numerous concretions which have fallen from the ceiling and shattered into large fragments. Amidst the loose stone are four **Evil Roots**: DC 7, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special. The center of the floor rises up to a level plateau, the top of which ranges from eight to ten feet and is out of view. At the center of the rise is a hollowed area, the lair of a **Quivering Mass**: DC 9, Spd 0, HD 12, Dam 2d+special, Glob Spew. The tentacles of this mindless devourer will reach down from the darkness and attack, and it can lob its missiles from out of sight as well. Above the rise is a small hole formed by the bottom of a vertical shaft leading up 10 feet through the ceiling to **50B**, Ylfrit's Memory.

**50B. Ylfrit's Memory**. A small grotto is connected to **50** by a short vertical shaft. On the wall above the floor and shaft is a low, wide natural stone shelf. A pair of carved pillars, depicting Unseelie scenes, frames a shrine of sorts to Ylfrit. Seated upon an elaborate throne, the Queen's likeness is sculpted from the wall itself. Atop the statue's head is a diadem of silver and upon her lap is a silver scepter, both covered with the dust of ages. Non-magic, the crown and scepter are both set with emeralds and the value of these relics is 2,200 and 3,100 gold, respectively. The base of the throne has a secret compartment, within which are a few unusual items: a decapitated ancient statue head weighing 15 lbs (*Balthagorn's Head*, confers a delusional feeling of invincibility, bonus of 1 on all saves), a snake-skin pouch rotted with age holds a rather large white rabbit paw (*Wallbanger's Paw*, owner eventually befriends an imaginary friend named Yevrah, endlessly entertaining and always nearby unless tired. Totally imperceptible to others, Yevrah can function as an

invisible servant for up to five minor tasks before he must rest for a day), four old charred leg bones (*Black Dog's Bones*, if bones buried in the ground the user gains the spell-like power *Black Dog's Bite*: once per day summon ghostly dog which can bite once per level of the caster for 1d6 damage, never missing, and doing so no more than once per minute. Better bury the bones well, because when not summoned the ghost dog is searching for them in order to dig them up and gain some peace), and a large thick glass vessel sealed with a hammered silver lid (*Zim's Innards*, drinking foul black liquid causes immediate memory loss of one level, the liquid is to be applied to weapons by a spell-caster, adding a bonus of +1 to magic or non-magic items and coating in a glittering sheen, enough liquid for 6 swords or equivalent). Touching any of the above items causes the guardian spirit of Sikke-Qwyngard to be summoned forth from her statue in **49**. The spirit will float up into the grotto and attack with surprise. **Sikke-Qwyngard**: DC 5 (only hit by silver), Spd 12, HD 7, Damage 1d+1, Special: Sleep or Hold Person.

## Appendices I-IV

### I. NEW MONSTERS:

**Blood Thumps *(Utahraptor):*** DC 4, Spd 12, HD 10, Dam 2 dice. 10 feet long (20 with tail), 7 feet tall, and weighing about 1,500 lbs. Covered in dark brown feathers with massive jaws, long tails and bird-like feet topped by a single massive curved hind-claw. Blood Thumps are trained to bite rather than use their formidable dagger-like claws, so as to not unsaddle their riders. These huge dinosaurs can trample opponents if able to charge into melee, causing 2d6 to all in a 5' wide by 20' long path, plus a save vs paralysis to avoid being bowled over and spending one round gaining footing.

**Bogbears**: DC 5, Spd 9, HD 3+1, Dam 1 die. Surprise 3 in 6, they themselves are only surprised 1 in 6. Bogbears are immune to charm, hold and sleep. While engaged in melee, the target of a Bogbear's attacks must save vs paralyze at the beginning of each round or become *Frozen with Fear* for that round. Bogbears attack at +2 against foes *Frozen with Fear*. Particularly bright light will cause Bogbears to lose 1 round of action until they adjust to it. (A full Bogbear description can be found in *Fight On!* #3.)

**Chasm Creeps**: DC 6, Spd 9, HD 3+1, Dam 1d+special. Also called False Wights, Chasm Creeps are blood-thirsty, devolved, corrupted Fae known for long periods of dormancy. While hibernating for years at a time, Chasm Creeps decompose into the earth. Awakening requires a regenerative period of many days, after which they begin feeding immediately. Their very touch drains physical energy from their targets. Each successful attack regenerates the Chasm Creep 1 hp and requires a save vs paralyze to avoid Exhaustion. Failure indicates the loss of 1d3 points of CON. Any character reduced to zero CON dies immediately. Normal rest will return lost CON points at a rate of one per 10 minutes. Chasm Creeps are only struck by magic weapons and are immune to all mind altering (sleep, charm, hold, fear, etc) magic.

**Claw Maws *(Velociraptor):*** DC 2/7, Spd 18, HD 2, Damage: ½ die+special. 3 feet long (7 with tail), 2 feet high at the hip, and weighing about 35 lbs. Covered in grey and black feathers, with strong razor fang filled jaws, long thin tails, and bird-like feet topped with a single sharp, curved hind-claw. Claw Maws are the ultimate hunters; fast, silent, sly, cunning and always hungry. They hunt in large packs and work in unison to flush prey into ambushes or simply overwhelm larger, slower moving targets with their vicious bites. Their sharp hind-claws are normally used to puncture a target, pinning them in place or allowing the raptor to cling to a target as they lock their jaws for the kill. Once a Claw Maw has hit a target, it will cling to it and deal 3 hp damage per round thereafter. Up to four of these murderous little predators can attack a man each round. Claw Maws are lightning quick, as reflected by their superior DC, which is reduced to 7 after they have locked their jaw in for a kill. Slain raptors will have to be carefully removed from their prey by prying open those deadly jaws.

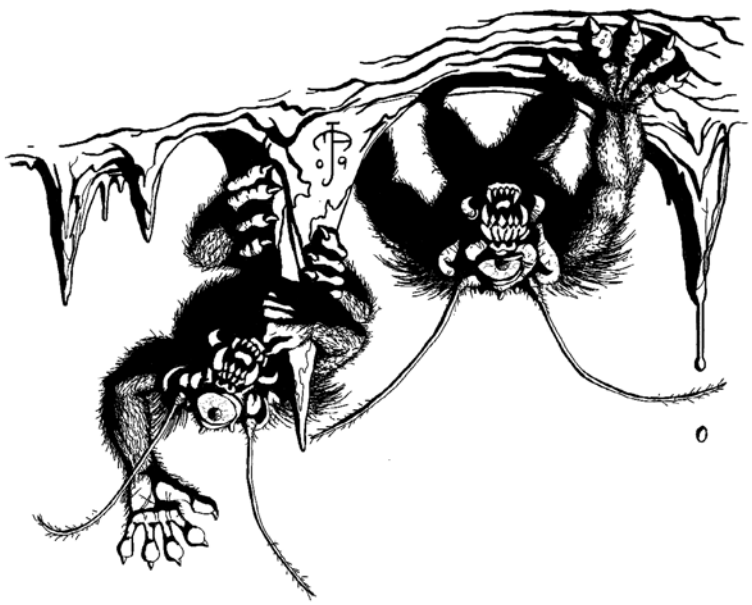
**Cryptlings**: DC 7/2, Spd 9, HD 3 (+4 to hit), Dam 1 die. Mutated, deformed, once magical servants, Cryptlings are dusky, bristly and bent. Vaguely humanoid and no more than a meter tall, Cryptlings give off a constant aura of Unseelie magic which causes intense unease in surface dwellers. This effect causes Cryptlings to gain initiative nearly all the time. Attacks upon them are at a marked disadvantage, reflected in their effective DC of 2. Cryptlings assail their targets with all manner of physical blows from their malformed shapes, and each strike is at +4 to hit due to the unsettling aura which surrounds them. Their only link to Unseelie magic is now found in ancient Fae burial sites, and they protect these places with all of their power.

**Dark Trolls:** DC 4, Spd 12, HD 6+3, Dam 1d+2, Regenerate. Intelligent trolls who wear armor and prefer to attack with weapons (dealing +2 damage). Dark Trolls consider themselves the 'Lords' of *The Darkness Beneath*, and frequently emerge from their citadel on Level Nine to remind the other denizens of that fact. Dark Trolls are not quick to attack, normally preferring to parley or intimidate those they encounter. In fact, many of their kind consider 'breaking a sweat' when dealing with surface folk an insult, and will typically insist on some sort of monetary tribute before moving along. Most Dark Trolls encountered in *The Lower Caves* will be traveling the *Troll Highway*, simply passing through and usually mounted on a Blood Thump. Dark Trolls will be described in more detail in a forthcoming issue of *Fight On*!

**Dread Lurkers**: DC 2, Spd 6, HD 6, Dam special. These undead stalkers are the embodiment of evil Fae memories and violent bloodshed. Waiting in the darkest depths, Dread Lurkers awake when surface dwellers are nearby. Best described as lengthening shadows, Dread Lurkers creep slowly and undetected until they are able to attack with surprise (4 in 6). Long taloned claws of darkness grasp at their victim's throat. Targets successfully struck must save or find themselves paralyzed in a chilling death clutch which causes strangulation damage of 2 dice per round. The Dread Lurker will never repent from its relentless effort to destroy life. Only by turning undead or slaying the Dread Lurker can it be stopped, and even then the choking victim will require 1d3+3 rounds to recover. Dread Lurkers are only struck by magic weapons and being incorporeal are immune to most magical effects. Intense light might drive them away, and if brought to bear while they are strangling will destroy the dark undead being at a rate of 2d6 damage per round.

**Evil Roots**: DC 7, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special. Burrowing network of roots connected to a sentient tree. Each instance of these abominations consists of three 1 HD roots. Evil Roots are capable of snatching and holding targets and can also lash out to grab weapons. The reach of these unnatural tentacles ranges from 10 to 30 feet, and targets out of reach might still be subject to more Evil Roots from adjacent floors, walls, or ceilings. Each strike upon a foe necessitates a save vs paralyzation. If that strike was the result of a roll to hit score of 20, a failed save indicates that the target's weapon, shield or other held item has been lashed and removed. Otherwise these failed saving throws mean that the victim has become coiled by a root. Targets coiled are incapable of movement but may still attack roots until they have failed three times and a trio of roots has effectively paralyzed them. At this point the roots begin to constrict and strangle, causing 1 die of strangulation damage per round.

**Feral Fangs**: DC 6, Spd 12, HD 3, Dam 1 die. Subterranean, vaguely ape-like creatures living in the highest recesses of underworld caverns, Feral Fangs are thin, gaunt and tall, extremely agile and deceptively strong. Able to spend their entire lives without ever touching the ground, these monsters crawl, leap and climb amidst the rocky crags of their homes. They are able to scale stone surfaces in a "spider-like" fashion, and normally stalk prey while hanging upside down from stalactites. A large sightless green glowing eye can execute a gaze attack once/round, causing paralysis for 1d6 minutes at a range of 30 feet. A pair of forehead-mounted antennae detects movement at a distance of 300 feet. Feral Fangs are naturally resistant to magic, saving against it at +4. Feral Fangs are able to surprise their foes on a 4 in 6 and prefer to attack from above in great numbers if able. Crafty and cunning, they are excellent ambushers and hunters.



**Foul Sapling**: DC 9, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special. Small, pale trees connected via roots and growing from a parent sentient tree; Foul Saplings radiate an aura of Taint, creating chaotic changes to the natural order of things nearby. Incapable of attack, Foul Saplings have but one defense: if destroyed the sapling releases one last wave of Taint in a 15-25' radius. This intense arcane burst causes 4d6 damage (save for one-half) to both surface dwellers and denizens of the underworld. Those failing are bewildered for 2d6 rounds, unable to take any actions.

**Graeth**: DC 5, Spd 12, HD 5-7, Damage 1d+1 or by weapon. Mostly forgotten and nearly extinct, the once all-conquering Graeth are now reduced to a relative few. Certain powerful Graeth are particularly long-lived, but cannot foster the growth of their kind without the presence of strong Fae magic, itself nearly exhausted. Rumors exist of still-thriving Graeth communities deep within the earth in areas untainted by the magic of men. Graeth are regal, majestic Fae-kind, ranging from six to seven feet tall with gray skin, large double-pupilled amber eyes, long silver hair, wiry or lithe physiques, heavy intricate robes or flowing gowns, melodic voices, graceful cat-like movements, and an air of divinity. Graeth may use the spell-like powers of *Sleep* and *Hold* and in addition may engage foes in melee (+1 to hit for 1d+1 damage or by weapon). Graeth are only damaged by silver weapons or standard, unarmed attacks from fantastical beasts of 5 or greater HD. However, these ancient Fae are extremely susceptible to the magic of man. All spells or spell-like effects will have double effect on Graeth, and Graeth roll all saving throws vs magic as a 1st level Warrior (13 vs. Wands, 16 vs. Spells).

**Great Bogbears**: DC 4, Spd 6, HD 5+1, Dam 1d+2. Great Bogbears are only hit by silver or magic weapons, and are immune to charm, hold and sleep. Great Bogbears deal +2 damage in combat. In addition to the Bogbear *Frozen with Fear* power, simply seeing a Great Bogbear can

*Cause Panic*, with saving throws against paralyze rolled as follows: 1 HD or lower: No save, flee in panic; 2-4 HD: Save or flee in panic; 5-7 HD: Save at +2 or flee in panic; 8+ HD: Immune. If the saving throw is made, the character is immune to *Cause Panic* for the rest of that encounter. Those fleeing will do so for 1d6+4 rounds. The lair of a Great Bogbear is enveloped in an *Eerie Presence* with a radius of 90-180 feet. The presence is marked by cold drafts, whisperings of dark omen, moving shadows, and an ominous feeling of dread which intensifies as its center is approached. The *Eerie Presence* creates an otherworldly unease, causing all characters to suffer a penalty of 1 on both attacks and saving throws. (The full Great Bogbear description can be found in *Fight On!* #3.)

**Hidden-folk**: DC 2, Spd 12, HD 5, Dam 1 die. Ageless spirits not of this world, Hidden-folk can be found near realm-connecting wellsprings of Fae magic, participating in Fae rituals of dance or chant while in their wispy incorporeal forms. Mortals witnessing the rituals must save vs magic or become enthralled (elves save at -4). Characters watching the ritual for five or more rounds while enthralled will begin to age at a rate which doubles each round, beginning with two years in the first. Victims removed from the area will gain their senses and end the aging effect. Anyone approaching the ritual too closely will cause the Hidden-folk to notice. Some of them will materialize and most likely attack the trespassers. If intruders continue to remain nearby there is a chance that more Hidden-folk will notice and join in. Hidden-folk may not be damaged while incorporeal, and once material they are only struck by magic weapons. Elf-like with dark gray skin, Hidden-folk have no hair, ears or noses. They dress in heavy robes of leaf and vine and defend themselves with magically summoned daggers of quartz.

**Living Statue (Mercury)**: DC 3, Spd 6, HD 12, Dam 1 die x 2. The Mercury construct is an 8' tall mass of shining liquid mercury with a vaguely humanoid form. It attacks twice each round, and when it moves or is struck it momentarily loses its shape as the mercury reacts and slowly reforms. This version has the innate power to *Rebuild* itself, fixing 3 hp damage at the end of each round. The statue strikes for 1 die damage with each arm, and any target struck for 5 or 6 damage (from one or both attacks) must save vs poison or become enveloped with mercury. Failure indicates that the target begins to suffocate and slumps to the floor covered in liquid mercury, with death ensuing in 1d3 minutes or as judged by the referee. This mercury will slither back and rejoin the statue, healing it of 1d6 damage after the victim is slain. Living Statues (Mercury) are immune to non-magical weapons, and to all spells and magic with the exception of *Dispelling of Magic* which will cause 1d6 damage/level of the caster outright by loosening the magic which binds the liquid mercury.

**Mad Crickets**: DC 6, Spd 9, HD 1 hit, Dam 1 hp. Tainted, twisted chirping bugs, Mad Crickets range in size from 6" to 18" in length. Their homes and surroundings are nearly always cascaded in their maddening ceaseless chirping. Their songs have patterns which might be noticed over time, and anyone taking the time to listen and consider the patterns will begin to think he can almost make out words in them. Doing so leads down the path to madness. Their painful bite deals damage from a flesh-softening acidic fluid. Mad Crickets use long antennae to sense movement and changes in atmosphere, and they are able to leap great distances, up to 25' or more. "All you hear is crickets" takes on a whole new meaning!

**Pale Spawn**: DC 7, Spd 9, HD 2+1, Dam 1 die. Devolved cave-dwelling Fae, Pale Spawn subsist on the fading emanations of Fae magic nodes. They normally huddle near these sources in large groups. Pale Spawn react quickly and violently when they notice intruders. Hairless and pallid, Pale Spawn are little more than savage neander-elves now, with strong, sharp claw-like nails and jagged, filthy fangs. They conduct melee with these, and will only pursue foes so far from their magical sustenance. Pale Spawn are fading like their life-giving Fae magic: many have slipped partway out of existence, but are still tied to this world by their brethren. For every two Pale Spawn encountered, another will appear should combat begin. At the beginning of each round of combat, 1d3-1 more will appear and add to their number until no Pale Spawn remain. Slain Pale Spawn decompose in under a minute.

**Quivering Mass**: DC 9, Spd 0, HD 12, Dam 2 dice + special, Glob Spew. This immobile organism is the result of vile experiments best left untold. It appears to be a writhing, bubbling mass of small pale worms. It is always found in a shallow pit or indentation which it fills to some degree, giving the impression of a pool of white worms. Normally dormant, it detects movement at 60', and will begin to attack as soon as prey is within the 20' reach of its pseudopod. The Quivering Mass is immune to all non-fire spells; all forms of fire deal +3 damage per die and it receives no save even if one is normally permitted. It has two attack modes; a single 20 foot long tentacle which lashes once per round and a Glob Spew which spits a mass of its own body to a range of 60 feet up to five times per day. The tentacle lash deals 2 dice of damage, and those hit must save vs poison or be subject to Festering Wounds (damage continues at a rate of 1 per minute for the next 15). Targets of the glob spew must save vs breath or be struck for 1 die of damage and become Infested (nausea and vomiting incapacitates for 1d6 minutes, at the end of which a save vs poison indicates if the victim lives or not). Only magic weapons deal damage to this abomination.

**Stone Wretch**: DC 2, Spd 0, HD 12-18, Damage: 3 dice + 3. A massive quasi-elemental stone serpent formed from the rock of the ancient underworld, the Stone Wretch is a

mindless, immortal guardian of solid, living earth. Growing through the centuries to their maximum length of 180 feet, mankind can be thankful that these ancient evils are tethered to the caves from which their bodies were formed. Thus, even the largest Stone Wretch may only attack that which it can reach, or targets within 180 feet of its source. The Stone Wretch has two attack forms and a reflective gaze effect. In the first round of an encounter it will breathe a violent blast of stone shards in a cone 60' long and 40' wide which causes 1d6/HD, save for one-half. It may only breathe thus once per hour. The thing can also eat targets. Its bite deals 3 dice+3, and any bite which reduces a target to zero hits indicates that the victim has been swallowed whole. Perhaps most fearsome, though, is its passive reflective gaze attack. Its enormous quartz eyes reflect like a mirror, and anyone seeing themselves in those eyes must save vs stone or be turned into a statue. The Stone Wretch is only damaged by magical weapons, and only magic which could hurt dirt will effect it.

**Vaettes**: DC 7, Spd 15, HD 3, Damage: n/a. Uncommon, mysterious family-based subterranean Fae. Small in stature, Vaettes are normally gray-clad with red caps, looking otherwise like smallish Gnomes. Able to become invisible at will, Vaettes are known for their utterly ruthless and vengeful nature, and can bring luck or misfortune to people. They never fight, but cause sickness in those that cross them, and can curse the rich to become poor. Only the most foolish mortals dabble in Vaette affairs.

## II. TAGART, the TRAP-SPRINGERS, JALEN LONGSPEAR, and CRIMSON HATE:

**Tagart, Troll Envoy:** Tagart is a Dark Troll Envoy, charged with collecting tribute from various intelligent denizens of *The Darkness Beneath*. Every three Clutches, Tagart arrives at the West Entrance of the *Halfway Inn* and demands his tribute. Jalen has a tenuous truce with the Dark Trolls: as long as he continues to fork over this tribute, the Dark Trolls allow him to conduct business here. Tagart views every surface dweller he encounters outside of the Inn fair game, and will demand a hefty tax before allowing them to go free. Tagart is crafty, and will not risk his neck if he feels such a confrontation might go poorly. Tagart is an obese but ferocious Dark Troll, mounted on a particularly thick Blood Thump (add HD to both standard types), and is always accompanied by a pair of muscular Dark Troll Bodyguards likewise astride raptors and decked out in the finest arms and armor. Tagart will have a considerable amount of gold in his saddle bags. The Troll Envoy is no easy target, and slaying him will certainly enrage both Jalen and the Trolls in the citadel below.

**The Trap-Springers:** The Trap-Springers were formed two decades ago under the guidance of another fortune-seeking band, the Ribald Five. Jalen at the time was noteworthy only for the fact that he had served as a shield-bearer for the Ribald Five, and after a string of successful adventures was charged with forming a band and aiding the Ribald Five by removing traps and flushing out monsters; an advance party of sorts. The nickname Trap-Springers stuck. One ill-fated excursion into *The Darkness Beneath* nearly did both bands in, leaving the Ribald Five at one member and the Trap-Springers at two. Jalen led the survivors out and quickly became the leader of the rebuilt group, which kept the Trap-Springers' name alive.

**Coop Falter (Mag 7)**: Charter members of the Trap-Springers, Coop and Jalen have been friends since childhood. Coop is a slug of a man, adverse to physical exertion and perfectly content to sit down and work on his Tinker hobby locked away alone in his workshop. The most reluctant delver of the Trap-Springers, Coop remains here because, as Jalen promised when he convinced him to join all those years ago, one day he'd be famous and rich and would have his own wizard's lab. Although overweight, out of shape, sometimes lost in thought and altogether without direction, Coop is in fact a powerful Enchanter. He owns a *Staff of Power* and a *Ring of Invisibility*.

**Gargo Greengas (DWar 6)**: Formerly of the Ribald Five, Gargo and Jalen are steadfast friends, both having saved the others' life numerous times. Gargo suffers from obsessive compulsive behavior. Organized and fastidious, the Dwarf insists on killing Orcs in the same order and with the same stroke of his sword every time. As meticulous as he is discerning, Gargo cannot stand to be near Orlaith until the action starts, when he becomes so focused on his methods that he finds her an invaluable ally. The Dwarf often has to stop and fix things which to his mind are out of order and utterly distracting. Prized possessions include a *Sword of Life Sucking* and a *Belt of Hill Giant Strength*.

**Jalen Longspear (War 8)**: A legendary adventurer and founder of the Trap-Springers, Jalen is a tall, strapping man with chiseled features and a disarming smile. Somewhat unbalanced and altogether eccentric, Jalen is nevertheless a remarkable, striking presence and natural leader of men. Despite his predilection for grabbing the limelight and controlling the scene, Jalen brightens a room simply by entering it. The famous Hero has hundreds of fantastic adventuring tales, and will gladly share them with any who might listen. Of note: *Crimson Hate* (see below), *Serpent Shield* (-1 damage from each melee attack), *Basilisk-hide Bracers* (+4 saves vs stoning), *Royal Hauberk* (Plated Maille +2, half damage from fire, cold, lightning), *Bewinged War Bonnet* (Attack & Damage rolled twice, using higher result).

***Crimson Hate***: Jalen's prized possession, claimed from *The Darkness Beneath* years ago and forged by unknown hands, this war spear is nearly as famous as its owner. Some call it Toothpick of the Titans or Needle of the Gods; the menacing spear has a large head which vaguely resembles a dragon's, and its octagonal shaft is wrapped

entirely in thick reddish dragon-hide. The spear confers the Strength of Five, and commands the Five of Strength, or so the legends go. Five command words, uttered in the tongue of dragons, allow control of the spear's unusual magic abilities. *Eyes*: A cone of pale light extends to 30 feet, illuminating darkness and penetrating illusions. *Wings*: The spear flies at move 24, remaining under the owner's control, and may strike as if wielded by him or her out to 100'. *Breath*: A cone of rolling flame 60 feet long and 30 feet wide spews forth from the spear head, dealing 10d6, save for ½; usable thrice per day. *Fangs*: Sets melee mode to Strength of Five, attacking at +3 and dealing 3 dice+3 damage. *Claws*: Sets melee mode to Five of Strength, which summons four mirror images of its wielder. All five spear-toting figures may attack a separate target at +1 to hit, dealing 1 die of damage. The mirror images may only conduct melee, and vanish once combat ends, appearing again only during the next. Crimson Hate turns invisible when left idle for over one hour.

**Orlaith the Younger (E War/Mag 4/4)**: Rescued by the Trap-Springers from Ogre captivity, this Elf maiden was raised by the brutes in the Ogre Downs. No one is sure if she learned her ill-mannered, unkempt ways from that up-bringing or if she was kept alive because of them. Whatever the case, Orlaith is remarkable for her complete lack of etiquette, femininity, modesty, and grooming. Orlaith and Gargo are polar opposites, and unless in the field can barely stand one another's presence. The fact is that Orlaith enjoys needling Gargo, but loves him like a brother. Her best tools are a *Displacer Cloak* and *Last Request* (Great Axe +2: Deals 2 dice+2 damage).

**Teabuck Ten (Pr 4):** The newest and youngest member of the Trap-Springers, Teabuck is Tenhove's little brother. Often resentful of the fact that the Trap-Springers are semi-retired now, Teabuck remains in order to pursue his other passion, cooking. Orlaith jokes that Teabuck is only here for his Popovers. Prone to mood swings between deep depression and feverish euphoria, Teabuck is a handful at times, and only his brother Tenhove really understands him. He has a *Mace +2* and an *Elven Cloak and Boots*.

**Tenhove Ten (Pr 7)**: Tenhove joined up with the Trap-Springers shortly after the Ribald Five disbanded. Despite his unabashed love for wine and ale, Tenhove has often proven to be the glue that keeps the band united. Tenhove seems to be able to function perfectly well whether he is partaking, hung over or suffering from the shakes. Had Tenhove the striking looks of Jalen, might be the more natural leader. He keeps a *War Hammer +2* and *Plate +2*.

## III. MISCELLANY

**Glyph-magic**: Highly magical, intricately drawn symbols of long-lost sorcery. *Dispelling of Magic* has a chance to delay or temporarily disrupt Glyph-magic. Proper deactivation requires mastery of Glyph-magic, however. **Time-locked**: prevents the effects of time with resepect to aging and decay. **Time-lost**: areas so enchanted cease to exist until certain criteria are met, at which point they exist once more. After a predetermined or random amount of time, the magic will reactivate, causing the target to once again cease to exist and return to its original Time-lost state, returning to existence as before if the same criteria are met. **Time-sent**: the entire field captures a specific time, past or future, and an aperture in the present can be located which leads to this field. Time-travelers may not exit the Time-sent field except by the aperture back to the present. **Time-torn**: this Glyph-magic activates at regular intervals. The results of all actions that altered the enchanted area since the last activation are torn from time and did not, effectively, occur. **Time-toss**: passing through this field thrusts the traveler forward in time randomly. Each character is tossed 1d6x10 minutes into the future. Be sure to make Wandering Monster rolls when they return!

**Ylfrit's Poem**

***Ware the Queen of Faerie Twisted***
***Promises not oft resisted***
***Scheming, somber eyes of sorrow***
***Recollected on the morrow***
***Night's long shadow never-ending***
***Greets the sleeping death impending***
***Dawn breaks forth reveals the dreaming***
***One by one your souls fade screaming***
***Ware the Queen of Faerie Twisted***
***Damned before this world existed***

It is not known who wrote this poem, but there is evidence that it is very old. Copies can be found in the Trophy Room, in Jhimyn's Journal, in Randall's possession, and anywhere else the referee feels appropriate. Single lines or partial versions might be located as well. Kafi, one of the Lost Corsairs, knows this poem by heart, and has been reciting the lines in his sleep for months before the Looming brought the pirates to this place.

**Hazes, Clutches and Time in the Underworld**: Time is an unknown quantity to most denizens of the underworld. Here beneath the earth, there is a certain maddening constancy; change is rare. Living things age, die, decompose, and turn to dust, but the surroundings undergo few perceptible changes. Time is simply not a consideration here, especially given that so many of the monsters who call this forsaken place home do not even age. Time is a concept which has been introduced to the underworld by surface-dwellers that have braved the dangers here and found they simply could not do without the rigid laws of the world above. The Dark Trolls now track time, and the methods they use are shared by Jalen and his cohorts. Various standards have been explored over the years, including the sleeping patterns of cave bats, growth rates of mold, and

how long it takes a Goblin to bleed to death. But the time unit which finally proved most reliable was the lifespan of a Haze Grub when deprived of food. The Haze Grub is a large, larval pest which will grow into a Giant Beetle over time, but must eat immediately upon hatching. This unit of measure became known as a Haze, and is almost identical to six minutes. The Haze is the basis of all time measurement in the underworld. A very complex system of determining time has evolved from this which no longer entails actually watching dying insect larvae. Candles, hourglasses and brass clockworks are used throughout the depths. 250 Hazes is known as a Clutch, and is the standard 'day' down here, although few of the races actually agree on what Clutch it is from one 'day' to the next.

## IV. TABLES

### MASTER NPC QUICK REFERENCE:

| Name | Who | Location | Name | Who | Location |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Aleth Enach** | Time-locked Dreamer | 37 | **Molif Yot** | Lost Corsair | 39 |
| **Ank Moaf** | Lost Corsair | 39 | **Morto** | Guest | G20 |
| **Arazul** | The Cat | 40 | **Nyles** | Valet | 14 |
| **Bang** | Digger | 14 | **Og** | Madcapper | 31 |
| **Bonedust** | Roach | 13 | **Ogg Grodd** | Troll Exile | 38C |
| **Boyid** | Bartender | G4 | **Orlaith** | Trap-Springer | Appendix |
| **Breezy** | Roach | 13 | **Pantyuzo** | Bartender | G4 |
| **Breghoneir** | Lone Graeth | 32 | **Pineapple** | Roach | 13 |
| **Cici** | Banker | 13 | **Pullo** | Pit Champion | 20 |
| **Chubby** | Roach | 13 | **Quigmoor** | Guest | G12 |
| **Coop Falter** | Trap-Springer | Appendix | **Randall** | Madcapper | 31 |
| **Darmley** | Guest | G12 | **Risnor** | Marchand Rover | 28B |
| **Dokh** | Troll Exile | 38C | **Rum-Tum** | Guest | G20 |
| **El Amn** | Lost Corsair | 39 | "**Shady" Schamn** | Gambler | 16B |
| **Ephrii Jae** | Marchand Rover | 28B | **Serios** | Ogre Porter | G6 |
| **Eshrek** | Troll Exile | 38C | **Shenydar** | Inn Custodian | G18 |
| **Falltee** | Inn Manager | G1 | **Silent-Wolf** | Guest | G16 |
| **Farina** | Roach | 13 | **Skipper** | Digger | 14 |
| **Fidget** | Madcapper | 31 | **Sleeping-Bear** | Guest | G16 |
| **Froggy** | Roach | 13 | **Stinky** | Roach | 13 |
| **Gargo Greengas** | Trap-Springer | Appendix | **Strutter** | Madcapper | 31 |
| **Gloam** | Guest | G19 | **Sunshine** | Roach | 13 |
| **Goomba** | Ogre Porter | G6 | **Tagart** | Dark Troll Envoy | Appendix |
| **Gowizch** | Marchand Rover | 28B | **Tatjana** | Guest | G14 |
| **Grothok** | Troll Exile | 38C | **Teabuck Ten** | Trap-Springer | Appendix |
| **Hogg** | Digger | 14 | **Tenhove Ten** | Trap-Springer | Appendix |
| **Ivilmic Aamit** | Marchand Rover | 28B | **Triggs** | Guest | G10 |
| **Jalen** | Owner and T-S | Appendix | **Urgorin** | Great Bogbear | 42B |
| **Jaxine** | Jalen's Guest | 21 | **Valahimt** | Guest | G14 |
| **Jhimyn** | Cricket King | 44 | **Vermin** | Madcapper | 31 |
| **Junior** | Roach | 13 | **Vin Phinaar** | Time-locked Dreamer | 37 |
| **Kafi** | Lost Corsair | 39 | **Waldo** | Roach | 13 |
| **Katrinka** | Digger | 14 | **Wally** | Madcapper | 31 |
| **Kimali Zhues** | Lost Corsair | 39 | **Wheezer** | Roach | 13 |
| **Les Clefdors** | Concierge | G1 | **Woim** | Roach | 13 |
| **Magwire** | Digger King | 14 | **Woo-Woo** | Digger Cultist | 14 |
| **Marholm** | Guest | G10 | **Wortle** | Digger | 14 |
| **Melone** | Bartender | G4 | **Zliff** | Lost Corsair | 39 |
| **Metherym** | Time-locked Dreamer | 37 | | | |

### NPC's BY TYPE (and where to find their descriptions):

**Wandering Types:** Arazul (40), Breghoneir (32), Jhimyn (44), Tagart (Appendix), Urgorin (42B).
**Halfway Inn Staff:** Bonedust and the *Roaches* (13), Boyid (G4), Cici (13), Falltee (G1), Goomba (G6), Jaxine (21), Les Clefdors (G1), Magwire and the *Diggers* (14), Melone (G4), Nyles (14), Pantyuzo (G4), Pullo (20), "Shady" Schamn (16B), Serios (G6), Shenydar (G18).
**Halfway Inn Guests**: Darmley (G12), Gloam (G19), Marholm (G10), Morto (G20), Quigmoor (G12), Rum-Tum (G20), Silent-Wolf (G16), Sleeping-Bear (G16), Tatjana (G14), Triggs (G10), Valahimt (G14).
**Lost Corsairs**: Ank Moaf, El Amn, Kafi, Kimali Zhues, Molif Yot (L), Zliff. (All found in 39).
**Madcappers**: Fidget, Og, Randall (L), Strutter, Vermin, Wally. (All found in 31).
**The Marchand Rovers**: Ephrii Jae, Gowizch, Ivilmic Aamit, Risnor. (All found in 28B).
**Time-locked Dreamers:** Aleth Enach, Metherym, Vin Phinaar the Odd. (All found in 36).
**The Trap-Springers:** Coop Falter, Gargo Greengas, Jalen Longspear, Orlaith the Younger, Teabuck Ten, Tenhove Ten. (All found in the Appendix).
**Troll Exiles**: Dokh, Eshrek, Grothok and Ogg Grodd (L). (All found in 38C).

## TRAP-SPRINGERS QUICK REFERENCE:

| Trap-Springers | Class | Level | STR | INT | WIS | CON | DEX | CHA | Bedroom | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coop** | Mag | 7 | 9 | 13 | 17 | 6 | 11 | 8 | G5 | Nerdy, Overweight |
| **Gargo** | DWar | 6 | 12 | 15 | 13 | 10 | 8 | 11 | G5 | Fastidious, Neat-nick |
| **Jalen** | War | 8 | 14 | 11 | 8 | 10 | 15 | 18 | 21 | Overbearing, Confident |
| **Orlaith** | EWar/Mag | 4 | 16 | 10 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 6 | G2 | Ill-mannered, Unkempt |
| **Teabuck** | Pr | 4 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 15 | 9 | 7 | G3 | Moody, Dramatic |
| **Tenhove** | Pr | 7 | 9 | 11 | 13 | 14 | 16 | 15 | G3 | Hard Drinker, Outgoing |

## NEW MONSTERS QUICK REFERENCE:

| Monster | DC | Spd | HD | Damage | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Blood Thumps** | 4 | 12 | 10 | 2 dice | Trample |
| **Bogbears** | 5 | 9 | 3+1 | 1 die | Surprise, Frozen with Fear, Immunities |
| **Chasm Creeps** | 6 | 9 | 3+1 | 1 die | Exhaustion, Regenerate, Immunities |
| **Claw Maws** | 2 or 7 | 18 | 2 | ½ die | Jaw Lock |
| **Cryptlings** | 2 or 7 | 9 | 3 | 1 die | Unseelie Aura, +4 on RTH |
| **Dark Trolls** | 4 | 12 | 6+3 | 1 die+2 | Regenerate |
| **Dread Lurkers** | 2 | 6 | 6 | Special | Surprise, Paralyze, Strangle, Immunities |
| **Evil Roots** | 7 | 0 | 1 | Special | Snatch, Lash, Coil, Constrict |
| **Feral Fangs** | 6 | 12 | 3 | 1 die | Surprise, Paralyzing Gaze |
| **Foul Saplings** | 9 | 0 | 1 | Special | Death Burst |
| **Graeth** | 5 | 12 | 5 to 7 | 1 die+1 | Sleep, Hold Person, +1 on RTH, Silver to strike |
| **Great Bogbear** | 4 | 6 | 5+1 | 1 die+2 | FwF, Panic, Eerie Presence, Immunities |
| **Hidden-folk** | 2 | 12 | 5 | 1 die | Enthrallment, Immunities |
| **Jhimyn** | 4 | 9 | 9 | 2 dice | Leap, Acid Spit, Immunities |
| **Living Statue (Mercury)** | 3 | 6 | 12 | 1 die x2 | Envelopment, Rebuild, Immunities |
| **Mad Crickets** | 6 | 9 | 1 hit | 1 hit | Leap |
| **Pale Spawns** | 7 | 9 | 2+1 | 1 die | Appear, Join |
| **Quivering Mass** | 9 | 0 | 12 | 2 dice | Throw Globs, Festering Wounds |
| **Stone Wretch** | 2 | 0 | 12 to 18 | 3 dice+3 | Breathe, Swallow, Gaze |

## NEW MAGIC QUICK REFERENCE:

| Item | Usage | Location | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Amulet of Memory*** | Mag, Pr, E | 24B | Cast one 1st and 2nd level spell twice |
| ***Talon Rip*** | Any but Pr | 28C | +1 Dagger, Hidden Fae bonus |
| ***Venom Creeps*** | Any but Pr | 28D | Bracers, Poison target on 20 |
| ***Cinder's Teeth*** | Any | 28D | Necklace, 15 Spd, +1 DC, other bonuses |
| ***Mjolfipt*** | War, E, D | 31C | +2 Spear, 1 die+2, 2 dice+2, or 3 dice+2 |
| ***Life-bond Diadem*** | Any | 31C | +1 hit per level |
| ***Eye of the Tiger*** | Any | 31C | Fight as a 6 HD Monster/+1 Level |
| ***Vigil's Edge*** | War, E, D, H | 32 | +1 Sword, 2 dice damage |
| ***Satchel of Gold Holding*** | Any | 44 | As Bag, only accepts gold |
| ***Necklace of Rat-shape*** | Any | 37 | Shape shift into a sewer rat |
| ***Ifrit Bottle*** | Any | 37 | Holds *Shaita'an* the Ifrit |
| ***Cold Scream*** | War, E, D, H | 36 | +1 Sword, adds 2 cold damage, freezes on a 20 |
| ***Thunder Javelins*** | War, E, D, H | 36 | Single use, creates a 60 foot range 7d6 bolt |
| ***Glitch Gut*** | War, E, D | 36 | +1 Two-handed Sword, deals 1 die+4, breaks on a 1 |
| ***Pocket Boulders*** | Any | 36 | Single use mini-boulders |
| ***Widow Sting*** | War, E, D, H | 36 | +1 Sword, 1 poison damage, cumulative, kills on a 20 |
| ***Floating Footwear*** | Any | 36 | Fall like feather, Levitate x3/day |
| ***Balthagorn's Head*** | Any | 50B | Delusional invincibility, +1 on saves |
| ***Wallbanger's Paw*** | Any | 50B | *Yevrah* the imaginary friend |
| ***Black Dog's Bones*** | Mag, E | 50B | Confers *Black Dog's Bite* |
| ***Zim's Innards*** | Mag, E | 50B | Six applications of weapons coating |
| ***Crimson Hate*** | War, E, D | Appendix | Jalen's famous spear |

## RESTOCKING THE DUNGEON

**Roll 1d6**

**1:** Monster

**2:** Monster & Treasure

**3-5:** Empty

**6:** Something Hidden. 1d6: 1-2 : Junk, 3-6: Treasure

| RANDOM TREASURE IN THE LOWER CAVES |
|---|
| **Roll all 4 together: 1d6, 1d10, 1d12, 1d20** |
| **1d6** for Silver: Result x 1,000 in coins |
| **1d12** for Gold: 1-6: Result x 200 in coins, 7-12: No Gold |
| **1d10** for Gems: 1-2: Gems, 3-10: No Gems |
| **1d20** for Magic: 1-2: Magic, 3-20: No Magic Items |

**WANDERING MONSTERS:** At 20 minute intervals the referee should check for Wandering Monsters with a d6 roll. A roll of 6 indicates that the referee may roll on or choose from the list for the appropriate region. There are no Wandering Monsters in the *Halfway Inn* or *The Oubliette*. **Other** indicates that the referee should pick some Specific Personality, such as The Troll Exiles, or Jhimyn if appropriate, or simply choose whatever makes sense at the time. **Dual Encounter** indicates that the referee should roll twice more, ignoring this result, and combine the results. Both parties are encountered at the same time. The two might be allied, or in mid combat.

**Troll Highway** (areas **1-8**), roll 1d12:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | *Tagart, Troll Envoy* | With 2 bodyguards | **7 to 8** | *Feral Fangs* | 1d6+2 |
| **2** | *Dark Trolls* | 1d3+1 | **9** | *Arazul* | See 40 |
| **3 to 4** | *Claw Maws* | 2d6+2 | **10** | *Breghoneir* | See 32 |
| **5** | *Chasm Creeps* | 1d4+1 | **11** | *Other* | Pick |
| **6** | *Dread Lurker* | 1 | **12** | *Dual Encounter* | Roll twice more |

**West Tunnels** (areas **24-32**), roll 1d12:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1 to 2** | *Claw Maws* | 2d6+2 | **9** | *Arazul* | See 40 |
| **3** | *Dread Lurker* | 1 | **10** | *Breghoneir* | See 32 |
| **4 to 6** | *Feral Fangs* | 1d6+2 | **11** | *Other* | Pick |
| **7 to 8** | *Evil Roots* | 1d4+1 | **12** | *Dual Encounter* | Roll twice more |

**East Tunnels** (areas **38-50**), roll 1d12:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | *Claw Maws* | 2d6+2 | **8 to 9** | *Evil Roots* | 1d4+1 |
| **2** | *Dread Lurker* | 1 | **10** | *Arazul* | See 40 |
| **3 to 4** | *Bogbears* | 1d4+1 | **11** | *Other* | Pick |
| **5 to 7** | *Mad Crickets* | 3d6+10 | **12** | *Dual Encounter* | Roll twice more |

**RUMORS FROM THE MOISTENED BINT** (as delivered by whispering Dwarves – 1d20):

**1**. Gloam's gotta wagon-loada gems and glitterys stiched up all tights like in 'is room. (F)
**2.** Dem Dark Trolls're ben run out from dey 'omes by sumpin' mean, dey plannin' on makin' dis joint dey new digs. (F)
**3.** Crickets, me boy...crickets. Dey runnin' da show down 'ere, not da Dark Trolls. (F)
**4.** One a dem Roaches is really a spy come from Marchand set to watchin' Jalen. (F)
**5.** Dem Marchand boys (Rovers) run inta Tagart 'n crossed 'im but good, dey now shackled down in da Troll 'omes. (F)
**6.** Dose lil faeries dat run Shady's games use dat evil eye ta rig da bones. (F)
**7.** Jalen's so-called Champeen Pullo's a floppin' flounder wit' 'is weak knees an' all. (F)
**8.** Dat sly Elf Orlaith locked 'er own pops in room tirteen an' bricked 'im in all snug, 'e's still tryin' ta claw 'is way out. (F)
**9.** Dem Ogres Morto and Rum-Tum are chattin' wit' Jalen 'bout buyin' dis 'ere inn. (F)
**10**. Dere's an Odd-elf in dem caves, older dan ta time hisself. (T)
**11**. Some idjut Gar-Ghulii worshipin' Digger trew dis giant like pearl inta 'is pagan god's scrap 'eap. (T)
**12.** Jalen 'e's been eyin' dat Tatjana an' Jaxine in return's gettin' all mushy-like wit' Valahimt. (T)
**13.** Dis 'aff-baked wizard guy, Jhimyn, so 'e sets 'im up a magic shop in dem caves. 'E's na' ben 'earda since. Some sez 'e's done ben turnt inta a black cat. (T except black cat bit)
**14.** Jalen was de Ogre Overlord, won de t'rone on a lucky bet. If yer askin' me twas no luck 'tall. Some sez dat 'e be da Dark Troll King afores we knew it. (T with some conjecture)
**15.** Dat hare-brained wizard guy Coop spends affa 'is days in dis wee lil toy land he done conjured up by magic. (T)
**16**. I don't trust dem Diggers, dey're upta no good I tells ya. Dere's a reason none're let back inta dem holes. (T)
**17.** Dat Odd-elf Queen she lives in men's dreams. No man can be 'er King, butya din't 'ear dat from me. (T)
**18.** So dis lodger year or two back claims 'e sees a dragon in one dem pits and high tailed it outta dere faster'n Shady can say Yer On. (T but he saw the Stone Wretch, not a dragon)
**19.** Some sez a grotto wit steamin' 'ot-tubs is out dere in dem caves, but same sez look out fer Trolls if ya sees 'em. (T)
**20.** Dere's dis Odd-elf King buried somewhere'bouts in one dem pits, pertected by elfish bad-uns, so I'm told. (T)

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER ADVENTURE** (1d20, when desirous of random events):

**1. Digger Uprising:** The Goblins are either planning to or have overthrown Magwire the Digger King.

**2. Labor Strike!:** The Roaches, Diggers or Ogres are refusing to continue work unless drastic changes are made.

**3. Fight! Fight! Fight**!: Bonedust and Magwire are finally squaring off in the Brawling Pit. Bonedust has serious tricks up his sleeve, which if exposed could send the already contentious groups into all-out feuding.

**4. The Anthill Gang:** Rival street urchins from Marchand have found the Roaches and are looking to cause trouble.

**5. Gar-Ghuliians:** The Cult of the Pit is spreading and gaining power, stirring up problems in Marchand. Rumor has it a back-alley church has formed and is growing rapidly.

**6. Gar-Ghuliians in Tinker World:** Woo-woo is inducting Tinks into his Cult of the Pit having found a way to enter Tinker World.

**7. Cici and the Jilted Lover:** Cici needs help - a ruthless Crime Boss in Marchand is sending thugs to harass her into keeping her wedding vows.

**8. Coop's Love:** The Thaumaturgist has fallen in love with one of his more life-like Tinks.

**9. Gloam Becomes Lucid:** but no one realizes it because he keeps raving on about "whales". Something he says tips off the characters; there might be more to the story.

**10. Rascally Roaches:** The Roaches have been sneaking into Tinker World and upsetting apple carts, tipping cows, knocking on doors then hiding, and so forth. Coop thinks some of his Tinks have gone bad and wants the PCs to investigate..

**11. Trapped Coop:** The Magic User has become trapped in Tinker World, held by some powerful force.

**12. Ogre Downs Needs Help:** Messages from Jalen's allies plead for aid, their Overlord is dying and there is tension brewing.

**13. The Problem with Pinkie**: The Pinkie in the Crystal Pool is addictive and potentially valuable. Guests or staff might be getting hooked on it, selling it, etc.

**14. The Bat People?:** Explore the history and specifics of these winged Elf-kin, themselves older than the Graeth. Why did they worship an Easter Island Head? Perhaps their otherworldly cousins have arrived in search of the missing Stone Face.

**15. Go Get Loomed:** Bored with his monotonous life, a noble from Marchand is looking for adventurers to lead him safely to the Looming. Virtually no one besides Arazul even knows what the name means.

**16. Dark Troll Carousers:** A group of hell-raising Dark Trolls have had too much to drink. They'll gladly escort adventurers to lower levels, for a price.

**17. Evil Comes Calling:** *Evil*, the Madcappers' nemesis, has followed their trail here along with his Flying Cow Heads. Someone's got to stop them!

**18. A "Shady" Contest:** Schamn and his gambling cronies are running a winner takes all contest (with plenty of side action) to see who can be the first to fetch Old Tekkos and Young Zhoolg (see **15**), last known seeking Level 9, the Dark Troll Citadel.

**19. Salician Girls Night Out:** A drop-dead gorgeous gang of Salicia's girls (priestesses of the Goddess of Lust) from Level 6 are whooping it up in the Moistened Bint, and one of them has her eyes set on a PC.

**20. Long Arm of the Law:** The Warden of Marchand has amassed enough do-gooders to send a small army of Priests and Paladins to the gates of the Halfway Inn. The Warden is convinced that Jalen is in cahoots with the Dark Trolls.

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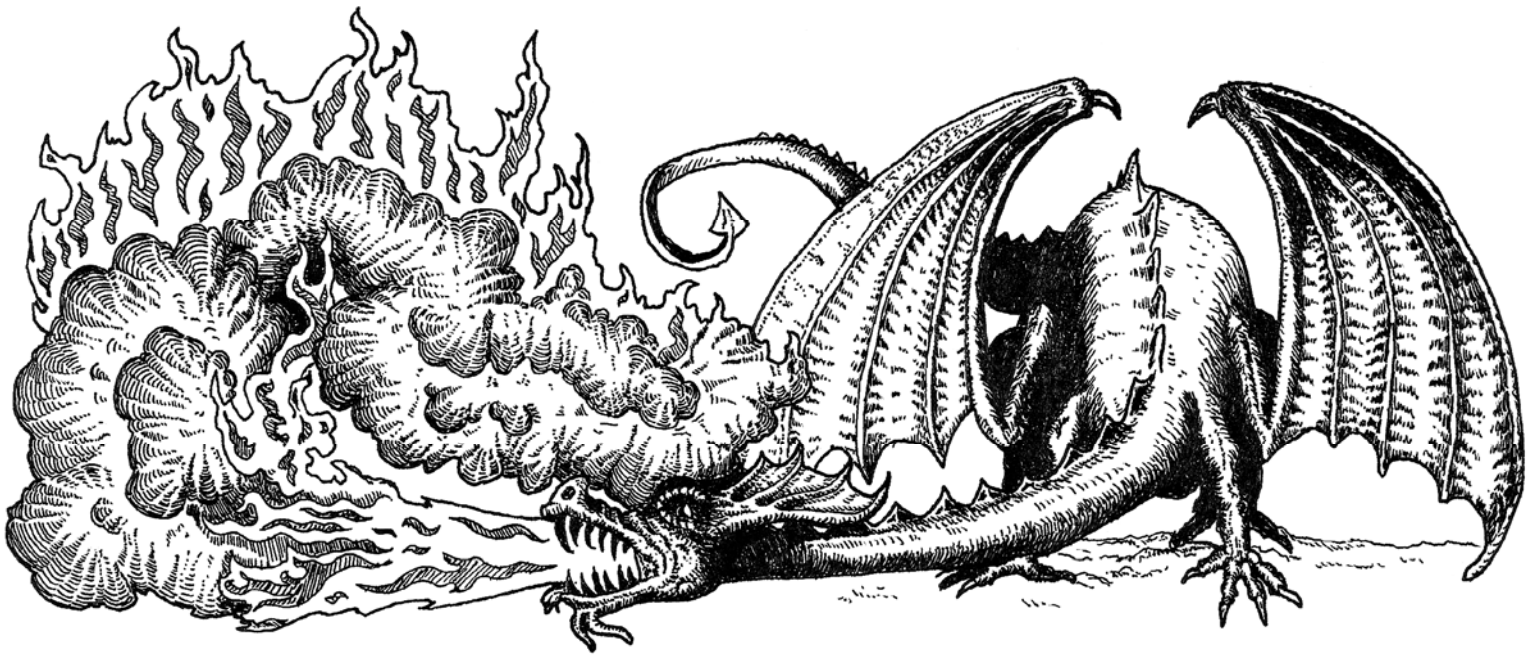
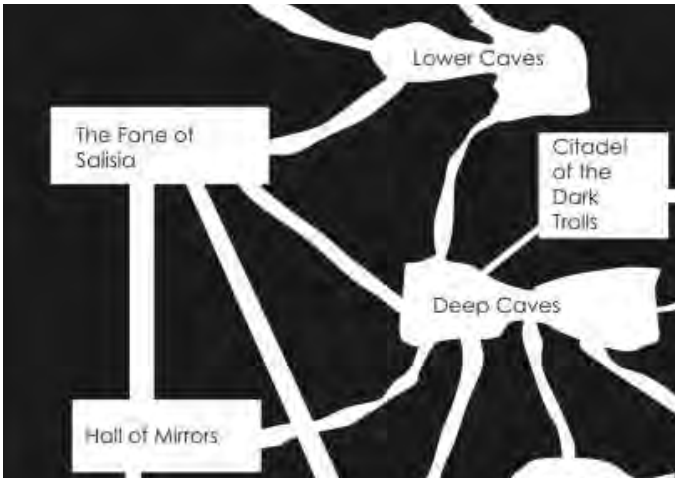


**Introduction**: Long before the dainty sandals of young women would step from behind the Fane's iron portals, a small regiment of phobic Duergar claimed this secluded area. All that is known of them can only be heard from the Lamia Noble who dominated by the power of her charm and deception. This evil beauty, properly addressed as a Priestess of Salicia, soon tired of the exaggerated fears possessing the Duergar and betrayed them. With the help of an equally nefarious suitor, a wizard investigating the depths on behalf of his Lich master, they tricked the infatuated dwarves into a battle with trolls. Although the newly arrived wizard, Myxod the Hellion, wanted to destroy both tribes of monsters, he was swayed to retract that plan by the Lamia's magic. In fact, for over seven years the growing troll stronghold would benefit from the "odd couple", receiving the content of the Duergar armory and having opposing monsters slain for arcane research. However, the serpentine priestess wasn't satisfied with this cozy existence, and devised a plan to establish a debauched shrine. Trips Myxod made to the surface were aided by a teleportation portal, the only one to be established in the dungeon by human hands. While on one expedition, a gang of condemned lycanthropes were recruited to waylay caravans and kidnap young women. At the same time, the Lamia assumed a fully human appearance, and secretly spread the word about a "convent of concubines". Eventually, Myxod noticed the pacification of his life, and the threatening arrival of good adventurers in the upper levels. Leaving his laboratory guarded by his creations, he disappeared into a magical staircase leading to the Hall of Mirrors. Unfettered, the lascivious Lamia (now an Abbess of Salicia) continued her plan to transform nubile victims into her adepts or valuable slaves. Any adventurers knocking on her doorstep would be tricked into believing that the gloomy chambers are only for surpassing pleasures.

**Features**: The geometric architecture of the Fane and its stonework are not hard to identify as dwarven. (Even a surface-dwelling human might wonder why the lintels are so low.) Uncommon to such a place are the sand pit gardens, magical lanterns, sweet smells of perfume, and comestible treats. The secret doors in the Fane are twice as difficult to detect for non-dwarf PCs. The Fane has several connections to other dungeon levels. If used in conjunctiton with the other levels of *The Darkness Beneath*, one narrow corridor winds up to the Lower Caves, and is used by the priestesses to visit Longspear's Halfway Inn. This path is routinely checked by wererat guards. The other, wider tunnel descends to the Deep Caves, and is considered Dark Troll property. They use it to train young raptor steeds before pressing them into full service on the Troll Highway. Any party interrupting a training pack (2 Dark Trolls mounted on Blood Thumps and 2 juveniles) resting at the water pool is going to be attacked. A variety of skeletons can be found along the raptor run, victims of the trolls or hungry, giant cave insects.

**Legend**

**1. Vestibule and Souvenir Shop**: At the mouth of the entrance tunnel, a few paper lanterns have been placed behind stalagmites, casting eerie beams of rosy light toward the pool. Other lanterns hang above the first iron double door, which is weakly lashed shut with a bit of rope. An inspection reveals that a locking mechanism once existed, but was bent out of shape. If the party is accompanied by the sultry adepts, they will be met at the portal by Malvin



Wiorfether, who will whisper an appropriate greeting. Malvin, outfitted in a sleeveless black robe and sandals, was once a splendid constable (War5) who nearly stopped the escape of the wererats now operating in the Fane. He was paralyzed with a spell after seeing Myxod's face and taken below to suffer the coriaceous caress of the whip and other instruments. Unable to resist the charm of the Lamia Abbess, and routinely distressed by immoral sights, the former captain spends his time sweeping away spiders and tending his cart of souvenirs. If the party has arrived without the escort of females, Malvin has been instructed to determine why they are visiting the Fane. Party response and apparent formidability will dictate how he knocks on the doors leading to **2**. One strike is a code for a likely attack, two strikes means caution, and three are for a vulnerable or wounded group. While the party awaits the priestesses, Malvin will try to sell his wares. Arranged on his cart are 12 small glass bottles circling a tall silver bottle. For 13 gp, one can purchase the former, which are filled with a few ounces of the scented oil the adepts use on their tresses. The big bottle is a magical trap containing an Asparan Genie, a type of wizard familiar in another realm (see Monster Appendix), and costs 1333 gp. Malvin will defend himself with a broom if attacked, although he will be joined by the wererats in **1a** if the battle lasts more than a round. He can be saved from his long stupor if he sees some of his old gear, which was traded to other dungeon denizens upon his capture. The *Lion Shield* +2 found in the Troglodyte King throne room (**24** in *FO!* #5) was his beloved treasure, and he will snap back to his former role if he sees it. The GM can add a recovered weapon if the shield isn't present if appropriate. He will feverishly relate that monsters hide behind the walls here, and women are being enslaved. Of course, the spying lycanthropes will try to cut short his disclosure.

**1a. Secret Guard Room**: The wererats of the Fane were notorious outlaws, and still maintain respectable skill at hiding and moving silently. A pair in human form (HD 3; hp 18, 18; DC 7; DMG 1d6 fang baton) are tasked with observing Malvin's interactions and shadowing the adepts' outings. Behind the secret door, the room holds a wide bench, one loaded crossbow, and a small metal cage riveted over a hole in the north wall. Inside the cage is a young Musqoad (see Monster Appendix), which will skitter up a burrow-like passage to **11a** if a release pin is triggered. Unless taken completely by surprise, warning the other wererats will be the first action taken by the guards if Malvin is slain or coughs up secrets. These two will try to sneak attack (or block a party retreat) if a fight erupts deeper in the dungeon.

**2. Audience Hall of Salicia**: Breaking up the checkered tile floor in this square room is what appears to be a rock garden, set upon a textured field of crystalline sand. An open corridor continues north and a partially open door juts from the west wall. Five round pillows stacked two high rest a few feet before the sculpted garden. A pair of bronze chains form an "X" across the low ceiling, holding up warm-colored lanterns. The manner of scene that takes place here will depend on Malvin's level of warning. The iron doors won't be unlocked until the Lamia Abbess and her forces are prepared. If her strategy is to seduce the party, the meeting will be very entertaining. Otherwise, the unwelcome heroes will be battling her entire cadre of monsters forthwith. The "salacious" itinerary is as follows:

a. Adepts either with the party or appearing first will seat the party on the supplied cushions.
b. All other adepts, in pastel robes of transparent silk, gather on the far side of the garden, acting very coquettish.
c. The Abbess enters the chamber with her zither-like *guzheng*, which she sets beside her. She will ask for full introductions and send one girl to fetch wine from **3**.
d. If the party requires healing, the Abbess will explain how treatments must be paid for, by willing participation in rituals pervaded with iniquitous acts of lust. The price is the same for information about dungeon areas or denizens. Uncompensated participation is also welcome.
e. All party members must agree to the Abbess' conditions to stay at the Fane any longer than this first exchange.
f. The adepts will interrupt to beg the Abbess to play music, so that they can dance for the guests.

All the priestesses appear to be dressed like bathhouse courtesans from ruttish tales. Their wispy robes and slit tunics couldn't hide the faintest blemish, and even more is exposed by short girdles of decorative buttons and scales. The largest part of the outfit is a crimson hat, tied about the chin or neck with ribbons. Unless the party has travelled widely, these girls are the most exquisite troupe of beauties seen by the PCs at one time. Although the Abbess has lost some of her youthful tone, she does the costume no disservice. She wears large earrings and a torc, and is the tallest of the women at 5' 6".

The Abbess of Salicia is a Lamia Priestess ten times the age of her prey. She is very pleased with her latest charade, and enjoys manipulating others into doing vile acts. Her true name, given in the ancient serpent-tongue, cannot be pronounced (Lamia Noble - Priest 6; HD 10; hp 72; DC 6; DMG by mace or spell; Special: Wisdom drain). Her personal items include green peridot earrings worth 400gp, a *Ring of Walking on Water*, *Sandals of Springing*, and a *Torc of Spiritual Tablature*. Also with her during most encounters is a lesser artifact, a twenty-string musical instrument much like a guzheng (see Magic Appendix). With the power of the Torc, the Abbess can cast her spells as melodies played upon the cursed lyre. At her disposal are the following: *Sanctuary, Protection from The Good, Detect Magic, Paralyze Person, Discern Alignment, Dolorous Hymn*, and a curse known as the *Scar of Temptation* (see Magic Appendix). The Abbess shares one weakness with all Lamia; her human guise is less effective against characters above 7th level. While playing music for her energetic adepts, the Abbess will be

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using her spells to prepare for combat or find out more about the adventurers. In the rare likelihood that a comely lass is one of the visitors, the Abbess will immediately strike a tune to place the female target under the influence of the *Scar of Temptation*. Although the music cannot be identified as spell use, her items radiate enchantment, and the cursed guzheng has an aura of overwhelming evil. Even without magic detection, a keenly observant party member might notice that one of the large white "rocks" in the sand pit is actually bleached bone. Buried beneath the artistic arrangement is the undead skeleton of a Gorlangterus (see Monster Appendix), which can extract itself from the sands one round after being magically animated. During the dance, the 9 adepts will remove their red hats, revealing long hair that hides the curse-scar on their necks. After the performance, they will leave crestfallen if the party doesn't agree to the rituals. PCs that stay will receive royal treatment from a girl (or three) of his choice, starting with many cups of drugged wine and lurid small talk. The list of girls, ranked from least to most experienced:

a. YiYun (P1; hp 5; DC 8): An exotic teen with very long black hair she toys with constantly.
b. Brighid (P2; hp 8; DC 8): A limber girl with red hair and nails speckled with gold dust.
c. Argenta (P2; as above): A pale damsel with platinum hair and a fair grasp of Elvish.
d. Cybel (P2; as above): A winsome brunette with an attraction to full-bearded fellows.
e. Theoni (P2; as above): An athletic girl with chestnut hair and a healthy appetite.
f. Junko (P2; as above): Another raven-haired lass, doesn't like goblins or trolls.
g. Ninetta (P2; as above): A petite girl with auburn hair who prefers to share with Argenta.
h. Garlinde (P2; as above): Extremely well-endowed, with blonde hair and a coin trick that never grows old.
i. Ophira (P3; hp 14; DC 8; DMG 1-3 silvered hairpin): A corrupted woman that would remain evil even if freed from the curse. She will never surrender.

Four of the adepts have prepared *Lesser Healing*, while the others are ready with the damaging reverse. In a fight at the Audience Hall, the latter will all cast upon an enemy mage or priest before fleeing. The healers will try to offset any attacks striking the Abbess or Ophira. While Ophira intercepts melee, the Abbess will use the full power of the guzheng to animate the buried Gorlangterus skeleton (HD 6; hp 36; DC 7; DMG 4d4 tusks, 1d6 club tail) and seven of the similarly hidden Duergar Zombies from **4**. The wererats and Musqoads will also join the fray, entering from the secret door on the east wall.

**3. The Changeling's Kitchen**: After days in the rotten dungeon, some PCs may be more attracted to the smell of baked goods emanating from here than to the striking adepts. Alone in her toil here, a plain maid with black robes and short hair strides between copper pots and clusters of diced vegetables. All the food here is pilfered from surface farms and trade caravans. The priestesses will offer a bogus explanation for this, that an indebted goblin brings food down to the Fane in an invisible wagon. If the party dines on any of the prepared dishes, the only effect will be a full stomach. However, the alcohol served is laced with a euphoric drug that makes troubling thoughts float away. The maid is not human, rather, a Doppleganger with the skill of a druggist (HD 4; hp 25; DC 5; DMG 1d8). The creature was hired by Myxod to mimic the other races living in the upper caverns, facilitating the theft of alchemical ingredients. Currently, the Abbess also employs her to clone visitors that might die "accidentally" on a ritual night, so suspicions are delayed.

**3a. Maid's Apartment**: Enthralled by human fashions, the Doppleganger's room is full of trinkets, discarded outfits, and chalk drawings on parchment. At a lacquer-topped desk are her powders and extracts for making poisoned wine. Beneath the cushion of a low stool are 30 small gems affixed in globs of wax, each worth 9-30 gp.

**4. Court of the Drying Dead**: A short distance beyond the audience hall is a cavern split in half by a landing encompassed with low balustrade. The railing is lit by small lanterns at each corner, with the deck space containing 5 chaises longues. The unpaved sections of the cavern floor are layered with salty sand, raked into miniature swirling dunes. Mere inches beneath the strange landscaping are Duergar corpses in armor, never interred in their nearby clan tomb. Five bodies are close to the furnished platform and four more are just around the sharp corner in a darkened bed of sand. Guests of the Abbess will be led here by the Adepts, if some seclusion for closer contact after dinner is warranted. The seemingly smitten priestesses won't mind heated revelry as a group, or their noises reaching the ears of any nonparticipants in **2**. No smell of decay arises from the desiccated Duergar due to the composition of the sand. Of course, the reason for the necrotic presence is so the Abbess can animate them for battle. Once arisen, the zombie warriors will storm the platform seeking their targets (HD 2; hp 12,12,14,15,15, 16,16,16,16; DC 3; DMG 1d8 battle axe). Only Ophira and the Abbess are aware of the secret door to **5**; the younger adepts will be too frightened to venture past it. The locked iron doors to **6** are trapped with poison spring blades, which inflict intense convulsions (1d4 damage for 1d8 rounds) upon a failed Save.

**5. The Forgotten Biers**: The featureless secret door leading to this tomb isn't trapped, but will make a sharp grinding noise if swung open. The unlit interior is home to two bizarre undead monsters. The first is a mummified Giant Stomatopod, a clawed crustacean that during its younger life was transplanted from the upper caves by Myxod. He transformed a few into undead defenders for his lab and this Duergar crypt. The reanimated Stomato-

pod (HD 4+4; hp 32; DC 4; DMG 1d8x2 mantis claws; Special: Turn as Mummy, +2 initiative) is in the middle of the room, and will attack intruders with astonishing speed. Two rune-carved biers are in the niches along the far wall. The coffins placed upon one have been smashed, and any contents of value looted. The second funerary display is pristine, with half a dozen caskets covered by a large linen tapestry. Unfortunately, this foul fabric is a Shroud Phantom that can easily kill an unprepared robber. The wight-like Shroud Phantom (HD 3; hp 18; DC 3; DMG 1d4/round suffocation; Special: Turn as Wraith, can only be harmed by silver or magic weapons) will envelop the closest target character, choking him like a twisting noose and preventing counterattack by weapon. Any other combatants striking blows to the Phantom after its successful snare will have resulting damage split between the monster and its immobilized prey. This malevolent undead absorbs slain characters, evaporating bodies and gear into an ethereal mist. The six coffins contain the remains of Duergar clansmen, each wearing a silver death mask worth 45 gp, and girded with a short saber. The scabbards used by this clan have a special feature: the lining is imbued with Salamander Flake, a pyrophoric chitin. Friction from drawing a blade ignites the flakes borne on its edge, giving the first slash a bonus of 1d6 fire damage. The sizzling flakes flare out immediately after. There are enough flakes in a sword scabbard for five independent incendiary attacks.

**6. Secret of The Love Tree**: The rituals of Salicia's Fane can be started immediately after the deal is made. The Abbess will not accept any delay longer than one period of rest after the welcoming dinner. The priestesses will return to their chambers before the first ritual is to begin, leaving the party with the Doppleganger. They will be instructed to leave any armaments, staves, or wands with her, or a cohort that declined the contract. Due to certain "physical limitations", a ritual can only be conducted with up to two guests at one time. Garlinde and Theoni will temporarily unlock the iron doors to **6** when all is ready, escorting the adventurers along a corridor featuring a weird potted tree. Actually an overgrown bush with branches drooping from the tight confines, this plant is the very rare Passion Mallow Bloom (HD 3+8; hp 20; DC 8; DMG: none), benign cousin to the poisonous purple death. The girls, still wearing their wide hats, will try to examine the delicate pink flowers...but will shriek in fright instead! Pointing towards the central cluster of fronds, the Adepts will say they've seen a menacing spider. This ploy is to get the players to move beneath the tree and disturb the branches. The adepts know that the Bloom exudes a sweet sap, which in contact with skin acts as a supercharged aphrodisiac (resistance to carnal enticement halved per failed poison Save). Even if the players don't touch the tree, vibration will cause droplets to fall to the floor, with a 25% chance of hitting anyone close. Searching for the scary spider incurs 1d4 exposures requiring saving throws. Nestled in the Bloom is a dead cave spider, brought in by routine sweepings near the Fane entrance. The Adepts are protected from the sap by their one useful costume piece; they don't need the nature of their curse amplified by the poison. The girls will pause here until they are confident that the players are under the sap's influence.

**7. One Bed to Seduce Them All**: If the guests haven't degenerated into drooling dogs, they will see a large, pyramid-vaulted hall before them, clouded with steam and smelling of rich incense. A rounded alcove in the center of one wall appears to hold a low black stove, shimmering with blue flame. Copper water jugs are heating on its flat tempered top. The remaining far wall with an opening frames another set of iron doors. The main attraction of the space is a circular bed, hoisted nine feet above the floor on cylindrical trunks of gleaming bronze. With a twist, the Adepts can move between the spaced supports, although larger characters would be blocked. Underneath the tall bed is an equally gigantic bathtub, being filled by the remaining adepts, with the exception of Ophira. Naturally, the escorts will suggest that players still in armor make themselves more accessible. A closer look at the opulent bath reveals bronze "leaves" radiating from most of the pillars, forming a delicate exterior stairway to the roof of cushions. One plain pillar can sink into the floor, allowing man-sized individuals within the wet play pen. The Abbess, reclining out of sight on the bed, will jump down to "bless" her new companion(s) with a kiss. Thus she begins a pattern of intimate contact, alternating between her and the cursed adepts, that will drain Wisdom until all resistance crumbles. Aside from enhanced willpower or a rescue sortie, there are a few events that could ruin her seductive plan. First, there is a slim chance that a PC could hear the growling of Musqoads behind the secret door to **11**. Second, the charmed mercenaries from **8** might interrupt, displeased that the ladies are seeking better "performances". Third, and most ironically, a randy player pressing the Abbess for intercourse will discover the limit of her illusionary skin, consequently finding himself in bed with an angry snake. If something (other than combat) happens to spoil the ritual, the priestesses will demand that the players repent before the image of Salicia in **7a**. Conversely, all players charmed by the Lamia's special power will be pressured into a mercenary role, fighting to secure her evolving interests. The Abbess knows not to confront her devotees with repugnant demands, like slaying a close friend or other deed that could ruin the enchantment. Immediate requests to retrieve treasure from renegade monsters will be worded to sound like charitable acts. Players that survive these deadly missions will eventually learn about the wererat raids and Salician curse. Within a year, the Abbess plans to bring strife to the upper dungeons, by having a squad of well-equipped assassins eliminate key personages.

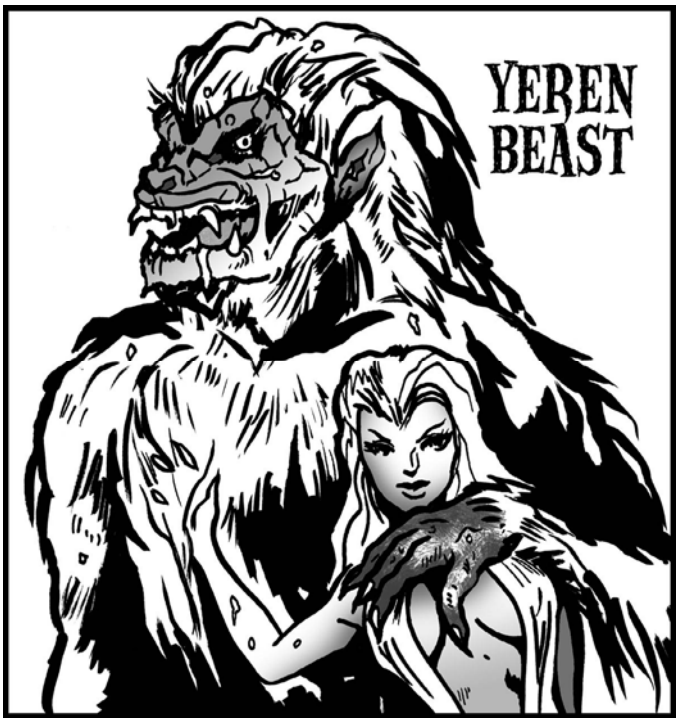
**7a. The Painful Pinch**: Impuissant victims or strong votaries can be led here for a disabling surprise. At the end of

the path leading south from **7** is a carved relief of Salicia, looking very similar to the Abbess in her true form. Eight feet in front of the piece is the edge of a trap door, which releases under any weight greater than 20 pounds. Characters slipping into this narrow pit will only take 1 damage from the short fall. However, rolling down a slope beneath the floor towards their midsections is a half ton beam! Unless a victim has an instantaneous escape device, like a *Ring of Blinking*, he will receive 1d6 crushing damage from this weight every round he is pinned. There is a chance the player will have his arms free, but this also means he will take maximum damage from the trap. The priestesses will then recover the unconscious (or dead) bodies from the pit with the help of the Dark Troll in **10**. The obedient Troll will also use a large crank to reset the trap. Bright rubies imbedded around the lamia sculpture are worth 1600 gp total, but are very difficult to remove.

**8. Secret Guardroom of Old Beaus**: Not so long ago, this room was only used by the shifty lycanthropes. Living here now are the two surviving members of the "Bracken Spiders", a trio of thugs rebounding from a prudent retirement. The half-centenarians decided to attempt one final dungeon delve, winding up at the Fane after expending all their healing potions. Utterly captivated by the Abbess, the Spiders are trying to navigate a way down a multidimensional staircase in order to please her. Tragically, one of their band was pulverized within the confusing anomaly, a loss that has put the other two in a sour mood. The secret door is normally open unless a ritual is starting in **7**. **Taor Drasmit** (War 6; hp 36; DC 4 *Ridge Helm of Protection* +1 and chainmail; DMG 1d10+2 two-handed Flamberge +1/+3 vs Elementals) will become jealous after peeking at any macho rivals, and will possibly (75% chance) enlist his graying chum, **Vultan Barcozzi** (Wiz 4; hp 14; DC 7 *Roquelaure* +1; DMG 1d4 silver dagger or Crook) to break up any ritual romping. Taor won't brandish his impressive sword if he intrudes, but he will certainly pummel (with the aid of Vultan's *Enstrengthen* spell) any guest that derides him. If a regular melee transpires, Taor promptly starts hacking opponents with his sword, while Vultan stands back to use his *Crook of Carrion Beasts* (see Magic Appendix) and sorcery. Three of Vultan's spells will always be *Enstrengthen, Foul Cloud*, and *Spider Climb*. If the PCs aren't being repelled by the summoned crows, debilitating magic, and Taor's big blade, he retreats using *Spider Climb*. Taor has a *Potion of Spider Climb* he will use if below half hit points. Other treasure among their personal items includes a silver buckle worth 40 gp and a *Hippocampus Hair Charm of Waterproofing* (tucked in Vultan's spellbook). The guardroom is minimally furnished, with an unlocked iron door to the east. Mine cart tracks begin at the corner that turns into the hallway to **9**. The ruts are very clear due to a bright halo of white glittering around the outline of a door, roughly 10 paces down the parallel tracks. This is the shortcut to the Hall of Mirrors being investigated by Taor and Vultan. The portal is dimensionally phased, and can be

walked through without harm. The same cannot be said about reaching the exit. For every person that enters during its current manifestation, an additional flight of stairs is added to the usual number it takes to reach the deeper dungeon. The current total is seven, which will increase if the party enters for more than a moment. The otherworldly effect for each flight of stairs can be rolled on the table on the next page.

**9. Ophira's Favorite**: Chained to the back of this hexagonal room is a snoring humanoid with a pelt of orange hair. It will remain still until someone other than a priestess moves within leg reach. Then, with a hideous growl, the Yeren Beast (HD 4; hp 36; DC 6; DMG 1d6x2 claws) attacks with its clawed, grasping feet (see Monster Appendix). The monster's chains are almost 20 feet long, allowing it to move about most of its rancid lair. The Yeren Beast used to be the Fane's strongest guard until the Dark Troll was foisted upon the Abbess. To keep them from tearing each other apart, Ophira decided to make the "softer" of the two her special consort. Unbelievably, she has not been (visibly) mauled during private interludes. Just inside the entrance to this room is a stool with a pan of water on it and a magic lantern dimmed by a piece of dyed cotton.




**9a. The Duergar Mineshaft**: The cart tracks disappear under the doors to this dusty cavern, which have only been opened once since the Duergar were sacrificed. The mine was never a smart idea in the first place, given that it was centered above a Blasphemous Shrine of some Tentacled God. After being stripped of a few rich deposits, fissures in the lowest tunnels began to ooze a contagious white slime. This danger ceased any further digging, and triggered the clan's fears about an inescapable doom. Myxod tried to eliminate the pooling slime, but found a better use for it in his laboratory. The 260 foot deep pit would remain undisturbed for many years, until a man named Fletcher Shaystorm became a guest of the Fane. Fletcher, a charismatic space pirate from the future, materialized in the Looming (see the Lower Caves) and was invited to the Fane after being sighted by a group of adepts. Eager to assist the "alien dames", Fletcher joined them for a record-breaking ritual. Yet, the drugged wine made the pirate exceedingly brave, causing him to peer a little too far into the precipitous mine. Players can find where Fletcher land-

| d20 | Otherworldly Stair Effects |
|---|---|
| 1 | PCs experience zero gravity and spot chunks of the former "Bracken Spider" floating about, including his *Ring of Free Action*. |
| 2 | PCs enter a vacuum and must pass through immediately or take damage. |
| 3 | PCs are shrunk to 10% of their normal size, and must climb down 18 steps. They will return to normal size after reaching the base. |
| 4 | The stair flips on its axis, and PCs slide down a smooth surface into the next flight. |
| 5 | PCs see ghostly clones of themselves walking up the steps, stopping if they stop. They have no pupils. |
| 6 | PCs are struck by a wave of negative energy that inflicts 1d10 damage, repeating every three rounds. |
| 7 | PCs see a message written on the wall reading, "MYXOD WAS HERE DO NOT SPE ----". The last part is covered by brushstrokes in the same dull white that covers all the surfaces. |
| 8 | PCs pass by a Gnomish handyman wearing a white smock and dipping a paint brush into a pail of white liquid. He will only smile at the party, disappearing with a snap of his fingers. In his place will be a small sign that warns of "WET ECTOPLASM". |
| 9 | PCs must descend through a blanket of snow three feet deep over the steps. |
| 10 | Splintered from another reality, the front of a Grumman Avenger aircraft is caught in the side of the staircase. However, the propeller is running at full speed inside the dimension occupied by the party! The gap between the triple-bladed prop and the other side wall is 17 inches. Anyone hit by the mechanism takes 3d12+30 points of damage. |
| 11 | PCs witness a huge winged demon rise from the floor, only to smack its head, curse under its breath, and sink back down. |
| 12 | PCs that speak on these stairs will start the space to crack like an egg. Additional noise will destroy the stairs, sending the party to the Abyss. |
| 13 | PCs encounter a telepathic alien brain in a crystal sphere who wants to know where the Cygnus spaceport is. If the party spokesperson doesn't suggest a direction, he will be blinded by a radiation burst. |
| 14 | PCs find a coil of rope with one end cascading down to the last three steps, where a blackened pile of bones can be seen. |
| 15 | PCs enter a flight of steps covered in olive green shag carpet. On the steps are 3 thin picture books about a barbarian and a dumpling-sized piece of vivid yellow cake with a white center. If the items are touched, a man wearing a plaid suit and smoking a pipe will come into view at the bottom of the steps, and inform the PCs that the dog needs walked. |
| 16 | PCs must save versus magic or have the contents of their potion flasks shuffled randomly. |
| 17 | Instead of a staircase, PCs see themselves stepping down the front of a megalithic temple at sunset. |
| 18 | PCs are treated to scratchy elevator music and the smell of old leather shoes while on these steps. |
| 19 | Before descending, a small pot on a chain drops to waist height in front of the PCs. Engraved on its lid is a short message - "INSERT ONE GOLD". Anyone that doesn't place a coin inside before continuing is teleported to the entrance. |
| 20 | A cleric in the party will encounter an avatar of his Deity, who will demand that he hurry up. |

-ed, because he didn't die upon impact. After a fall of about 70 feet, the intoxicated pirate landed in the web of a Monstrous Marbled Cyclosa (see Monster Index). Face up on the adhesive strands, Fletcher couldn't reach the weapons attached to the back of his plate armor. Before he succumbed to the spider's venom, he lit his last *Cigar of Synthetic Smoke*, which won't stop smoldering for another sixteen years. The vapor trail will lead adventurers to his body, and the next generation of Marbled Cyclosa (HD 8; hp 40; DC 5; DMG 2d6; Special: lethal poison). Fletcher is wearing a suit of plate armor made from a dull alloy and light-warping "space spinel" gems (treat as *Plate Mail +1 of Invisibility*). The strength of the armor prevented the spiders from eating him; it will also be impossible to fit on anyone not close to his measurements. If the PCs can extract the body from the web, without burning or sundering the silk structure, they will also find his *Maser Rifle* and *Polychromatic Shiv* (see Magic Appendix).

**10. Gallery of the Dark Troll**: The only door showing significant damage in the Fane is this one; a close look reveals popped rivets and deep scratches. Residing on the other side is "Coal-Hide" Heikkwid, a Dark Troll commander relieved from service. Unless summoned by the Abbess, "CH" will be found crouched over a long table, delicately scraping grooves into the top of a hobgoblin skull. Heikkwid suffers from brain trauma inflicted when he and another troll officer brawled in an unstable part of the Deep Caves. The regenerative ability of his race saved him from an avalanche of rock, but his mind never returned to normal. He could no longer be interested in troll conflicts or fighting for any other reason than to collect skulls. Heikkwid considers their ivory surface the perfect canvas for his unfathomable etchings. Abashed by this loss, the Dark Troll leaders issued an order to the Abbess, instructing her to keep CH under observation in her dark temple. The Abbess, in no position to decline, placates her dangerous patient by letting him decapitate anyone he pleases. When Heikkwid (HD 6+3; hp 55; DC 4; DMG 3-6x2 claws; Special: regeneration) fights intruders or anyone that disturbs his finished works, there is a 50% chance he will ignore a foe if an opportunity to remove a head occurs. He will not care if the body was an ally or not. His gallery of macabre art is situated on shelves lining the entire east wall of his room. Twenty-two of the "best" skulls are propped up on blocks of jade worth 75 gp each.

**11. Vile Kennel of the Wererat Eunuchs**: These abhorrent man-vermin were guilty of an assault upon an Elven Duchess traveling to a congress of merchant guilds. The outrage over the crime led to disfiguring torture and a judgement stating that all of them would be executed by burning. However, the prisoners never made it to their appointment at the stake; the eight still living escaped from their confines with the help of a Lamia masquerading as the dead Duchess' sister. The Abbess needed replacement footsoldiers for the Duergar, wicked men that wouldn't be tempted to despoil her new harem. The lycanthropes are positive about their new employment, merrily raising Myxod's mutated moles and perfecting their kidnapping tactics. Guests are never allowed into this hub of rooms, and the iron double doors are trapped with a Warding Glyph (2d6 damage - acid) that sprays forth if a password isn't uttered. The nest of Musqoads and their young is the rock-strewn corridor leading to **7**. For exercise, the creatures have been boring through the walls, and could easily tear an opening into **6**. There are 3 adult creatures (HD 3; hp 18,20,21, DC 7; DMG 1d8+1 bite) here, with one baby (hp 2) and another offspring in **11b**. A wererat will be nearby spreading fresh straw from large basket. A second wererat is poised near the secret door to **2**, listening to any conversations by guests. All the wererats (HD 3; hp 14,16; DC 7; DMG 1d6) wield a metal baton with a fang spike and quirt-like top. In the center of the room is a wooden scarecrow that can spin on reinforced base; it is a dummy the 'rats use to condition the attack reflexes of the Musqoads.

**11a. Wererat Study**: The villainous creatures sleep in bunks cobbled together in a square room just before the study. Continuing west past the compact domicile, players will discover the meeting chamber were raids upon trade routes are plotted. If the documents and maps present are studied, the location of the teleportation gate and the next human quarry will be revealed. Unless asleep outside, three wererats (HD 3; hp 15,15,16; DC 7; DMG 1d6) will be encountered here, waiting to shoot trespassers with cross-

-bow bolts tipped in points made from diamond-strong Musqoad teeth (+1 piercing). There are arrow slits in the north and south corners of the room, so they can see and hear anything transpiring in those zones. The equipment stashed here includes 5 more tooth-capped bolts, a dozen throwing daggers, four jars of oil, two heater shields displaying the local militia's coat of arms, a small scarecrow dressed in child clothes, a javelin of Orc design, and a gold hourglass (44 gp).

**11b. Little Shop of Torture**: Should a party be able to approach the door to this tiny vault undetected, they will hear a feminine voice cry out from within. Oddly, the pained moans will be interspersed with the worst of Elven epithets! Once the door is opened, one snickering wererat with a twig from the Passion Mallow Bloom will be seen attending to his seated victim, a naked Elf woman. Beneath her bound legs is a wooden contraption with a back of reinforced posts and a miniature "water wheel" affixed to one side. The wheel isn't being spun by a running stream, but a running Musqoad (HD 2; hp 9; DC 7; DMG 1d6 bite) on the inside of the spoked circuit. The torturer (HD 3; hp 15; DC 7; DMG 1d4+1 hot poker) will snatch a poker from a burning brazier and attack intruders not accompanied by the Abbess. The maiden will scream for help in Elvish, athough with arms also manacled to the strange chair, she can do naught but shiver. The copper-haired Elf is the first of her race to be captured by the Lamia's raiders, and is in the process of subjugation. As a hardy ranger (Elf 2; hp 8) though, she has resisted the *Scar of Temptation* and plied drugs. However, unless rescued by the party, the application of the Bloom oil will defeat her. Once unshackled, she will not move unless offered a cloak or such. The wererat wears a platinum ring with a budding rose design, worth 210 gp. The elf can explain the Abbess' plans much more clearly than Malvin if her curse is lifted.

**12. Adept Dormitory**: To the Abbess, her slave girls are the most valuable commodity in the Fane. Hence, she keeps them safe behind two locked iron doors shielded with Warding Glyphs (2d6 damage each - cold blast). The apartment is truly luxurious, with upholstered silk beds, rows of costly mirrors with damascene frames, two alcoves brimming with costume finery, and laquered bureaus stocked with only the best cosmetics and personal treatments. The only uncomfortable looking furnishing is a lounge stringed with rough leather strips that belongs to Ophira. A single suit of shortened scale armor amid the dresses is hers too. A search will reveal no currency, but the jewelry, perfume, and rich furniture would be worth at least 8000gp if sold in a city. Any rest the Abbess requires is taken in the ritual bed of **7**.

**13. The Shrine of Salicia**: A pair of bronze doors, lightly corroded to appear bright green, block the way inside the evil shrine. The Abbess has warded these locked doors with two different effects: the first is a 2d6 electrical shock and the second is paralytic. The hall is austere, with only a dozen black pillows and a pitcher filled with a greasy liquid that smells like eucalyptus. At the far end, a life-like statue of a lamia rising from a coiled posture is nestled into a half-domed reliquary. Upon the extended arms of the statue is where the Abbess will store her cursed guzheng. The sculpture has a strong similarity to her, as the Duergar craftsmen that made it only had her for a model. The smooth, exposed abdomen and bosom of the piece was formed from a thick plate of solid gold, and then attached to the stone body. The serpent eyes are also gold. These precious metal components are worth 1700 gp. Players defiling the unholy image of Salicia must Save versus Magic or be cursed with livid crotch warts. The secret door to Area 14 will have a bonus to detection, due to the large monster breathing nearby.

**14. Stable of the Beetilasp**: Watching over the arcane escape route from the Fane is Myxod's former steed (see Monster Appendix). The chimerical horror is a prehistoric tiger modified with giant wasp and rhinoceros beetle anatomies. The monster will pounce upon anyone entering the room, unless halted by a command from the Abbess or someone wielding the *Wand of Calcars* (from **16**). The Beetilasp (HD 8; hp 66; DC 3; DMG 1d8x2 claws/1d4 tail stinger; Special - poison) can automatically strike a foe with its stinger if both claws hit first. The poison causes hemorrhaging, which increases physical damage received in battle. A niche for the Abbess' traveling gear is along the south wall; it contains her scale armor, *Mace of Ferity* (see Magic Index), 2 pairs of branks to restrain victims, a pouch with 100 silver pieces, six thick planks of oak, and a magic lantern attached to a long pole. The door to **15** is a bronze grille with a simple latch.

**15. Teleportation Grotto**: Icy water of unknown depth rises nearly to the mouth of the grotto entrance. Three flat

boulders form a short trail to Myxod's active teleporter, which looks like two floating scrolls linked by a violet bolt of lightning. Jumping between the rocks is possible, but the priestesses use the oak planks in **14** to secure the route. All the residents of the Fane keep away from the water, as it is defended by a wrathful Water Spirit (HD 3+3; hp 15; DC 4; DMG per drowning; Special - damage reduction from weapons). The angry entity is fighting the spread of white slime from **16**, which the grotto was connected to by a long duct. The levitating scrolls are seven feet off the ground, with the unfurled paper revealing glowing calligraphy. Stepping into the space between the scrolls teleports the individual to a gap between two large trees on the surface. A return ride must be activated by an incantation that only the Abbess and Myxod know. The scrolls are part of a permanent spell and cannot be moved.

**16. Myxod's Abandoned Laboratory**: Centuries ago, this hall was a Duergar throne room. Now it festers with rotting junk and a pond of malodorous slime. The focus of the laboratory was the creation and control of unique monsters. Myxod's undead master was obsessed with having the perfect dungeon, so any new monster stock an underling could bring to the Lich's lair was greatly valued. Myxod had successfully extracted the Gorlangterus species from this locale, and was hoping to find a host creature that could survive a slime infection long enough to be shipped across hundreds of miles. Guarding his remaining possessions here is the result of the reckless experiment. The bronze doors to the hall are wedged shut with a mine cart, and the gaps filled with wax. The Abbess had tricked Fletcher Shaystorm into an extermination attempt, hoping that his magical "maser" could rid the area of its protecttors. He only managed to scorch the tableware and kill the undead Stomatopods, which she wasn't fearful of. Next were the old adventurers from **8**, who retreated when the surviving monster made itself known. To convince a new lot of guests that the task is important, she will say that all her travails could be cured if she has the treasure chest found on the slime-surrounded pillar inside. Indeed, there is a box there as described, with a "moat" of slime at least 12 feet wide all around it. The top of the pillar is another six feet above the jellied water, and has no protrusion that a rope could be anchored to. The white slime is not sentient, but it does retreat from sunlight. To destroy the entire pool of slime, the damage dealt by frost or fire would have to total 180 points, given that the outlet to the grotto was also sealed. White Slime shares properties with the general family of slime, in that it eats almost anything and metamorphoses its victim after time. The scum-like infestation here feeds off the water, and the body of a twenty foot Giant Moray. **The Moray of Myxod** (HD 7+4; hp 53; DC 5; DMG 2d4 bite; Special - slime mucus, locking jaw) will surface if anyone clambers atop the pillar. The mindless monster will never check morale in its attempt to feed. Engaging the enormous eel in melee is precarious, since any blow to its slimy skin will splatter the

parasitic mucus. A player bitten by the creature will be "locked" in its maw, held by its sectioned jaws with curved teeth. The recurring damage is only 1d6, but wresting free has a -2 Strength penalty. The bronze treasure chest has a false lock on the front (5% chance of discovery per level) that will sever tools or fingers with a serrated blade if tampered with (3d6+3 damage). The real, untrapped keyhole is on the bottom, requiring the 90 pound object to be lifted.

Within the bronze strongbox is a gold box, the golden coffer of the Lich ZICG'UD. The top of the case features an embossed wolf head with a six-fingered arm instead of a tongue. Inside are the following treasures: ZICG'UD's *Wand of Calcars, Myxod's Murky Medallion*, a *Potion of Gnoll Control*, a fibula with a huge chrysoberl worth 800 gp, and Myxod's laboratory journal. The coffer itself is worth 1000 gp, but not to anyone who knows of the Lich. Details on the magic items are in the appendix; the journal reveals that Myxod was partly responsible for another wizard named Jhimyn being transformed into a bug. The other magician refused to help Myxod during a fight with the Stone Wretch (**28B** in *FO!* #6), which started a short feud. Another important note describes a bomb made from a Blood Thump egg and Salamander Flake, hidden near the Dark Troll Citadel. The last entry states that he chose a flying carpet instead of his Beetilasp to expedite his trip to the Hall of Mirrors.

**Magic Appendix**:

**The Widow's Betrothed**: The story of the Lamia's musical artifact begins with the cursed family of Ruvan and their eternally lonely daughter, "Silver Ocean Sprite". Her betrothed was from a rival family, the Bao, and had to leave for war on the day of their wedding. The inexperienced Bao son was killed, and the only procession that day was for his funeral. When the Ruvan girl was told what happened, a gale arose from the seashore as she cried, and her hair

turned white. Shockingly, the young widow demanded that a magical guzheng be made, one with string bridges made from the twenty finger and toe bones of her mate. Through the haunting music played on the black lyre, the widow communed with the spirits of the dead, and learned that her own family had plotted to kill her husband to be. Opening her shuttered abode to the sea, the vengeful woman played a forbidden etude that could animate the dead. Later that night, the entire house of Ruvan was slain by corpses risen from shipwrecks. The Sprite is pictured on one end of the guzheng, with an elongated neck and demonic eyes. By itself, the item has the following powers: *Converse with Dead* (at will) and *Animate Dead* (1 HD per string). The cursed item can only be destroyed at dawn, while a chorus of blessed children sing and the twenty strings are cut at once with a Holy Sword.

**Torc of Spiritual Tablature**: This heavy gold necklace allows priests to express spells as a musical composition, without any vocalization.

**Dolorous Hymn** (Spell, Priest 2): An evil chant normally, which spreads a languor upon the Cleric's targets. Enemy attack, damage, and saving throws rolls suffer a -1 penalty, and the memory of the sound disturbs any attempt to sleep for a number of hours equal to the Cleric's level.

**The Scar of Temptation** (Spell, Priest 3): This lecherous curse is only known by Lamias that worship Salicia. A female affected by the curse will have a black sore appear on the back of her neck, and she will feel a strong compulsion to indulge in anything pleasurable.

**Crook of Carrion Beasts**: A blackened cane made from the wood of a coffin left exposed for 100 days, this magic wand has three minor powers. First, the user is made immune to all non-magical stench effects. Second, the crook can summon 1d6 fiendish crows (HD 1; hp 1; DC 5; Special - only damaged by silver, holy water, or magic), which will attack a single target for 1 point of damage per round until dispelled or slain. The last power, called *Foul Gustation*, creates the illusion of a horrible-tasting bile in the victim's mouth, reducing attack rolls by -2. This effect lasts for 2 rounds per charge expended.

**Xurian Maser Rifle**: This weapon resembles a smooth bazooka capped with a chromed parabolic dish. The rifle fires a cone of microwave energy that inflicts 3d8 points of searing damage. Targets wearing metal armor will take an additional 1d8 damage on the following round. The 16 ounce battery at the butt of the weapon provides enough power for 60 beams.

**Polychromatic Shiv**: A glowing plasma blade that is somewhat unstable in this dimension, the Shiv does 1d4+3 damage and has a 10% chance to create an elemental micro-explosion at its tip, adding another 1d20 damage.

**Mace Of Ferity**: The wielder of this +1 mace, capped with a bronze bear's head, gains the power of animal reflexes. The magic increases the initiative adjustment from Dexterity to the maximum bonus under your rules.

**Wand of Calcars**: Players of Good alignment that handle this bumpy arm bone will take 4 points of damage unless they save versus magic at -6. The wand was made from a severed arm, and shows the effects of a terrible bone disease. Like the crook (also designed by ZICG'UD), this wand has three dangerous powers. A *Ray of Suffering Sinew* can be cast for one charge; a target that fails his save will feel terrible pain in his joints, taking 6 points of damage and losing all attack bonuses for the round. For two charges, the caster can launch an *Explosive Pustule Patch*. If the blob is targeted at a living opponent, it immediately bursts for 1d10 damage. However, if the blob lands on a surface, it undergoes binary fission during the following round, exploding then for 6d8 damage in a 15 foot radius. Expending all the remaining charges (at least 8) can open a *Corpse Door*. With this power, a wizard can touch a fresh corpse and teleport to a prepared magic circle in his lair.

**Myxod's Murky Medallion**: This single-use item features a large, smoky opal on an electrum necklace. The gemstone will emit a magical smoke upon command; the vapors block infravision and damage the nose and throat tissue of any opponent within 10 feet. The necrotizing effect does multiplying damage: 2 points on the first round, 4 on the second, and 8 on the third and last.

**Monster Appendix**

**Asparan Genie**: HD 4; DC 2; DMG none; Special - illusion spells, can only be hit by magic weapons. These sexy wind sylphs are almost always found within a wizard's residence. The genies promise their masters that they will tell them a secret spell, one that will allow physical contact between them. In return, the wizard must crusade against evil elementals. The genies can stray up to 400 feet from their bottle, and cast minor illusions.

**Myxod's Musqoads**: HD 3 full grown; DC 7 DMG 1d8+1 bite; Special – tunneling. Musqoads are vicious multiped mutants the size of a hog. Musqoad skin has a number of wrinkles, and their oversized gums sport large chisel-like teeth. Originally, Myxod had hoped to grow them large enough to pit against trolls, but the mole stock had limitations in scale and birth rate. The creatures can burrow through nearly any natural material, forming nests and routes to food sources. The wererats have trained the Musqoads to attack male humanoids, which is why they stay rat-like in the Fane.

**Gorlangterus**: HD 6; DC 6; DMG 4d4 tusks, 1d6 tail club. The last of these beasts was removed from the Deep Caves and given to Myxod's master. These rhino-like animals with walrus tusks and long, clubbed tail were the

natural enemies of the raptor species living near the Dark Trolls. After the lizards started to receive food and care from the trolls, the Gorlangterus were nearly hunted to extinction. Ironically, these beasts would have made much better steeds, but the trolls wanted more fearsome- looking animal companions.

**Yeren Beast**: HD 4; DC 6; DMG 1d6x2 claws on hands or feet; Special - climbing ability. The Yeren Beast is a relative of the mountain Yeti. Standing taller than a man, it has clawed hands and quadrumanous feet. Shaggy orang-utan-like hair covers its agile body, only exposing the face of a yellow-eyed oni. Yeren Beasts can climb any rough surface at full speed, and even move while upside down. The creatures love to steal food and are attracted to women's voices.

**Monstrous Marbled Cyclosa**: HD 8 full grown; DC 5; DMG 2d6 bite; Special - lethal poison. Certainly one of the more unpleasant giant arachnids a party can stumble across. The Cyclosa has eight foot legs and a bloated abdomen that looks like a stretched seed pod. They build webs over deep pits and chasms, letting debris collect along the strands. Nothing is wrapped like a cocoon, so their homes are relatively easy to loot. The Cyclosa has strong venom which spoils quickly if extracted from the chelicerae.

**Beetilasp**: HD 8; DC 3; DMG 1d8x2 claws, 1d4 stinger; Special – poison. The Lich ZICG'UD is a bit of a showman. In addition to residing in a dungeon with rare creatures and pricey traps, the Lich insisted on having a steed that no other villain might have. Regrettably, his combination of tiger, beetle, and wasp couldn't fly well at all. At best, the monster can glide after jumping from higher ground. Displeased, the Lich gave the Beetilasp to his apprentice. The monster will only use its stinger if it has struck a foe with both front or hind claws. An oddly shaped mouth and skull prevents it from also having a bite attack. A taxidermic display of this rare chimera would be worth much to a collector. Ω

**– Thus Ends the Expedition to the Fane of Salicia –**

# The Four M's

initiative/combat system by Calithena

I have not been rolling initiative for some time. Instead I process actions by type, with everyone going once during a round in the appropriate phase. Everyone declares actions at the top of the round in a free-for-all. When I need to know who goes first during a phase or resolve tit-for-tat in the free declaration, I usually just give it to the PCs, have people act in DEX order, or roll off, but only the latter if it increases tension and enjoyability. I do use surprise rules. One advantage of this system is that I don't need to keep track of engagement; since melee happens first every round, if you want to withdraw from someone you're next to they automatically get their shot in first. The order:

**1. Melee:** Everyone gets to strike at an enemy within reach with a melee weapon they already have in hand. Warriors and monsters with multiple attacks may split those attacks between different targets if available and allowed.

**2. Missiles:** Now characters with missile weapons in hand may fire them as appropriate. Characters acting in this phase who only fire one missile may move 1/3 of their normal movement in the movement phase of the game.

**3. Magic:** Now spells declared at the beginning of the round go off, in order from lowest level to highest. (Counterspells automatically go at the same time as the spell they are cast against.) Mages who took damage in phase one or two must roll the amount of damage taken or higher on 1d6+level or their spell misfires.

**4. Movement:** I let characters move 5' per "inch" of movement on the character sheet – this is half the speed many GMs use, and I actually think 1/3 might be better. Actions such as unstoppering and drinking a potion or dropping a backpack take up 5' per – for example, dropping a pack, finding a potion, getting it, unstoppering it, and drinking it would take 25' worth of movement, or possibly more if the pack was hopelessly cluttered. I don't allow characters to move through friends or foes except on a charge. Drawing or sheathing weapons takes 5'.

It's very important to let PCs and monsters use the movement phase to set up the next combat round. Set spears and charge attacks are the most obvious uses of the phase in this regard, but PCs especially should try to use the phase to plan their next actions in advance. Someone needs to block for the mage, the thief needs to find a hole in the goblin line to climb the wall and steal the idol, and the hobbit needs to get around the ogre's back and kneel over so that Ragnar of Rhadamanthia can try to bowl him over into the pit during the attack phase. Ω

be a good way to get PCs access to powers or allies from wildly disparate traditions.

**Transformation:** This is where the heroquest concept is potentially at its most radical and interesting, where the actions of the PCs actually have the potential to change the gameworld myths, legends, and structure forever. Sometimes PCs choose to 'take the gameworld on' directly: for a great discussion of how one group dealt with the issue of rape in relation to the Gloranthan chaos goddess Thed and the Orlanthi pantheon, check out adept-press.com/ideas-and-discourse/other-essays/goddess-of-rape/. At other times, things just happen. In one game, one of our PCs participated in a heroquest involving the God of Sunrises and Sunsets, who fell in love with the PC and offered her apotheosis: she could take his hand and become Consort of the Dawn. The fate of the mortal world was more important to her, though, and though she wept with his loss, she blew him a kiss goodbye ere she departed the Godsrealms en route to completing her quest. Her kiss caught the rays of dawn and coalesced into something new, a fourth moon that ever since has orbited the world of that campaign; and though the character did not become a god in the conventional sense, that moon has now always been there, and its mythic history is tied in with that PC's own as her adventures have continued.

How do PCs leave their mark on your campaign world, and what kind of mark can they leave? The naturalistic approach to this question is in many cases adequate. Raising armies, conquering kingdoms, leaving heirs, building castles, even holding local office or running an inn are all fine goals for many a PC. But the heroquest offers another possibility: the chance to change the mythic, physical, and cosmological structure of the fantasy world itself. At the metagame level, you can think of transformative heroquests as a kind of dialogue between players and GM, where the successful player can transform even the theology and cosmology of the campaign through his or her PC's actions. Such is difficult, of course, usually requiring clever play and tremendously powerful characters to find success; but if it can be done then the gameworld itself can be transformed, destroyed, or made anew. Having a heroquesting option within your game also makes a clearer path for PC apotheosis; they must undertake various heroquests with an eye towards inserting themselves into one or more existing mythologies.

Such things are not easy to accomplish, though. In Glorantha, Orlanth slaying Yelm is a pretty major event. Should you wish to save Yelm, you would have to go back past the beginning of time, work your way forward to that conflict, and then face the unshielded death rune. Your PC might very well be one of the many shadows or gleams of light that Orlanth shredded as he slew Yelm. Each of those was/is someone who thought he could transverse time and make a difference. None did, of course – so far. Ω

## The Darkness Beneath, Level 7:

# Palace of Eternal Illusion

megadungeon installment by Matthew Riedel

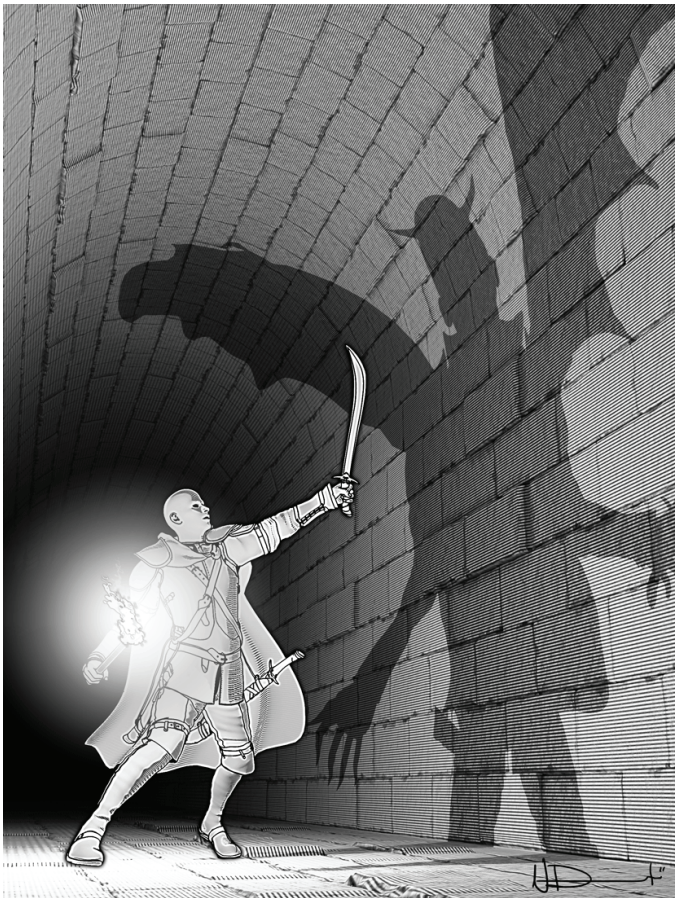
**Introduction:** Ages ago, King Xanadun was a wise and powerful ruler. But greater than Xanadun's wisdom was his obsession to extend his own life. The King sold his soul and his kingdom for immortality, thus becoming a Lich. His kingdom lost, Xanadun built his own quasi-real palace within the depths of *The Darkness Beneath*, retreating to the sanctuary of an illusionary world. But, the years have grown long and now Xanadun finds himself waiting for the world to end in his lonely Palace of Eternal Illusion …

**Interlevel Connections:** This adventure may be played as a stand-alone underground palace of an illusionist lich. If you wish to play it together with the other *Darkness Beneath* levels, however, it connects to them as follows:

- A tunnel beyond the double doors of The Shadow Walk (**1**) leads down to Level Eight.
- An elevator in the Mechanical Room (**15**) leads to Level Nine – the secret entrance to the Dark Troll Citadel.
- A chute from **29** of Level Four (see FO! #4 – Ig) terminates in the Illusionary Maze (**26**).

**Shadow Walk (Areas 1 – 11):** This region of Level 7 borders a shadowy plane. From time to time, the denizens of that plane wander into this area. There is a 1 in 6 chance of a random encounter every 30 minutes.

| 2d4 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 2 | Shadow Dragon (DC -2, HD 5, Atk 2-5, 2-5, 3-12, SA breath, SD +1 or better weapon to hit, see **11** below for further details) |
| 3 | 2-5 Wraiths (DC 4, HD 5+3, Atk 1-6 + Energy Drain, SD magical or silver weapon to hit) |
| 4 | Nightmare (DC -4, HD 8, Atk 2-8, 2-8, 4-10, SA smoking breath save or -2 on attacks) |
| 5 | 7-12 Shadows (DC 7, HD 3+3, Atk 2-5 + Strength Drain, SD +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to sleep, charm, and cold; 90% undetectable) |
| 6 | 4-10 Shadow Hounds (DC 6, HD 4, Atk 2-8, SA baying causes fear, SD 40% undetectable) |
| 7 | Human Illusionist (LVL d3+6 - might be an enemy, ally, or traitorous temporary ally depending on alignment and how things play out) |
| 8 | Rift in the shadow – roll for 2 encounters on this table and double the number of foes appearing |



**1. The Shadow Walk:** This dark subterranean walkway borders the shadow plane. A black silvery curtain divides the outer membrane of the plane of shadow with the material world. Characters cannot enter the shadow plane unless they have the ability to become ethereal, etc.

**2. Empty.**

**3. Worst Fear:** A placard is nailed to arched double doors bearing a chromatically-hued inscription in an unknown language. A read magic, comprehend languages, or similar ability will reveal the following verse:

A treasure to be won
For thee who dares
To bravely overcome
Thou'st worst fears

An oversized iron padlock holds the doors closed at the center. The lock may be picked or broken with 100 hp of damage. The first character to open the door will be confronted by that character's worst fear in the form of a phantasmal killer. The GM should select the most formidable opponent the character has faced, perhaps a memorable adversary from another level of *The Darkness Beneath.* The illusionary terror attacks as a 4 HD monster for 11 rounds and slays the unlucky character with a successful hit. The only chance of success in battle against this hallucinatory monster is to disbelieve the illusion. PCs attempting to disbelieve may roll 3d6 (characters aware of the translation of the verse receive a -2). A result equal to or below the character's intelligence score will dispel the apparition. If the phantasmal killer is slain in this way, a brilliant gem will appear before the character. The gem is worth 2,500 gp and serves as +1 protection device only for the character that confronted his/her fear. The phantasmal killer will be invisible to the rest of the party. Other characters looking on will see nothing but the character experiencing intense fright and acting out a combat. Dispel Magic or Dispel Illusion may be effective in dispelling the phantasmal killer. However, a gem will not appear if the apparition is eliminated in this way.

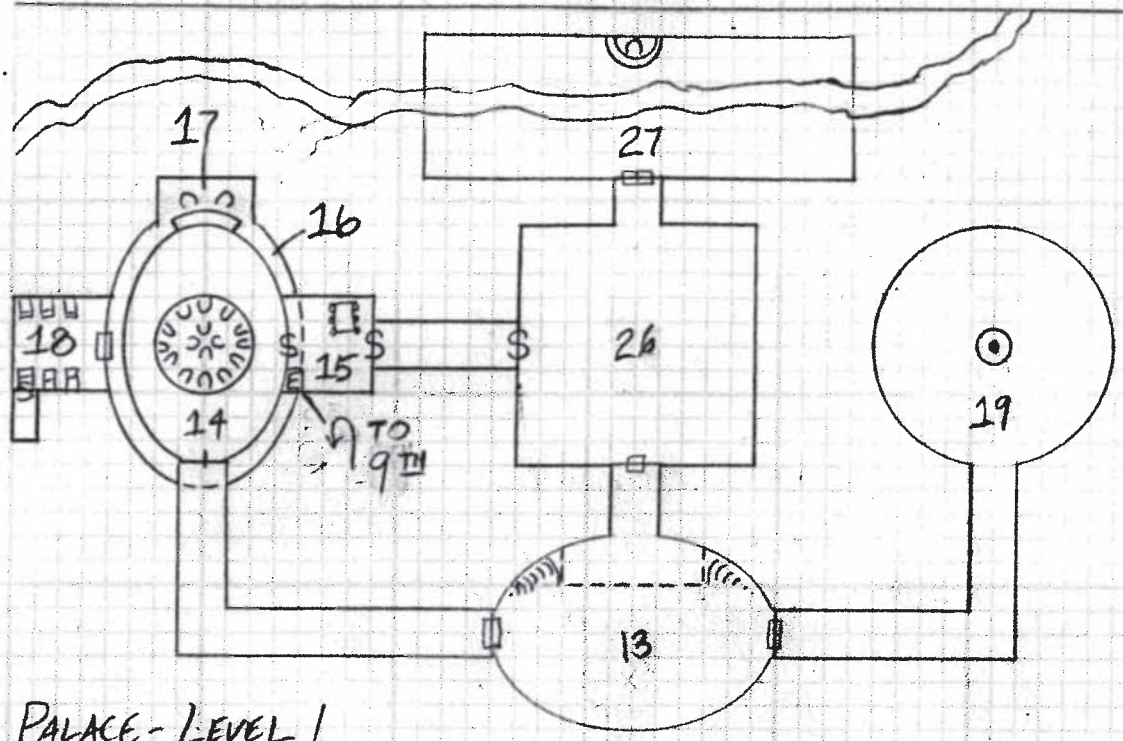
**4. Between Shadows:** This room is empty save some etched words on the back wall: "TWEEN SHADOWS".

**5. Shadow Demon:** One of the arched double doors is pushed open. Inside the chamber, a robed human skeleton lies on the floor. A piece of parchment remains clutched in his hand inscribed with the single word "Seltevoor". Seltevoor is the true name of a foul shadowy creature currently banished to another plane. There is a rift in this chamber to the darkest depths of that plane. Depending on the creature's current location, uttering the name "Seltevoor" in this room will either summon the creature from the plane of shadow to wreak havoc on this world or banish it back to the plane of shadow. When the party first arrives, Seltevoor is in the plane of shadow (he was banished there by the unlucky skeleton). If anyone in the party utters the name, Seltevoor will appear in this room and combat the individual who spoke his name for 3 rounds. After 3 rounds, Seltevoor will attempt to escape to wreak havoc on this world (see below). If Seltevoor's name is again uttered in this chamber, it will return in 7 – 12 rounds, regardless of its location. It will again battle the individual uttering its name for 3 rounds before being forced to return to the plane of shadow (hence the fate of the robed skeleton). Seltevoor is a winged shadow demon (DC 9 in daylight, 5 in torchlight, 1 in darkness, HD 7+3, hp 52, Atk 1-6, 1-6, 1-8 1st round, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6 following rounds, SA +1 to hit in torchlight, +2 to hit in darkness, leap attack, spells: darkness 10' radius and fear 30' radius). The demon's initial attack will be a leap attack (up to 30') at its target attacking with a claw/claw/bite routine. In following rounds it will attack with all four of its claws. Its small wings allow it a flying Spd 18. While in this world the demon can take the exact likeness of its summoner. It will stay within 100 miles of the conjuring character, wreaking deadly havoc in his or her guise.

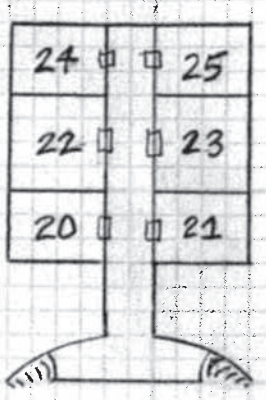
**6. Empty Room:** This room is empty. Characters teleported from **25** will be transported here.

**7. Illusionist's Study:** The room contains two work tables, several shelves, and a desk. The tables are full of the records of years of study of the shadow. The shelves are

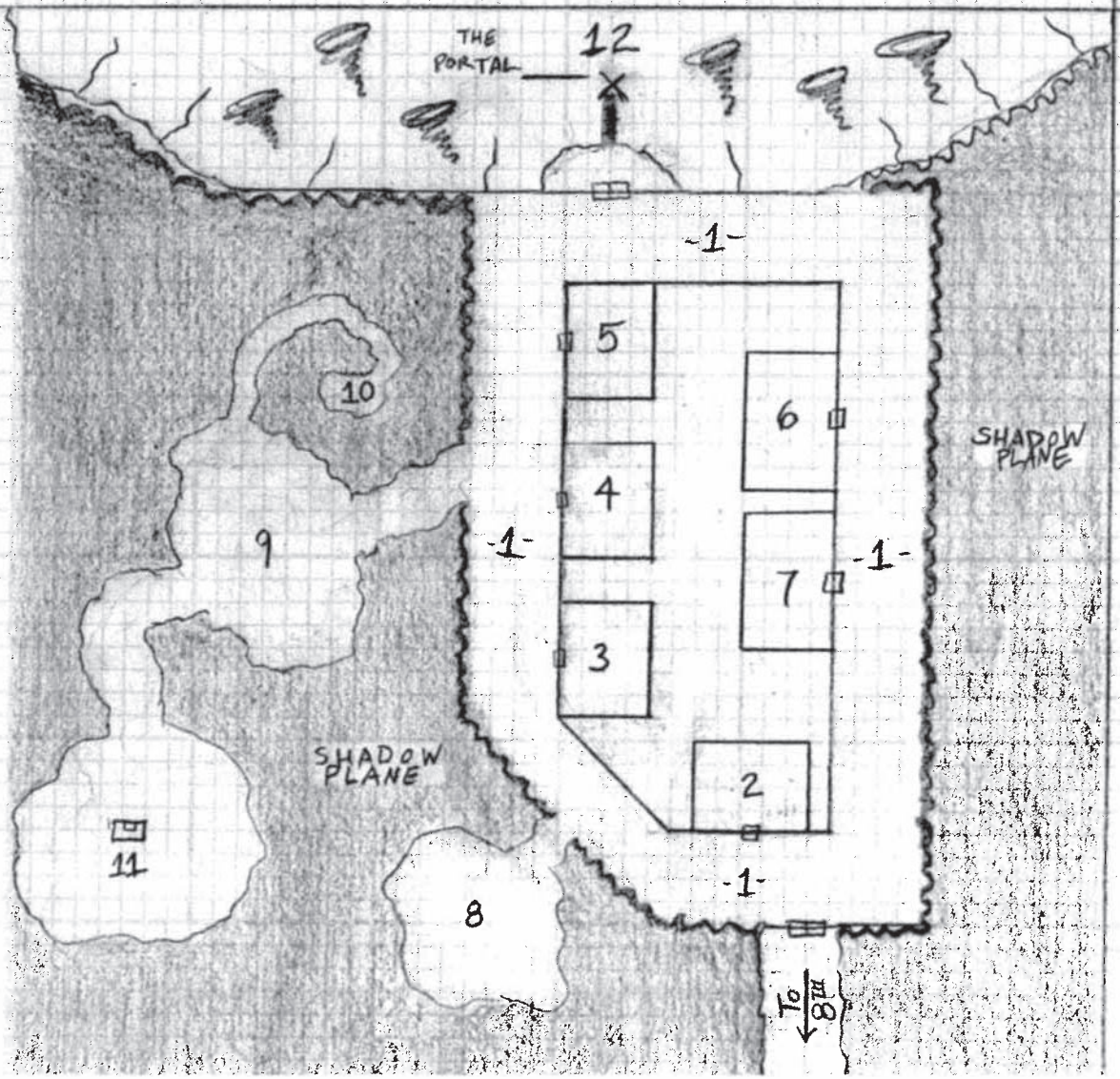
# The Palace of Eternal Illusions
## Level 7 of the Darkness Beneath




Palace - Level 1




Palace - Level 2




Map Legend

- Door
- $ Secret Door
- Stairs
- Fountain
- Bridge
- Elevator
- Bed
- Chest
- Chair
- Dais

N

filled with books related to the plane of shadow, illusions & phantasms, light refraction, etc. The entire collection of notes and books could be sold for as much as 2500 gp. One of the books on the shelf is a spell book containing the following spells: audible glamer, change self, color spray, darkness, wall of fog, wraithform, blindness, invisibility, mirror image, rope trick, spectral force, and shadow monsters. The desk is covered with notes and has a single drawer, which appears empty, though an illusion hides a bone scroll case. The case contains a scroll of protection from undead and a rolled up piece of parchment with the following text: "Faith alone mends the bridge – and leads to the Palace of Eternal Treasures".

**8. Nightmare Cavern:** Somehow a cavern is cut into the shadowy membrane here. Two nightmares (DC -4, HD 8, Atk 2-8, 2-8, 4-10, SA smoking breath save or -2 attacks) occupy this room.

**9. Shadows of the Dragon**: Twenty undead shadows (DC 7, HD 3+3, hp 18 ea., DAM 2-5 + Strength Drain, SD magic weapon to hit, immune to sleep/charm/cold) hide in the dark, 90% undetectable until they attack. They are servants of the shadow dragon in **11** and fight to the death unless turned.

**10. Dead End:** Hidden under a heap of broken armor and tattered cloaks are a +2 short sword and a belt pouch containing a 200 gp bar and a folded up piece of blank parchment, a treasure map that can only be read under the light of the sun.

**11. Shadow Dragon Lair:** A large chest of black obsidian lies at the center of this large cavern. A shadow dragon is lurking above (75% undetectable) and will attack the first character(s) to investigate the obsidian chest. Obsinanyx is an ancient shadow dragon (DC -2, HD 6, hp 54, Atk 2-5, 2-5, 3-12, SA Breath weapon, SD +1 or better weapon to hit). The dragon's breath weapon is a cloud of darkness 40' long x 30' wide x 20' high. Anyone in the darkness loses 75% (save for 50%) of their vitality. Level, hit points, spells memorized, etc. are reduced accordingly for the next 8 turns. Obsinanyx may also cast the following spells: audible glamer, wall of fog, fog cloud, improved phantasmal force, continual darkness, fear, confusion, and shadow monsters. If things go poorly for the dragon, it may attempt escape through the shadowy membrane of the cavern walls (give the party one full round of attacks). The chest is filled with 51 black opaque gems and an obsidian scroll case. Each gem is worth 100 gp. One particularly black gem is magical and gives its possessor fire resistance and immunity to light-based attacks. The scroll case contains a raise dead scroll.

**12. Leap of Faith:** A great iron door opens inward leading to a rough ledge overlooking a deep chasm. An eerie green mist swirls obscuring the air above and beyond the chasm. A 2' wide arched bridge spans out from the cliff for 20', but is visibly broken. At the end of the first round in which the party arrives in the room the mists will begin to move more rapidly. At the end of the second round, a strong gust will slam the door shut behind the party (unless measures were taken to prevent this). The door is magically locked and may only be passed *via* magical means or after no less than 200 hp of bludgeoning damage is inflicted upon it. In round 3, an air elemental (DC 2, HD 12, hp 50, Atk 2-20, SA +1 to hit and +4 damage v. flying opponents, SD +2 or better weapon to hit) will attack the party. After the appearance of the first elemental, a new elemental of equal strength will join the fray every five rounds. Travel on the bridge is limited to single file. Any character successfully hit by the elemental while on the bridge may be required to make some type of check to avoid falling into the void. The bridge has two permanent illusions cast upon it. The first is the illusionary break on the bridge (the bridge is actually unbroken). The second is the recurring programmed illusion which will be triggered each time a character passes the illusionary break on the bridge. All

characters behind a character passing beyond the "broken" area will see the character that passes the "break" to fall to his or her death (the GM is recommended to temporarily simulate the death of the character, i.e. rolling 20d6 hp of false damage, etc.). A small invisible portal just 8' in height and 3' in width is located at the "break in the bridge". The portal is the only way out of this area and to the Palace of Eternal Illusions.

**Palace of Eternal Illusions (Areas 13 - 27):** The palace is the quasi-illusionary creation of the Lich-King, Xanadun. Its furnishings are lavish, but aspects of the place are unsettling. Many of the ceilings are unfinished and simply terminate in a greenish nebula. The view out of the windows, in the rooms with them (**13** and **20 – 25**), suggests the palace is encased in a greenish miasmatic atmosphere – perhaps the raw building blocks of the illusionary essence of the palace. Detect magic and detect illusion spells are useless here as the palace itself, its contents, and every inhabitant will radiate magic. There is a 1 in 6 chance for a random encounter every hour:

| 1d4 | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 Spectre (DC 2, HD 7+3, Atk 1-8 + energy drain 2 levels, +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to sleep, charm, hold, cold, poison, paralysis). |
| 2 | 3 Thelidu (DC 5, HD 4+3, Atk 1-6 (x2) Claws, 1-4 Tentacles, SA Mind Powers, Brain Extraction) from the Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere (see *FO!* #4). |
| 3 | 8 Gnome Regulars (DC 2, HD 3+6, Atk 1-6 pick, 1-3 darts). See **14 – 18** for additional details. |
| 4 | Adventuring Party (1 each Warrior, Mage, Priest, and Thief, each LVL d2+5) |

Anyone surviving a visit to The Palace of Eternal Illusion will later doubt the reality of their experiences despite all evidence to the contrary.

**13. Entry Hall:** Characters passing through the portal will find themselves in a large, lavish entry hall. Royal red carpets line the floors and elegantly carved wood stairways rise to the second floor, where a balcony overlooks the room. The windows here are unsettling and the view is blocked by a green haze. The ceilings are incomplete, with wood and stone giving way to an oppressive green. Especially strange is the gigantic chandelier that hangs from the green without anchor.

**14. At the Movies:** An indestructible metal panel blocks the room entrance. A button is located to the right of the door frame. Pressing the button will cause the panel to slide into the recesses of the wall, revealing a huge domed oval-shaped room illuminated by luminescent lighting panels located on the walls and ceilings. Padded seats are arranged in circular rows facing the outer walls of the room. Shortly after the party arrives, the metal panel slides back to closed position and the lights go out. The seating area will spin and a cinematic in-the-round 3-D action scene will commence. Each time the theater is entered roll d4 to determine the star and film clip projected:

| 1d4 | Random Movie Monster |
|---|---|
| 1 | **King Kong** (DC 2, HD 24+4, hp 288, Atk 1d12+12 x2(Fists), 4d4(Bite), 5d4 x2 (Stamping), SA Squeezing Grasp 24 hp, Rend 1d20, Hurling 6d10, SD Regenerate 1 hp/Round, Resist Fire, Cold, Electricity (1/2 damage)) |
| 2 | **Godzilla** (DC -2, HD 25+5, hp 300, Atk 3d6+6 x2 (Claws), 6d4(Bite), 6d4 x2 (Stamping), 4d10 (Tail) SA Squeezing Grasp 30 hp, Swallow Whole, Atomic Breath Weapon 10d10, Fire Breath 8d10, SD Regenerate 1 hp/round) |
| 3 | **Rodan** (DC 2, HD 20+3, hp 248, Atk 2d6+4 x2 (Claws), Bite 5d4(Bite), 4d4 x2 Wing Slam, 4d4 x2 (Stamping), SA Sonic Boom, Hurricane Winds, Spikes, Wind Breath Weapon 5d10, SD Resist Fire, Cold, Electricity (1/2 damage)) |
| 4 | **Ghidora** (DC -3, HD 30+6, hp 320, Atk 4d4 x3 (Bite) or 5d4 x2 Wing Slam, 7d4 x2 (Stamping), SA Shock Wave, Hurricane Winds, Gravity Beams, Crimson Electricity 6d10, SD Resist Fire, Cold, Electricity (1/2 damage)) |

The GM is encouraged to add or substitute creatures (i.e. Predator, Alien, etc.) for the group's "viewing enjoyment". After three rounds, the film becomes frighteningly interactive as the floors will quake, some of the seats will be launched in the air, and the featured creature will emerge from the screen to attack the party. The attack is a combination of film projection, mechanical engineering, and illusionary magic. Characters are unlikely to successfully disbelieve the reality of the experience, especially if they are first-time viewers. A character attempting to disbelieve rolls 3d6 + 6. Only a modified result below the character's intelligence score results in successful disbelief. Characters returning to the theater for a second viewing may attempt to disbelieve with a roll of 2d6 + 6. The third and all subsequent viewing is determined with 1d6 + 6. If the randomly generated film is a re-run for the character, eliminate the modifier. Characters that successfully disbelieve will realize the creature is not real and will no longer take damage, but they will be unable to communicate with others who have not successfully disbelieved. After 20 rounds of battle, the show stops, the lights re-illuminate, and the door re-opens. Characters "slain" in this battle will be in a state of total unconsciousness for 7 – 12 turns. If all characters are unconscious the movie operators (see **14 – 18**) will take each character's single most valuable magical item and dump their unconscious bodies in the center of the illusionary maze (see **26**). If some of the characters remain conscious, the operators

will measure strength and decide to either attempt to finish off the party or remain hidden. An illusion hides a button on the south end of the room. If this button is pressed, a secret panel slides open to **15**.

**Gnome "Burrow" (Areas 14 – 18):** A small enclave of ancient and ingenious gnomes operates the cinema. There are a dozen gnomes in all: 9 Gnome Regulars (DC 2, HD 3+6, Atk 1-6 pick, 1-3 darts), 2 Assistant Burrow Wardens (DC 0, HD 5+8, Atk 3-8 w/+2 pick, 1-3 darts), and 1 Burrow Warden (DC -1, HD 6 +9, Atk 3-8 +2 pick, 1-3 darts, SA 50% summon earth elemental). All Gnomes (SA poison gas darts, save v. poison or target stunned 1 round and slowed 4 rounds, +1 to hit w/pick, +2 to hit w/darts, SD +3 on all saving throws, immune to illusions) are armed in a finely crafted mithral mail. The regulars and the assistant each carry a 100 gp gem. The warden carries a 500 gp ruby. If the gnomes are aware of an impending invasion the Burrow Warden will gather his forces and try to ambush intruders. Otherwise, the gnomes will be found at the locations below.

**15. Mechanical Room:** Various machines, camera equipment, battery-powered tools, and a small vehicle are packed into this room. Four gnome regulars (DC 2, hp 25, 22, 19, 14) are usually working here. An elevator with two buttons (one with an arrow pointing up, one with an arrow pointing down) is in the northwest corner of the room. Pressing either button will result in the door panels opening. Shortly after a character, or characters, enters the elevator its doors will close. If the up button was pressed, the elevator will ascend and open at the Observation Deck (**15**) above. If the down button was pressed, the elevator will descend rapidly for a long period of time, finally opening in the Deep Caves, Level 9 of *The Darkness Beneath*. A secret panel hides a passage leading to **26**.

**16. Observation Deck:** This area encircles the theater. Cleverly disguised one-sided windows allow the gnomes to view events in the theater below. Several screens include highlights of unfortunate movie goers. Three gnome regulars (hp 24, 22, 19), the assistant burrow wardens (hp 35, 30) and the Burrow Warden (hp 45) spend most of their time here.

**17. Control Room:** A metal control table is set into the wall just below one-sided rectangular window from which two gnome regulars (hp 22, 21) can view the entire theater and make necessary modifications to the cinematic production. The table contains built-in controls, as well as various screens on which several of the movies are running at once. Characters that experienced an attack in the cinema may recognize some of the films.

**18. Gnome Quarters:** These quarters contain six small-sized bunked beds. A secret door leading to the gnome burrow's treasure vault is hidden behind one of the beds. It contains 2500 sp, 1000 gp, 250 pp, 10 gems (5 50 gp, 3 100 gp, 1 250 gp and 1 500 gp), +3 spear, +1 shield, wand of illusions (49 charges), +3 mace, cloak of invisibility, plus any items the gnomes may have taken from the characters.

**19. Fountain Room:** A fountain of weaving, turning patterns of shimmering color is at the center of the room. Characters approaching and examining the fountain must save v. magic at -2 or be entranced by the fountain. As soon as any characters become hypnotized, the 4 phase spiders (DC 7, HD 5+5, Atk 1-6 + Poison (save -2), SD phase out (impervious to attack when spiders win initiative) will phase in and attack from the ceiling above. The fountain contains 500 gp and a pearl of wisdom (+1 to priest's wisdom score).

**20. Alchemy Room:** A long rectangular table rests against the wall opposite the entrance. The right and left ends of the table are stacked with books and scrolls. The books and notes are the former possessions of a mad alchemist. To the right buyer, they could command a worth of up to 1,000 gp. However, the books are riddled with error and could produce dangerous effects for those using any of the information. Twenty containers of varying sizes, shapes, and contents are strewn about the middle of the table. The placement of the containers on the table should be determined randomly (see table at right).

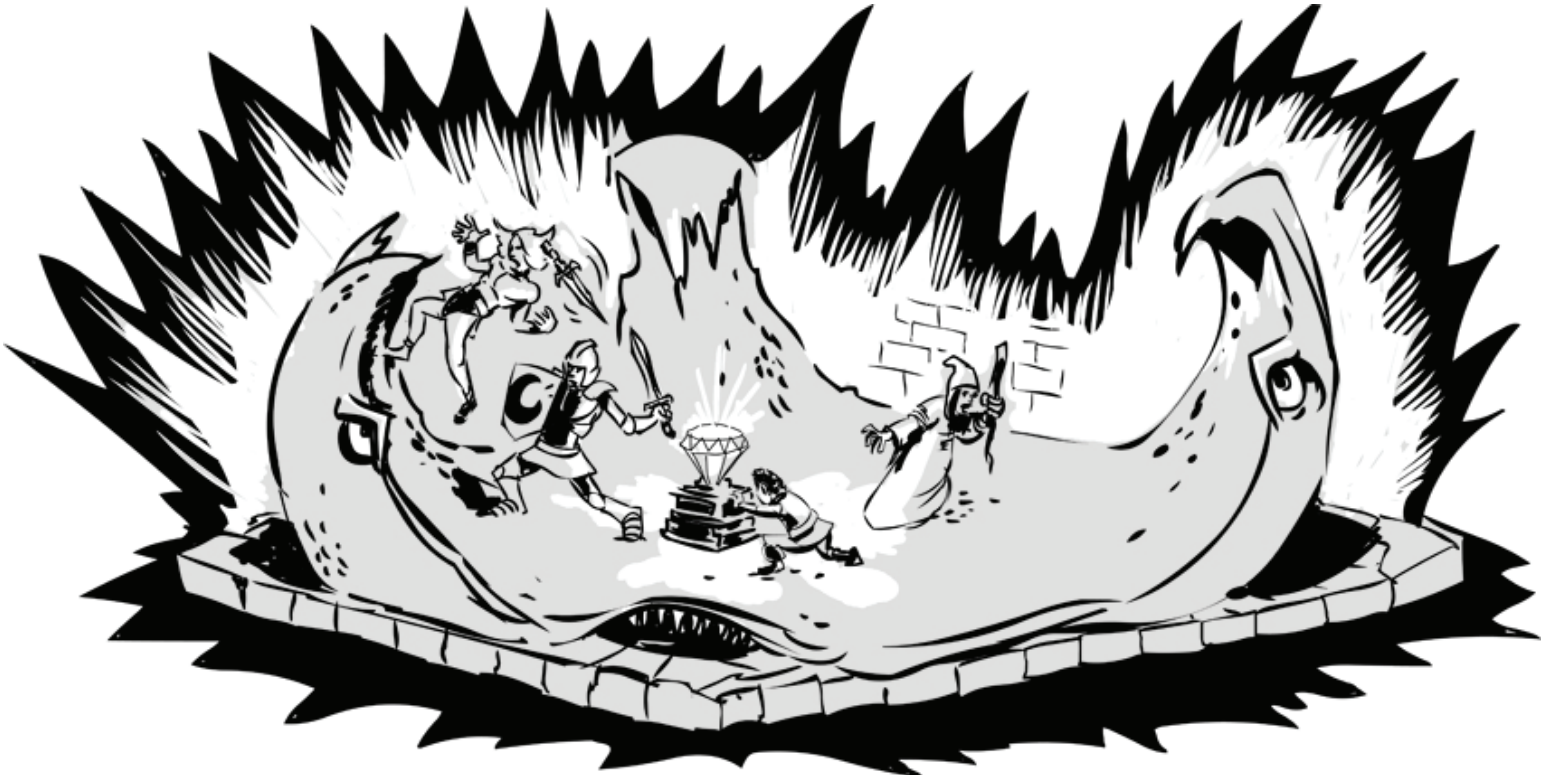
**21. False Orb:** A low circular table rests in the middle of the room. A pair of chairs faces one another across the table. On the table a crystal orb rests on a gold base. Any mage or illusionist attempting to scry with this device will have normal chances of 'success'. However, the images in the crystal ball will all be false: the GM should create believable but misleading images in the orb. The false crystal ball's gold base is worth 250 gp.

**22. Trapper:** A plush red rug covers the entirety of this square room. At the center of the room is an ivory pedestal on which rests a red ruby. The pedestal and the jewel are an illusion, and the rug is actually a trapper (DC 3, HD 12, hp 45, Atk 4 + DC value, SA envelops and suffocates prey in 6 rounds, SD 95% undetectable, resists fire/cold (half/no damage). The trapper closes itself upon its prey as soon as any character makes it to the center of the room. The trapper's treasure lies beneath the "rug" and includes 500 gp, a 500 gp gem (identical to the illusion), a wand of paralyzation (13 charges), and a scroll of invisibility.

**23. Clear Crystal:** A clear crystal lies at the center of this otherwise empty room. The crystal is of very modest value (10 gp) and has no other distinguishing properties.

**24. Fool's Gold, Lucky Pennies:** The room is piled full of large sacks filled with coins. There are 50 sacks containing 400 gp each. The gold is fool's gold (the coins are really made of iron scrap) and their true properties will be

| # | Container Description | Liquid Description | Properties/Effect |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Glass Vial and Stopper | Bright Blue | Healing (4-10 hp) |
| 2 | (same as #1) | (same as #1) | X-Healing (6-27 hp) |
| 3 | (same as #1) | (same as #1) | Fullheal (restores all but 1-4 hp) |
| 4 | (same as #1) | (same as #1) | Delusionary Fullheal |
| 5 | (same as #1) | (same as #1) | Poison (save or die) |
| 6 | Glass Decanter & Stopper | Red | Wine (excellent quality - 250 gpv) |
| 7 | Unlabeled Bottle | Golden Brown | Mead (highly intox-icating – 10 gpv) |
| 8 | Bottle labeled "Old Shire" | Light Brown | Old Shire Beer (2 cpv) |
| 9 | Clay Tube and Stopper | Earthy Green | Polymorph Self |
| 10 | (same as #9) | (same as #9) | Delayed Polymorph Self (Imbiber is poly-morphed into same form as next creature encountered) |
| 11 | Flask labeled "Hill Giant Control" | Light Brown | Hill Giant Control |
| 12 | Flask labeled "Frost Giant Control" | Silvery Blue | Frost Giant Control |
| 13 | Flask labeled "Fire Giant Control" | Red | Reversed (Imbiber is controlled by next fire giant met) |
| 14 | Clay Cup | Yellow | Treasure Finding |
| 15 | Silver Goblet | Yellow | Treasure Finding |
| 16 | Gold Chalice | Yellow | Leads imbiber to greatest danger within 1 mile radius |
| 17 | Glass Tube with Glass Stopper | Empty (actually contains invisible liquid) | Invisibility |
| 18 | (Identical to #17) | Empty (actually contains invisible liquid) | Invisibility |
| 19 | (Identical to #17) | Empty (actually contains invisible liquid) | Faerie Fire (imbiber glows, +2 to all opponent "to hit" rolls for 3-12 turns) |
| 20 | Glass Flask with Gold-Plated Stopper | Clear | Water |



**Shadow Monsters* Table**

| d12 | Creature(s) | Spec. Attacks** |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3 Apes (DC 6, HD 5, hp 10 each, Atk 1-4/1-4/1-8) | |
| 2 | Black Pudding (DC 6, HD 10, hp 20, Atk 3-24) | Wood/Metal dissolved |
| 3 | 5 Bugbears (DC 5, HD 3+1, hp 6 each, Atk 2-8) | |
| 4 | 4 Gargoyles (DC 5, HD 4+4, hp 12 each, Atk 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4) | |
| 5 | Gelatinous Cube (DC 8, HD 4, hp 13, Atk 2-8) | |
| 6 | Gray Ooze (DC 8, HD 3+3, hp 7, Atk 2-16) | Metal dissolved |
| 7 | 3 Minotaurs (DC 6, HD 6+3, hp 14 each, Atk 2-8) | |
| 8 | 2 Nightmares (DC -4, HD 6+6, hp 15 each, Atk 2-8/4-10/4-10) | |
| 9 | 3 Owlbears (DC 5, HD 5+2, hp 14 each, Atk 1-6/2-12/2-12) | |
| 10 | 2 Rust Monsters (DC 2, HD 5, hp 13 each, Atk nil) | Metal dissolved |
| 11 | Sphinx (DC -2, HD 13, hp 40, Atk 2-12/2-12) | |
| 12 | 2 Sabretooth Tigers (DC 6, HD 7+2, hp 17 each, Atk 2-5/2-5/2-12) | |

*Technically demi-shadow monsters (40% normal hp). Save vs. spell to disbelieve attacks for only 40% damage.
**Special attack results are illusionary. Dissolved materials return to normal after exiting the maze.

**Illusionary Treasure Table**

| d12 | Treasure* | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fist-Sized Gem | |
| 2 | 2 Black Pearls | |
| 3 | Illusionary Healing Potion | Restores 4-10 hp of illusionary damage |
| 4 | Diamond | |
| 5 | Ivory Horn | |
| 6 | Illusionary Extra-Healing Potion | Restores 6-27 hp of illusionary damage |
| 7 | Glowing Shield | |
| 8 | 8 Gold Bars | |
| 9 | False Maze Instructions | e.g. "To Exit Maze, Turn Right Thrice" (meaningless) |
| 10 | Gold Key | |
| 11 | Jeweled Dagger | |
| 12 | Jeweled Ring | Wearer sees true room |

*All treasures are illusionary and disappear upon exiting the maze.

permanently revealed under natural sunlight. There are 5 sacks containing 400 cp. The copper pieces are actually platinum pieces. Like the "gold", the true platinum properties of these coins will be permanently revealed under the light of the sun.

**25. One-Way Teleporter:** Anyone entering this room is immediately teleported to **6**.

**26. Illusionary Maze:** An illusionary maze is programmed in this chamber. When the party arrives (whether through the door or down the chute from **29** of the Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere), describe the passage using the Illusionary Maze Generation instructions below. All passageways will appear to end in a turn. All monsters and treasures will appear at the end of the passage (just before the turn). All monsters are shadow monsters and attack immediately. All treasures are illusionary and will disappear once taken out of the maze. The maze results may seem to take the party out of the 100' x 100' room. Ignore this, as the perceived distances are part of the illusion.

**Maze Generation Instructions**

**1.** Determine passageway length: d8 x 10' long (all passages 10' wide).
**2.** Determine turn direction at end of passageway – d6: 1-3 right, 4-6 left.
**3.** Determine encounter/treasure – d6: 1-3 none, 4 monster, 5 treasure, 6 monster & treasure).
**4.** Determine monster (if any) on Shadow Monster Table.
**5.** Determine treasure (if any) on Illusionary Treasure Table.
**6.** Repeat when party reaches next turn.

Any character can attempt to disbelieve the illusion of the maze (save v. spells). Any character successfully saving may pass through the walls revealing the 100' x 100' room and the door leading to **27**. The terminus at the bottom of the chute from **29** of the Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere will also be visible in the northeast corner of the room.

**27. Throne Room:** Double doors open to a large rectangular room. A floating stream of green nebulous matter runs horizontally across the room. A dais is raised against the wall opposite the entrance. A skeletal man dressed in kingly guise sits upon the throne. His head is adorned by a magnificent emerald crown and he still clutches a jeweled scepter. When the party arrives the skeleton will smile, dust falling from its face. This is Xanadun, the Illusionist Lich (DC 0, HD 11 (18th level illusionist), Atk 1-10 + paralysis touch, SA fear, SD +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to charm, sleep, enfeeblement, polymorph, cold, electricity, insanity, death magic; wears Ring of Fire Resistance). Xanadun is the creator of The Palace of Eternal Illusions. He has long since become weary of immortality and lonesome. He will

attempt to converse with the characters. He is ancient and will gladly share information and any history he may possess about *The Darkness Beneath*. Xanadun will only attack if the party attacks him or if the party begins to leave. If the players parley with the lich, he may let them go without attack if they promise to bring back more "company". Of course, he will expect collateral (i.e. either some PCs or powerful magical items stay behind with him). Xanadun's recommended spells are - **1**: color spray (x3), darkness, hypnotism; **2**: blindness (x2), hypnotic pattern (x2), mirror image; **3**: fear (x2), paralyzation (x2), suggestion; **4**: confusion (x2), phantasmal killer, shadow monsters (x2); **5**: shadow magic (x3); **6**: demi–shadow magic (x3; **7**: prismatic spray, prismatic wall. The green stream serves as the illusionary material from which Xanadun "builds" the palace. The lich's dais is covered with a king's ransom of 25,000 gold coins and assorted fine jewelry. This treasure, however, is illusionary and will become worthless once outside the palace. The crown (25,000 gpv) and scepter (15,000 gpv), however, are real. Other real treasures include a +2 long sword, +2 shield, and a wand of paralyzation (53 charges) lying amongst the false treasure on the dais. Ω

# Bust-up at the Moon & Parrot

barroom brawl minigame by Baz Blatt

Distribute the characters on pages 84-5 'round the bar with tables and chairs as appropriate. Encourage your players to get into character (with a few drinks?) and see who hits who first!

**Rules:**

- The 'MV' score noted below is the number of hexes a person may move per round.
- Changing facing by 1 hex is free, changing by 2 costs 1 MV, changing by 3 costs 2 MV.
- A character may run gaining +2 MV, but only if he doesn't change direction once he has set off.
- A character may make only one attack, but can do it at any point in his move, costing 1 MV.
- Opening a door takes 1 MV; climbing out a window or getting up off the floor takes 2 MV.
- To charge and deal +2 damage, a character must run 6 squares in a straight line before hitting his target.
- Anyone can leap onto a table for 1 MV if they roll Dex or below on d20. If they fail, they roll again or fall over.
- Bottles, beer mugs, etc. can be thrown for 1d3 damage.
- Bottles may be broken (roll STR of below on 1d20 to break) and used as daggers at -1 to hit.
- Stools may be thrown or used as impromptu clubs by people of STR 12 or above at -1 to hit and 1d4 damage or used as shields for +1 AC (not both in same round).
- Tables and benches may only be used by people of STR 16+, hit at -2, and do 1d8 damage. Anyone hit by a table or bench must roll STR or DEX (whichever is higher) or below or be knocked down.
- Attacking from the side gives +2 to hit, from behind +4, but only thieves get ay damage bonus for doing so. A character can only effectively attack to his front.
- Swinging on chandeliers, reachable by a successful leap from a table, enables you to add 2 to your MV, and if you roll DEX or below you can get +2 damage at the end of the swing because of momentum, and get +2 AC for moving quickly over everyone else's head.

**Drunkenness:** Everyone can take as many units of alcohol as they have CON. Half a pint of ale, one measure of spirits or one glass of wine is one unit. When you reach 1/3 of your total you are slightly intoxicated, at 2/3 you are moderately intoxicated, and at your CON you are pissed as a newt. All characters except 1, 9, 12, 13, 17, 18 and 19 start having had 1d10 units of drink already. Each unit drunk over the limit forces a save vs poison. If this is failed roll CON or below on 1d20 or throw up (no actions for 1d3 turns), if the roll is made you merely fall asleep. Each further unit imbibed adds 1 hp. Undead are immune to drink, while women and small characters like halflings and baboons only have 2/3 their CON to work with.

**Slightly** -1 INT, -1 WIS, +1 CHA, +1d3 HP, +5% Morale

**Moderately** -3 INT, -3 WIS, -2 DEX, -1 CHA, +2d3 HP, +10% Morale, -1 to hit

**Very** -6 INT, -6 WIS, -5 DEX, -4 CHA, +3d3 HP, +15% Morale, -5 to hit

# SURFACE LEVEL
# Was Never Made

The Surface Level containing Brackenfells, Dark Hills, Jagged Plinths, and Trackless Waste was not completed before the magazine stopped publishing.

# LEVEL 9 Is Missing

Level 9: Citadel of the Dark Trolls is found in Fight On! 14, however I’ve not been able to get it.

# LEVEL 13 Was Never Made

Level 12: The Caverns of Slime was not completed before the magazine stopped publishing.

# LEVEL 15 Was Never Made

Level 15: The Tomb of The Black Lord of Nothingness was not completed before the magazine stopped publishing.

# THE DARKNESS BENEATH

## Level 8: The Deep Caves

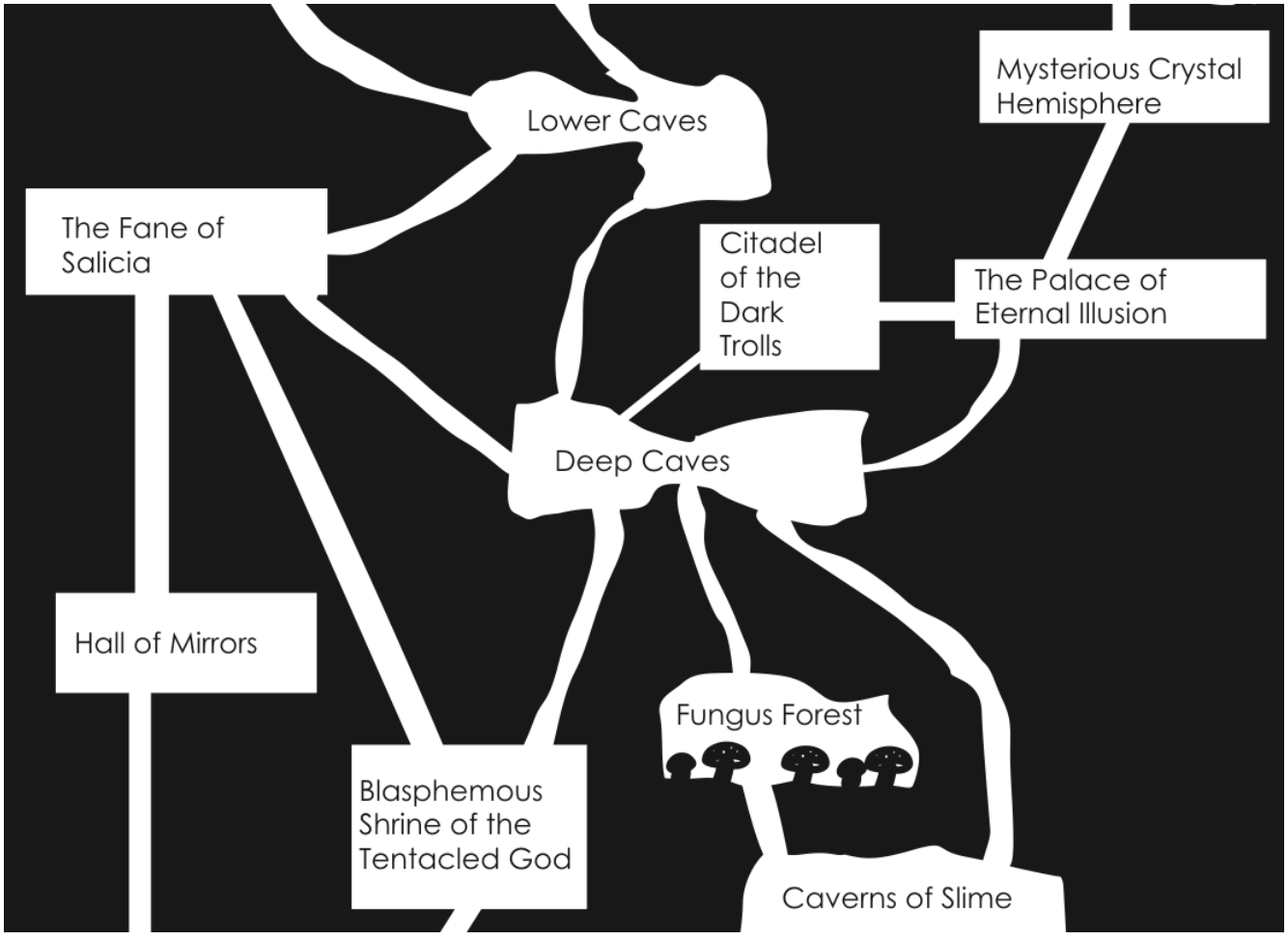
by Heron Prior, David Bowman, Calithena and Simon Bull

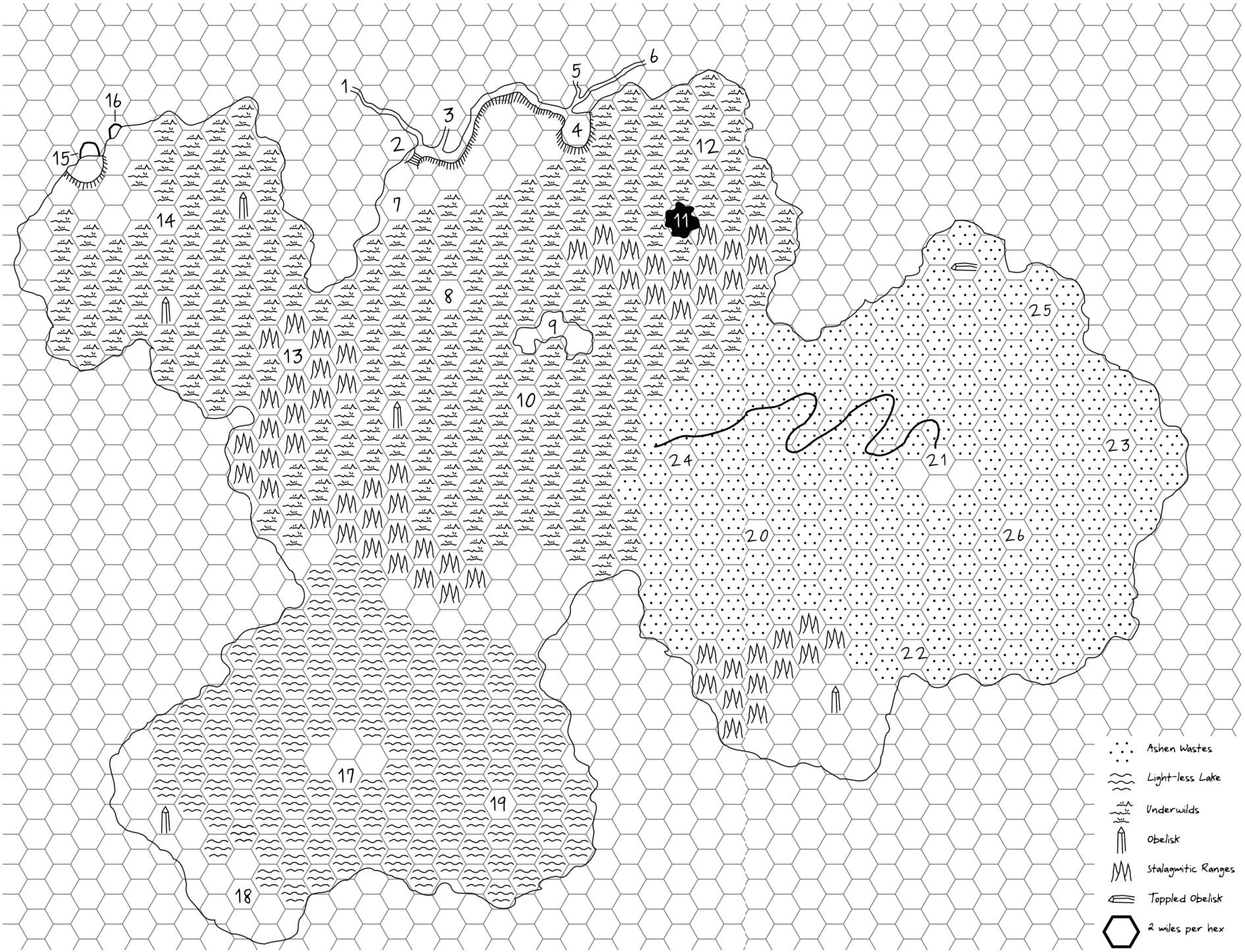
**Introduction:** What you hold in your hands is a self-contained 'underdark', a great cavernous wilderness beneath the earth where lightless lakes lap at stalagmitic peaks and raptor-mounted trolls ride a range of desolate howling temples and gem-encrusted tombs. Designed for parties of about the eighth level of experience, this adventure environment can be located anywhere you wish in your own fantasy world, connected to other dungeons by cavernous passages or standing largely on its own.

It is also designed to serve as the beating heart of *The Darkness Beneath*, a community megadungeon published in these pages. While you do not need any of the other *Darkness Beneath* levels to play in the *Deep Caves*, if you like what you find here you may wish to check them out! Connections to other levels will be noted, but we have striven to make this underworld as self-contained as possible.

**What Are Characters Doing Here?** A fair question, deep in the dismal depths – though in our day we never shirked from girding up our loins and going forth in search of plunder and wonder, though our quest took us to the jagged edge of hell and beyond! Still, if more specific pretexts are needed, here is a sampling (d6):

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The Goblins of the Thousand Spears (**15**) or the Dark Trolls of Dagendreng Hold (**5**) have taken a prisoner, or characters need to hire goblin or troll armies there. |
| 2 | An ancient artifact or map is needed, and can only be recovered from the Tomb of Thirteen **(13**), Night-Wing Temple (**14**), or Snow Throne (**20**). |
| 3 | Characters need to buy or sell something that can't be obtained anywhere else at the Multiversal Bazaar (**21**), or else attempt to solicit the services of the Undoers there to travel to another world. |
| 4 | The Iron Duke of Marchand has hired or sentenced PCs to capture 100 pterocs from their aeries (or from **4**) to serve as mounts for his new Winged Knights. |
| 5 | An old friend or mentor or renowned hero lies tangled and asleep in the Thicket Tunnels of the Flower Dryad (**7**)**,** and must be brought back to the surface. |
| 6 | A PC or prominent NPC wishes to establish his own fortress in *The Deep Caves*, and the party travels these lands to establish their own stronghold. |

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Ashen Wastes
Light-less Lake
Underwilds
Obelisk
Stalagmitic Ranges
Toppled Obelisk
2 miles per hex

**The Map:** The footprint of the Deep Caves is about 72 miles across (2 mile hexes) which will require several days to cross on foot. The "floor" of the level is undulating and rolling, with shallow vales and low rises punctuated by towering stalagmites that pierce the dim air sometimes quite far above. Intermittent clouds of bioluminescent fog create varying levels of light, from nearly pitch black to something better than full moonlight. The uppermost reaches of the cave have a star-blue luminescence which serves to add scope and depth for onlookers, but is not enough to yield normal sight in the lower reaches on the cavern floor. In general the lower the altitude, the darker it is. The Ashen Wastes (**20-26**) are unlit, although the bazaar at their center (**21)** serves as a beacon, one whose unearthly glow can be seen from anywhere in the *Deep Caves* which has a line of sight to it.

## Key to the Deep Caves

**Highway Area**
**1**. Troll Highway
**2**. Black Spinel Cliffs
**3.** The Tilting Tunnels
**4.** Pteroc Stables
**5.** Dagendreng Hold
**6.** Fortified Causeway to the Troll Citadel

**Underwilds**
**7.** Thicket Tunnels of the Flower Dryad
**8.** Seekers' Redoubt
**9.** Fell Lagoons
**10.** Raptor Run
**11.** Tar Pits
**12.** The Bad Puppets' Camp
**13.** Tomb of Thirteen
**14.** Nightwing Temple

**Thousand Spears**
**15.** Cliff-City of the Thousand Spears
**16.** Lair of Gorangol, the Night Dragon

**Lightless Lake**
**17.** The Pale Grove
**18.** The Cock-Robin
**19.** Sunken City

**Ashen Wastes**
**20.** Snow Throne
**21.** Multiversal Bazaar
**22.** Bubble Boy
**23.** Shrine to the Black Lord of Nothingness
**24.** Siren Temple
**25.** House of the Toad
**26.** Mourner's Keep

To fully detail an environment of this scope is beyond (*what I was willing to print in one issue – Ig*). What we have done instead is to provide a general Gazetteer, with short descriptions and random encounter tables, for the entirety of the Deep Caves, mostly written by Dave and Cal; and then more detailed descriptions of the Ashen Wastes and the Siren Temple and House of the Toad within it, mostly written by Heron. Future submissions to *FO!* documenting the areas merely sketched here in more detail, or even inventing completely new ones, are welcome.

**The Obelisks**: Black basalt pillars covered with ancient runes, anyone with even remote psychic sensitivity (magic, psionics, or Wisdom 13+) will hear a dim buzzing from them even a mile away that grows to a terrible grinding chitter when the obelisks come within sight. The language is indecipherable even to magic. Every turn a sentient being is within 30' of an obelisk they must save vs. *Feeble-mindedness*, whether they are sensitive/ magical or not (non-sensitives and non-spellcasters save at +2, however). Beings failing their save become drooling, humming idiots until 1-6 days spent continuously outside any obelisk hex. Toppled obelisks have the same appearance but do not cause madness, and their otherworldly buzz is only audible to the most sensitive. The obelisks are in effect an unresolvable mystery unless you, the GM, deem otherwise, though they are venerated by the Shrine of the Black Lord of Nothingness (**23**) and ignored by the Undoers of the Multiversal Bazaar (**21**), who are immune to their effects.

## The Highway Area

**1.** This region is defined by the **Troll Highway**, a well-trodden thoroughfare running from higher up in the underworld (in the full *DB* it connects to Level 5, *The Lower Caves*). Until it reaches the Black Spinel Cliffs (**2**), the Highway is a great twisting enclosed tunnel with occasional side caverns, of a minimum diameter as to allow two elephants to pass side by side. It is also fairly safe as such places go; the Trolls are vigilant so close to their Citadel.

**2.** When the highway reaches the **Black Spinel Cliffs**, a breathtaking view of *The Deep Caves* may be had, as the road here emerges from its cavernous containment and runs along a cliff-side running from 500 down to 300 feet above the Underwilds. The cliffs are difficult to climb due to sheerness and sharp outcroppings; a thief might manage with good rolls, but what of the rest of the party? Unless some magic or serious climbing equipment can bring a whole party down, the Pteroc Stables (**4**) are likely to be a party's best bet for exploration.

**3. The Tilting Tunnels** are a complex, three-dimensional maze of caverns and wooden buildings and bridges counterbalanced over vast subterranean abysses. The whole tunnel complex is somewhat akin to a giant Rube Goldberg contraption, and when the wooden segments move relative to one another PCs may often be left at a dead end or unable to retrace their steps. There are however two routes down through the tunnels that allow one to reach the Underwilds two hexes SE of the Tunnels, and this is known to Snearg (**4**), who will suggest this as an alternate route for the parsimonious. The Tilting Tunnels are inhab-

ited by the Puppeteer (Neutral Mag 12 with Dr. Octopus-like wooden prosthetics), a bizarre enchanter of semi-sentient, Oz-like constructs made from wood and sawdust and dungeon detritus. Along with his twin djinn servants, the Puppeteer creates a vast panoply of servitors – animated puppets, life-size cuckoo clocks and jack-in-the-boxes, juggernauts, spinning tops, and his vexing masterworks, the Bad Puppets, sentient, free-willed animates who are quite willing to thwart the Puppeteer's will whenever they can get off the strings that bind them to him. The Puppeteer is avid to trade for more wood, and if PCs of insufficient strength challenge him he may well Geas them (with a clockwork device grafted to their backs) to bring him more from the Underwilds, as he is loath to lose any more Bad Puppets to the bandits there. The Puppeteer is obsessive and eccentric, monomaniacally focused on his creations, but not malevolent per se. He is very powerful, especially in his own realm, and coexists with the Undoers and the dark trolls in an uneasy détente.

**4.** The most reliable way to get down to the Underwilds and beyond is found at the **Pteroc Stables**, run by Snearg, a Cave Troll (10 HD Troll, 2 Claws for 2d6 each) whose long possession of a *Pearl of Wisdom* has bestowed upon him ordinary human cunning and intelligence, and his stone giant wife Lith, whose minimal druidic ability allows her to speak to the Pterocs, something Snearg has learned rudimentary skill at as well. Pterocs (9 HD, DC 6) are giant, atavistic, brightly colored flying reptiles with a vague resemblance to eagles and parrots. One pteroc can carry one large, two normal, or three small PCs. The pterocs here naturally roost in this part of the Black Spinel Cliffs, so Snearg has no fear about his charges returning; they cost 1000 gp to rent, with an additional 1000 gp deposit to be refunded upon the pteroc's healthy and timely return. A single Multiversal Bazaar token suffices for rental as well. Unless PCs have some way to command their obedience, the pterocs will return immediately after characters get off their backs at their first destination. They may be flown anywhere in *The Deep Caves* except the Ashen Wastes, which they will not cross farther than 3 miles into. The Dark Trolls have an understanding with Snearg, and they ride at no cost and with priority over other riders. Snearg will bargain if he is treated with respect, but he knows that his customers have few other options.

**5.** After the Pteroc Stables the Troll Highway once again becomes tunnel-like, and a smaller (one-elephant) branch leads to the **Dagendreng Hold**, a carved-out redoubt for highborn and recently wealthy dark trolls, as well as the bravest wayfarers in *The Darkness Beneath*. A sort of dungeon-bound Gentlemen's Club, this is the best place for non-trolls to go if they wish to purchase influence or mercenary support from the dark trolls, although prices are always high and service always uncertain, and petitioners may be eaten for their trouble. There is also a teleportation circle hidden here that connects to the Thieves' Guild in the city of Marchand, and a particularly ruthless coterie of thieves (some placed high in the Dragon Earl's retinue), working to further the dark trolls' purposes in the world above, can sometimes be found here as well. (The Puppeteer (**3**) deals with them for wood.) Highborn Dark Trolls are known as Drones, and those who loiter here play the role of the young, idle scion of wealth to the hilt; *Nellie Dean* may be heard at all hours, emanating from the gin-drenched bowels within. It is hard to imagine spirits more crushed than those of Dagendreng's elven barmaids.

**6.** After winding its way down from the surface far above, the Troll Highway steadily rises after Dagendreng Hold and finally ends here, before massive stone walls and a gargantuan iron-shod gate of petrified wood. Warriors and anyone moderately alert will note that ballista-sized murder holes and giant pots of superheated tar festoon the **Fortified Causeway to the Troll Citadel** for some distance before and after these mighty gates, which are heavily guarded by dark trolls in plate armor bearing light ballistae (3d6 damage). None but Dark Trolls and their dinosaur pets and mounts may pass these gates, a fact which the guards will politely (really!) inform visitors of; even superheroic parties will likely find a direct assault on the front gates akin to suicide, for there are wards against magic here as well as tremendous force of arms. In the full *Darkness Beneath* the Citadel of the Dark Trolls is Level 9, and will be detailed in a future issue of *Fight On!*

## Underwilds

**7.** The Underwilds are akin to a primeval jungle, albeit with a greater proportion of jutting stone, fungus, mold, and moss to go with its trees, ferns, and grass. They are full of dinosaurs and strange enclaves, such as the **Thicket Tunnels of the Flower Dryad**, a dungeon complex filled with shambling plant monsters, scores of delvers slumbering amidst somnolent mists and twisting roots for eternity, and the eponymous dryad and her 'flower.'

**8.** One of the safer places in the Underwilds, and one that dark troll dinosaur hunters and unguided pterocs will almost always come to, is **Seeker's Redoubt**. An ancient shrine of Law, the Redoubt bestows its blessings on the just and the unjust alike; a great calm falls on all those who camp within its environs, making fighting nearly impossible (-4 save vs. magic to initiate or continue each round) and healing those who rest here 1d6 hp each day. Beings are often present here: roll 1d6-4 Underwilds encounters here each day, but no matter how evil or hungry these beings will never cause trouble within the Redoubt itself.

**9.** The **Fell Lagoons** teem with visiting dinosaurs, plesiosaurs, horrible toothed fishes, carnivorous aquatic plants, and slaughtered caravans of dark trolls, goblins, and adventurous traders. Highly valuable (1000 gp +) pearls may be obtained by divers from the freshwater oysters found here, and there are a few ancient ruins as well, but it is quite questionable whether any of it is worth the cost. Somewhere within the Lagoons are passages stretching

deeper into the dungeon; in *The Darkness Beneath* these lead to level 11, the Fungus Forest and Mold Falls.

**10.** The relatively open mosslands of **Raptor Run** are full of Claw Maws (velociraptors – HD 2, DC 2, Bite 1-4, jaws lock on) and Blood Thumps (dark troll dinosaur mounts – HD 10, DC 4, Bite 2-12, trample), as well as the rarer and not yet troll-domesticated Great Maws (utahraptors – HD 14, DC 4, Claws 1-12, Bite 2-20). Within this area is a dark troll breaking ground, where an outpost of dark troll dinosaur hunters bring their captures for training to expert troll animal trainers and a wizened halfling druid-witch.

**11**. The **Tar Pits**, in addition to being a good source of undecayed ancient dinosaurs and monsters, are haunted by a band of terrible Tar Fiends from the Ashen Wastes. An Ashen Mage is here as well, and if the Mourners (see the Ashen Wastes, below) ever learn to harness and conjure force the vast life-forces still trapped within the tar, it could alter the balance of power in *The Deep Caves* and the dungeons beyond forever, or even give them an army with which to assault the surface world.

**12. The Bad Puppets' Camp** is home to a large gang of semi-sentient enchanted beings, escaped servants of the Puppeteer (**3**). Three Bad Puppets lead a coterie of several score lesser creations with various levels of ability and consciousness. They occasionally engage in banditry against trolls and wayfarers, their goal being to gain more magical devices to use in their war against the Puppeteer. But their primary motive is revenge against their creator for the servitude he keeps their fellow Puppets in, and towards that end they are perpetually planning sorties into and, eventually, a decisive raid against the Tilting Tunnels. They know where the lower exits from **3** to the Underwild are, and their leader, the first Bad Puppet to break free from the Puppeteer's control, also knows a secret passage that leads to within the dark trolls' Citadel. He will not reveal this information (or that he has it) to anyone unless they provide decisive help against the Puppeteer; the Bad Puppets are no fools and do not want trouble with the trolls until their original score is settled.

**13.** The **Tomb of Thirteen,** a lethal dungeon, may present welcome respite from the terrible dinosaur-infested wilderness outside. In addition to monsters and treasure, the Tomb includes a great number of puzzle-traps and will require dumb luck as well as good play to reach some of its most remote secrets. Treasure maps may well lead here.

**14.** The **Nightwing Temple** and dungeons beneath are the dwelling-places of the psychic, extradimensional Control Freaks (treat as intelligent Unseen Stalkers with telepathy and mind control), allies of the Undoers who keep Gorangal the Night Dragon (**16**) and the goblins of the Thousand Spears who worship her (**15**) in mental thrall. Cave-villages of enslaved Troblins who serve the Control Freaks ring the temple, and these will both fight off outsiders and warn the Control Freaks of their approach. Nominally a semi-ruined temple to the Night Dragons, the dungeons here are difficult even by the standards of *The Deep Caves*, but if a party has the ability to cope with psychic attack and invisible foes, the strange extradimensional spaces beneath the temple contain a great deal of information and valuable magical and technological treasure. Gorangal's consort Liringhast is imprisoned here as well. Victory here also opens up the possibility of friendship with two Night Dragons and a thousand goblin warriors, if the thralldom of the Control Freaks is broken.

*A tar fiend prepares for its afternoon snack.*

## Thousand Spears

**15. Cliff-City of the Thousand Spears**: The proud goblin warriors who live here (treat as 2 HD hobgoblins who regenerate 1 hp/round) once held these lands against the troll-folk above, hunting dinosaurs for meat and hiring out as mercenaries. But since the coming of the Mourners, the Multiversal Bazaar, and above all the Control Freaks, they have been brought low, and now live in psychic thralldom, their souls slowly flensed for the Freaks' nourishment. There is a secret passage here to an underground shrine of Chaotic priestesses (Level 6, *The Fane of Salicia* in the full dungeon) who sometimes hire or kidnap these goblins as well as selling them healing and other services. The Goblins of the Thousand Spears worship Gorangol, the Night Dragon, and her consort Liringhast, in great caverns higher up in the cliffside (**16**). They would die to a goblin against the Control Freaks at her orders, but as long as they have Liringhast she will not act against them.

**16. The Lair of Gorangol, The Night Dragon** stands higher on the cliffs and to the north of the City of the Thousand Spears. Ancient idols flank the cavern mouth; within the dread Gorangol (Chaotic Huge Ancient Night Dragon) mourns with her hoard, pining for her stolen consort Liringhast. Gorangol is neither good nor patient, but she does love Liringhast and will reward any who rescue him, with her friendship if not her treasure. She is strong enough to resist the Freaks' mind control, but not so strong as to act against them without losing Liringhast first, so she does nothing, leaving her worshippers to be enthralled and muttering into her vast golden troves.

## Lightless Lake

**17.** If one can bypass the gargantuan sixteen-headed hydra swimming the Lake's waters and navigate across miles unlit by dimshroom or the Bazaar's beacon – for this region, unlike the rest of the Caves, is almost completely dark – one might eventually come to the ghostly island at the Lake's center and the **Pale Grove** upon it. Glowing softly, but visible only a mile or less away, this ghostly forest is a dimensional nexus of sorts, through which not only space but time can be traversed. Within the Grove can be encountered strange monsters from other worlds, as well as Skogsra (10 HD, DC 3) and Huldra (7+1 HD, DC 5), cow-tailed fae beauties that act as guides and tricksters to those who venture within. Among their other abilities, Skogsra and Huldra can conjure a black moss in a 30' radius which instantly puts 2 HD and below beings to sleep and slows all others. Elsewhere on the island is an altar of purple stone, stained from centuries of ritual sacrifice; this leads downwards to an eldritch temple deeper down (Level 12, *The Blasphemous Shrine of the Tentacled God* in the full dungeon).

**18.** On the far shores of the Lake may be found the good ship **Cock-Robin**, crewed by forty-seven ginger-headed sailors and captained by Redhead Tom; a freak storm off the Yucatan left them stranded here. Whether they are now implacable undead pirates who must be defeated, or still-living Earthly sailors who might help PCs or be returned to their home through the magic of the Grove, or both, is up to the GM to determine.

**19.** Beneath the waves of the Lake here is a **Sunken City**, where dwells an ancient race of sea elves that neither has nor desires any contact with the world outside. There is ancient magic and technology here, and the City is very large, full of forgotten areas, strange interlopers, and interesting treasure. It is not magically concealed, but it is in the dark, and its highest spires are one hundred feet below the Lake's surface.

The **Ashen Wastes**, some of the areas for adventure within them, and tables for random encounters there are given a fuller treatment by Heron below.

## Random Encounter Tables

**Highway Area (d12):**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1-3 | Mounted Dark Troll Patrol: 2-8 Dark Trolls mounted on Blood Thumps |
| 4 | Siege Dinosaur Handling Party: 0-3 Dark Trolls mounted on Blood Thumps, 1-3 Dark Troll Dinosaur Handlers, and 1 Monoclonius |
| 5 | 3-24 Dark Troll Footmen returning from a battle in the surface world |
| 6 | 1-4 Dark Troll Drones (highborn); 20% to be accompanied by 1-3 human members of the Marchand Theives' Guild (see **5**) |
| 7 | Surface World Trading Party heading to Multiversal Bazaar; led by d3: 1 Mage, 2 Nobleman, 3 Trader of level 8-13; d6 other NPCs or monsters of levels 6-12; 75% to have a Multiversal Bazaar Token already |
| 8 | 1-20 Escaped Slaves (race d6: 1 Human, 2 Goblin, 3 Troglodyte, 4 Crab-Man, 5 Other Type, 6 Mixed Group, d4+1 types present |
| 9 | 3-18 hungry Claw Maws (velociraptors) |
| 10 | 1-6 Puppets on an errand for the Puppeteer; 50% chance of a single Bad Puppet leader (solo if only one puppet is indicated on the first roll) |
| 11-12 | Roll on your standard encounter tables for dungeon level 8 |

**Underwilds and Thousand Spears (d16):**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 3-8 Dark Trolls patrolling on foot |
| 2 | 2-4 Dark Trolls patrolling on Pterocs |
| 3 | 1-2 Dark Troll Dinosaur Hunters with 2-5 ordinary Dark Trolls; 50% chance of 2-8 Claw Maws for tracking; 20% chance to have actually caught and bound something (d20: 1-16 Blood Thump, 17-19 Monoclonius, 20 Great Maw) |
| 4 | Trading Party (as roll of 7 above) |
| 5 | Escaped Slaves (as roll of 8 above) |
| 6 | Puppet Bandit Party (2-12 Puppets and 1 Bad Puppet – on patrol from **12** |
| 7-8 | Herbivorous Dinosaur d6: 1-2 Blood Thump, 3-5 Ignuanadon, 6 Monoclonius |
| 9 | Carnosaur d4: 1-3 Claw Maw, 4 Great Maw |
| 10 | Roll or choose random dinosaur from prehistoric table |
| 11 | Hunting Party of 4-32 Thousand Spears Goblins or 3-18 Troblins (50% chance of each) |
| 12 | Zombie Dinosaurs: choose or roll d6 at random |
| 13 | Adventuring Party: 2-5 members of level 5-11 |
| 14 | Treasure Hunters (roll on subtable below) |
| 15 | Roll random (sub-tropical) wilderness encounter from your standard tables |
| 16 | Roll random encounter for dungeon level 8 |

**Lightless Lake (d4: 50% chance every d3 days)**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Sixteen Headed Lake Hydra |
| 2 | The Cock-Robin (see **18**) |
| 3-4 | Roll on a standard deep ocean encounter table – if humans or other sentient beings are encountered, they are either Escaped Slaves (as roll of 5 on the Highway Area table) or Treasure Hunters (roll on subtable below) |

**Treasure Hunters (d4):**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Veteran Treasure Hunters. A large group (1d12+ 12) of Neutral human and half-orc fighters and thieves, levels 4-7. They were formerly henchmen to a powerful Lord, abandoned in *The Darkness Beneath* when their master was dissolved by a nasty slime. They have since turned to tomb robbing, and are returning from a modest score (3000gp value). All are on foot, but one leads "Bessy" - a blind, mangy pack mule, driven insane by her extended time below. Despite her shortcomings, Bessy is of especially sturdy stock. She has uncanny luck, having been blessed by a minor godling early in her dungeoneering career. She has since passed from owner to owner, most of whom she has outlived. She will follow whoever holds her rope, but is prone to fits of braying at inopportune times and will kick anyone who stands too close behind her. The words "wizard," "treasure," and the sound of lute strings all send her into a mindless panic, braying and bolting recklessly in a random direction for 1 turn. Those who spend time with her learn to work around such things. |
| 2 | Dark Troll Deserters. Six Dark Troll footmen in battered armor are led by a Dark Troll Captain on a Blood Thump. A second Blood Thump carries supplies. The Captain carries a map showing several areas of interest, only one of which is real. They have little interest in a fight but may try to shake down the party anyway. |
| 3 | Surly Dwarves. 3d4 luckless Dwarves and a Dwarf Warrior/Priest (L 5/5) are returning to the Multiversal Bazaar, eager to claim justice for a bogus map. They are irritable but not looking for trouble. All carry large packs and excavation tools. One has been replaced by a Tar Fiend shape-shifter. |
| 4 | Ogre Expedition. Ten Ogres carrying packs of excavation gear accompany a half-ogre warrior (barbarian warrior 8) on a large lizard. Twelve Troblin slaves scamper behind. The Ogres carry useless charms against the Mourners and a map showing both the Keep (**26**, with an X marked at a point nearby) and the Trade Road. Ogrish notes in the margins state "over the second ridge south, third pillar from the left." The Ogres are well-equipped, with chainmail shirts, spears for throwing, and bardiches. |

## The Ashen Wastes

**Introduction:** The Ashen Wastes are vast plains of hardened mud and volcanic ash, rising hundreds of feet above the original floor of the cavern. From their outer edges, the Wastes ascend in a gradual slope to a central plateau, cut through with a spider-web of cracks, trenches, and steep-sided valleys. Here, the ever-swirling dust muffles both sound and light, moving of its own capricious will. Traces of unknown minerals are borne on the winds, disrupting both detection and navigational magic. Some whisper that the particles are bits of Chaos itself, and have wrought strange transformations on the creatures here.

At the center of the cavern lies the Multiversal Bazaar, a fabled marketplace drawing travelers from throughout the planes. If not for the Bazaar, few would choose to travel in this desolate place, but travel they do. The Bazaar has become a hub of activity in *The Darkness Beneath* and a base of operations for tomb robbers. Extensive ruins lie beneath the dust, built centuries ago by a tribe of strange and alien settlers. Though a sudden eruption brought an end to both the settlers and their city, their vengeful spirits linger on. They are known now only as the Mourners. Their ruins hide wondrous relics, but the Mourners defend them with a jealous fury, and most who go searching do not return.

**The Environment:** Though the Ashen Wastes are largely dead, pockets of life do exist. Moisture from above creates seasonal streams, carving narrow channels through the deep mud. Elsewhere, colonies of bats create fields of guano, nurturing small oases of fungal and insect life. Persistent rumors also tell of hidden aquifers and waterways far beneath the dust.

**Travel:** Travelers here are usually desperate bands of tomb robbers or well-armed caravans passing to or from the Multiversal Bazaar. The terrain is difficult, and movement is at half speed. Mounts not indigenous to the area must be led on foot. Only the Trade Road and several lesser caravan paths allow faster travel, ¾ the normal rate.

**Power Groups within the Wastes**

*The Mourners*: These free-willed mummies haunt the Wastes, attacking all who live. Deep within their sunken ruins, their magi still labor upon strange and inscrutable projects, but their ultimate goals remain unknown. See *New Monsters* for greater detail.

*Dark Trolls*: The Dark Trolls have nominal lordship over the Ashen Wastes, but do little to control them. Those encountered here are typically merchant caravans, military officers on some official business, or private groups of treasure seekers. If given a choice, most Dark Trolls prefer not to enter the Wastes at all.

*Urek Deadbear and Gluushik the Toad*: Two rival necromancers are at work within the Wastes, and wild rumors about both are circulating throughout the region. Players may be drawn into their struggle by chance encounter, or

**Multiversal Bazaar Tokens** are special, triangular metal coins bearing an indecipherable rune that allow the bearer and up to 2 associates entrance to the Bazaar. There is no other way to enter the bazaar, short of being a berserk demigod with the power to cow the Undoers, so these Tokens are in high demand. They may be found in treasure hordes or after especially tough fights, but they are not common, and owners never give them up easily. It is possible that one of the Drones in Dagendreng Hold (**5**) might gamble one away at a game of chance, if PCs can survive such a victory after the fact. The Puppeteer (**3**) and Gorangol (**16**) surely have a few each as well.

may be enticed by a bounty for the one known as Gluushik the Toad. For further detail see *The Bear and the Toad* scenario below, connected to **25**.

**Points of Interest**

**20.** The **Snow Throne** may be found ice-bound within snow-covered ruins, highly uncharacteristic for the region. This is a pocket realm under the rule of an insane outcast demon-prince (*to be detailed by Simon next issue – Ig.*).

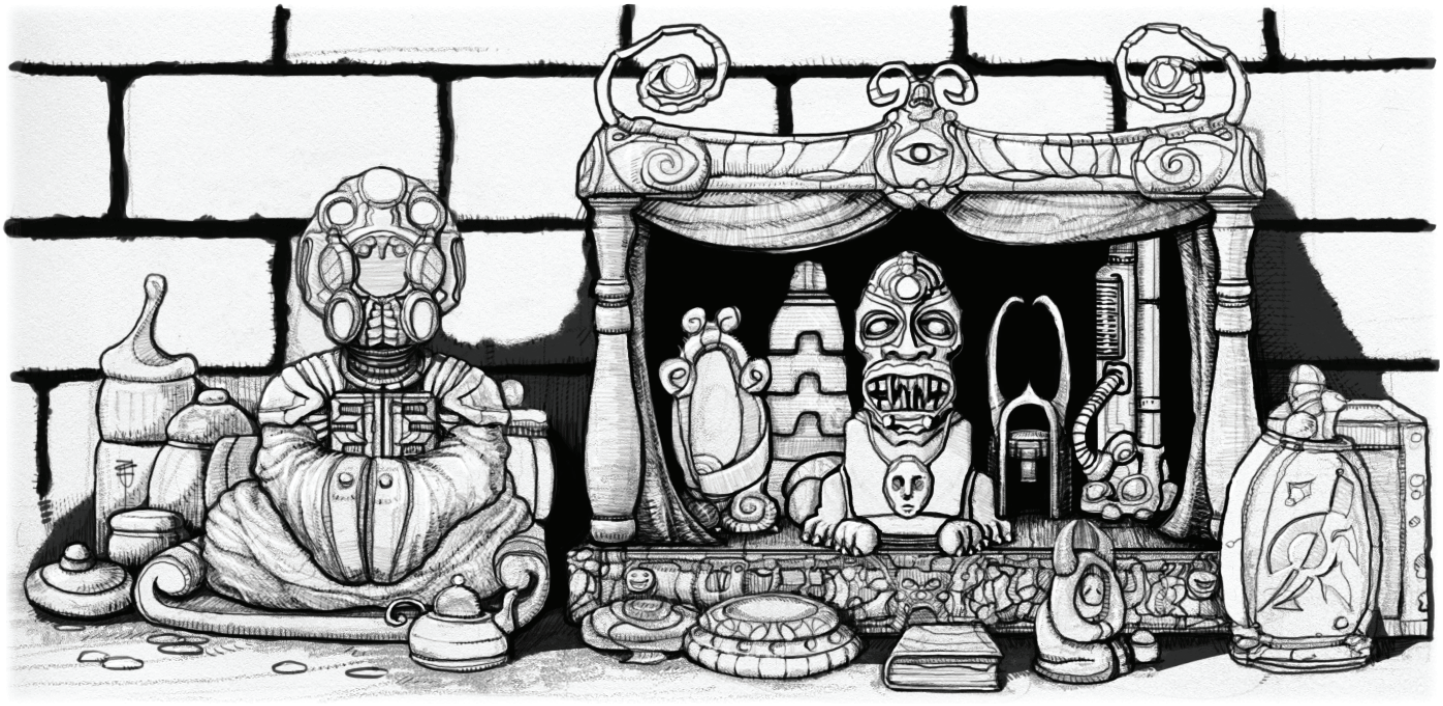
**21.** The great beacon and twinkling lights of the **Multiversal Bazaar** are visible throughout the cavern, though often obscured by swirling dust. Here, the merchandise of countless worlds is bought and sold, and many strange creatures come to trade. A bizarre shantytown filled with unexpected enticements and a cavern system partially flooded with both water and garbage border it. This place is run by the Undoers, strange dimension-traveling sorcerers (invisible within their cowled cloaks) powerful as greater demons who will barter for just about anything with those who possess tokens. Their headman's name is reputedly Grigij, but as they are impossible to tell apart for most, this information is nuncupatory. They bargain brutally, and some of their wares are treacherous, but with luck and cunning the Multiversal Bazaar is a place where anything one wants genuinely can be found. As a result, great potentates, archmages, and even slumming demigods can sometimes be found here, hoping to gain something new or regain something old.

**22.** Here a vengeful undead monster, the **Bubble Boy**, dwells deep within the ruins. The Bubble Boy has a very high level of psychic awareness and tremendous power to melt minds, which he does with nightmarish memories from his painful life.

**23.** The **Shrine to the Black Lord of Nothingness** is inhabited by a band of specters, whose current project is to animate Tyrannomortis (a zombie T-Rex) to cause havoc throughout *The Deep Caves*. The Black Lord of Nothingness is a bizarre not-deity, without representation or creed, which seems to represent something like the utter annihilation of existence. The specters here have no genuine psychic or intercessionary connection with their deity, but they do possess an ancient dull black rod which radiates magic (a key, perhaps, to vaults lower down…).

**24.** The **Siren Temple** has only recently appeared, rising from the dust in a single night. From its lighted tower a droning horn sounds across the plains, luring all who hear it to their doom. Its presence now renders the westernmost section of the Trade Road impassable. Several armed groups have already set forth to silence its deadly song, but none have returned. This area is detailed in *The Siren Temple* scenario.

**25.** When not traveling about the Wastes, the necromancer Gluushik dwells at the **House of the Toad** in a ruin at the bottom of a steep gully. Here, he watches out for his rival



Deadbear and hopes to learn the secrets of the Mourners' spiritual power, thus far with little success. He traps lone Mourners for study, eventually harvesting their powdered organs for sale. Though the Mourners as a whole have not yet organized against him, knowledge of his activities is spreading. For his part, Gluushik is aware of his enemies, and takes great care when traveling. This area is detailed in *The Bear and the Toad* scenario.

**26. Mourner's Keep,** or simply "The Keep", is a maze-like jumble of cyclopean blocks, likely a partial foundation for some massive, unfinished building project. The site coves roughly 4 acres, and is used as a landmark, meeting place and occasional shelter. Lately, a large camp of Troblins led by Hungus the Drooler has attempted to claim it as their own, but no one expects them to hold it for long.

**The Trade Road:** From the western border of the Wastes, a road of raised stone cuts across a lowland plain before disappearing beneath the dust. From there, a rough cart track continues onward to the Multiversal Bazaar. The path meanders through ravines and gullies, with only a handful of scattered markers as guides.

**The Canal:** Persistent rumors tell of a subterranean waterway, discovered by treasure seekers over a decade ago. Its location, purpose, and ultimate destination vary with the telling, but many believe the tales hold a grain of truth.

**Ashen Wastes Encounter Table (d12):**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1d2 Will'O'Wisps attempt to lure the party into a sinkhole, 20'-40' deep. 25% chance this reveals sunken *Ruins* (roll on ruins table). |
| 2 | 1d6+4 Howling Dead. Their calls will be heard from all around for several minutes as they converge. |
| 3 | 3d6 Wererats, seeking captives for sacrifice to She-Who-Whispers, a sentient plant they worship as a god. They are primitive and somewhat agoraphobic on the open plains, and will flee if 1/3 of their number are killed. |
| 4 | Sudden dust storm, limiting vision to 30'and causing uncovered flames to gutter and possibly go out (70% chance). 40% chance the storm uncovers previously hidden *Ruins* (roll on ruins table). |
| 5 | A Trapper, covered in dust, sits stretched across a sinkhole. Anyone stepping onto its surface is enveloped and dragged down 15'. At the bottom, shallow caves hold bones, ruined equipment, a pouch with 3 amethysts (250gp ea.), and 630gp in scattered coins. |
| 6 | A pack of 1d6+4 wild Hellhounds, roaming the Wastes. The alpha hound has 8 HD, causes Fear 1/day, and wears a black iron collar trailing a broken chain. Two Imps tag along to revel in the mayhem, flying or occasionally sneaking rides on the beasts. |
| 7 | Remains of three dead men, jaws stretched and broken and mouths filled with dust. They have been stripped and looted by later passers-by. |
| 8 | 1d3 Mole-bats, hunting for food. Dozens of these creatures nest among the thousands of ordinary bats on the ceiling of the cavern. |
| 9 | Flashing lights and strange auroras are visible in the distance. If investigated, players find 6 Ashen Magi seated in meditation around the lip of a sunken, hollow tower. They have summoned and are communing with a being formed of wild, electric energy. If the Mourners are disturbed, the creature breaks free and attacks random targets (including the Mourners) for 2d4 rounds, then disappears. Surviving Mourners are greatly displeased. Treat the creature as a 16 HD Air Elemental dealing lightning damage. |
| 10 | *Special* (roll on table below) |
| 11 | *Treasure Hunters* (roll on table p. 39) |
| 12 | *Ruins* (roll on table below) |

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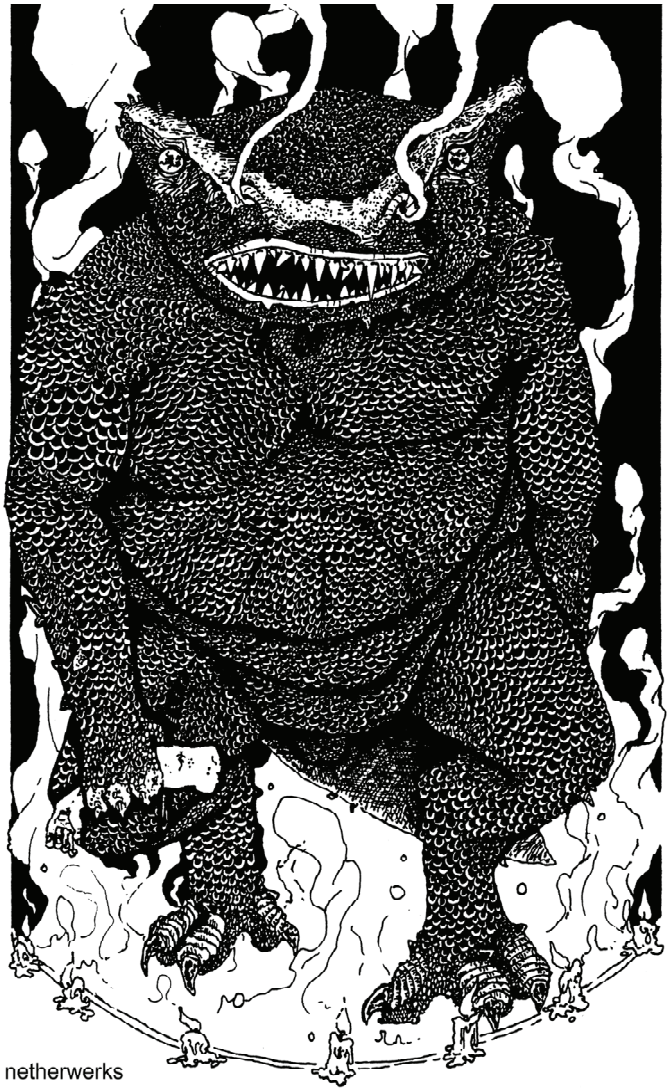
**Ashen Wastes Special Encounter Table (d8):**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | A pair of Noble (10HD) Earth Genies in ruined finery slump at opposite ends of a courtyard. After pummeling each other for hours over the division of treasure, both have collapsed from exhaustion. Between them several terra cotta pots have spilled forth a handful of gemstones. Neither Genie makes any effort to rise, but each calls out in an imperious manner, commanding the party to destroy his opponent. Ignoring them brings a stream of curses, but no hostile action. If the party actually attacks, touches the gems, or is insulting in any way, the Genies immediately band together, enraged at the audacity of such lesser beings. Each is at 2/3 normal hp. |
| 2 | Necromancer. Either Gluushik the Toad approaches in *The Wandering Hearse* (50% chance), or the party comes upon Urek Deadbear's campsite. See *The Bear and the Toad* scenario for detail. |
| 3 | Three hooded Dark Trolls with heavy clubs look on as a blubbering Human Thief digs his own grave. Three Pterocs are tethered nearby. These Trolls are part of a secretive criminal organization with interests in the Multiversal Bazaar. The man is Zelgen the Fink, a grifter and degenerate gambler whose luck has run out. Though it may appear the right thing to do, rescuing him or becoming involved in his affairs is definitely not in the party's best interest. |
| 4 | A Dust Giant plods slowly towards the party, shaking the ground with every step. It takes no notice of them. If the party moves, and the Giant is left alone, it continues on its way. If not… |
| 5 | A single stone pillar bears a sheet of tattered hide. Inscribed upon it in Dark Troll is a bounty of 10,000 gp for the head of Gluushik the Toad. |
| 6 | A crater 100 yards across contains a warren of large guano mounds, crawling with life. A dense stand of towering fungi grows along the eastern slope, and is cultivated by a nearby nest of giant Boring Beetles. 1d6 Beetles are present at all times. They make an aggressive display if the party approaches, but ignore them otherwise. There are several hundred Beetles in the nest. Collectively the group exhibits an unusual level of coordination, as if directed by a greater intellect. Among the western mounds are two Otyughs, who live in symbiosis with the Beetles. The bones of two explorers lie covered in guano. Among their ruined gear are a decaying sack of 637 gp, a jeweled comb worth 500gp, and a *Potion of Heroism.* |
| 7 | Remains of a Dark Troll convoy. Half-buried corpses of Trolls and pack animals lie amidst shattered wagons. The animals are torn apart, but whatever killed the Trolls left no wounds on their bodies. A huge, wheeled cage lies overturned; its bars are bent and its occupant is gone. A scrap of the caravan master's manifest mentions "a beast" they had been transporting to the Bazaar, but whatever it was has been unleashed into the Wastes. |
| 8 | The Hand of War. Rust-colored stone hand, twelve feet high, protruding from the dust. Fingers clutched, clawlike, as if in agony or rage. The stone is heavily chipped and scarred. Tiny rivulets of blood leak from the cuts, creating a darkened, crusty patch around the Hand; sharp-eyed characters may notice dozens of weapons buried just beneath. Each weapon is untarshed silver, and anyone who picks one up is filled with an unquenchable lust for battle regardless of profession. The individual will seek out the first oportunity for conflict, but will not attack friends or betray his or her alignment. Once battle is joined, the subject knows no fear, saving at +2 and attacking as if one level higher until either he or his enemies are dead. If the weapon itself is employed, it is a +2 weapon, with the ability to *stun* an opponent on a natural 19 or 20, causing them to lose their next attack. Each person may carry only one such weapon; if another is chosen the first disappears. It remains for one week, then vanishes. If traded or sold, it disappears. The Hand of War can be found but once. |



**Ashen Wastes Mourner Ruins Table (d12):**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Unidentifiable structure, worn down by the winds. A large flagstone is engraved with a Mourner symbol meaning either Peace or Pacification. Sealed below is a *Type II Demon*, released if the stone is lifted. |
| 2 | Camp of 1d10+10 Troblin robbers attempting to chisel through the exposed roof of a stone tower. This encounter is made more awkward by the arrival of a pack of 3d4 Howling Dead. The tower itself proves to be a hollow shell, all furnishings having long since disintegrated. |
| 3 | Ghoststone. These milky-blue pillars are found throughout the Wastes, typically in ruined courtyards or plazas. Each is a natural menhir of unknown stone, mounted upon a dais. Ghoststones are nodes of spiritual power, once central to the Mourners' religious and spiritual beliefs. Ashen Magi still use them to contact ancestral spirits, and they may have other uses as well. While touching a pillar, characters are able to see into the ethereal plane, revealing the throngs of disembodied spirits circling the skies above the Wastes. For each round of contact, there is a 10% chance of attracting a hostile *ghost*. |
| 4 | The corner of a wall pokes through the dust, revealing a stone door. This leads to a sunken hall of well-preserved murals, depicting a thin, alien looking people with pale orange skin. Each sits in meditation, while above him, a phantom form projects into some other dimension. These projections pray reverently at the feet of colossal, yet seemingly benign beings of confusing aspect. |
| 5 | Abandoned excavation. A sloping tunnel leads to the ruins of a simple dwelling, where a guttering lantern on a tripod still burns. Tools are scattered around the bodies of two men, their limbs twisted and broken. 50% chance three Encrusted Mummies return after having chased down a third robber. |
| 6 | A stone lid reveals a vertical shaft, dropping 40' to a small chamber. Debris surrounds heaps of broken crystal and withered remains. One large, crystal cylinder remains intact. Within is a bizarre winged humanoid of saurian appearance, with red, pebbly skin and a single, bulging eye. It wears a harness of belts and straps, perhaps indicating intelligence. It is quite dead, and withers to dust if exposed to the air. |
| 7 | Guardhouse. This is a small, sturdy bunker between thick fragments of wall. A stone door is still barred, but opens with a good shove. The furnishings have disintegrated, but stone bins hold heaps of rusted arrow heads and corroded spear tips. |
| 8 | A collapsed dome is filled with huge terra cotta globes, 6' wide. Most have shattered, but one is intact and sealed with lead. If opened, it holds four Evil Sprites, which stream out, cackling with glee. |
| 9 | A multi-family compound, in well-preserved state. There are signs of frequent traffic, and Mourner footprints are everywhere. A number of small sleeping chambers show signs of occupancy. These are Mourner "homes," if that term still applies. Most hold mats of tattered cloth, where Mourners sit in meditation, and some also hold worthless keepsakes -- household objects, pieces of ancient clothing, or other mundane items prized by the Mourners as remnants of their former lives. |
| 10 | Slaughterhouse. Crumbling pens still hold skeletal remains of some gigantic, subterranean swine. Corroded hooks and blades remain, but there is nothing of value. |
| 11 | Sunken tannery in a series of low, interconnected domes. Shallow stone pits were used as baths for various stages of curing and tanning hides. Sealed urns hold toxic residue of urine and other substances. Heaps of withered hides crumble at the touch. One vat holds a Grey Ooze, coated in dust. |
| 12 | An odd, wheeled contraption of ceramic, crystal and bronze rests within a preserved dome. Polished lenses encircle a 6' metal dish, resting atop a confusing array of gears, pipes, and other machinery. The gears which once adjusted the disc have corroded, but the batteries still have power. Turning a large dial powers it up with a loud, rattling buzz, and a single glowing button emerges from the surface. If left alone, the machine shorts out and collapses into junk. If the button is depressed, a massive beam of energy, six feet wide, lances skyward, and the machine collapses into a heap. The beam disintegrates everything in its path, carving a 6'bore hole up through the preceding dungeon levels and on into the sky. |

**Mourner Artifact Table (d6):**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Exotic weapons and armor of unknown minerals or ceramics. These are often enchanted, but brittle, and may break unexpectedly. |
| 2 | Bizarre reed instrument, with a tonal range undetectable by humans. Attracts Mourners within 100 yards. |
| 3 | Tablets of stone or bronze, detailing unknown alchemical or metaphysical knowledge. |
| 4 | Unrecognizable dimensional and celestial models, or engravings of planar diagrams. |
| 5 | Strange hand tools, ceramic batteries, or gauges for unknown measurements. Mishandling has a chance of delivering an electric shock for 2d4, one time only. |
| 6 | Crystalline pendant on a copper cord, once used as a spiritual communication device, but now instilling its bearer with *sensitivity to psychic impressions*. May also attract unwanted spiritual or psychic attention. |

*Use this table to spice up treasures in Mourner ruins.*

(*This is level 9 of our community megadungeon,* **The Darkness Beneath**. *It can be used as a stand-alone level in the Underdark of your choice or connected up to* **TDB**. *Thanks to Busman and Welleran for some helpful initial ideas. Enjoy! – Ig*)

**Introduction:** Surrounding a runewheel of electrum, five hunched Duergar shamans studied a smear of green ichor, divining the disposition of their chaotic deity. This paranormal ritual, observed every fifth year for the last 555, formed their tenets and commanded their tribe's rare debouchments. Unclean essence seeped into incised sigils.

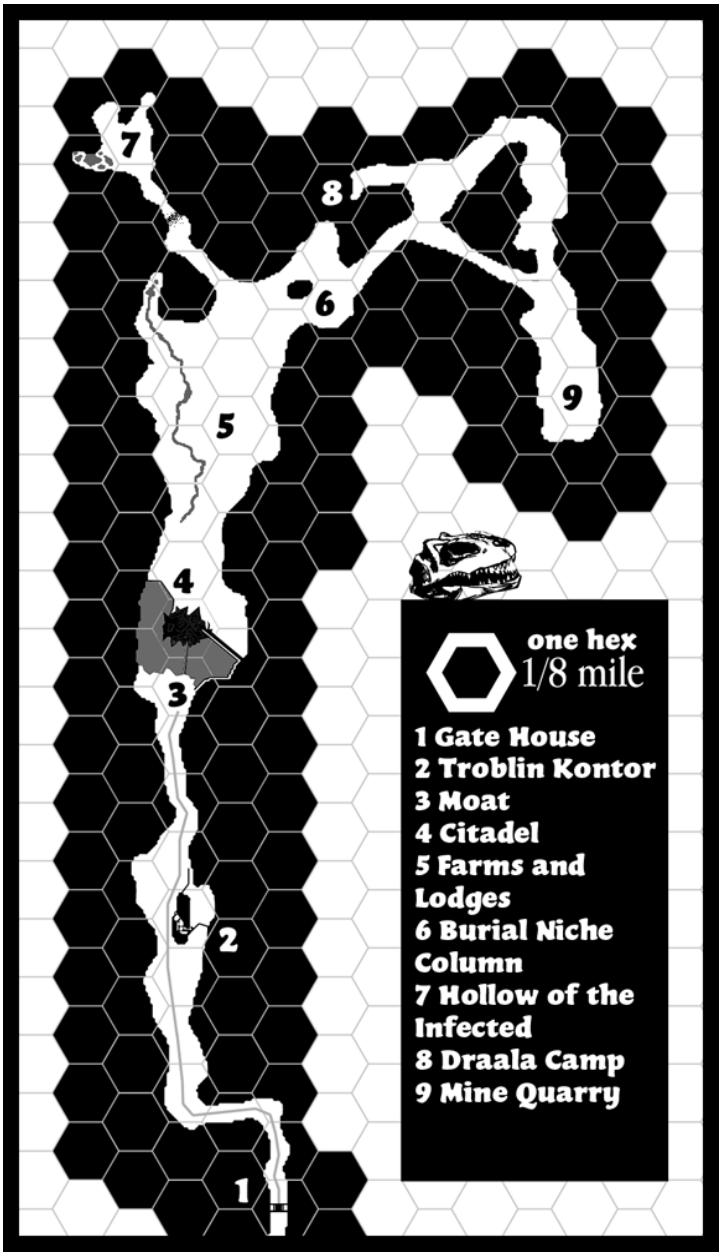
Xsaya-Narsehv, Mutilator of Pantheons, would act!

Narsehv recounted the vile deeds his paranoid parishioners had undertaken to please him. Half a millenium's subservience wasn't long, but the tiny gray worms did have a concern that could impact his control. Beyond the citadel gate and past a thatchy jungle was a city of spiritual beings the Duergar failed routinely to raze. His immaterial eyes locked on the psychic field around these aliens, Narsehv's terrible will perceived a fear of calamity. Victims in another time and dimension they were, to be crushed yet again!

The declaration of cataclysm exhilarated the ruthless dwarves – until the moment their tenebrific overlord extorted his price! The reckless shamans had entered into a cursed exchange. They recoiled from the runewheel, bodies painfully pulled into new shapes by the sorcery of Narsehv. The contorted clerics had to abide, their damned souls trapped - in the granite green of loathsome trollflesh!

Days after their ritual submerged the Deep Caves in fire and ash, the five transformed priests left…and returned. Guided by five dark kin claiming to be long-returned prisoners of the Duergar, a war band of trolls stormed a passage to their inner galleries, slaying all that could not flee. The priests accompanied the band back to the Dark Trolls' dread citadel, aware that the lustrous runes offer nothing without terrible remuneration. And even now, the plots of Xsaya-Narsehv thicken in the dark…

**The Hex Map**: For unwelcome visitors, the great Troll Highway ends at the indomitable looking Gate House (**1**). It seals seamlessly with the floor of the cavern, although it is open above to allow the passage of riding Pterocs. Algae growths among the sharp dripstones attract a bioluminescent fog, providing a dim glow all the way to the Citadel. Travellers admitted by the guards have over a mile to ride to the Troll King's doorstep, and will first pass a raised hill inhabited by Troblin tradesmen. Sulfurous smoke billows




out of the Troblin Kontor (**2**), where iron and raw materials from quarry and jungle are wrought with passable skill. The road to the Citadel splits at the edge of a repellent Moat (**3**), crossing directly forward along a stone bridge and winding atop arched promontories constructed flush with the cavern wall. Encircled by a wreath of glowing clouds, the enormous pillar-keep of the Citadel (**4**) holds the ancient chapel and Royal chambers. A maze of angular towers and reinforced parapets defend the entrance from the moat's far side.

The expanse beyond the terrific fortress is a mushroom-dotted pasture for rearing dinosaurs, with lodges for the very young and old members of the Troll population. The residences mix with food stock Hatcheries (**5**) near a spring-fed stream. A few Troll Rangers have built stone halls near heated mud pools, for recreation away from more contemporary sorts at Dagendreng Hold. A second cave pillar, pierced with looted Duergar Burial Niches (**6**), demarcates the end of the lighted territory. Branching West is a patrol route leading to a sizable barricade of rubble. Soldiers are alert at all times here, for beyond is the Hollow of the Infected (**7**). Once the original Dark Troll settlement, the cold chasm hides parasites that can't be allowed to spread. Oddly, few patrols ride to the next closest chamber, the temporary headquarters (**8**) of a Draala Expedition (see *FO!* #11, or make up your own alien interlopers). The Dark Trolls consider their presence a boon, since they corral dangerous slimes and donate food unavailable from other subjects. Troblin crews know their way to the Iron Quarry (**9**), where they also dig for colorful gems like lapis lazuli. Altercations among the workers are often resolved here, where they won't be reprimanded by their hulking masters.

**Particulars of the Dark Troll Army**: Mistakenly thought an endless barrack of undaunted, reptile-riding champions, the stronghold of Dark Trolls posts troop numbers far fewer than any surface kingdom. (Of course, an adventurer encountering even a lone Troll would not like his odds without a host of men-at-arms.) Unlike their feral relatives in the swamps and moonlit crags, the Dark Trolls have disciplined their brains to restrain pure bloodlust and improve their fighting technique. They have even bred themselves to have leaner offspring that can wield weapons and wear humanoidal armor. They do not exhibit the heavy skulls, bulbous joints, and lurching gait common to their species. The Thousand Spear Goblins secretly mock them for trying to look attractive, especially the nobles cavorting in Dagendreng Hold. Minor relinquishments in Dark Troll development have been a touch of height and one degree of natural armor (DC 5 bare instead of DC 4).

Officers direct their infantry, with cavalry, hunters, and royal bodyguards comprising smaller units. The King himself is partial to a central position among his troops, but the Shamans will deploy only under seemly portents. For dangerous operations like scouting for traps, the Trolls engage trustworthy Troblin militia and sacrificial war beasts like Claw Maws or enslaved monsters. If the conflict is inside the home cavern, female and elder kindred will also repel enemies with tooth and claw. A glaring criticism of the Army, which the King is focused on rectifying, is its nonexistent supply chain. The lizards they've trained as mounts will not pull carts or keep their snouts out of rations. Luckily, the hunters are raising a new dinosaur type to fill this crucial role.

The foot soldiers, called Varbod, don a jerkin of woven Underwild grass stitched with rows of iron scale in combat. They will carry a tall shield of laminated hide or buckler of blackened crab shell on one arm. Authorized weapons to select from include a heavy saber, spiked flail, iron bardiche, and refurbished Duergar crossbow. The Dark Trolls possess the size and strength to use these d8 arms in one hand. Troll veterans, the Vohbod, relish their role as officers and enjoy better armor. Their additional

equipment includes polished iron greaves, manica, and a riveted helmet. Officers are usually in control of ballista operation, and the use of two special weapons: the Unholy Hand Grenade and the Gastendolg Bomb. The first is a ghastly combination of Unholy Water and fetid Troll urine inside a clay pot, which inflicts with a direct strike (and failed save) 2d4 damage to good creatures and 1-3 rounds of weakness from stench to good and evil alike. The second, a creative weapon against mages, is a recovered Blood Thump eggshell full of powdered ghost stone from the Ashen Wastes. When hurled, the bomb's spilled contents become a cloud that can cause spell misfires (save or have magic effect siphoned into ethereal plane). All Vohbod have been trained to ascertain the best targets for these special missile weapons. From the officer rank, select loyalists may become Masungbod, the bodyguards of the royal personages. Regalia of the Masungbod include a full helm adorned with gems, a black cape, and often a spare magic weapon or device.

The Blood Thump mounted ranks include regular cavalry, the Rytbod, and wilderness hunters, the tireless Masarytbod. To improve flexibility, cavalry wear shorter jerkins partially covered in salvaged mail links. Seen with the shiny limb plates, the ensemble looks like unjointed plate mail. Since the cavalry often return from patrol with tribute items, they don't have space for a shield. Yet, they will equip a d10 pole-arm, effortlessly wielded like a short lance. Weapons with long wood hafts are uncommon, since the local flora is either too soft or fully petrified. To defeat the monsters of the Underwild, the Masarytbod favor crossbows and hooked blades crimped to lengths of chain. They forego bulky iron plating for chitin braces and a tasset-like skirt of ringmail or dinosaur leather.

## Key to the Gate House

To hollow an onlooker's heart with fear, the approach to the Gate House is staged with an array of sensational sights. Bleached tusks, ribcages, and loose mandibles appear swept to the sides of the highway. Thousands of raptor footprints tamp the clay, each with claw punctures only a spear could match. Glowing orange torches atop the high merlons give the structure the appearance of a reservoir wall, holding back a molten lake. Lastly, an acrid smell grows strong when within 100 paces, permeating the air like the exhalation of a gorgon. Surely, no men without mettle would survive here for long.

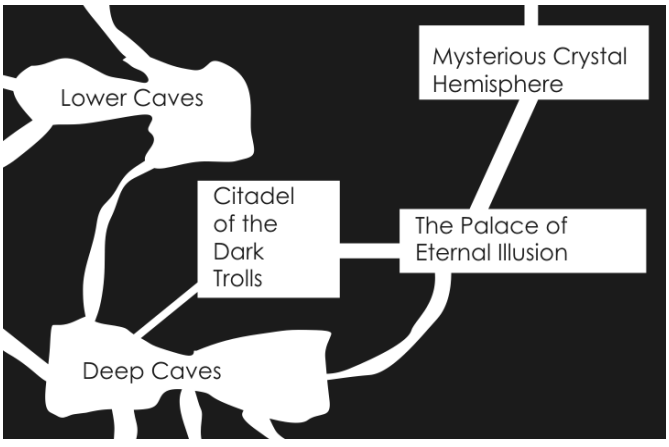
**1. Grinning Doormen**: Outside the barbican towers are a pair of toothy Varbod, each armed with heavy crossbow and saber. In place of a shield, they each clench twisted chains for guiding a pair of pet Claw Maws (HD 2, DC 2, ATT 1, D 1d4 bite, Special: jaw lock). The sharp creatures hoot and snort madly if they smell anything not marked by Troll contact. The only words in Common they know are a polite warning to turn back. However, they will ring welcoming gongs near the outer double door for non-Trolls if one of three criteria are met:

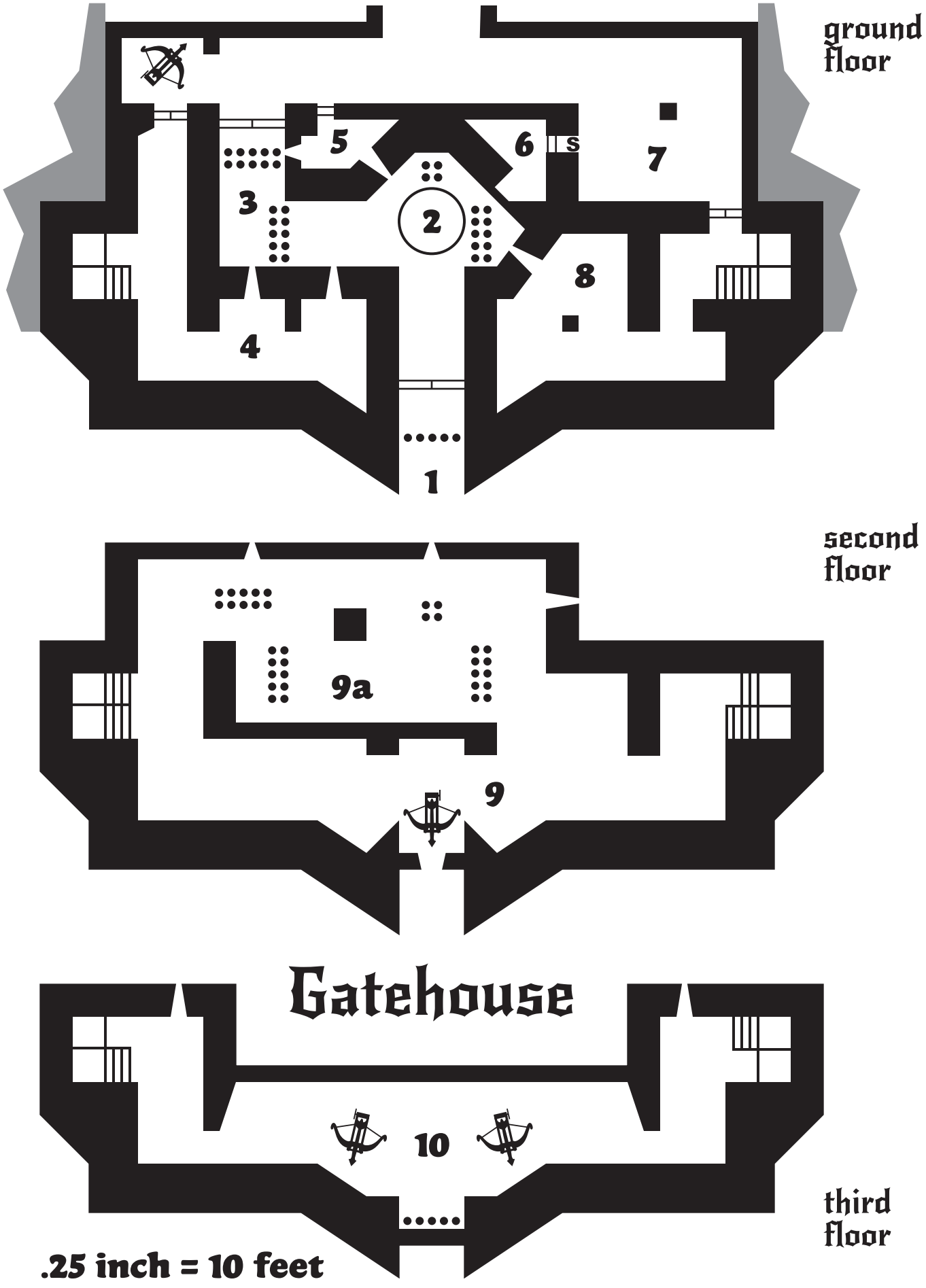
1) The foreigners plausibly claim a bounty decreed by the King (like the one for Gluushik's head in *FO*! #12).
2) The foreigners possess identifying items given to the Thieves Guild of Marchand from a Troll noble.
3) The foreigners desire to fight in the Pit Games, and are willing to bet all their possessions on the outcome.

**2. Traffic Inspection**: The sets of doors at both ends of this angled passage are fashioned from petrified wood 14" thick (STR 15 to move one side), and swing slowly on multiple iron hinges. The Dark Trolls have not deduced how the barriers were locked, as there are no keyholes nor slots for a drawbar. To increase security, the High Shaman has cast paralytic *Runes of Warding* upon them. Coupled with the runes are elastic bands made from dinosaur tendons, stretched (when needed) from notches in the floor blocks to pins hammered into the inside of each door. Since the gates only swing out, anyone pulling would experience incredible resistance from the springy cords. Four saber-armed Varbod are stationed in the tunnel to maneuver the doors and check incoming supply wagons or prisoner cages. They guide all suspect carriers to a holding position above a concealed trap door. If released by a lever in **6**, everything within the indicated circle plummets 30 feet, as the circular covering splits into five uncoupled wedges of iron. Dwelling in the cylindrical cell are nine zombified Anvil Head Ants (HD 3, DC 3, ATT 1, Bite 1d6+1), named after their smooth blocky heads. All the six-legged soldiers not smashed by falling material mindlessly attack. Intruders that elude the pit are likely worse off: they will be confronted by Varbod blades, jabbed from murder holes above, and assailed by magic and crossbow fire. Although the Witchdoctor can't enter from **6**, a section of the shared wall is perforated like a grate to permit his viewing and sorcery.

**3. Visitor Welcome**: Propped on the West wall is an iron-framed cut of dinosaur hide, painted with the phrase *Veni-Vidi-Vici* in Trollish. Technically, the translation is closer to "Storm-Sniff-Squash", but nobody has pointed this out to the trolls yet.

**4. Varbod Dormitory**: Even if Trolls require only sporadic naps, they do enjoy having a nest-like spot. Eight




ground floor
5
6
S
7
3
2
8
4
1
second floor
9a
9
Gatehouse
10
third floor
.25 inch = 10 feet

Varbod reside here, one always stationed at the (3d6) ballista and another covering the inner stair or arrow loops. In the corner closest to **1** is a pile of shredded jungle leaves, where the four Claw Maws outside play with chew toys made from bugbear fur. Arrayed on wall pegs are three additional crossbows, quivers, and a pair of nine-pound ballista bolts. To curb boredom when patrols are out, some jocose activity may take place (**d6**): 1. Contest to see who can fit the most Duergar femurs in his mouth; 2. Facetious imitation of Pit Game victims; 3. Ballista trials with inappropriate projectiles, usually to find out what makes the best splatter; 4. Game of catch through the murder holes with guards in **10**; 5. Audience with the Witchdoctor to hear stories about the detestable foods humans eat; 6. Search for Pteroc feathers to adorn armor.

**5. Lady Commander**: Idolized by her fellow Rytbod, Iviog the Pale is even more mysterious than the erudite hobgoblin around the corner. Distinctly, she appears only part Troll, with marble gray skin and the regal carriage of a stone giantess. Mounted on an albino Blood Thump and concealing her face at all times with a white mask, her reports are always received in awed silence. Six years ago, she was discovered in the Underwild. Rumors hint that the sculpted hood (of some ancient princess?) was given to Iviog by the Halfling witch in charge of the new stable there. Some Masarytbod say that it doubled her prowess in combat, a blessing that has made her a fearsome contender in the Pit Games. The spectators howl madly when she completes her signature move, snaring an opponent's head through the eyesockets before landing the final death blow. Iviog is wholly Troll, but her identity has been concealed. Before her isolation in the jungle, she was to be wed to the King's son. A revelation from the High Shaman's runewheel ordered that the strongest female fighter be paired with the strongest male Noble. Iviog, then called Tahmrys of Dagendreng, despised the Prince, who rebuffed her claim to being deadlier than he. On the day their monstrous nuptials were paraded through the Citadel, Tahmrys, ordered to ride behind the Prince, compelled her Blood Thump to yank her betrothed from his saddle with its jaws. Humiliated, the royal family exiled her from the Dark Troll dominion. Espied later near the Tomb of Thirteen, she made a pledge to outlandish witchdoctors to aid them in return for a magical disguise…and revenge. **Tahmrys the Renegade, Rytbod/Gladiatrix**: DC 3, HD 7, hp 56, ATT 2, D by weapon and greave spike, Special: regeneration 3, immune to mind reading from or normal weapon attacks by Dark Trolls. Schooled by the Pit Masters in the "venator" style, Tahmrys can add a leg attack to her normal melee action. Her personal weapon resembles a serrated guisarme (3d4), imbued with a +1/+4 versus Archosaurs enchantment. A razor spike on her favored right leg greave inflicts 1d6+2 damage. The *Ouhi-Fudo* (Queen's Mask), can only be worn by women. In addition to gaining fairer skin, the mask blocks extrasensory trespass and damage from normal (troll wielded) weapons. Tahmrys doesn't disobey her King, but she will not suffer his unworthy progeny being named his successor. In her apartment is a bugbear-skin satchel containing: a strand of Lake Hydra teeth (205 gp to a wizard), an electrum totem of a sleeping bat (40 gp), Dagendreng gambling chips (90 gp of lapis lazuli), a corked gourd of Marchand honey, one Multiversal Bazaar Token and slivers of smoked fish.

**6. Witchdoctor Constable**: Trusted by the King to supervise the affairs of the Gate House, Wengami the Hobgoblin has more authority now then he ever did on his home isle. Native to the distant Island of Gyeryong, habitat of the dreaded cockatrice and other horrors, he arrived in Marchand thirteen years ago. Conducting the ocean voyage was his master, an intelligent salamander-sorcerer with unnerving abilities. Together, they won admittance to the Citadel by locating and recruiting a Nature Witch to partner with the trainers at Raptor Run. The success of this camp became crucial when numerous mounts within the stronghold succumbed to a parasitic disease. Wengami learned a great deal about the Deep Caves in this time, information that an officer in the outer defenses should have. Shortly after the Dark Troll Prince caused a second political calamity, the haggard King turned over inspections and lesser regulatory matters to new constables. Thus, little Wengami became the first outsider to assume a role in the Dark Troll Army. Issikasid, the Maho-Hanzaki (magic salamander), pretends to be Wengami's familiar. Under the influence of his student's *Wand of Size Alteration*, he looks like a pet lizard with skin the color and texture of river pebbles. He reverts to normal only within the confines of their hidden study. Wengami's position was secured not only by the effort at Raptor Run, but also by Issikasid's incredibly strong Charm Gaze. (The Maho-Hanzaki of Gyeryong are the equivalent of Spirit Naga on the mainland.) Unknown to all but his amphibian coven, he is here to purloin the artifact of Xsaya-Narsehv that the High Shaman protects. Multiple auguries suggest to him that the deity wants his sect to possess this unholy treasure, adding to the one found ages ago in a Gyeryong lagoon. If the forces within the Citadel are ever sent into disarray, Issikasid will compel Wengami and enthralled Trolls to assault the towering chapel. Beguiling or blackmailing PCs to sustain his recreant scheme would also be justified. Immediately behind the unlocked secret door to the Constable's office is a bronze door with a real lock. Wengami carries the key in his pouch of sling bullets. The candle-lit space features a wide ladder leading to the station where **2** can be scanned through a series of drilled holes. Tomes are piled beneath the ladder, along with an owlbear skull (Pit Game raffle prize). Along the North wall is a wet sand box and a crystal cauldron for producing unholy water. Issikasid has a magic item that can manipulate stone, which he has used to make nooks beneath his cozy bed of dampened alluvium. **Constable Wengami, Hobgoblin Witchdoctor**: Mage 3/Cleric 3, DC 4, hp 30,

ATT 1, D by weapon, Spells - *Protection from Good, Detect Magic, Know Alignment, Hold Portal, Comprehend Language, Detect Invisibility*. Considering his cohorts, Wengami is armed very lightly with sling bullets +2 and a *Wand of Size Alteration*. His clattering *Seashell Baldric of Defense* (DC 5) would make it hard for him to hide. Tucked in a pocket is a *Potion of Animal Control* he could use to flee on a Blood Thump or Pteroc. To thwart intruders, he will detach the *Ofuda of Desecration* from his cauldron and place it on an outer door. Good characters touching anything shielded by the talisman will take 3 points of damage every time. Wengami has jade green skin and ivory fish eyes like his Koalinth grandmother. One of his molars is actually a small diamond worth 170 gp. **Issikasid, Maho-Hanzaki**: Mage 5/Cleric 4, DC 5 (3), HD 7, hp 45, ATT 1, D 1-3 bite, Special: Charm Gaze, Spells - *Cause Light Wound, Curse, Darkness, Hold Person, Augury, Spider Climb, Identify, Invisibility, Web, Haste*. Weighing a bit over 120 pounds, Issikasid stands upright on short rear legs. Covering his body is a violet *Pelisse of Protection* +2. He hides his *Jasper Geode of Perviousness* (power of *Stone Shape & Rock to Mud*) in the depths of the sand box. In melee, he will touch victims with a *Spiracle Ring of Asphyxia*, a vile item that forces a save each round to end a continual loss of 1d6+1 hp/level from choking. He will wait to use the ring until his target is already wounded, held in place, or stuck in web strands. Although he keeps the majority of their treasure hidden in the Underwild, some is within the floor niches: bag of onyx chips (200gp), deed to an abandoned tavern (600 gp to thieves, 275 gp to honest folk), 14 dishes of hammered electrum (840 gp).

**7. Hitching Yard**: Four Blood Thumps selected for speed are lashed to a pyramid block in this open court. These beasts have two strategic uses - defending the Gate House or carrying a Rytbod deeper into the tunnel to roust the next encampment. Packed on each saddle is a polished trumpet a rider can sound vigorously. Mounted Rytbod can see over the enclosing North wall, which is 10 feet high. Shading the door to **8** is Iviog's colorless steed, altered by a mutation that occured as a result of eating garbage at the Multiversal Bazaar. Uncustomarily, the (slightly radioactive +1HD) raptor can breathe a stream of energy like a lightning bolt if severely frightened. Fortunately, the list of eerie things it would blast is short: The Night Dragon, Great Bogbears, Fungents, and humans with funny hats.

**8. Cavalry Postern**: Lazing in this secure chamber are four designated Rytbod, all pleased to be so close to their commander. Ignoring the daydreamers is one infantry officer, the Vohbod in charge of provisions. His temperament is poor, having to deal with stalled suppliers at the Troblin Kontor. During inspections, he often yells through the arrow loop, telling the Varbod to swipe things they could use. An extra suit of plate armor is kept hanging in case a rider needs a clean replacement. Combined, the Trolls here have Dagendreng gambling chips worth 800 gp.

**9. Watchman Gallery**: Centered on this floor is the only outward window, a design of the xenophobic builders. The Duergar were wary of huge monsters and canny magicians that might exploit a series of embrasures. Leveled at the road is a ballista, which can fire out the window once every 2 rounds (thanks to Troll strength). The two Vohbod working this artillery gain a +3 bonus to hit any target on or near the road. Certain large bones outside have been positioned as range markers, which the pair use to practice and refine bolt shots. Arranged on the dividing wall behind the machine are 24 ballista bolts, 118 crossbow quarrels, 2 of each special grenade, and a 60 pound basket of caltrops.

**9a.** On the other side of the gallery are the six Varbod they command. These Dark Troll fighters have iron harpoons (1d8) for plunging into the murder holes, in addition to crossbows. The extra floorspace near the East stairwell is spread with pots of salty dinosaur sausage, fermented louse hash, crab knuckles, brains in grease, dried mushrooms, and spring water. Tucked under a loose stair tread is an iron box with five luck charms of smoky quartz (175 gp), 600 ep, and a *Tallow Lamp of Mole Bat Summoning* the Vohbod know how to activate.

**10. Baleful Rampart**: Twice as vigilant as their compatriots inside, five Varbod react quickly to any strange sight or sound. Four of them are entrusted with a pair of ballista that have an extra wide arc of fire (120°). Stone rollers at various points allow the shooter to aim at both ground and aerial targets. Between the ballistae is a heated cauldron that could pour something like tar or oil upon attackers. Dejectedly, the King had to order that incendiary contents not be used after a panicked Pteroc spilled the pot and ignited a siege bow. Now, one of the duties of the rampart crew is to cook blood broth soup in it. If the crimson melange hasn't been completely eaten before enemies arrive, a splash attack will inflict 1-3 damage. In place of stone merlons, the thinner wall behind the ballistae features a petrified wood log that all arriving Pteroc must land upon. (Snearg has trained his birds to do this.) Passengers must present a small bag of inked bones to the Gate House Border Bailiff (fifth Varbod on rampart). The bones are a code, which tell the Bailiff where the flyer is going to. The patterns are changed twice a year. If an aerial intruder passes overhead, the ballista at **4** will be ordered to fire, and at least one Rytbod will pursue on the ground. The rooftop arsenal also comprises of personal crossbows, 12 ballista bolts, 9 gastendolg bombs, 4 unholy hand grenades, 2 weighted nets with sewn on zombified troglodyte heads, psychoactive porridge in ewers, and sealed cave clams stuffed with rot grubs.

## Key to the Troblin Kontor

Centuries ago, the Bugbear tribe living atop this hillock was fettered in chains of Duergar iron. Rage and primeval weapons had failed to drive back the bearded raiders, and the tribesmen quickly lost half their numbers. While blood

trickled to the cavern floor, Duergar shamans entered a haunted crypt near the butte's North slope. The vanquished Bugbears hoped the iron-shod imps would take the forbidden treasure there and go; but the Duergar stayed and enslaved their remnant. For generations, the Bugbear toiled to construct a pocket empire, exhausting vitality and determination. The misery might have ended with the ascension of the Dark Trolls, had the creatures been less avaricious. But the new Troll kingdom needed more than a buried stockade and servants with insufficient craft. Accords were struck with wild goblins of the Deep Caves, and the regenerative power of Troll blood was proffered. Within the King's lifetime, the Citadel and stockade had been refitted, and the first Troblins raised to adulthood. Although the Bugbears remained servants, their dwindling number stabilized after punishments were lessened and useful males no longer fought in the Troll games. The gregarious Troblins commited to upgrading the army, and made their Kontor a unique facility in the Deep Caves.

**Kontor Encounters (1d8)**:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Rytbod Patrol: 1-4 Dark Troll cavalry on Blood Thumps, from a camp halfway between the Gate House and Kontor. |
| 2 | Iron Mine Crew Rotation: 4 Troblin Soltvar with crossbows, 12 Bugbear Thralls pulling 3 barrow carts of ore. |
| 3 | Underwild Cane Bale Hauler: 1 Dark Troll Masarytbod on Blood Thump, 2 Troblin Soltvar with axes, 6 Bugbear Thralls pulling a sled of cuttings. |
| 4 | Live Crab Delivery: 3 Troblin Soltvar with maces, 6 Bugbear Thralls with back baskets of stock. |
| 5 | Citadel Catering Team: One female Troblin Chef, 2 Troblin Soltvar with crossbows, 4 Bugbear Thralls pulling 2 barrow carts of delicacies. |
| 6 | Troblin apprentice smith with pair of heavy door hinges. |
| 7 | Pair of Claw Maws in a noisy mating frenzy. |
| 8 | Highway Repair Crew: 3 young Troblin with shovels, rakes, and bitumen chips. Inside a half-tent, two 4th level Thieves from Marchand await their boss' return from meeting with the Troblin Warden. In the interim they are sharing some liquor with a Dark Troll Noble who escorted them from the teleport device at Dagendreng Hold. One of the burglars will slip away to follow any other humans entering the Kontor. |

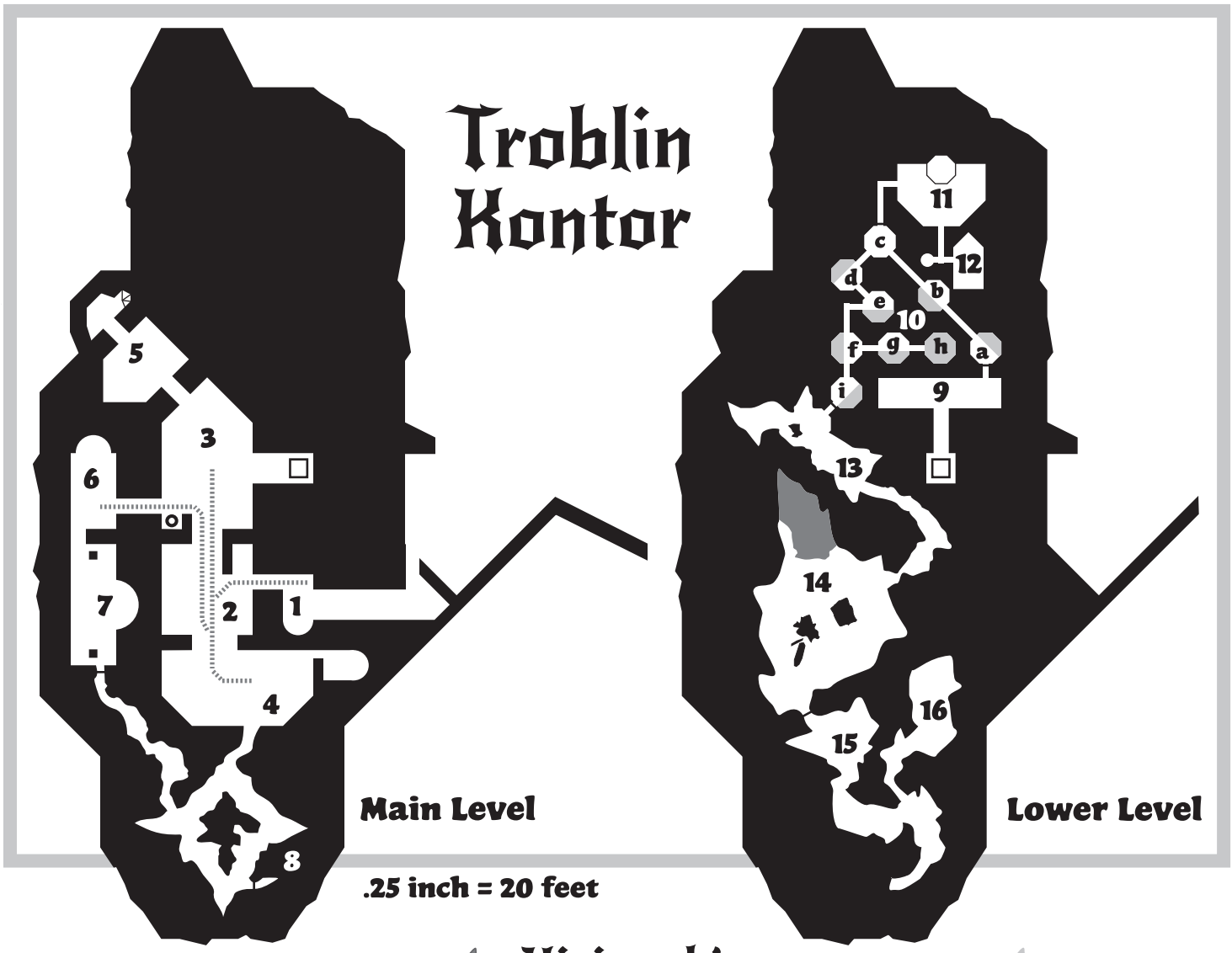
**Kontor Approach**: Players could compare the vista to a hilltop where indistinct campfires create a stagnant haze. The side road heads straight East, jogging out around the North face of the site. Spying on the smoothed path are Troblin Soltvar (reservists) 50' up in the only wall tower. The single ground level passageway to the interior is on the side of the Kontor not facing the highway. A 16' high wall safeguards the entry from intruders opting to dispatch to the South slope. This barricade, the Kontor, and the tunnel form a gulch-like bailey alive with Troblin enterprise.

**1. Policed Threshold**: Standing on the inside of a low swing gate are two Varbod with heavy flails. They will not impede carts unless they are noticeably overburdened or reek of an unusual scent (like humanoid blood). Customers from Dagendreng arriving without an escort must present a unique key issued only by a Clan Father. These keys can be made to vanish if held longer than expected…At the other end of the dusty gallery, nine Troblin Soltvar oversee the unloading of goods into iron bucket trolleys that roll on grooved tracks. All the Soltvar with javelins or crossbows will use these carts for cover when battling invaders.

**2. Junction Chamber**: Most of the finished rooms in the Kontor are dimly lit by oil lamps high on the chiseled walls. Trolleys pushed by Thralls pass through every hour, between the two ends of the Kontor. Four Troblin Planners are discussing a display of painted rocks, each socketed to a section of the West wall that looks like a Halma game board. All work schedules are announced here, with every labor shift represented by one of the colorful rocks. Stored in the alcove to the left of the archway to **1** is a disassembled ballista. This valuable weapon is destined for the back of a four-legged dinosaur being trained at the Citadel Stables.

**3. Troblin Commissary**: Formerly a Duergar tribunal hall, this vaulted chamber contains rows of petrified tables for business transactions and meal breaks. Troblin matrons draw water from a well here, a resource that has one permanent Soltvar guard. Banking around the well are trolleys headed to the kilns in **6**. Tables don't intersect the route to the prison elevator, but can be tilted to obstruct it if an alarm is raised. The iron platform, capable of bearing the weight of 4 Dark Trolls, is operated by a vacillating pedal on the floor. Stepping on one end lowers the apparatus, while a reverse move returns the platform to the commissary. A Troblin Soltvar with a Claw Maw guard-lizard has the simple task of elevator security.

**4. Crafting Hall**: Masking every square foot of floor here are shreds of raw grass, clumps of clay, and snarls of dust and hair. Occupying the center of the room is a pole-mounted hand loom for weaving. Troblin matrons hackle Underwild cane into tough filaments that, once degummed, are woven on the loom. The result is a strong hop-sack material that is made into army jerkins, nets, and carrying bags. In the West corner, a team of potters roll clay into strands, then coiled into crude bowl and vase shapes. Individual tradesmen, each expert with a particular component such as iguana hide, fill the remaining space. When a work shift ends for a rest period, those Troblins plug their ears and retire to a former watch room. If all the


Troblin Kontor
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Main Level
.25 inch = 20 feet
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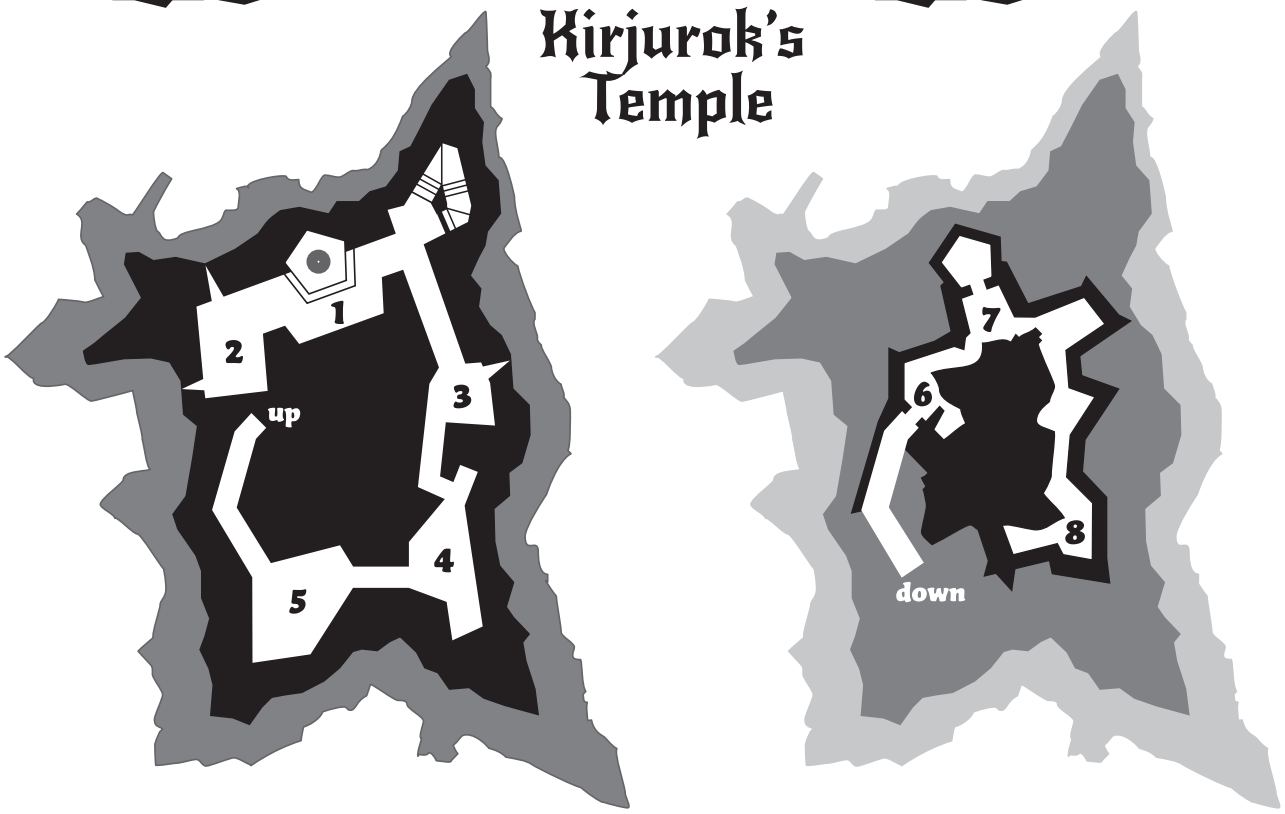
Lower Level


Kirjurok's Temple
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crafters have orders to fulfill, 24 Troblins will be in the Hall, both sleeping and awake.

**5. Militia Headquarters**: Above the curtained archway to this Soltvar den is their blazon, a Claw Maw rampant with one foot grasping a mace. The entire squad numbers 30; half that number are on duty in the Kontor at any given time under normal circumstances. The remaining four active Soltvar are stationed in the watch loggia accessed by the spiral staircase. The modest room connected to the stair is the office of the Kontor Commander, an aging Vohbod named Dmoljuc. Like most of the Dark Trolls at the hill, he has many descendants from the interbreeding agenda. Dmoljuc possesses a unique shield made from Rust Monster hide, taken from a nest (formerly in **8**) he destroyed. In melee, he fights with a Scimitar +1. Next to his bowl-chair is a stone podium, displaying a Bugbear lexicon and hiding a pouch of lapiz lazuli nuggets worth 480 gp. Dmoljuc's two pet Claw Maws also use it for a scratching post. In the Southwest corner of the barrack are an octagonal game table and 3 heavy pots containing 5 javelins each. The barbed points are soaking in a poison made from spores and wood naptha. The substance inflicts optic spasticity, blurring vision until the wound is cleansed. Beneath one pot is a key to **10**.

**6. Iron Roaster**: Significant heat from the iron purification oven pours out into the corridor and makes the stone walls warm as flesh. This single domed furnace was the only one saved when the Dark Tolls ravaged the Citadel. Dwarven engineering was innovative enough to power metalworks with natural gas, a perfect replacement fuel for clans with no access to forests or anthracite seams. Tubes of bronze 2' underneath the floor transport the mysterious vapor to the roaster, a couple clay-firing kilns, and the forge in **7**. Four Troblins in lizard-skin aprons regard the ovens at all times. The acrid smoke from here and the Smithy crowns the hill, preventing occupation topside.

**7. Troblin Smithy**: A Dark Troll produces weapons here with two of his strapping Troblin sons. Another Troll responsible for armor has three Troblin offspring at his side. Laughing over the hiss of hot metal, this consanguine outfit is the only crew that can keep pace with demand. Some of the equipment here is obviously too large for Troblin hands; their giant sires work titanic bellows and turn the oversized grinder. In a corner is a basket of rivets and armor scales so bountiful it could clad a bare dragon. Removing all the unfinished weapons from wall pegs would require one of the cargo trolleys and most of an hour. The South door, sealed with latches, opens into the cellar stores. Underneath a stone water basin are nine large and very heavy gold ingots worth a total of 18,144 gp.

**8. Unsightly Kitchen**: Once hidden by a Duergar altar and sheltering Rust Monsters, this ring-shaped cave is the only location that doesn't smell like Troll feet. Among the bubbling pots and greasy utensils is a sumptuous dish found nowhere else in the dungeon. At work (or rest) here are 3-4 Troblin chefs and ten sooty Troblin maidservants. Invariably, the kitchen is behind schedule due to some sort of mishap. Common problems (**d6**): 1. A kettle has burst, and a grease fire is requiring everyone's attention; 2. Auntie Hockbone has lost her favorite measuring cup; 3. A passing Thrall has kicked over a tray laden for the Commander; 4. Maids are gawking at some romantic poetry written by an unknown Soltvar; 5. A Claw Maw is trying to drag food out of the cellar; 6. The ugliest rat ever seen (this week) is swimming in the bucket of well water. The kitchen specialty, which all find heavenly, is an aspic made from Draala gelatin bulbs…and smoked human meat. Basting in a covered crock is an entire torso, soon to be slivered into the jelly. The Draala gelatin comes from an organism that looks like a pumpkin-sized onion. Eaten raw, it tastes vaguely of garlic wontons. A dry tunnel meandering to **7** functions as a root cellar. Preserved food and spices are wrapped and hung from bags pinned to the ceiling. Anything that drops seems to summon hungry Claw Maws. In the Southeast corner of the kitchen is an iron-braced door, locked to prevent the unplanned appearance of Bugbears from below. PCs that bring bright light into the cellar have a 25% chance to find 1d10 gemstones worth 30 gp each.

**9. Jailhouse Ward**: To infiltrate the old Duergar prison, the Trolls had to pass numerous traps and rend seven gates of latticed iron. Those security measures were scrapped, since the first King believed that incarceration should only be a short respite before final judgement. Captives were fodder for the Pit Games, and rarely embodied any negotiable value. The mechanical platform descends 22 feet from **3** before reaching the prison. There is no lever to engage the system here. Without rows of inmates to care for, the Soltvar in residence use their time to practice combat styles and test new weapons. Firstly, they must be able to withstand a menacing Mother Claw Maw that has a way of scaring off craven Troblins. The old raptor, Brigozaa, has 4 HD and deals 1d6 damage. Any of her clutch above that howl from wounds will put her in a frenzied state (+1 to hit). Her pen is by the door to the first cell; the dozen Soltvar jailers stick to the other areas of the ward. Leaning against the South wall is a portable mantlet of petrified wood covered in Duergar scapulae. If signaled by the elevator controller, four Soltvar will position the mantlet, themselves, and Brigozaa on the platform to help defend the upper rooms. The wooden wall can absorb 30 points of damage before collapsing. Deposited in the niche for the elevator platform are 2160 ep, each coin set flat and covered by waxed leaves and fine sand.

**10. Gloomy Oubliette**: Glistening bronze doors that lock automatically partition these cells from the other rooms. The Warden and Dmoljuc have skeleton keys that function in all three, and one that only grants passage from **9** is hidden in a mantlet wheel. The shaded fields on the map represent sunken pits; seven cells are partially hollowed to

a depth of 15' and one is a complete cavity. An assortment of four or five captives can be selected from the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 2 Cerebral Sentries (*FO!* #4) with only enough energy to levitate. A weighted net is pinning them to the ground until they deactivate and can be melted down. |
| 2 | A shackled Bugbear heretic that is thought to be an agent for the Thousand Spear goblins. |
| 3 | A stork-winged Faerie Minstrel who tried to pay a toll with musical composition. He has been tarred to prevent flight. |
| 4 | A truculent Barmaid of Dagendreng guilty of violating dress code after shaving her locks, and suspected of involvement in the "exploding pot pie" incident. |
| 5 | A speared Tricerabeetle (*FO*! #13) awaiting dissection. |
| 6 | A tattooed Assassin hanging upside-down from iron leg chains, convinced that his plight is one of the Abbess of Salicia's naughty games. |
| 7 | A stumpy custodial robot molded out of institutional green plastic. It rolled into the Kontor a month ago on a mission of lemony disinfection. If freed, it will return to the location of the secret elevator to the Palace of Eternal Illusion (*FO!* #11, or insert your own level). |
| 8 | A family of human peasants, kept clean for their turn on the kitchen cutting board. |

A bronze handle in the corridor outside of cell H can be pulled to fill the basin with up to 10' of water. Area C, which has no oubliette, is where the Troblin Warden has rendered a map of Marchand. Topographic features have been scaled down and molded out of tinted cement. Tacks of yellow bone radiate outward, highlighting strategic targets. Crates of woven cane raise the paneled map 2' off the prison floor, skewered by a pair of poisoned javelins. The art project is an anniversary gift to the Dark Troll Queen.

**11. Forsaken Crypt**: Resting on an octagonal dais is the bottom half of a gypsum sarcophagus. The Dark Troll Shamans proclaimed a century ago that something important to Narsehv the Mutilator was uncovered here and then ensconced in the Citadel Temple. By standing on the angled foundation, one can see that the open tomb is a slough for a putrid green resin, collecting around where the occupant's ribcage would have been. Standing to the East of the unholy vestige is a female Troll Shaman, sorting a pile of bones into open jars. Cisamuuq is the Warden's abiding deputy and current Troblin Pontiff. With advance warning, she can use the power of the sarcophagus to animate the jumbled skeletons she has divided into containers. For an expended 1d6 hp from a disciple, any humanoid skeleton scattered into the open coffin will rise again as an Execrated Nawaab of Narsehv for one day, or until the summoner is slain. The fiendish **Nawaab** (HD 5, DC 6, ATT 2, D 1d8 claws and gout, Special: immune to 1st level spells, single gout of necrotic bile) are considered mummies for Turning attempts. Once aware of a foe, the green ichor coating the Nawaab's bones will slither into its skull, to be expelled all at once as a short range missile. The slime causes a typhus-like disease if it contacts exposed flesh. Cisamuuq will perform this ritual four times (there are 5 pots of bones) if assailants are not beyond the door to the crypt. **Priestess Cisamuuq, Dark Troll Shaman**: Cleric 3, DC 3, HD 6, hp 33 (minus sacrificed lifeforce), ATT 1, D 1d8+2 Flail, Special: regeneration, Spells - *Command, Protection from Good, Silence*. Billowing around her iron-banded armor is a long tabard of septic green. A crabshell shield is behind her shoulder, painted with the symbol of Narsehv. The vile mark accents a diabolic bird skull, shown biting a spear that pierces a sunburst. After pitching bones into the sarcophagus, Cisamuuq will retain a Nawaab at her side to help block the exit to **12**. A lizard-hide pouch belted to her leg holds a Flask of Curses, and a table-cut emerald set in a silver dwarf hand (1200 gp).

**12. Palatial Office**: The lightless tunnel from the evil tomb meets a perpendicular route, although it appears only to branch left. A permanent illusion shields a circular vault about 5' in the opposite direction. Adventurers probing the corner may Save to disbelieve the sensorial facade. Dwarves that reject the false barrier will experience a second image for one round - a vision of dead Duergar everywhere! In reality, spread across the floor of the nook is a desirable magic item, a Portable Hole belonging to one impatient Thief of Marchand. Goods desired from the surface realm are transported in the extra-dimensional fissure and relinquished here for gold or protected convoy to the Bazaar. Awkwardly, the Dark Troll sharing his Token this time was the Troblin Warden, who is not inclined to end his camaraderie with the constrained crook. Dashiell the Red-Handed would be overjoyed if mayhem broke out in the nauseating Kontor, freeing him from a rambling examination of trinkets by his "partner." Poztuzhg the Troblin Warden is used to mayhem, and will only conclude his discussion if an angry Troll stands bleeding in the threshold. Poztuzgh's new finds will join a collection filling three garderobes, a faceted exhibit that requires about 2-8 hours to review. Finished with tales about the older prizes, he is emptying a CIR-CUL-CAY shopping bag (from an Undoer chronomancer named Rufus) on a stately table lit by a glowing sculpture of a winsome lady. Dashiell, seated eleven paces from the tunnel outlet, will only fight if cornered in the office. If combat erupts elsewhere he is confident that his skills will triumph over locked doors and sheer stone. However, abandoning the Portable Hole is not an act his Guildmaster will suffer. The Warden's exhibition of bravery increases the closer enemies are to his cherished bric-a-brac. Fortunately, there are a few magical oddities here that will trouble interlopers. **Dashiell the Red-Handed, Human Sharper**: Thief 7, DC 1, hp 37, S 14 I 11 W 15 D 18 C 15 Ch 12, ATT 1, D by weapon, Special: 3x backstab. Dash earned his title by filching goods during

midday, and informing each victim how much he profited from the stunt. His gumption shocked his first Guild, which he left about halfway through his career. Now, he performs the most perilous of challenges, delving into catacombs full of man-eaters. To help remain intact, he wears Elfin Chainmail +1 and fireproof boots. His most pragmatic item is a *Wraith Cord of Transposition*, which can teleport him from one silver aglet to the other. Sheathed in a fancy scabbard is *Tarsutram*, a Short Sword +1 of Stair & Slope Detecting. Dash has used the Cord numerous times to position himself for a backstab or slip past a gate. Stowed in the Guild's Portable Hole is an oiled iguana-tote full of lapiz lazuli (3000 gp), a Duergar ceremonial urn of electrum brimming with Underwild snuff (250 gp), and *Modra's Wand of Cobra Conjuration* (see new magic items). **Warden Poztuzgh, Troblin Champion**: Warrior 6, DC 4, hp 40, ATT 1, D 1d10+1 sword, Special: regenerates 2 hp per round. Formerly the Kontor's War Chieftain, Poztuzgh was quick to appoint a Dark Troll Vohbod to replace him. Impassive about the Soltvar destined to march to war, he thirsts for better covenants with the Undoers of the Multiversal Bazaar and other respected and wealthy personages of *The Darkness Beneath*. To complement his Priestess, he wears a green cloak and scale armor. Suspended from ankle to collar is a two handed *Sword of Clashing Paths*, ensorcelled to penetrate certain magic barriers. Fitted to index fingers are identical topaz rings - one a *Ring of Protection* +1 and the other an imitation with a poison needle (soak in water to fill a tiny capsule or be pierced when it dries completely in 2 days). If the Warden has the opportunity to enter an unfinished battle, he will take a couple trinkets from his office along:

- *Statuette of Madame Monlaur*: Shining like diamonds in the sun, this hollow porcelain figure magically illuminates a 10' radius. The ashen remains of a ravishing vampiress are held within, swept up after her last dance with paladins. Any evil person smashing the figurine can order her phantom to drain life one more time. A target that fails his Save will see the unearthly maiden clasp his chest, and feel her glacial bite (lose a level).
- *Weirding Waveform Amplifier*: An unadorned box from a distant desert planet, this weapon of banned sciences emits an invisible cascade of pain-inducing frequencies with each charge expended (1d20 remaining). Living targets are damaged based on their anatomical structure, taking 1d6 points for each type of vulnerable system: respiratory, renal, and skeletal. A creature like a Draala, without large lungs or bones, would only suffer the fluid-affecting die of damage. A Save against the Amplifier only reduces the damage to 1d4 rolls.

Below the waxed shelves in each of the Warden's garderobes is a false bottom, lined with possum skin and stacked delicately with electrum chunks shaped like orange segments. The entire mass of precious metal is worth 9600 gp. Poztuzgh's displayed assets of recognizable value include 17 assorted platinum rings (765 gp), Sphinx Blood Ink in a labeled jade bottle (170 gp), a scrimshawed T-Rex tooth set in a gold plaque (400 gp), and Modra's digested spell book (only the middle pages are unmarred, with 3 second and third level spells still legible). Other curiosities, trash from strangers gadding about the Multiversal Bazaar, have a slim chance of pecuniary worth, mostly generating little beyond mild revulsion. **d10**:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Translucent shells around spools of black ribbon, inked with lutes and pentagrams. They spill from inside the CIR-CUL-CAY sack. |
| 2 | A dehydrated alien head with three glass eyes. |
| 3 | A 16" gargoyle with yellow teeth, strung with wire like a puppet. |
| 4 | A bleached log with a 5" plug of brass on one end. It makes stridulous noises when lifted or rolled. |
| 5 | An incredibly detailed painting of a sea cult, observing blithe human sacrifices moments before they fall into the maw of an ebon and white shark. |
| 6 | A three fingered glove with no stitching that carries a magnetic charge. |
| 7 | A dark blue folio stamped with a small eagle in the center, collecting small gray drawings of round lamps levitating in the clouds and dead cows. |
| 8 | A large glass beaker storing a dessert sauce with a pickle tang stronger than "Howling Gnoll" Gherkins. |
| 9 | A forty ounce copper mug with "Happy 7000th Flogging" stamped on the side in Lizardfolk. |
| 10 | Stack of dusty pamphlets for tourists interested in Dark Troll Pit Games. The offer of discounted lodging at Dagendreng Hold expired nine months ago. |

**13. Strange Shepherdess:** Incarcerated for a decade in this rift, a mutated nymph from the territory of toadstools strives to earn her freedom from the Dark Trolls. Attacked by Woebegone Kernoble's adventuring party (*FO!* #13) because of similarities to the leering Medusae, **Hatipoli the Hesperid** (HD 5, DC 6, ATT 1, D by weapon, Special: Druidic magic gaze) was kidnapped from the Fungal Forest while bordering on death. Although her faceted eyes emit a magic lambency, no flesh can be transformed to stone. Rather, a twinkling gaze can warp wood or establish a telepathic link with an insect. The writhing coiffure atop her head are tussocky caterpillars, which do not bite. The delicate wings that once let her soar with giant moths were damaged extensibly by the human's sneak attack, and never meliorated. Hatipoli capitulated to the Commander's order to care for the "resources" in the adjoining cave. The door to her dismal lair is only unlocked when baskets of Underwild vegetation are deposited inside once each week.

**14. Crumbling Cavern:** Impressed by a goblin scroll depicting a host of human warriors being swallowed by a monumental worm, Commander Dmoljuc went on a hunt for juvenile Purplepedes (*FO!* #13) four years ago. If the

moth-woman in his prison could make such horrors respond to commands, he wouldn't have to lead the weakest formation into battle. The prisoner's unnatural gaze had revealed its power early in her captivity, when she rid the pits of Giant Curled Lice. Druidic sorcery granted her the talent to speak with insects! Once the pair of caterpillars recognize Troll signals, Dmoljuc will have his terrible warbeasts, and the wretched nymph her freedom. Contrariwise, Hatipoli plans to win her independence by instructing the Purplepedes to assail the Kontor's foundations. Gradually fracturing from the multifold grip of two captive Purplepedes, the twin pillars strengthening the roof of this cavern are bound to succumb within the year. The prodigious larvae (HD 9, DC 6, ATT 1, D 2d8) are coiled around the far pillar, as directed by the clever Hesperid. The demolition has progressed very slowly, to avoid alarming the Troblins. Before her pets erupt into the crafting hall, she will also tear away the iron bars sealing the Bugbear pens nearby. If a PC force purges the jail first, Hatipoli will shelter with the caterpillars, wary of steel bearing humans. To appease such strange mammals, she will reveal a cache of gems (3880 gp) discovered at the bottom of the north wellspring. Players foolish enough to engage the protective worms with volatile magic risk collapsing the ceiling prematurely.

**15/16. Bugbear Holds:** The diminished population of Bugbear Thralls (HD 3, DC 6, ATT 1, D 2-5 fist or thrown rock) subsist in these branching caves. When workers are needed, a whistle is sounded at the door to **8**, one chirp per Thrall. Once assembled, the shackled band is handed victuals from the cooks and marched outside. If a male Thrall is sick or wounded, a female or runt must take his place. None of the dispirited creatures will risk escaping alone or be easily incited to fight the Dark Troll Army. The Kontor Commander inspects their pungent caves every few months, to confirm that they have not stolen weapons or treasure. The number of adult males and females hovers around 40, with 1d10 children. The oldest Thralls know about the treasure their ancestors secreted in the waters of **14**.

## Approach to the Citadel

Above the black slate bar in Dagendreng Hold is a collection of skulls. Each belonged to a one who tried to repent of his desire to fight in the Dark Troll arena, typically upon seeing the Citadel towers draw near. Saluting returning troops are a trio of mounted Rytbod and 1d8 Claw Maws, stationed at the highway split. Unlike other cavalry units, these Trolls ride caparisoned Blood Thumps, draped in dark green cloth from throat to croup. Part of the decoration is a chain of mixed skulls across the chest of each lizard. One rider will always follow an arriving gang across either bridge. To give the Citadel guards a better view of the diverging route, a 130 pound, glowing brazier has been perched atop a 14 foot menhir. The stagnant waters of the great Moat rise to within a few feet of the cave floor and traverse bridge. Unlashed Claw Maws hop carefully down the embankment to scavenge for carrion, poised to retreat from the shoaling Moat Dragons (*FO!* #9) in the cold trench. Odd islands appear to surface from the festering lake, each smoothly leveled and featureless. These pads of granite are the stumps of stalagmites, removed by the Duergar to thwart nesting mole-bats. A popular punishment ordained by the Troll King is to abandon a victim on such a spot, where the natatorial goliaths will soon find him. The four Moat Dragons (HD 4+4, DC 4, ATT 1, D 1d10 bite) have a pen framed by the Citadel walls, observable from **21**. The carnivorous beasts, with maws like hungry Hydrocynus, would easily detect an attempt to breach the underwater opening to their sanctuary. The Dark Trolls constructed the East ramp for their cavalry in order to quickly mobilize a unit for action beyond the Citadel. Crossing the castle would be very inconvenient for regular patrols; Blood Thumps navigating the narrow baileys must slow to a walk lest a rider be pitched from his saddle. Hypothetically, both the ramp and bridge could be demolished or blocked by magic. In that event, both troll and steed would wade across the water while the moat dragons were lured to their pen with food. Wedged into the seventh corbelled arch from the start of the ramp is a bomb made from incendiary Salamander Flake. It has been undisturbed for years, hidden there by the Fane's former wizard, Myxod (*FO!* #7). Igniting the trap in place would collapse a 15' expanse of pavement and start a fire that burns for 3 turns. Implementing the explosive against any of the Citadel's portcullises would diminish its strength by three quarters.

**Citadel Construction**: Distinct from contemporary human building practices, the Citadel's 40' high towers and curtain walls are a conglomeration of irregular stones weighing many tons apiece. For lasting solidity, many sections are twenty feet thick, permiting two Varbod to walk side by side atop the allures. The enormous keep, encircling a cavern pillar, appears twice the parapet height given the additional temple structures. Two floors were gutted from each enclosed tower, leaving three stacked rooms a troll could stand upright inside. Dark Trolls were also responsible for digging the Arena Pit and connecting **8** and **13** with an elevated bridge. The drop-gates at each entrance are made from alternating beams of petrified wood and furrowed iron, without gaps. Lifting the barriers up recessed tracks requires soldiers atop the flanking towers to spin cranks. The only window slits are either high in the keep, or exposed only to the occupied side of the cavern. Furnishings are spartan in most common areas; the soldiers spurn items that would make their cramped rooms even more restrictive. Unlike the Gate House, no torches are affixed to the wall walks or carried by troops.

Enchanted sconces, fashioned by Duergar to look like iron ribcages, hang in the royal chambers and near each gate.

**1. Bridge Vigil:** Policing the main gate and 240' bridge are four Varbod with green tabards over their scale armor. One pair are expert crossbowmen, while the others carry sabers and iron clarions for signaling the trolls inside. To defend this location, they are prepared to drag attackers into the moat, or expend a final spark of life plugging the entry with their 300 pound corpses. Any nonnative person spending more than 1d6 rounds here must save or sneeze violently from the drifting vapors eructed by the Moat.

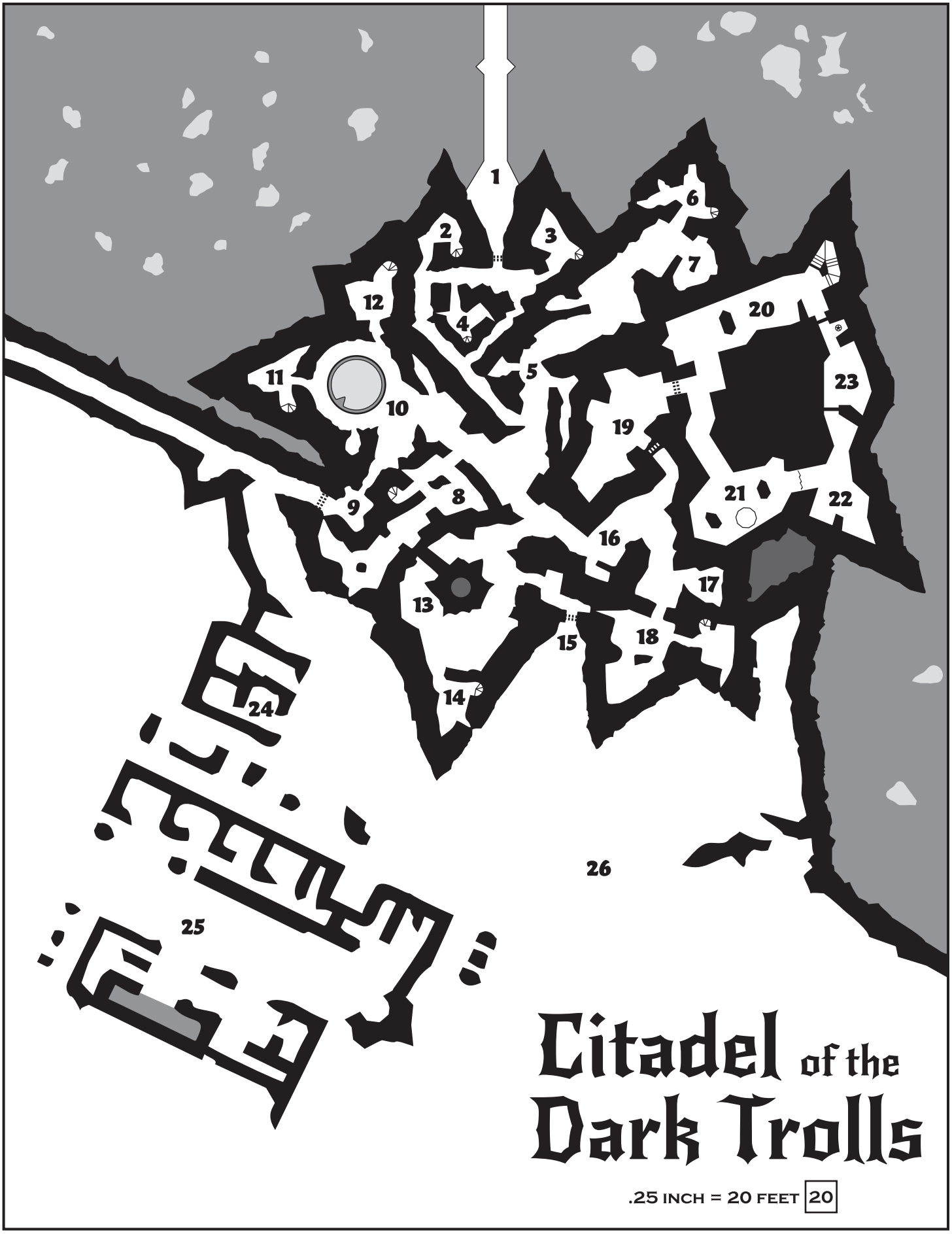
**2/3 Barbican Towers:** A force of 24 Dark Troll Varbod dwell in these triangular towers, counting the soldiers minding the bridge. The greased cranks for hoisting the portcullis are never unmanned, and there are always four Varbod posted on the strip of ground inside the gate. Specially, the trolls of the barbican have a supply of the poison made by the Troblin militia. Every other bolt or javelin launched at intruders will be steeped in it.

**4. Envoy's Apartment:** Tagart, the tribute collecting Vohbod (*FO!* #6), enjoys a personal suite in this squat, two story tower. He has a total of four bodyguards located on the ground level. Only two join him on the trail to collect tributes, while the others secure every expropriated coin until passed to the King's vault. A stone tub, recessed in the floor and sealed with a threaded iron plug (STR 15 to loosen), will contain 200-1600 gp yet to be tallied. Tagart's ostentatious quarters is dominated by a brick sleeping platform that can be heated by starting an oven fire in the room below. After riding for days, Tagart can only soothe his vast bulk with a heat treatment. Soft reptile leathers cover the radiating masonry, and a cashmere canopy from Marchand (325 gp) hangs above. A secret lockbox is kept inside the flue-like cavity of the platform, where Tagart hides a gold medallion (155 gp), 400 gp worth of Dagendreng gambling chips, and a *Sceptre of Hypnotic Shimmer*. In addition to his unique bed, he enjoys Gargoyle Stout from the Moistened Bint (*FO!* #6), which fills a cask near one of the arrow loops. When home, Tagart's large Blood Thump settles into the alley behind the tower. The portly Envoy protested having to retrieve his mount from the Stable Master at **24**. In a battle where besiegers have entered this first bailey, Tagart's trolls will try to engulf victims with weighted nets stored on the roof. One gastendolg bomb and basket of young **Blister Beetles** (HD 1+1, DC 4, ATT 1, D 1d4 bite, Special: blistering oil secretion) are also available as missile weapons. The Claw Maws from **16** will lunge at enemies from a side that doesn't interfere with engaged Varbod. Lastly, reinforcements from **11** and **6** will move down the connected allures to fire crossbows or drop jagged stones.

**5. Competitor Crannies:** On a lane sided by the outer bailey and royal yard are three barred cells for humanoids and beasts slated to appear in Pit Games. In the nook closest to the arena are a pair of starved Speci-Men (*FO!* #3). Before they weaken too much, the captives will be forced to fight each other to the death. If inspected, the immuring walls will reveal tribal runes and pejorative remarks left by doomed Bugbears.

**6. Corner Tower:** Likely to be the oldest guard tower, this structure has required a few new blocks from the Quarry to remain unimpaired. Twelve Varbod share primary duties, scanning the Moat and protecting the curtain wall behind the barbican. Even though there is no access from the short walk to the Keep (above **7**), one troll will always be stationed there with a clarion.

**7. Ruined Forge:** Had this gas-burning workshop not been dealt calamitous damage during the Duergar fall, the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Citadel of the Dark Trolls
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Dark Trolls would have been able to craft arms and armor decades before the Kontor upgraded. Currently, the exposed facility has no roof and only one pipe feeding gas to a burn pit. Two elder Trolls with no armor collect trash from around the fortress to incinerate. One elder can recall an adventure he had scouting the thicket of the Flower Dryad (*FO!* #12), and how he discovered an antidote for the soporific toxins there.

**8. Rytbod Bailiwick:** General Agradenv, leader of all lancers and hunters, instructs his thirty Rytbod in this hall by leaving a coded trinket looped around their individual pole-arms. Each weapon is clipped to the pillar near the entry, and cannot be taken down unless an order is given or the Citadel is under attack. The General's office is to the left of this rack where he can observe the door out and the spiral staircase. In addition to organizing patrols, he meets with the Stable Master and Masarytbod of **25** every couple days to review their progress with dinosaur discipline. Less frequently, Agradenv rides a Pteroc to the Army's Raptor Run in the Underwild. 40' from the bailiwick, and halfway to the Arena, is a wall alcove occupied by the General's dangerous Blood Thump. One of the three larger lizards allowed inside the walls, this +1 HD beast has small horns and tail spikes instead of plumage. A whipping strike from the tail can inflict 1d10 damage. As most of the cavalry are out in the various dungeon zones, only 8-12 trolls will be in the building with the General. **General Agradenv, Rytbod High Commander**: DC 3, HD 7, hp 50, ATT 1, D weapon, regeneration. The General's countenance is rather dreadful after having lost his lower lip to a caustic ooze. Impoverished by habitual gambling, his only lucky winning from the Dagendreng tables is a *Crossbow of Speed*. To settle his account, he covertly supplies the nobles with Underwild Snuff. A loyal Masarytbod collects the plants for him, which are dried and ground at a secret location. Customers that partake of the stimulant can only guess where it originates from. In battle, he will fight from the saddle with a pole-arm (1d10+2), unless outnumbered. Against a host, he stands afar to shoot Bolts +2 while his Blood Thump intercepts anyone attempting to close for melee. A silvered box lashed to the beast's saddle flap contains a silken purse marked "Bazaar Tokens". In fact, the spurious treasure is a *Bag of Devouring*, which has disposed of more than one fellow gambler.

**9. Cavalry Postern:** A ground level section of the Bailiwick tower, this gate is much more active than the Barbican entry. Riding lizards are taken and left just past the portcullis, where the ramp opens to the livery yard (**26**). Thus, all active Rytbod depart and arrive by way of the Postern. The area is manned at all hours by a pair of Varbod handling the gate winches above, and two more inside the tunnel. Should attackers breach the sliding gate, the guards will retreat to **10**, triggering a pendulum blade trap to thwart followers. The deadly defense impels two waving blades: one swings in the narrow path outside of the Bailiwick spiral stair and the other crosses the "elbow" of the Postern interior at a 45° angle. Each will inflict 2d10 damage to a target in their arc.

**10. Fighting Pit:** More enemies of the Dark Trolls have perished inside this 32' ring than anywhere else in their domain. Every five years, coinciding with the Priest's rune readings, the compressed mixture of sand and dried blood layering the arena floor must be shoveled out to maintain a 12' depth. To keep the earthen walls of the hole protected, stakes of petrified wood, each a foot thick, have been set around the perimeter. Spectacles of sacrifice are frequent, replacing trials for meek prisoners and expediting the slaying of lesser monsters. Combat between troll soldiers or challenges from outlanders must be approved by Hringvotak, the Pit Master. Even being in the audience at a special bout is considered an honor; Dark Trolls beneath the rank of officer are only given the chance to observe with a pass won by lottery. Customarily, the major events are announced well in advance, to allow odds to be figured and bets placed at Dagendreng Hold. With the pit surrounded by over 40 trolls, nobody cares if foreigners keep their personal weapons to fight with. However, mages will be muzzled and given spears to attack with - troll chicanery they deem perfectly fair. Victors gain a macho moniker and a percentage from the Dagendreng wagers. A troll vs. troll contest will only end in death if the King permits it. The fight is won when the opponent can no longer give battle. When the arena is empty, Hringvotak will occasionally conduct gladiator training for Dark Trolls (like Iviog) that have his commendation.

**11. Causeway Tower:** With its crest high above the Postern road, this pointed tower protects an entire side of the Citadel. Half of the twelve Varbod here spend most of their shift on the rooftop allures, watching the ambling Rytbod below and slinging stones at mole-bats. Other duties include checking shipments of arms from the Kontor, supporting the defenders of **9** or **4**, and striking the Pit Game drums nestled in the curtain wall between their tower and the cavalry gate. Notoriously, all the Varbod of the Causeway Tower, with its lofty view of the arena, are related to nobles or reputable officers.

**12. Mentor's Tower:** Hringvotak the Pit Master, a surface troll of the two-headed variety, competed for his own freedom from a wicked spire haunted by invisible Erinyes and cognizant Spiders. A fervor for martial technique had been required extricate himself from the strange tower. Amidst pureblood trolls he realized that they lacked a good deal of combat proficiency, accustomed to simply taking hits and regenerating instead of using tactics. To benefit champions in the King's arena, Hringvotak pledged to train them in one of two masterful styles. The first, a "venator" technique, bestows the ability to add a leg strike in melee. The second technique, a popular "secutor" ability, involves fighting with a weapon in each hand. Four Varbod act as his assistants, and supervise any foreign challengers (none yet this month) confined to the second

floor. **Hringvotak, Two-Headed Troll Secutor Champion**: DC 3, HD 10, hp 68, ATT 2, D by weapons, Special: regen 1/rd, surprised only on 1, ambidexterity. The Pit Master wears a variegated shirt of fine mail, stitched together from two elven hauberks and two human ones. His belt weapons, a War Axe +1 and a Heavy Flail +1, cut and crush for 1d8+3 damage each without off-hand penalty. Irregular patches of hair appear on his two lumpy brows and muscled forearms. Although quite capable of kicking opponents, he eschews that style in melee after hurting a knee while performing a crescent kick to the head of a manticore. Hringvotak dreams about the day the aloof Trap-Springers (*FO!* #6) see the inside of his tenebrous pit. Entirely visible and on display in an open cabinet on the ground floor are these treasures: a silver collar of Knighthood worth 360 gp; a jewel encrusted falchion scabbard worth 905 gp; a bracelet of teardrop-shaped ivory engravings (175 gp); a platinum blond braid of elven hair, attached to the scalp; three goblin skulls inside an iron shield pinched shut like a taco; a hollow walrus tusk containing volcanic ash from a plane of Hell (1200 gp to a wizard); an imitation gold trophy for winning the "All Cave Karate Tournament": and a Gnomish Institute of Science ring that can open the hidden elevator to the Palace of Eternal Illusion.

Withdrawn from his position in the Army and blacklisted by the Dagendreng Clan, the indignant Prince of the Dark Trolls broods in his room on the third floor. Almost seven years ago, a shameless bride mugged him with her Blood Thump and vanished into the Underwild: that fiasco cost him his position as a Varbod Commander. Then, around one year ago, an edict from the dark temple offered a chance to redeem himself and secure his advent to the throne. The required task wasn't trivial; Skaemir had to challenge and defeat Gorangol the Night Dragon! To prepare, he trained with Hringvotak and spent much of his father's gold obtaining magic items at the Multiversal Bazaar. Grievously, the ancient dragon's precautions nullified his plan of attack. Knowing he would use the statues lining her cavern to dodge breath attacks, exploding runes had been placed upon them before his arrival. Defeated, Skaemir was returned to the Citadel by posturing goblins, his lacerated flesh sliding from exposed bone. To chastise the troll nobles, Gorangol kept the Prince's equipment, ate his Blood Thump, and demanded that a week-long party for her wild goblins be held at Dagendreng Hold, free of charge. While recovering, the angry Prince learned that the Shamans blamed an outbreak of disease on his combined failures to uphold prophecy. If the PCs journeying through the Deep Caves do not kill Iviog the Pale, she will challenge Skaemir in the Arena. Word of the unexpected match will spread everywhere, and fill the vaults of Dagendreng Hold with wagers a hundred times greater than any previous contest. The showdown will distract every soldier beyond the Gate House, providing a hiatus in security the PCs (or NPCs) could exploit. Regardless of the outcome, Iviog will be revealed as Tahmrys, provoking greater chaos in the Citadel. **Skaemir the Scorned, Dark Troll Prince**: DC 3, HD 6, hp 36, ATT 2, D by weapons, Special: regen. Skaemir only leaves his sanctuary if accompanied by Hringvotak or his father's Masungbod escorts. He fights with a pair of standard sabers and wears nothing to distinguish him from the tower guards. A fake quiver for crossbow bolts, usually on his belt, hides 105 gp and a *Potion of Humanoid Control* effecting Troblins and Goblins. The declaration from Iviog will impel him to take any measure to defeat her. If the luckless Prince fails a third time, he will blame his ruination on their implacable deity.

**13. Pteroc Pinnacle:** Between the two sally ports is a tower carved from, or possibly built upon, a ridged stalagmite. Thoroughly corroded chains hang from the high corbels, used long ago to raise a cage to the open roof. Duergar mutineers were condemned to death here, dropped into a smooth cavity where they would be consumed by giant ants. The Dark Trolls ditched their initial plans for the tower after Poltergeists were encountered inside. Now, the location serves as a landing pad for Snearg's birds. One Rytbod from **8** guards the bridge to their hall, and checks the passport bones that all flyers should possess.

**14. Signal Tower:** 12 Varbod supervise a signaling system at this tower. If they spy trouble at the dinosaur pen or Blood Thump yard, a crimson banner will be hoisted to warn Citadel forces. If a green banner appears, then all troll males outside the Citadel are being summoned to fight a foe. The warnings are backed with blasting clarions. One smitten Varbod will place a lantern in the second floor arrow loop on occasion, to arrange a chat with his mate from the crab hatchery.

**15. Grof Gate:** Considered redundant, this exit would only be used if the Barbican and Rytbod Postern were overwhelmed in a battle. Moreover, the King does not want the Count of Dagendreng's troops at **18** to have supervision of the gate closest to his Keep. So, in place of Varbod, the passage behind the portcullis is guarded by humanoid Skeletons animated by the High Shaman. Their flesh having long been devoured, these six undead minions (HD 1, DC 7, ATT 1, D 1D6) are armed with Troblin maces. They have been instructed to repel all creatures excepting the King, the High Shaman, and General Agradenv.

**16. Raptor Coop:** Eight mischievous **Claw Maws** (HD 2, DC 2, ATT 1, D 1D4 bite, Special: jaw lock, surprise) rule over everything tiny, and potentially edible, that the trolls take no notice of in the Citadel. Similar to hungry canines, they will sit around archways, wagging their feathered tails for scraps. Inside the confusing baileys, the guileful lizards can ambush intruders. If they win a first attack, targets without metal armor will be favored. Anchored near the opening to the dirty nest is a carnotaurine skull with a silver orb in one eye socket. The item is ordinary glass, and trapped with a Rune of Warding (12 points frost damage) that the garrisoned trolls will avoid.

**17. Citadel Pantry:** The plethora of meals needed to satisfy an army of trolls are dispensed from here. Five Troblin maidservants carry plates to **20**, selecting the best portions from inventory supplied by the Kontor and Hatcheries. Off-duty soldiers are expected to line up outside, each with a basket of uniform size. When beckoned by one of the busy females, skewers of mostly raw food, each the length of a short sword, are placed in the barrel. The amount of chow never exceeds the maximum of two meals a day for each troll represented by proxy. Motivated by hunger, at least 1D3 Varbod will be crowding the pantry shortly after shipments arrive. Skewer inflicted wounds are a routine occurence.

**18. Grof's Manor:** The Grof (Count) of Dagendreng sojourns at this tower when recalled by the King from his fortified base near the Black Spinel Cliffs. Grof Leirgund is the King's cousin and a close advisor. Although he avoids reporting profits from iniquities in his private hold, information about armed outlanders or encroaching monsters is invariably delivered. The Grof knows the King will bargain with him for reports on Marchand, compiled from sources that operate on the surface. Although the King does not especially like his cousin, he provides valuable military intelligence, including directions to enemy strongholds and reports of vulnerable populations. In return for his support, Leirgund has asked that the Lower Caves be purged for eventual Troll occupation. The Dagendreng clan seeks to expand forcefully, by storming the Halfway Inn (*FO!* #6). The King and Grof both desire to pluck Jalen's fantastic spear from his dead grip, but the edgy King feels compelled first to raise more forces and to find his son a complaisant bride – with whom he can be uprooted from the Citadel. Twenty Dark Trolls, half of them Vohbod of Dagendreng, reside in the bottom two floors of the Manor. Each of the officers carries a belt pouch with 2d20 gp worth of gambling chips. They also wear black capes with the Count's coat-of-arms, a troll hand pinching a coin dimidiated with a Pteroc emblem. In addition to veteran fighters, the Manor has a bizarre watchdog - an intelligent **Mimic** (HD 7, DC 7, ATT 1, D 1D10 pseudopod, S camouflage, adhesive) shaped like a stone altar. The creature rests next to the ground floor pillar, surveying the main door. It speaks Goblin, which the Grof can understand by casting a spell. All the Dagendreng loyalists despise the Prince, and would not hesitate to hurl him into the Moat. The cranks that operate the portcullis at **15** are locked down with chains. **Leirgund Dagendreng, Dark Troll Count**: Witchdoctor 1, DC 1, HD 7, hp 45, ATT 1, D by weapon, Special: regeneration, Spell - *Comprehend Languages*. To his patrons at the redoubt, the clever Grof portrays himself as a rustic brute with treasure to throw around. Enhancing the ruse are his handcrafted Dire Wolf hide cloak and bold lines of war paint on his chest. However, magic detection reveals a glowing silhouette, as he is actually bedecked in rare items (and dabbles in sorcery). On his wrists are *Bracers of Defense* DC 2, purposefully covered with strips of faded yarn. Clipped above a chin wart is a *Labret of Protection* +1, sculpted to resemble a tiger's head. For close-range fights, Leirgund draws his *Magnesian Blade of Khython* (see new magic items). If a swift slice doesn't solve his problems, he will take a defensive position and attack with a Thelidu Disintegrator (*FO!* #4) stolen from aliens. In his apartment on the third floor of the Manor, he has an exotic medley of exceptional treasures: a rendering of an Ogre wrestling a Cave Bear on a scroll made of Giant Ram skin (4d6+50gp to a collector); a Dragon Head Wine Goblet of gold worth 560 gp; a refurbished 20 inch electronic VidPhone Screen, used to send choppy messages to an identical unit back at the Hold; a mildly cursed *Rug of Rigaudon*, which if tread upon by two persons compels them to dance together for 1d6 turns; an iron buckle set with a large square amethyst (800gp); four painted table legs of solid electrum worth 2000 gp; a *Potion of Water Breathing* hidden inside a Duergar skull; and a silver and pink tourmaline ritual mask of Graeth origin (1700 gp).

**19. Royal Yard:** The 10' square iron grille to this private yard is left down because the King's mutant Blood Thump likes to provide the lifting power. When a guard or servant needs to get in, the phase-shifted monster will materialize by the gate, bite a ring welded to the low end, and push the metalwork up till a pinion catches. Doubtlessly, the routine is a toe-curling jolt to outlanders. Such guests are warned not to respond aggressively, as the (HD 11) creature also likes to bite off heads. Cespitose moss the color of corn blankets the ground, and two Masungbod are stationed directly across from the entry. When the Dark Troll Queen spends time in the yard, she sits on a marble bench and throws dull javelins where the rollicksome raptor may have shifted out of sight. If she scores a hit, everyone in the Keep will hear a loud pounding as the Blood Thump circles the yard in a sprinting gait. When the quirky beast is saddled, it desists from dimensional translocation.

**20. Provost Hall:** Uniquely, the door to the titanic Keep, a 6" thick slab of black granite, slides into a wall pocket when unbarred. Disengaging the bronze wedges is the duty of another pair of Masungbod, both armed with magical military forks +1. Lengthy pole arms are not a concern, as the passages and chambers of the Keep are open to a height of forty feet. The great hall, used for meals and clan conferences, houses five more royal bodyguards and a pair of 30' inanimate bat wings strung up from the support column. Centuries ago, the Duergar wrested control of this cavern from a six-eyed Mega Mole-Bat, and chained its sheer wings (worth 2000 gp to an alchemist) here for a grisly trophy. While four of the soldiers will often be seated at one of two large tables, one wielding a heavy flail +1 will stand as a sentry near the door to **23** and the staircase up. The locked vault door of iron is glazed with concentrated Blister Beetle oil, and will inflict double the normal penalty if it contacts humanoid skin (-4 to hit).

**21. Throne Room:** A pair of tapestries swathe the crooked corridor opening into the King's audience chamber. The black insignia of Clan Dagendreng is seen again here, woven with dyed fibers and copper beads. The royal family, Clan Gjorslazreng, displays their badge on a slightly larger arras, beaded with green andalusite. The blazon depicts a scaly raptor leg crossed by a troll saber, crested by a fortified tower. The final brace of the King's eleven bodyguards flank the entrance, each with the additional protection of magical +1 shields. Four of the enchanted ribcage sconces, two on each hexagonal pillar, cast weird bands of illumination around the room. Queen Nanridr sits primly on a marble dais, at the foot of her glowering mate. She wears a smocked dress of human skin branded with dark runes, and holds a leash for two pet Claw Maws. Off towards the left is an alcove with a electrum-plated rostrum. During proceedings, an acolyte of the High Shaman will sit there to record deals and rehash any previous rune readings.

King Karbruc Gjorslazreng has never met the few humanoids that persevere in the upper caves, and is baffled why beings softer than goblins don't hasten to the sunlit surface. His greedy cousin has convinced him that these nuisances can live there as long as tributes are paid. Yet, money isn't a paramount concern in his kingdom, where all clansmen serve without recompense. The funds simply make transactions at the Bazaar faster, and entice outlying agents to follow Dark Troll bidding. His primary concen is not his troublesome son, but the continued training of warbeasts. Karbruc means to start a war with the Duke of Marchand once he has enough ceratopsians to transport supplies and a cavalry of at least 100 mounted Rytbod. The cursory scenario for the war has three stages: first, seize total control of the caves above (levels 1-5 of *The Darkness Beneath*) and exterminating any creature regarded as a threat; second, raze all the rural areas surrounding Marchand rural areas that could provide levies and food; and third, assault the city just before harvest time, with aid from Cultists of Salicia and the Thieves' Guild within the metropolis. **Nanridr Gjorslazreng, Dark Troll Queen**: DC 5, HD 6, hp 33, ATT 1, D 1d6 javelin or claw, regeneration. In anticipation of her sovereign riding to war, Nanridr is thinking about which part of the Graeth-Home she will requisition. The Pit Games do not intrigue her half as much as tales of murderous Fae. If menaced by adventuring PCs, she will retreat to gather reinforcements, or attempt to grapple the first one wounded by the King. On her right hand is a *Ring of Spellturning*, the use of which the High Shaman has explicated. Pinned at the hip of her macabre attire is an electrum cameo with jasper inlays worth 700 gp. **Karbruc Gjorslazreng, Dark Troll King**: DC 2, HD 8, hp 55, AT 2, D weapon, regeneration, ambidexterity. Moderately chagrined about never having led his troops to war, Karbruc has trained arduously to face the champions of good. With the guidance of his Pit Master, he has mastered the use of dual weapons. All the troll officers support his plan, although the greedy High Shaman thinks they can accomplish their goals with fewer allies. The sovereign fights as an 8 HD monster with two sinister artifacts. One is a great mace known as the *Scaraboid Sledge of Destruction*, and the other a hooked gauntlet called the *Bane of Attestors* (see new magic item appendix). A human-sized garment, the *Robe of the Senescent Marid*, is knotted around his waist, and a *Pixane of Protection* +3 gussies his neck and collar. If opponents are harried by Claw Maws and soldiers, the King's first action will be to use the robe's power to summon sea fog, and then he will lash out with the sledge's battering horn toss. Karbruc knows that if he doesn't commit a foolhardy maneuver, the shamans and other defenders will soon reach his side.

**22. Masungbod Quarters:** Formerly the Prince's bedroom, this corner apartment is set apart from **21** by a curtain of Spinosaur hide. The King has turned the space over to his personal retinue, and often drinks blood broth with them. Underneath some dirty mole-bat cushions is a 200 pound stone coffer replete with coins. This stockpiled reward is for any triumphant foreigner claiming a lucrative bounty. For simplicity, the only largess offered in certified bounties is a sum of 10,000 gold coins. The brusque trolls will not offer to carry the coffer back to the Highway. The veritable metal inside is not all gold; the bottom 6600 coins are cast from electrum. Also within the box, written beneath the ponderous lid, is a message in Common that reads, "LEAVE OR BE EATEN".

**23. King's Vault:** Beyond a latched double door of petrified wood is the royal roost and clan treasure repository. In the corner by the projecting wall is a heap of assorted furs atop a base of doweled planks. Only one pelt, a white bison blanket, is worth keeping to sell. Hammered into the wall near the unkempt bed and below a magic sconce are three iron spikes. Dropped over one pin is the King's unhandy crown of pointy steel, black sapphire, and lapis lazuli (8000 gp). Parallel with the inside wall is a copper cabinet 14 feet long, with a back panel reproducing a winding river vista in splendid relief. The shelves inside stagger with the river's contour, and hold some baubles:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Bowl of suet and brain custard. |
| 2 | An *Incense Cone of Perpetuated Spellcraft* (see new magic item appendix). |
| 3 | A Dwarven sword with a snapped blade. |
| 4 | A pocket map of some Troglodyte Warrens (possibly located on level 2 of *The Darkness Beneath*…) |
| 5 | A tall silver tripod containing a stalk-like Spinosaur vertebra (475 gp). |
| 6 | A citron wood cage imprisoning one Unseelie Squirrel (*FO!* #1) in magical stasis. If freed, it will animate and try to bite the nearest Elf. |

The juncture between here and the provost hall has no illumination or apparent protection. The ceiling drops to 25 feet high, and the stone surfaces are dusted with gritty particles. Recessed into the floor at both ends of the passage are pressure plates that will release a pendulum blade like the ones in **9**. In addition to its 2d10 scythe blade, the apparatus incorporates a loud bell which will peal till the motion desists. Stowed in the 12' x 12' alcove between the floor traps is a **Cursed Carbuncle Idol**, man-sized, with arms raised to bear an unlocked treasure chest. Encircling its carmine body are three similar iron trunks. The stone construct (HD 5, hp 25, AC 5, ATT 2, D 1D6 x 2 fists, 20% magic resistance) will remember the first non-troll that opens or removes the elevated chest and teleport to that individual's first subsequent combat. The idol, appearing within melee range, will then attack the robber until destroyed. If the idol's treasure is emptied or the statue itself moved, the change will trigger another pressure sensitive trap beneath its feet. The reaction is the release of 10 tons of sand from directly above, which will inflict 1d4+1 points of damage. Dropping after the rushing sediment will be three zombified Anvil Head Ants. The trunks on the floor have locks that must be picked. The Idol Chest contains necklaces of lapis lazuli totalling 7500 gp, 90 silver scarabs worth 630 gp, and a *Potion of Polymorph*. The other three chests contain a total of 42,000 ep, gold ingots worth 64,512 gp, a 50 pound platinum death symbol worth 12000 gp, strips of braided silver wire worth 1480 gp, one flask of mysterious slime from the Vats of Gar, a *Helm of Frost & Fire Resistance*, 1/8th scale plans for the Duergar-designed ballistae, and five royal Clan Keys allowing entry to the Kontor, Dagendreng Hold, or Raptor Run.

**24. Marshal's Outpost:** Gulmirnk the Stable Master was selected for his position after defeating all challengers in a Blood Thump race from the Citadel to the Gate House. Young compared to many veterans, he grew up with his lizard companion, and is innately skilled at raptor handling. The mounts turned over to his care are scattered about the 1/8th mile hex considered the full livery yard. Gulmirnk's duty, along with his three Rytbod, is to rein Blood Thumps from the field and have them ready for cavalry missions. If the Citadel is attacked from the high road or cavern depths, the outpost has a light catapult braced on the roof.

**25. Breeding Barn:** Eroded foundations of an ancient temple carefully screened by Underwild shrubs and palms enclose the new Monoclonius stable. Only the Stable Master and a pair of stealthy Masarytbod are allowed within the important reserve; they will cut down any interloper, even another Dark Troll. Idling in the open stalls or near the water pool is a family of ceratopsians, two adults (HD 11, DC 6, ATT 1, D 2d4 horn, trample) and three young. Currently, other hunters are seeking a second breeding female to produce another clutch. With ample food, the troll herdsmen believe the reptiles can be ready for service within 8 years.

**26. Livery Yard:** Nine months have passed since an outbreak of disease reduced the Blood Thump herd twenty head. Fortunately, the affliction did not spread to the Raptor Run, where three broods have been growing steadily. This has slowed down the King's plan to go to war, as he lacks a sufficiency of assault beasts. The rocky pasture appears empty most of the time due to frequent dispatches and the creature's natural aversion to befouled Moat water. Rytbod from **24** riding among the steeds can return with a pair to the postern in a few minutes. Also encountered in the yard will be Dark Trolls bringing stock to the pantry.

## Key to the Temple

(See page 24 for the Temple map.) One of the first mandates of the Dark Troll clans was to apportion equal power between the King's scions and the High Shaman. The original intrepid followers of Narsehv, the "trolls" that precipitated the Duergar rout, held the pontifical position in turn till they detiorated. The quinquennial divinations were then entrusted to their best pupil, Kirjurok, who never held the royals in much esteem. Kirjurok was selected as much for his eristic and asocial traits as for his skill, and his influence tends to undermine both his own position and that of the King and nobles. True to form, his last two rune readings have tormented the Gjorslazreng Clan while decreasing his own prestige.

**1. Oracular Tabernacle:** By writ, admittance to the Temple is reserved for shamans and clan heads only. The dark staircase from the hall below connects to an ante-chamber where four **Bugbear Skeletons** with Troblin cleaver-axes (HD 1, DC 7, ATT 1, D 1d8) have been placed. The animations of the Temple cannot think for themselves; they only respond as programmed by the shamans. Centered in the 80' gallery to the right is a conspicuous metallic vessel, atop a pentagonal stage and below an open ceiling. The venerated object of evil lecanomancy is a wide plate of circumvolving runes, concave to a slight degree and made entirely of electrum (worth 8100 gp, but unholy). The wall insulating the central pillar holds five niches, one for each of the antecedent shamans, still captive to their master Xsaya-Narsehv. Normally, the acolyte in **2** will appear before anything can be investigated. The shaman will be daunted by his inability to waken the five mummies. If approached by PCs, the third dessicated corpse will tear open its chest wrapping, causing a small gold plaque to fall out. Scribed in both Duergar and Goblin is a brief message that reads, "DESTROY US BEFORE THE RELICS". Raiders that damage or attempt to move the divination instruments will awaken the undead elders. Compelled by their curse, they will attack as Mummies with the ability to regenerate.

**2. Temple Study:** Two stone box-benches with lids of petrified wood contain the records of rune readings and language translation tomes. The High Shaman's disciples are learning Goblin, in order to make use of imported

primers that decipher Common. The only shaman that has mastered the two additional tongues serves with the caravan that visits the Fungal Forest Garden (*FO!* #13). The Dark Troll Acolyte (Priest 1, HD 6, DC 4, ATT 1, D by weapon, regeneration, Spell - *Spittle*) present has poor study habits, and will not try to parley with unwelcome visitors. His skull-head mace and melted candle are the only items aside from the dingy books.

**3. Torture Chamber:** Heaved to the far corner are a number of dwarf-sized manacles and one extremely pitted iron maiden, five feet tall. Plainly, these implements were insufficient for any troll punishment. The current tool for castigation, when demanded by the High Shaman, is a coif of copper links heated red-hot in a gas flame. If the iron maiden is pried open, 1d8 Rot Grubs (hp 1, DC 9, Special: burrow into flesh) will slither to the floor.

**4. Acolyte Residence:** After Priestess Cisamuuq became the Troblin pontiff, the number of Kirjurok's adepts dropped to four. Of that number, only three still reside in the temple. Occupied by a fresco repair, two Acolytes (*Spittle* and *Protection from Good* spells) are spattering sections of the longest wall with raptor feathers dipped in pungent pigment. Behind each troll is a bugbear Skeleton holding a crackling torch. The azure panorama depicts an emaciated giant, with vulture skulls instead of hands, breathing miasma upon a florid city. One troll will retreat to warn the High Shaman in **7**. In the recess near the entry is an iron chest with a poison needle trap, containing lapis lazuli dust and electrum knobs worth 350 gp.

**5. Pernicious Pudding:** Appearing like an island of saffron and black granite, a fractured fountain rests 15' from the ramp to the Temple's second floor. The top of the construction has been defaced and battered, although the semi-circular basin is only chipped. Leaning against the fountain is a glowing staff tipped with a ruby chrysanthemum. Non-trolls that graze the large tub or touch the staff will be attacked by an olive muck known as Bile Pudding (see new monster appendix). The intriguing staff, belonging to a slain elf, has no charges left. However, it is trapped with the High Shaman's paralytic Rune of Warding. The incline to **6**, steep enough to be strenuous for humanoid legs, has hundreds of cobweb gossamers dangling from above, sheared by the passing priests.

**6. Cloister Beast:** Exhumed from the Underwild Tar Pits and reanimated, a bituminous Ant Bull Zombie fills the air with the stench of sulfurous pitch. Slowed from a skin of dry asphaltum inches thick, it will wait for intruders to encroach upon **7**. The beetle-like beast (HD 8, DC 1, ATT 1, D 3d8 bite, blood drain) has hollow mandibles that can extract vital fluid from a bitten victim. If clenched for additional rounds, the damage applied will be a minimum of 12 points. At a corner in the right-hand wall is an archway concealed by a permanent illusion similar to the one in the Kontor. Individuals of good alignment that infiltrate this floor will cause the illusion to fade in 3 rounds, mobilizing a troop of eight Goblin Skeletons (HD 1, DC 6, ATT 1, D 1d6) in the revealed room. The silent soldiers, armed with short swords and crab shell shields, will join the fray with the undead insect or hearken to a shaman's command.

**7. Narsehv's Chapel:** In the lair of the High Shaman one is closer to the top of the Dark Troll cavern than the bottom. Slits in the tile-plated roof seem to glow blue when a puff of glowing fog skims the high turrets. The cold floor becomes a ledge for a single person when the projecting sanctum is explored. The vaulted space is open to **1**, so the pendent relic just out of reach can weep green ichor onto the runes below. Seized by a chained Tyrannosaur skull banded in iron is a suppurative cyst the color of snail shell, the calcified Liver of Xsaya-Narsehv!

Unless powerful magic is used to breach the chapel and convey PCs to this very spot, they will have encountered the High Shaman Kirjurok in a more populated chamber of the Keep. His preference would be to fight with the King, bolstered by Masungbod and his undead retainers. He doesn't wear accoutrements produced by the Kontor; a suit of Giant plate mail +4, mildly scratched, was obtained from a red dragon at the Multiversal Bazaar. To pulverize beatific sectarians, Kirjurok fights with a *Stibnite Staff of Nether Adyta*, which strikes divine adversaries for triple damage. The priests that unearth an artifact of Narsehv gain the ability to summon a unique monster. The High Shaman can call forth a Bile Pudding once per week, which he regularly confines to **5**. **Kirjurok the Doomsayer, Dark Troll High Shaman**: Priest 7, DC -1, HD 6, hp 38, ATT 1, D by weapon, regeneration, Spells - *Protection from Good, Cause Fear, Darkness, Chant, Speak with Animals, Resist Fire, Rune of Warding, Blindness, Icteric Drain* (see new spells). To avoid being ringed by intruders, the High Shaman applies Mole-Bat Salve which permits a short (2 turn) aerial jaunt per application. The chain for his unholy symbol is platinum with jasper chips, worth 1360 gp. In a silken pouch beneath his armor is a Multiversal Bazaar Token. Should all the cultists and undead succumb to righteous rivals, the vise of bone holding the deity's enduring viscera will be blasted by reverberant howls. The Liver will disappear inside a growing bubbling seep of ichor, which will sweep into the lorn chapel. Born of this putrid orb will be the Avatar of Xsaya-Narshev, a two-faced horror with no body or limbs. One profile is the skull of a leprous Ghoul, 10 feet from lower jaw to frontal suture, with black sapphire eyes and two pair of snapping shark heads in place of teeth. Piercing the temporals are the blood-filled eye sockets of the antipodal face, a vulture skull with a dripping black beak. No power short of a Wish will stop the evil being from beginning its rampage with a pursuit of the High Shaman's killers.

The dissolution of the infernal Avatar will destroy the runewheel and the gypsum crypt at the Kontor. Unexpectedly, a tornado of golden lighting will loom over

# Avatar of Xsaya Narsehv

the Citadel, funneling down to the Pteroc tower. Its stones will tear apart violently, spilling like gems from a slit purse and collapsing the bridge to the Bailiwick. Emerging from the magical maelstrom will be 20 foot tall warrior-saints from Gyeryong, the Jang-Gun of Thunder & Lightning. They will remove their golden helmets to reveal two Dragon Horse Yearlings, which will fly to the PCs and deliver a pair of scrolls. The first scripture will grant each surviving battler either a point of Strength or Constitution for 729 moon cycles. The punctilious second scroll explains how the paladins and monks of Gyeryong brought down Xsaya-Narsehv and his demon birds with 10,000 arrows of sunlight and the trampling hooves of nine blessed Dragon Horses. The lore also recounts how the malign creature's liver was buried in the earth, the eyes fed to a Kraken, and hands pinned beneath a silver altar festooned with the prayer beads of every native monk. The holy generals will circulate a message in the form of a shared dream before vanishing, identifying the Maho-Hanzaki as villians fostering the Eyes of Narsehv.

**8. Kirjurok's Lodging:** Unrolled behind a magic circle of velociraptor talons is a thin mattress of bugbear hide filled with tufts of Duergar beard hair. A tripod of iron ribs, fastened with pins to the floor, would presumably bear the shaman's armor and weapon. Where a bed pillow might be discovered is a large iron bowl containing slices of the Kontor's human flesh aspic. One foot from the benign circle of claws is a stack of grimoires:

- A lengthy treatise on hydraulic and gear driven devices written in Duergar. Secret pages detectable only by magic provide instructions for making a Carbuncle Idol.
- Notes about the dragon Gorangol and her lair divulged by tortured goblins.

- A *Libram of Forgettable Facetiae* (see new magic items).
- The Codex of the Yethlyreom Necropoles, bound in canescent Sirine skin. The last entry encloses a filigreed bookmark with the the initials "CAS", worth 16 gp.

## Farms and Lodges of the Dark Trolls

Zone 5 on the hex map (pg. 18) is a "township" of Dark Troll livestock farmers and offspring too young for Army duty. The subterranean water supply that feeds the Fell Lagoons has an exposed tributary here which fills a fattening pond for crabs. The pool has sloped dikes around its perimeter so the Large Crabs (see *FO!* #3) can't escape. The hatchery is tended by Troll Matrons and some Elder Trolls. Curious Troll tykes are kept away from the 60 pound, cantankerous crustaceans. Instead, the youths assist with the numerous iguana and eight-legged possum hutches on the opposite end of the village. For every dry stone cabin, there are 1d10 clay garden pots for carrying Underwild greens to the meat animals. Drums fashioned from mole-bat membrane will be percussed to warn the Citadel of an attack. The population count stands at 22 Elder Troll males, 38 Matrons, and 40 youths. Secluded near geothermally heated mud pits are 3-8 private stone lodges for retiring nobles and wayward hunters. The villas wrap around the pleasant mud pools, making them part of a closed courtyard. Although independent, each lodge master must keep a Blood Thump ready for responding to any royal mandate. The properties will also house 1d3 Matrons and 1d6 pet Claw Maws. The lodge that General Agradenv has converted into his Underwild Snuff mill is well defended by 10 troglodyte Zombies armed with crossbows and a Masarytbod wielding a Trident of Submission. The market value of the cured leaf stockpile here would be no less than 2500 gp.

## Burial Niche Pillar

Deserted by both its dead denizens and tenacious mole-bats, the ornamental pillar of Zone 6 has only two significant features. Anyone not interested in the columbarium's chiseled art might be surprised to find a secret elevator to a mechanical room in Xanadun's Palace (*FO!* #11). Searching the base with True Sight will spot the sealed cab and its control buttons. PCs that release the custodial robot from Troblin captivity may observe it struggling to return to the elevator. A third method of gaining access would be to aim Hringvotak's science ring at the rock face from within 10 feet. The teak-lined transport opens with a jingle and has the ubiquitous (modern) arrow buttons, glowing pure white. Pulling at a chrome faceplate will cause it to swing out on a hidden hinge, displaying a third, blinking red button masked in black tape. A maniac that presses the prohibited selection is going to suffer the consequence of trifling with Gnomish machinery; the linear motion of the cab will accelerate and spin through assorted frontiers of reality! When the doors open at last, all occupants will be 1d3 years older and in one of the following extraterrestrial locations (**d12**):

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The Drugstore at the End of the Universe, where one old alien pushes a cart and looks for boxes of tissue. |
| 2 | Public Restroom 559 on Planet Tranzor K, which is one unbroken city of 75 million square miles. |
| 3 | The centipede canyons of Mesklimm, where gravity is 4x stronger and the temperature is a toasty 140° F. |
| 4 | An abandoned space station with a computerized counselor called Mrs. Pohl. |
| 5 | A labyrinthine bunker being assailed by Nimian Tripods from the first Zone War |
| 6 | The icy wastes of Arisia Prime, utilized as a parking lot for repulsor engine limousines. |
| 7 | The volcanic beaches of the Optimen, who are looking for Optigals with excellent nails. |
| 8 | Prison colony of the Co-Dominium Navy, where everyone has the choice to work or be vaporized. |
| 9 | The Draala city of Rithia, employer of thousands of talk show hosts. |
| 10 | The post-apocalyptic surface of Earth in 2343, when the Cadi-lacs triumph over the mutant Vol-vores. |
| 11 | The primitive continent of Phaesheia, protected by mechanical centaurs and rich in valuable orichalcum. |
| 12 | The Synapse Hive of Wire-Agents where prowling dream tasters sell their services. |

Depressing all three elevator control buttons will return the riders to the Dark Troll cavern.

## Hollow of the Infected

Just under a mile from the Citadel is a defensive bulwark of mining debris used to quash the advance of coprophagous beetles and diseased monsters. The only creatures that pass the line of Dark Troll crossbowmen are mole-bats, immune to the infection spread through the Hollow. When Blood Thumps carried Vohbod inspectors to the wall, they carried back parasites to the susceptible herd. Thus, the nine Varbod policing the zone are on foot. They will not trail any humanoid going deeper into the plagued territory. Perils of the rancid stockade include (**d6**):

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Split cave floors inundated with guano and the roving packs of beetles that consume it. Most of the insects are harmless, but there are Blister Beetles and Giant Curled Lice (hp 2, DC 7, ATT 1, bite for 1 point) that will swarm a fallen or immobile character. If contaminated clothing isn't washed or discarded in one day, the risk of disease increases dramatically. |
| 2 | Colonies of shelled Jekti (*FO!* #11) growing upwards to increase the effectiveness of their acid against climbing and flying creatures. |
| 3 | Worm-infested Claw Creepers (HD 5, DC 4, ATT 2, D |

| | |
|---|---|
| | 1d6x2 hook arms) living in the ruins of the preceding Dark Troll fort. The parasites have stricken the falcon-faced beasts with swollen limbs that impair their hunting prowess. The Creepers are deterred by fire, one reason the nearby Varbod have 2 barrels of pitch at their camp. |
| 4 | Exiled Troblin Sauropsiwere band (HD 4, DC 5, ATT 1, D 1d6 bite or weapon, Special: silver or magic weapon to hit, regeneration) trying to return to the Fell Lagoons. These former loggers have the power to change into Sphenacodon reptiles. When their plight was discovered by the trolls, the eight lycanthropes were isolated here. Fortunately, the magical disease makes them immune to the Hollow's burgeoning parasites. If assisted by PCs, the Troblins will draw them a map to a safe diving spot for giant pearls. |
| 5 | Mole-Bats (*FO!* #12) that will attack repeatedly until the party stinks of guano, ignites a sizable fire, or invokes an arcane barrier. |
| 6 | Two Duergar Wights (HD 4, DC 5, ATT 1, D 1d4, silver or magic weapons to hit, energy drain) concealed by a colossal pair of stone legs. The feminine limbs are positioned in a way to suggest the full figure was in a reclining stance. There is a 50% chance that touching the sculpted remains teleports the individual to King Hjorvart's statue in the Sparkling Grotto (*FO!* #6). |

## Draala Expedition Base

The Rytbod that discovered these spongy aliens in the dark tract of Zone 8 believed the things had spawned from the slime flume known to exist there. When a larger squad returned to challenge the invaders, their strong mounts slumped to the ground and swords became impossible to swing. While vitiated by senseless sorcery, the Dark Trolls could only watch as the anomalous jellies melded into a walking agglutination of untold strength! The loam-colored giant demonstrated this by snatching up each soldier, to be dangled in turn over a bath of deadly slime. Shockingly, not a single creature was harmed in the confrontation. Weeks later, Troblin miners found samples of the Draala gelatin relinquished on their route. Interested in making a deal, the crew from the Kontor met a trio of staff-bearing amoeba-men and (fractionally) ascertained their mission. In trade for the edible polyps and temporary settlement, the Draala wanted to be shown the dungeon environs rife with slime and puddings.

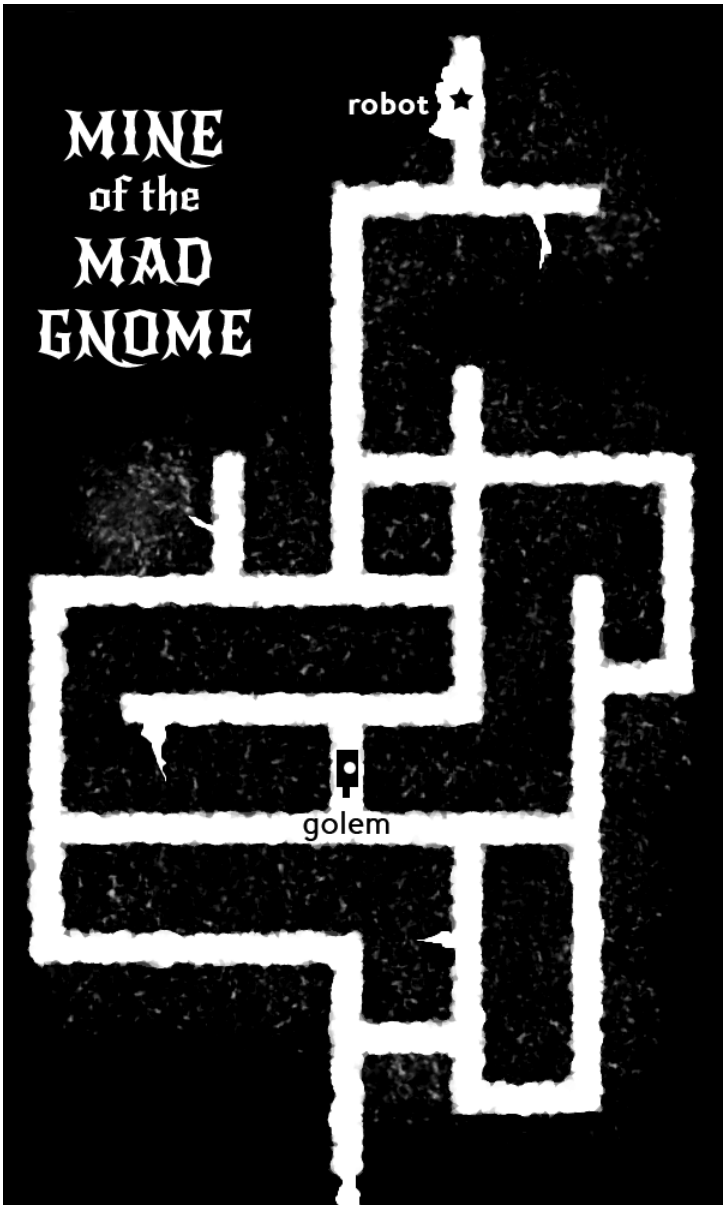
More accurately, the advanced Draala, part of the Exobiological Protoplasm Agency (E.P.A.), had been asked by the Guild of Reality Mechanics to administer the ooze problem in their workplace, this mega-dungeon. Locally, the Guild is made up of talented Gnomes and a few Arch-Mages. Already, a number of levels and their tenants have been troubled by superfluous ooze. To combat the expansion, the 16 Draala have started investigating sources and classifying the various species. Worrisomely, one of their scientists has not returned with his Troblin guide from the Fungal Forest. The Draala are also concerned that the violent trolls will only escort them for a higher price, and only to caves they want purged. **Draala Scientists**: HD 3, DC 7[4], ATT 1, D by weapon, elasticity, darkvision, camouflage, telepathic communication with oozes. Cinched around their waists are *Belts of Subatomic Shielding*, which account for an improved armor value. Half of the task force are armed with Neuro-Receptor Dampening Lances, which can sever the mind's signals to skeletal muscles. The result is involuntary relaxation for 1d10 rounds per charge (50 maximum) expended. A Save reduces the time numbed in half. Mindless creatures like slimes will simply move away from the staff"s energy field when sensed. With this device, a human could pass by oozes without trouble.

The busy expedition is housed in a dome of lobed concrete. Inside are work benches with bottled specimens and two futuristic machines. The Draala possess a *Tasty-Bake Glucoside Oven*, which generates both the gelatin bulb and a kind of fruit-flavored, twisted noodle. A second larger device, the *Multi-Mass Eukaryotic Fusor*, permits the Draala to merge up to half their number into a giant composite. The enlarged organism has HD equal to the sum of participating Draala, with the Fusor's effect lasting as long as desired. However, steady physical activity longer than 3 hours inflicts a kind of contusing damage, draining one health per fused individual every subsequent hour. If the PCs inquire about their plan of action upon locating the slime source, the aliens will say something about a "nuclear explosive".

## Duergar Iron Quarry

The laborious extraction of metals from veins has expanded Zone 9 from a cramped split to a wide gulf skirted with stone ramps and cairn-like piles. Only the iron mine, comprised of subdividing shafts, still provides a healthy amount of ore. Unless a scheduling error is made, one mining crew from the Kontor will always be present here. Fifty sappers could work here at a time, but the Trolls have noticed that intense clangors rouse Anvil Head Ants. Even with minimal digging, a cluster of 2d6 Ants will turn up every month. Their queen is below, having established the colony before the Kontor's smelter was active. A second dusty portal into the depths is shunned, even though the Duergar electrum was minted from silver and gold obtained there. Lurking in the sloping tunnel is a ruthless construct still in service to the Duergar. Assembled by the mad Gnome Schlegenthal IV, a Bronze Golem in the shape of a small German Jagdpanzer will greet all thieves with a blast from its lava cannon. The heavily plated, mobile artillery (HD 16 [80 hp], DC 0, ATT 1, D 5D6 lava munition, Special: searing blood, ramming) has one off-center mortar and a set of three jagged cogwheels on each side. The 22,000 pound construct is

possessed by the dead demi-human, and can engage PCs as an intelligent adversary. Very few passages in the mine are wide enough for anyone to flank or dodge the fiery golem. If a cannon barrage doesn't repel visitors, the tank will prod them towards dead-end paths. Targets crushed by the bronze chassis will take 2d10+2 damage from blunt force and high heat. A Save must be made to avoid magma (1d6 damage) that spits from puncturing wounds landed on the war machine. A complete inspection of the remaining lodes will uncover gold nuggets worth a total of 9800 gp, and **Schlegenthal's Cytronic Simulacrum**. This gnome-sized robot (HD 3, DC 4, ATT 1, D 1D6 saw, Special: enchanted spike) made of bronze sports a Pickelhaube helm and a reciprocating saw blade along the left forearm. Once per day, the construct's cap spike can generate a *Wall of Sparks* (see new spells) and negate 1d8 points of damage from a fire-based attack. It will serve a neutral PC for 2d6 months before losing power.




## New Monsters

**Anvil Head Ants**: HD 3, DC 3, ATT 1, D 1d6+1 bite, MV 15. The size of velociraptors, these warrior ants have heads like great blocks of caramel chitin. Anvil Head Ants attack in multiples if defending territory or maddened by jarring vibrations.

**Avatar of Xsaya-Narsehv**: HD 9, DC 0, ATT 2, D 4d4 shark bite / 2D6 beak, MV 9, Special: silver or magic weapon to hit, undead immunities, elemental resistance, miasma breath, spell abilities. The unholy avatar is a spectral demon that cannot be affected by Clerics beneath 9th level. It is immune to mind control and paralytic spells. Damage from fire or cold based attacks are reduced by half. Both of its rotting faces can act each round, biting at close range or using a special power. Twice per day, the avatar can expel a necrotic plume from its accipitrine visage, inflicting 3d8+4 damage to living victims that fail a save. The ghoulish visage can cast the following spells once per day: *Darkness 15' radius, Silence 15' radius, Dispel Magic, Fear Aura, Insect Swarm.* The Avatar can pursue the party that slays a High Priest of Narsehv without error, barring a move to an alternate plane.

**Bile Pudding**: HD 5, DC 6, ATT 1, D 1d10 acid, MV 6, Special: organic digestion, salt irritant. Only a priest of Xsaya-Narsehv may summon these putrid green globules. They maneuver like black pudding and dissolve non-metals like wood or leather. Unlike black puddings, they will not split from damage or resist elemental attack. Victims struck by the pudding suffer a -1 penalty to actions until they can wash off their salted wounds.

**Execrated Nawaab**: HD 5, DC 6, ATT 2, D 1D8 claws, Special: immune to 1st level spells, diseased bile gout. This undead creation resembles a skeleton slathered in green ichor. After rising from the sarcophagus of Narsehv, it can either attack with bony claws or expel the infectious patina in a 20' range. The Nawaab can be turned as a mummy.

**Giant Curled Lice**: HD 2 health, DC 7, ATT 1, D 1 point bite, MV 3. The giant louse is technically a crustacean, roughly the size of a loaf of bread. They scavenge dun-geons for food, and will try to draw blood from wounded or immobile creatures. Under certain conditions, the Lice can spread disease. The spherical shape they can assume has made them a favorite living missile for Goblin slingers.

**Hesperid**: HD 5, DC 6, ATT 1, D by weapon, MV 12, Special: Druidic magic gaze, flight. Easily mistaken for Medusae, the Hesperid are female herbivores with huge faceted eyes and tussocky sensors on their scalps. Most are also born with lepidote wings displaying bold patterns. Their magical abilities are focused by gazing upon a target. Just from a look a Hesperid can make telepathic contact with an insect, or bend ligneous structures. Much like Dryads, they prefer to live in secluded forests.

**Maho-Hanzaki**: HD 7, DC 5, ATT 1, D 1-3 bite, MV 6, Special: Charm Gaze, Spells. Allies of evil sea creatures and demons, the arcane salamanders of the coast of Gyeryong Island control an impressive number of charmed Hobgob-lins and Merrow. Accorded powers akin to the Naga, the feeble-looking gilled amphibians are on par with mid-level shamans. After organizing into a council dedicated to evil sorcery, the monsters discovered an artifact of Xsaya-Narsehv. The artifact is part of a set they plan to recover, which will insure their control of Gyeryong. All Maho-Hanzaki must keep their skin moist for at

least 12 hours a day or suffer an increasing penalty to attacks and spell casting. They are immune to poison.

**Sauropsiwere**: HD 4, DC 5, ATT 1, D 1d6 bite or by weapon, silver or magic weapon to hit, regeneration. Rare creatures of the Underwild that can transform into nine foot crested lizards. To escape from larger carnivores, they live among the Dimetrodons of the lagoon.

## New Spells

*Icteric Drain* (Priest 4; Range 3, Duration 1 round/level): When invoked, a target is drained of half his Strength for the duration. A successful save lessens the misery; two points of strength will return each following round until restored to normal.

*Wall of Sparks* (Mage 3, Range 4, Duration - 1 round/level): This bright orange barrier of flaring flecks inflicts 1d8+1 points of damage upon creatures passing through it. Residual cinders, unless extinguished, will contribute another 1d4 damage the following round against infringers.

## Protective Items:

*Baldric Of Defense*: Gyeryong style of enchanted substitute armor, ranging from DC 6 to 3.

*Belt of Subatomic Shielding*: creates a barrier of deflective energy that doesn't really stop energized particles.

*Helm of Frost and Fire Protection*: increases save bonuses and reduces damage of cold and heat magics. Rakishly designed, the helm has both a horn of gold flames and a horn of blue crystals.

*Labret of Protection*: enchanted jewelry favored by dark magicians with too many rings already.

*Pixane of Protection*: a small quantity of linked rings that protects the collar area. Not considered full armor, this item is popular among statuesque adventurers.

## Spell Effect Items:

*Incense Cone of Perpetuated Spellcraft*: spells memorized while this incense is lit will increase duration as if cast at one level higher.

*Jasper Geode of Perviousness*: once per day, the geode will grant the power of *Stone Shape* and *Rock to Mud*.

*Modra's Wand of Cobra Conjuration*: Modra had classmates that exploited his fear of snakes. To humble them, he made a Monster Summoning wand that brings forth a pair of 2 HD Spitting Cobras. Sadly, Modra the Mage was also greatly afraid of the T-Rex he encountered in the Deep Caves.

*Mole-Bat Salve*: a thin paste that permits short flights.

*Ofuda of Desecration*: an unholy talisman that dedicates items for use in evil rituals and damages good beings 3 hp/contact.

*Robe of the Senescent Marid*: grants the wearer the power to summon Sea Fog and cast *Water Breathing*. The former is a *Fog Cloud* that will also drench clothing and quench normal fires.

*Sceptre of Hypnotic Shimmer*: a crystal device which will emit one *Hypnotic Pattern* per charge expended.

*Statuette of Madame Monlaur*: when shattered, it summons the spirit of a wicked Vampire vixen for one round.

*Tallow Lamp of Mole-Bat Summoning*: allows the user to call to his aid a trio of Mole-Bats for as long as the lamp is lit. If two of the creatures are slain, the third will turn on the summoner.

*Wraith Cord of Transposition*: using a command thought while holding one end of this 30 foot cord will *Dimension Door* the owner to the opposite end. The cord can be used twice per day.

## Unique Item & Weapon Selections:

*Bane of Attestors*: this heavy iron gauntlet encloses the wielder's hand, and is capped with a crescent blade +2. The D8 weapon can detect alignment, and will inflict a 2D4 flaming burst upon lawful targets in addition to normal damage.

*Codex of the Yethlyreom Necropoles*: this ancient text records the treasures of, and directions to a fabled city of benevolent Undead. The city, once violated by necromancy, returned to its exemplary tenets and repudiated the horrific qualities of undeath. A mute boy lost in the desert found the necropoli, and was given a skeletal camel loaded with treasure to rebuild his life with. After penning the first version of the Codex, he was assassinated by an elder. Depraved searchers that attempt to follow the boy's directions will arrive in a city of Sand Hulks and Pit Fiends instead. Yethlyreom will only open its gates to those who struggle for virtue.

*Libram of Forgettable Facetiae*: a rambling collection of humorous stories about three friends, Squire Jack, Lady Priscilla, and her sister Snow. The libram is cursed, obliging a reader to spend at least 2 hours a day reading about the character's silly predicaments until the 720 page book is finished.

*Magnesian Blade of Khython*: an unfinished longsword +1 of white iron enchanted with Earth magic. The clay-hilted blade neutralizes certain chemistries, and acts as a Sword of Wounding versus acidic, aquatic, and heat producing monsters.

*Neuro-Receptor Dampening Lance*: see text description.

*Ouhi-Fudo*: see text description.

*Rug of Rigaudon*: depending on where the rug is placed, dancing victims could wind up attracting the wrong crowd. A save will let the affected move off the rug after spending one round bowing.

*Scaraboid Sledge of Destruction*: this D8 dire mace looks like a haft of black steel spearing a pair of bulbous beetles wrestling each other. Passive effects of the sledge include a -1 penalty to Charisma checks and an aura of wormwood wasting. The wasting will slowly rot plant material and wood within a 10' radius of the wielder. In battle, it has a +3 /+6 versus warm-blooded creatures bonus, and a brutal power known as the battering horn toss. Twice per day, a target up to 40 feet away can be struck with a gigantic scarab horn that erupts from the ground with enough force to heave a Monoclonius. Unless a save at -1 is made, a humanoid victim will take 1D12 damage and be knocked down. Immense creatures will take 1D6 damage and lose initiative.

*Spiracle Ring of Asphyxia*: see text description.

*Stibnite Staff of Nether Adyta*: used exclusively by evil priests, this metallic staff will inflict triple damage against good clerics and paladins.

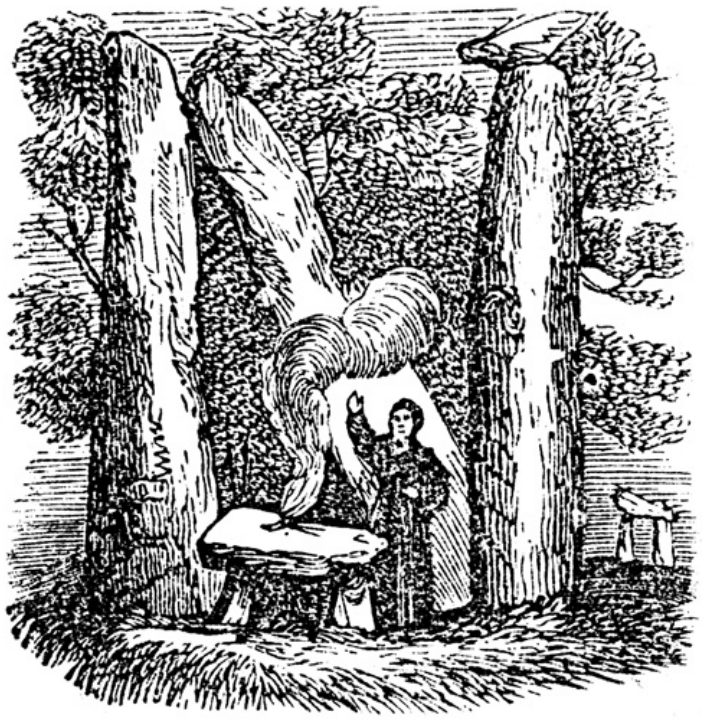
*Sword of Clashing Paths*: a two-handed sword +1 with runes that momentarily disable the barrier invoked by any type of shield spell. The cancellation only applies to strikes from the sword.

*Tasty-Bake Glucoside Oven*: a portable model the size of large chest, it makes two scrumptious foods from a reservoir of secretly formulated tablets.

*Weirding Waveform Amplifier*: see text description. Ω

this ore, a master smith can create weapons and armor that bear a +1 enchantment vs. undead and demonic creatures. The cost for a wizard to creature a magical item against these same creatures is half normal if this ore is used in its construction. Any ore removed from the outcrop is replaced by new deposits which appear overnight. However, before this hematite can be mined, permission from the gods must be granted. This is accomplished by a priest communing with the appropriate deity on behalf of the one wishing to collect the ore. Once permission is given, the hematite can be collected, but only in the amount required to produce one item. Hematite collected from the outcrop only provides the benefits noted above to the individual allowed to collect it. In the hands of the third party, it is normal iron ore. If hematite is collected from this site without asking prior permission or more than the needed amount of ore is taken, the offending party is struck by the *steel-curse*.

The steel-curse is a simple yet deadly form of divine retribution. Anytime the cursed individual misuses an item that contains steel or iron (a missed attack with a sword, an iron wand whose effect is negated, a missed ability check when using a tool, etc.), the individual must make a saving throw vs. spells or suffer damage from the item. A warrior would be struck by his own sword, a mage blasted by his own wand, and a craftsman would injury himself with his tool. Although the wound taken is seldom fatal, the gradual attrition the cursed party suffers from these injuries eventually leads to their demise. The steel-curse can only be removed by a Patriarch of the offended god, who usually requires the cursed to perform a quest or other method of atonement beforehand. Ω



# THE DARKNESS BENEATH

## Level 10: The Hall of Mirrors

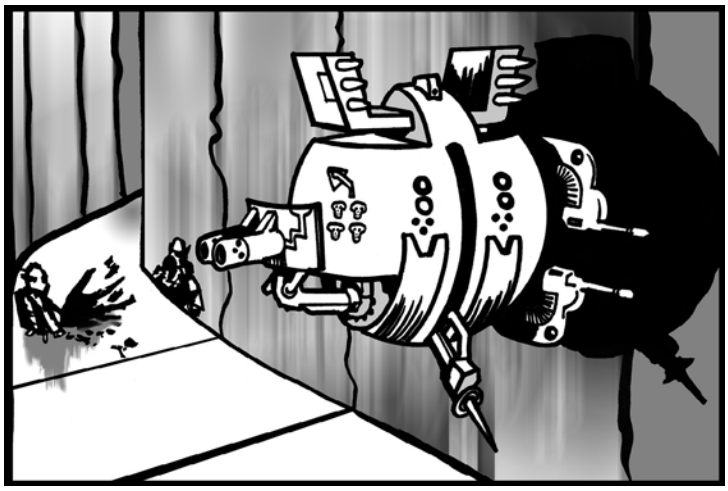
megadungeon installment by Calithena

**Introduction:** *The Hall of Mirrors* is a brutal deathtrap that may be plugged into just about any dungeon. Faced with a single high-tech monstrosity, a battle droid armed with lasers and missiles and protected by a force field in a symmetrical maze of reflecting mirrors, it will probably take all the ingenuity of even higher-level parties to survive. In *The Darkness Beneath,* the Hall of Mirrors can only be accessed from Level 6, *The Fane of Salicia* (*in* FO! #7 – *Ig*), and offers the only way down to the fabulous treasures and terrible technomonsters of Level 14, *The City of the Ancients*. It might serve well as a similar bottleneck in a megadungeon of your own devising.

**The Hall:** The walls, ceiling, and floors of this 280' square maze are all perfectly polished mirrors, made strong as adamant by technological manipulation. Corridor width and height are 20', with corners slightly cut off. These surfaces are utterly impervious to energy attacks, including magical ones, though a single physical strike doing more than 100 points of damage will shatter a 5' x 5' square. *Pass Through Walls*-type magic will work on them so long as it does not actually break them, however. (Some forms of this magic may actually create additional mirrored passageways; GM option.) From the PCs' point of view, there are no flaws in this scheme at the outset; the three secret doors can only be detected close at hand by an elf, thief, magic spell, or similar. All beings in the hall can be seen by all other beings in the hall at all times, regardless of location. Once a general sense for the structure of the hall has been arrived at (INT% per round if trying, or normally through mapping etc.), it is possible for highly intelligent entities to roughly pinpoint locations by guesswork; (INT-14)²% chance of success at this each round.

Such guesswork is not only important for teleporting. The battle droid in the maze is armed with lasers, which it can fire at the PCs every round from anywhere in the maze by using its targeting system to bounce its laser off mirrors (normal hit rolls only, no % roll required). Though *Ball of Fire* and *Mystic Missile* only work with line of sight here, *Lightningstrike* and perhaps some similar spells can hit the droid from long distances using the same technique.

**The Situation:** On the first full round that any PCs are in the corridor after opening the door at **7**, they will come under a barrage of laser fire. This will continue until the droid is destroyed or disabled or living PCs exit the maze,



in which case the droid will not pursue. If somehow the party comes up through the secret floor hatch at **8**, the same thing will happen, but only on the third full round after it opens (unless PCs use the delay to attack the droid, in which case reprisal will come instantly, as if the droid had specified in advance that it would attack as soon as the PCs did).

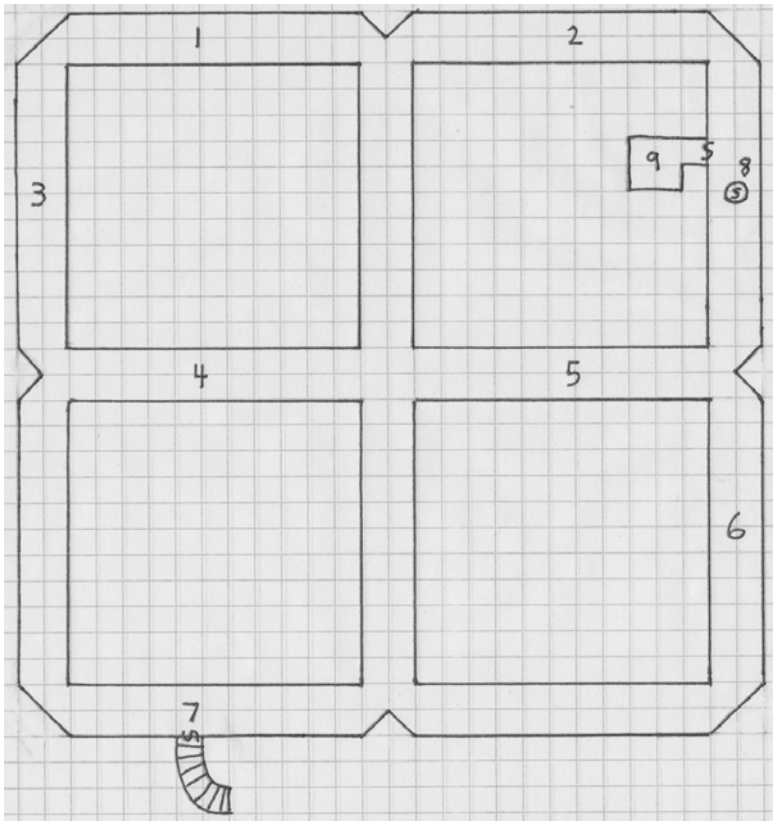
What happens when a laser, *lightningstrike*, or other similar attack misses its mark? It keeps going around the maze, of course! Each time this happens, roll on the following table:

| d12 | Energy Carom Result |
|---|---|
| 1-3 | Diffuses in corners/gets trapped in bounce pattern, no harm done |
| 4 | Comes around and strikes originator of energy |
| 5-7 | Strikes random target in maze (roll, including originator and original target) |
| 8 | Comes around to strike original target anyway |
| 9-12 | Still bouncing, roll for it again next round |

Characters struck in this way may make saving throws against the normal effects of the attack. If there is no save, they take half damage, with no hit rolls etc. required.

**The Droid:** The party's nemesis in this maze is an Ancient Battle Droid, a floating, spherical robot guardian. It has DC 0, HD 10, hp 50, and SPD 6, floating on anti-grav units about the maze. It has a **laser cannon** which it may fire every round, which does 4d6 damage (no save) and has no range modifier. Very highly polished shields, knightly plate armor (GM option), mirrors, and/or *Reflection* spells may divert this laser, creating a carom effect as above; some roll should be required for the PC to effect this, though it may not be difficult in some cases (e.g. the large polished mirror shield). Otherwise, the laser rolls to hit at the droid's HD 10 and only needs to hit a DC based on magical protection, dexterity, and shields, with a +1 to defense for plate mail and its ilk only. If targets come into line of sight, it can also launch 2 **missiles** each melee round (20 total), which do 3d6 on a direct hit (roll normally) but which also blow up as 8d6 non-magical *Balls of Fire* when they get near their targets whether they strike them or not. Saving throws are allowed for half damage; PCs in the blast radius of both missiles make one save against 12d6 rather than two separate ones. The droid is of course totally immune to poison, charm, mind control, death magic, and similar. Its sensors work in the normal spectrum, infrared, ultraviolet, and across various 5th-dimensional information pathways, meaning that all forms of invisibility, etc. are completely useless against it, though it cannot actually see into other planes of existence.

As if all that was not bad enough, the droid is also protected by a **force field** which is almost always up (though the computer takes it down in front of the laser cannon and missile tubes only just before they fire). This force field means that the droid makes its saves against all magic on a 2+, regardless of source; is only hit by physical weapons on a natural 20, regardless of their or their bearer's prowess; and only takes 1 point of damage from magic attack spells, or 2 if they are electricity-based. Even spells such as *Disintegration* will almost always be stopped by the force field. It is impossible to adjudicate all possible attacks and strategies against this force field, but it cannot be brought down by magic short of *Wishes* and the like, and in general it should eliminate, severely blunt, or make nearly impossible to pull off all attacks against the droid, except the most truly ingenious or genuinely warranted (e.g. if the party has obtained an anti-droid electric pulse gun on a previous foray into the dungeon).



The Ancient Battle Droid's only real weakness is that each time it actually takes damage there is a % chance equal to the number of hit points it takes that its circuits will go haywire. In this case it will start acting confused, as per your favorite confusion table or spell, and perhaps its semi-random behavior from that point onwards will give the PCs time to defeat it or find an exit. The droid is self-repairing, albeit slowly. It regains 1 hp per hour it is left alone, up to its maximum, and confused circuits will reset themselves as soon as 1 hp has been healed in this manner.

## The Hall

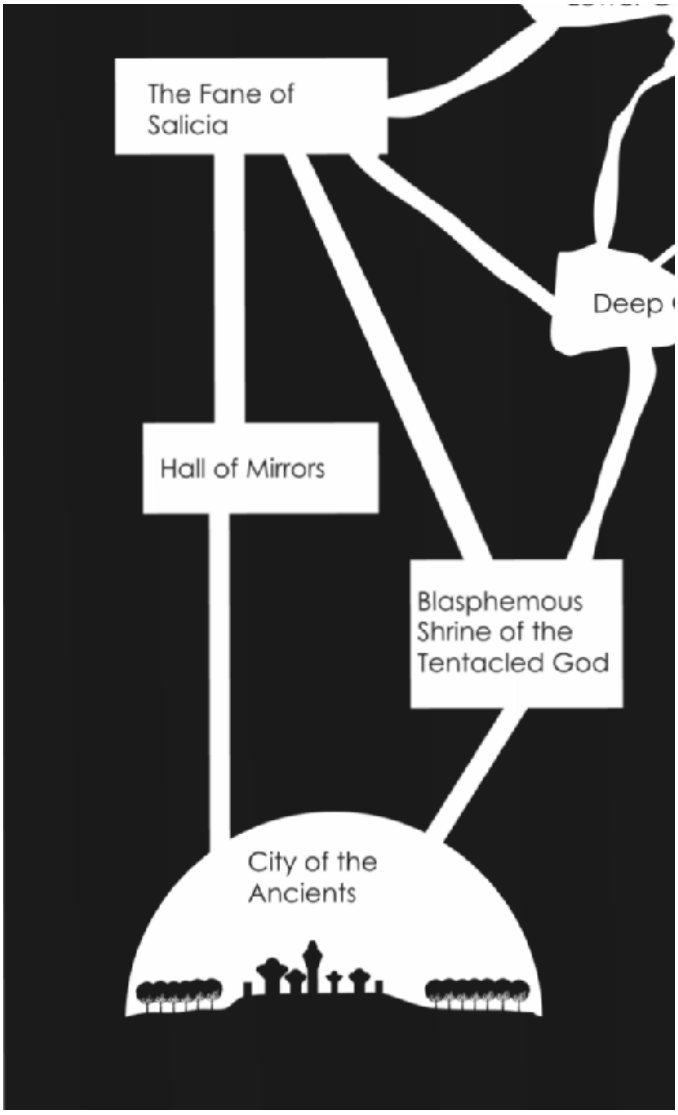
**1-6. Droid Starting Locations:** Each time the PCs enter or re-enter the hall, roll 1d6 to determine which of these areas it starts in. If the PCs do this very quickly it will be moving from its prior location to the number rolled instead. Remember, with the mirrored hallways and targeting computers it can start firing its laser at PCs every round from anywhere in the hall.

**7. Hidden Entry:** In *The Darkness Beneath*, the stair outside this door comes down from Salicia's fane. The lamia who rules that dread temple knows of the robot guardian here, though the likelihood she will communicate this knowledge to PCs is practically nil. From outside the Hall the door is not secret; it is, rather, ancient metal with curious glyphs and a circular vault-type wheel in its center. From inside, however, it is perfectly flush with the wall itself, and it does slowly swing shut if left alone. Opening the secret door from inside requires a flat hand to exert pressure on the wall at the right point. If someone has done this or seen it done they can do it again without trouble; a thief, elf, or hobbit who knows where the door is has a 50% chance to do it right each round, a mage or dwarf 20%, and any other PC only 10%. If PCs let the door close and run around the maze they will almost assuredly not recall its exact location, in which case they must search for it from this side normally.

**8. Hidden Exits:** In this section of the maze there are two secret doors, one a ground-hatch and the other a wall door. Both are detected and opened in the same manner as that at **7**; both are likewise completely flush with the wall and indiscernible to normal sight. The mirrors also have an odd distortion effect here: spells which detect exits, stairs, hatches, secret doors, etc. reveal this general location but not the precise location of either of these exits. They will have to be searched for…The floor hatch leads down to a wondrous City of the Ancients in *The Darkness Benath*; in your game it should probably lead to some similar location of wonder and intrigue, as you see fit.

**9. Supply, Maintenance, and Control Chamber:** This hidden room does not have mirrored walls. It contains video monitors showing the entire maze both in schematic form and through surveillance cameras embedded in the mirrors. A large and obvious yellow button will shut the robot down for one hour, but beyond that no control can be taken over the droid from here. There are also 21 full crates of 20 missiles each, though they cannot be fired without telekinesis or appropriate device (a mechanician of sufficient level might be able to rig a ballista…), and four empty crates which used to contain the same. The battle droid can command this and the other doors in the Hall to open, but will never do so when any intruders are present. PCs highly intent on vandalism can eventually wipe out the computer here, but this has no effect on the droid, alas. If any PCs make it into this area while the droid is aware, it will immediately make their incapacitation its top priority.

**Afterword:** When the Ancients long ago departed from the lands above to occupy their underground city, they left this guardian behind to ensure that they would not be followed. In the millennia that came since, none have succeeded in doing so. The City was breached from a different direction, however, by the dread tentacled servitors of Thuul; but that way is perhaps even more terrible than this, and will be detailed on another occasion. Ω



# Level 11: Fungus Forest and Mold Falls

megadungeon installment by Makofan

Accessed from the Lower Caves, but rarely visited even by the fierce dark trolls, is the vast expanse of the fungus forest. Closely grown mushrooms tower to heights of over one hundred feet, fed by veins of radioactive ore and enabled by the height of the gigantic cavern that houses them. Strange insects, inimitable intelligent denizens, and the odd aberration co-exist in a nightmarish world of silence permeated with hallucinogenic spores. The party may find incredible riches or gruesome death, but not necessarily in equal parts! There are hidden sanctuaries for the clever to find, and not every threat must be fought.

If used as part of *The Darkness Beneaath*, this level connects via a trip over the spectacular Mold Falls to the Slime Pits (level 13). The players may discover powerful technology, or even a new sentient species – so put on your Hat of Paranoia and let's go!

**A. The Fungus Forest.** The bulk of the map is taken up by the Fungus Forest proper, and most travel will be made in generic terrain where the Referee must improvise the details. This section gives the general character of the forest, along with helpful tables to generate conflicts, events, color and ideas. Various parts of the map are labeled with their own letter, and will be discussed in a separate section specific to the location. These include the fungal gardens of the dark trolls, the caterpillar lair, the fungemoth of the fountain, the sanctuary of the dysfunctional druid, the mold falls, the guarded grove, the enchanted circle, the enclave of the fungents, the lake of voices, the radiation rift, the demesne of the fungeyes, the plateau of the mantis folk, the sparkling spring, the slime wyrm's waterfall, techno caves, and the canopy.

The fungus forest grows in a huge natural cavern that averages 150 feet in height and in some instances surpasses 200. The lightly-soiled ground is uneven, with common gradients often descending or ascending five to ten feet. In the far west is the large plateau of the mantis men perched on a 100 foot cliff, and in the north-east corner is a small platform where the dark trolls grow their fungi. Scattered shallow streams meander sluggishly through constricted limestone passages worn from slow erosion, hiding the occasional treacherous sinkhole. The temperature is always warm and humid, reminiscent of a muggy summer afternoon before a thunderstorm. Very slow breezes occasionally swirl, generated by humid air meeting various bodies of water and the cold emanating from the techno caves. Millions of invisible spores get caught up in these breezes, and occasionally waft their particular inflictions on unsuspecting parties. The air is slightly obscuring due to the millions of particles, and vision is limited to about 60' even with full illumination.

The walls and cliffs of the cavern are covered with a variety of lichens, moss and mold. Most are fluorescent, providing a light that will not penetrate more than two or three feet, but which can be seen from a far distance. Many bare patches can be seen, evidence of feeding insects. Any time the party is in sight of a wall, the referee should place 1-6 giant insects, such as beetles, ants, moths, flies, locusts, feeding on the bounty, and one or two lichens, mosses, or molds. These insects are most likely not aggressive, but any disturbance of their routine will surely generate a reaction. Of course, only experimentation will reveal the property of the lichen covering.

The main mushrooms of the fungus forest are the giants that average 5 to 10 feet in diameter and 60 to 70 feet of stalk before branching into inverted trumpets that form an interlocking canopy. Most of these club fungi are some variation of purple, with mulberry being the standard base from which they deviate. Lime-green spots that drip a milky ichor generously cover the stalks, the ichor emitting an odor akin to rotting meat that attracts giant insects. The club fungi are inedible to most mammals, including humans, but will cause sickness at worst to those ingesting. Many are encircled by parasitical shelf fungi of different sorts and colors whose characteristics must be decided by the Referee. Some shelf fungi are wide enough, thick enough and extensive enough to provide a spiral passageway leading up to the canopy.

Moths with a wingspan of twelve to fifteen feet circle over the top canopy, spiraling down to feed on the fungus sap that pools in the trumpet hollows. Hunting arachnids the size of large dogs prepare to pounce on the unwary moths, while, waiting in inhuman stillness and silence on their cliffs, are the mantis men, ready to eat any moth that flutters too close. At regular intervals the mantis men organize brief hunting sorties, and occasionally the spectacle of a soaring mating flight punctuates the usually quiet forest.

A profusion of lesser fungi, rising perhaps to ten or twenty feet, chokes the gaps between the trunk-stalks. Crammed beneath them are still more fungi that reach waist height. Travel through this undergrowth is painfully slow, perhaps 120'/turn at best. These fungi come in all shapes and colors, from the well-known umbrella or toadstool mushrooms to giant jack-o-lanterns, ten-foot diameter puffballs that erupt deadly toxins, spiny hedgehog mushrooms, and prized giant truffles. It is suggested that the Referee make most varieties poisonous or inedible, but occasionally spice things up with a fungus of singular flavor or effect.

The party may stumble upon winding paths through the forest, which allow rapid movement, but beware, because the trails must be there for a reason! Encounters will be much more likely on a trail. There are six detailed shelf fungi paths that look promising to a traveler wishing to reach the forest canopy. The Referee should feel free to add more to taste. A careful party can typically follow these to the canopy in about half an hour, while a skillful thief could probably make it in five minutes.

**A1. Shelf Fungus Spiral – The Flies.** This spiraling shelf is 1-2' thick, averages 7' in width, and starts at ground level. It is umber colored with carmine streaks. The fungus trunk has more spots than most, and drips copious amounts of smelly, viscous fluid. This in turn attracts giant carnivorous flies, which are only too eager to feast on fresh meat (the party!) instead. Each turn spent on the shelf has a 30% chance of discovering/attracting 2-8 of these giant (3' long) flies, who will immediately attack the party. These flies bite, then hold on and suck blood every round thereafter until they have sucked as many hit points from their victim as the fly's original hit points. Characters attacking flies that are attached (to themselves or others) suffer a -4 penalty to hit. Furthermore, any character who has a fly attached must roll a d6 each round. On a 1 they stumble over the edge and fall to the cavern floor, taking 1d6 damage for every 10' they fall, and on a 2 they are off balance and fall down. The flies will normally stay attached until they are under 5 hit points, or full, but any energy attack (fire/lightning/cold), even a torch, will make them immediately disengage.

**Giant Carnivorous Flies** AL:N, MV: 180' (60'), DC 6, HD 3, #AT 1, DG 1d6, ML 8, Special: successful hit causes fly to latch on and suck 1d6 hit points per turn until full or driven off.

**A2. Shelf Fungus Spiral – The Break.** This aquamarine shelf fungus is only 5' wide and about a foot thick, tapering to 6". Characters should hug the trunk – if walking two wide, the outside character should make a routine dexterity/agility roll or fall off the shelf, plummeting to the cavern floor. About 70' up, the shelf fungi has been broken away. The party must turn back, unless they can somehow make the next turning about 30' above them.

**A3. Shelf Fungus Spiral - The Spider Ramp.** This shelf has the same characteristics as **A1** – umber colored, 7' in width, 1-2' thick. This ramp is a favored means of access to the forest floor for the canopy-top spiders. Depending on the speed of the party, the GM should roll 1d6 for an encounter 2 or 3 times: on a 1 they encounter 1-6 Giant Wolf Spiders, on a 2 1d3 of same eating giant fly corpses.

**Giant Wolf Spiders** AL:N, MV: 150' (50'), DC 6, HD 4, #AT 1, DG 1d6, ML 8, Special: Save vs poison or die, Surprise on a 1-4.

**A4. Shelf Fungus Spiral – The Slippery Shelf.** This maroon shelf fungus is extremely slippery. There will be no encounters on this spiral shelf, but movement is at half speed, and every character must make a Dexterity roll each round or fall down, with a 2 in 6 chance of then falling off the ledge, unless secured in some way.

**A5. Shelf Fungus Spiral – The Caterpillar Highway.** This shelf is close to the giant caterpillar nest, and occasionally one of the giant caterpillar horrors controlled by *cordyceps lloydii* will get the urge to climb to the canopy top by means of this shelf, then explode at the canopy top, scattering itself and parasitic fungi spores in a wide radius. There is a small chance (1 in 6) that a climbing horror will overtake the party, and attack.

**Caterpillar Horror** AL:N, MV: 120' (40'), DC 3, HD 8, #AT 1, DG 2d6 bite, ML 12, Special: Save vs poison or disease, turn into undead zombie in 2 days.

**A6. Shelf Fungi Spiral – The Safe Shelf.** The party has luckily hit on a seldom-used spiral. The party will have no encounters while travelling this wide purple shelf .

**Color List for Mushrooms**

For an emphasis on the unnatural colors in the fungus forest, try using some of these hues instead of just saying "a brown mushroom." See page 84 for shape suggestions.

**Brown:** bole (reddish brown/terra rosa), umber (light clay brown), chocolate (rich, dark brown), tan (pale leather – buckskin), chestnut (Indian red), ochre (light yellow-brown), sepia (dark grey-brown)

**Blue**: azure (sky-blue), ceil (pale blue with some violet), cyan (bright aqua blue), glaucous (waxy grayish-blue), zaffre (deep royal blue), indigo (dark purplish-blue), iris (light purple-blue), periwinkle (lavender blue)

**Yellow:** amber (orange-yellow), buff (pale yellow brown), beige (pale yellowish-cream), saffron (golden yellow), citrine (dark golden-yellow), fulvous (reddish butterscotch), gamboge (resinous dark mustard), icterine (jaundice yellow), mustard (slightly brownish yellow)

**Red**: crimson (strong deep red with a hint of blue), amaranth (reddish rose color), carmine (deep ruby red), coquelicot (bright poppy red), vermillion (orangish red), maroon (dark red with hints of brown), rust (reddish-brown)

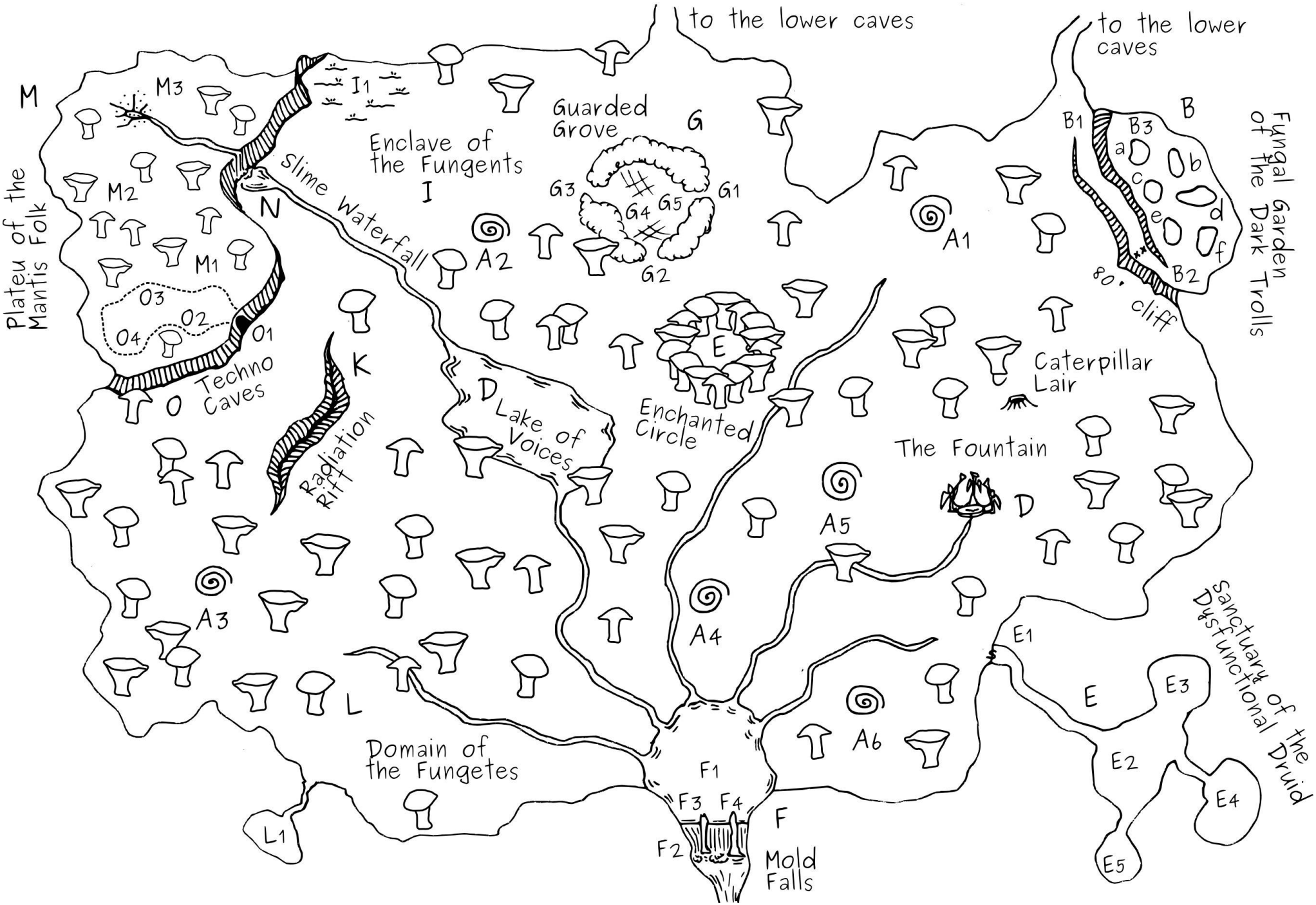
**Orange:** apricot (pastel orange/sandstone), coral (light orange with a touch of pink), persimmon (medium orange-red), salmon (pale pinkish orange), jonquil (orange with a bit of cream)

**Purple:** violet (medium blusih-purple), mulberry (pinkish reddish purple), orchid (light purple with touch of grey), magenta (strong, bright but light purple), fuchsia (same color as magenta), aubergine (dark purple with black overtones)

**Black:** jet, ebony, obsidian

**White:** ecru (pale grayish-yellow white), cream (yellowish white), isabelline (grayish yellow-white), ivory (gray-white), pearl

# The Fungus Forest and the Mold Falls



Extended stays in the forest are likely to bring encounters with the denizens. Each turn, the referee should roll a d6 – on a 6, there is an encounter. If on a trail, encounters occur on a 5 or 6. The fungus forest can be divided into four quadrants (North East, North West, South East and South West); the referee should roll 2d6 and consult the appropriate table.

**North East Quadrant Random Encounters**
2 – 1 Fungent
3 – 1 Mycedryad
4 – The Dysfunctional Druid
5 – EVENT: Spore Cloud
6 – 4-8 Dark Trolls on Blood Thumps
7 – 2-4 Caterpillar Horrors
8 – TRAP: Roll on Trap Table
9 – 4-6 Fairies
10 – NOISE: Squeal of a Wild Boar
11 – 1 Mutated Spider
12 – The Fungemoth

**North West Quadrant Random Encounters**
2 – Slime Wyrm
3 – 1-6 Giant Wasps
4 – 1-3 Fungents
5 – EVENT: Spore Cloud
6 – 1-3 Wisps
7 – 7-12 Faeries
8 – TRAP: Roll on Trap Table
9 – 1-4 Mutated Spiders
10 – NOISE: Faerie Laughter
11 – 2-20 Creeping Molds
12 – 4-8 Dark Trolls on Blood Thumps

**South East Quadrant Random Encounters**
2 – 1 Fungeye
3 – 2-12 Moon Moths
4 – 1-6 Tricerabeetles
5 – EVENT: Spore Cloud
6 – The Dysfunctional Druid
7 – 2-4 Caterpillar Horrors
8 – TRAP: Roll on Trap Table
9 – 2-6 Wild Boars
10 – NOISE: Over the Falls
11 – The Fungemoth
12 – 1 Giant Purplepede

**Streams**: The streams that meander through the forest are an inch or two deep at most, and flow at less than walking pace. There is a 1 in 20 chance when crossing a stream of a sinkhole 5-10' deep that will swallow characters. If this occurs, mark it on the map for future remembrance.

**South West Quadrant Random Encounters**
2 – 1-2 Mutated Spiders
3 – 2-4 Caterpillar Horrors
4 – 2-6 Wild Boars
5 – EVENT: Spore Cloud
6 – The Dysfunctional Druid
7 – 1-3 Fungeyes with 2-12 Blast Spores
8 – TRAP: Roll on Trap Table
9 – 2-20 Blast Spores
10 – NOISE: Over the Falls
11 – 1-6 Fungents
12 – 3-6 Faeries

**Event: Spore Cloud**
The breezes sweep a dense cloud of billions of spores over the party. Roll 1d6 for effect – each member must save vs poison or suffer the effect rolled:

1- Sleep (slumber lasting 1d6 turns)
2- Poison (save at +2 or asphyxiate)
3- Hallucinations (DM's choice, but characters should be delusional and paranoid, unable to function properly)
4- Disease (if not cured withn 2 days becomes zombies)
5- Rage (save vs spells or attack nearest being until it is slain – will even attack friends)
6- Levitation (character becomes lighter than air and will slowly drift in a random direction 20' per turn, 10 feet off the ground. Effect lasts 1d6 turns)

**Trap Table**
1 – 6'-10' deep sinkhole filled with Moon Slime
2 – trailing party member gets attacked by Noose Fungi
3 – random large fungi shoots out a penetrating tube; attacks as 8 HD monster, does 1d6 damage/round character is impaled
4 – erupting Giant Puffball
5 – a Giant Stinkhorn emerges
6 – Psionic Mold

**Common Mushroom Shapes**

**Umbrella:** Common mushroom shape (toadstools, button mushrooms)

**Club:** Small dense head

**Trumpet:** Inverted umbrella cap.

**Puffballs:** round mushrooms

**Shelf:** wide, flat and thick

**Phallales:** phallus-shaped

**B. The Fungal Gardens of the Dark Trolls.** There are two reasons that the Dark Trolls visit this forest – to tend their fungal gardens and to seek out new beneficial species of fungus. This is their gardens, a cleared area on a large plateau in the North-East corner of the cavern.

**B1. The Ramp.** There is a wide, limestone ramp leading up in a curve towards what looks like a plateau. The ramp is 20' wide, wet and slippery. A sheer cliff looms up on the left, and a sheer drop falls away on the right. This passage climbs 80' vertically in only 150' length, so its steep gradient and treacherous footing demand caution. A view from the ramp will show nothing but looming mushroom trunks as far as illumination permits. There is a 5% chance (1 in 20) of meeting a dark troll caravan consisting of four dinosaur riders, a shaman, and two pack dinosaurs laden with edible and medicinal fungi coming from the garden above. This caravan will be haughty and hostile, demanding that the party surrender or die. The trolls will gladly accept surrender, disarming and binding the party. Any lengthy hesitation in reply will result in combat.

**Dark Troll Caravan**

**4 Dark Trolls**: AL: L , MV: 120' (40'), DC 4, HD 6+3, #AT: 1, DG: 1d6+2 , ML: 9, Special: Regenerate 3 hp/round

**4 Blood Thumps:** AL: N, MV: 120' (40'), DC 4, HD 10, #AT:1 , DG: 2d6, ML: 7, Special: Trample charge

**1 Shaman**: AL: L , MV: 120' (40'), DC 4, HD 6+3, #AT: 1, DG: 1d6+2 , ML: 9, Special: Regenerate 3 hp/round, spells *Darkness, Cause Fear, Detect Charm, Speak with Animals, Cure Disease, Tongues*

**Treasure:** 50 pounds of each of the six fungus types from the fungal gardens (**B3**), general foodstuffs, 5000 gold pieces of toll collected along the way

**B2. The Boar Barrier.** About 30' from the top of the ramp is an 8' high prickly fence with wooden stakes jutting out, placed there mainly to deter wild boars from invading the gardens and eating the mushrooms and truffles found there. There are two heavy ropes leading from the barrier to the top of the ramp. By means of this arrangement, the barrier can be hauled up when a caravan arrives. Manning the barrier are two bored dark trolls, armed with giant boar spears. Their blood thump mounts lie placidly behind them. They will challenge any approaching party. They are content to fight from behind the wall with their boar spears, staying out of melee reach of the party, but if the party has too much ranged magic, they will mount their blood thumps, pull aside the barrier, and charge down side by side, sweeping the party over the edge.

**2 Dark Trolls**: AL: L , MV: 120' (40'), DC 4, HD 6+3, #AT: 1, DG: 1d6+2 , ML: 9, Special: Regenerate 3 hp/round

**2 Blood Thumps:** AL: N, MV: 120' (40'), DC 4, HD 10, #AT:1 , DG: 2d6, ML: 7, Special: Trample charge

The blood thumps are adapted to their environment, but PCs will be at a disadvantage fighting downhill on a slippery slope. Each round the players should make a check to see if they slip and fall, losing their chance to take an action that turn.

**Characteristic Checks:** Some game systems do not have a mechanism for ability checks. Below are some suggested ways to handle checks:

1) **The d6 Check**: check succeeds on a 1 or a 2 on a d6, with a +1 or -1 for a high or low attribute
2) **The d20 check**: roll attribute or lower on a d20
3) **The bell curve check**: roll attribute or lower with 3d6 (or 4d6 for more difficult situations)

As Referee it is up to you to provide a workable system for the players.

**B3. The Fungal Gardens.** The fungal gardens occupy the entirety of the approximately 100' x 150' plateau. The gardens consist of massive amounts of dinosaur fertilizer seeded with different mushroom species. These fungi are known only to the dark trolls, and their effects can only be discovered by experimental ingestion (see page 90 for a table). There are six patches labelled '**a**' through '**f**'.

a – indigo morels with glowing coral-covered spots. These are edible fungi, and are a staple food for the dark trolls.

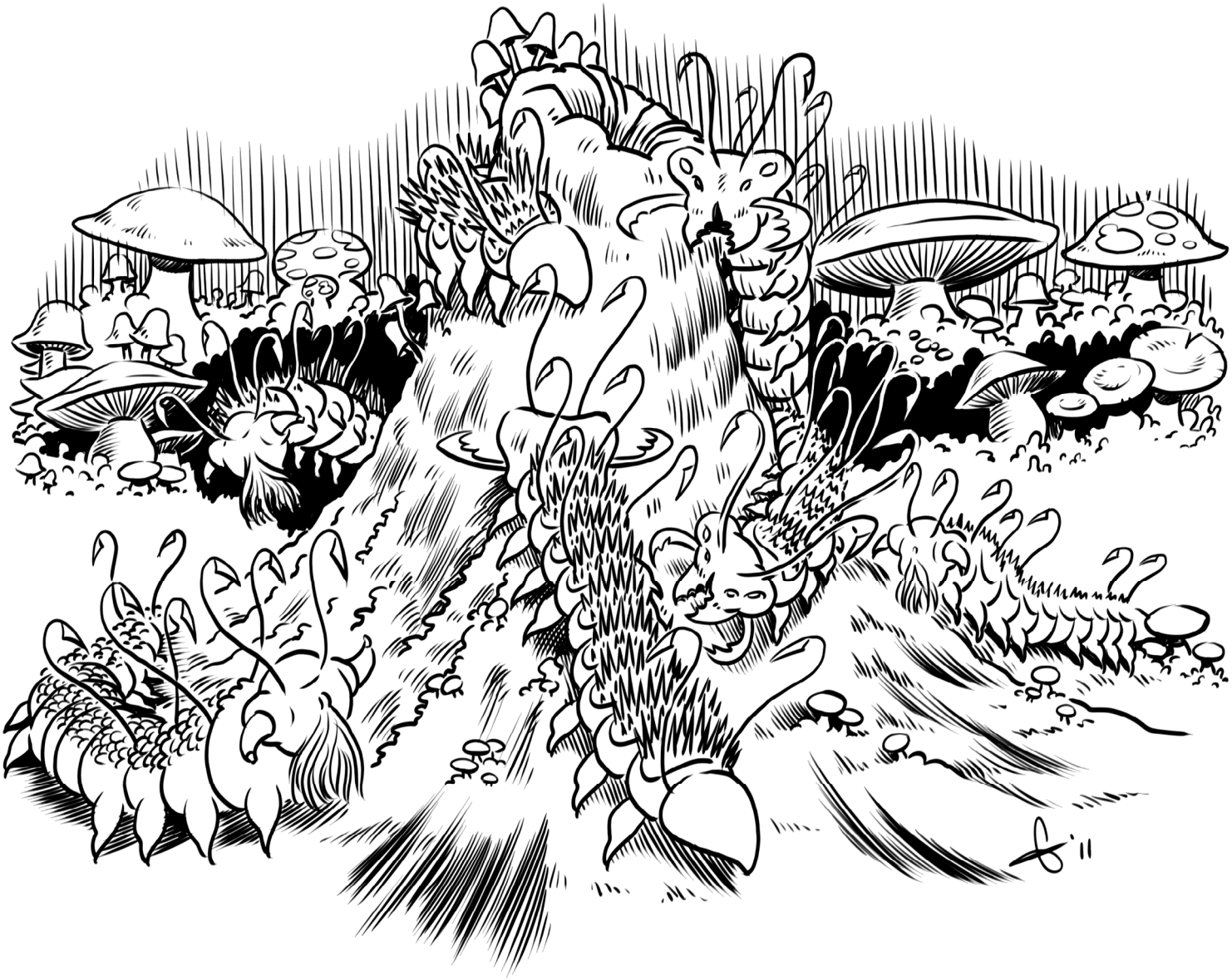
b – citrine stalks with coquelicot caps. These mushrooms are hallucinogenic. The character has one sense (Referee's choice) impaired or twisted for 1d6 hours. In the right frame of mind this could be pleasurable. In combat or exploration it could be fatal.

c – fulvous puffball. These mushrooms cause blindness if eaten, but cure blindness if a paste made from alcohol and the puffball is plastered on the eyes.

d – lime and fuschia-striped toadstools. These mushrooms are a delicacy, and can be sold to any chef (or the Halfway Inn on Level 5) for 100 gold pieces per pound.

e – flat shelf fungi of a mulberry color edged with indigo. These mushrooms are tasty and addictive. A few meals of these mushrooms will render humans and dwarves sterile. Any who eat these mushrooms will insist on taking along as many as they can carry, and partaking of them at every meal.

f – ultramarine umbrella mushrooms with zaffre-colored underside. The juice of these mushrooms creates a powerful ultramarine dye that is water insoluble.



**C. The Caterpillar Lair.** The Caterpillar Hill is home to a colony of Caterpillar Horrors. Long ago, giant ants harvested a mutated species of *cordyceps lloydii* as food. The ants were all killed off by the fungi, but now there is a new victim – caterpillar horrors. They inhabit the deserted ant lair. This violet- and apricot-colored club fungus poisoned the caterpillars, then infested their bodies and animated them. Now the mind-controlled zombie caterpillars roam the forest looking for new hosts. Any player injured by a caterpillar horror must make a saving throw or turn into a mind-controlled zombie in two days.

**C1. The Clearing.** In a small cleared patch in the forest rises a 12' high hill made of piled up soil and small rocks. There is a 2-in-6 chance that 1-6 Caterpillar Horrors will be roaming in the vicinity, scavenging, guarding or pruning the forest. These horrors will attack the characters as soon as they are aware of them. If combat ensues, the mind fungus will send out a telepathic call for help. Each round, there will be a 2-in-6 chance of another 1-6 horrors arriving. After 40 horrors have been encountered, no more will arrive. If the party decides to flee, any horrors currently on the scene will chase the party implacably.

**C2. The Entrance.** The conical hill is fairly stable, packed down by the tread of countless trips. The party should have no trouble climbing it. At the entrance, and every turn spent in the tunnels thereafter, there is a 1-in-6 chance of encountering a horror. If the party does meet a horror while on the hill, they must roll a check to see if they fall while trying to fight on the sloping hill. The entrance itself is a 6' wide hole that slopes down into darkness at a 70° angle. The party will have to be lowered by a rope or have some special climbing, clinging. or levitating ability if they wish to enter. The horizontal rooms leading off to the sides of the shaft usually have 10' ceilings'. After 30' or so, all the tunnels are dug out of limestone rock, the result of years of ceaseless labor from the previous ant inhabitants.

**C3. Guard Rooms.** These rooms are occupied by two horrors. These, and all other encountered horrors, will telepathically call for help as outlined in **C1**.

**C4. Empty Rooms.** Currently bare and unoccupied.

**C5. Food Rooms.** These rooms are lined with the mutated *cordyceps lloydii*. Any contact with these deadly fungi has a chance of causing zombie disease (as outlined in the introduction to the lair). There is a 50% chance of 1d6 horrors being present.

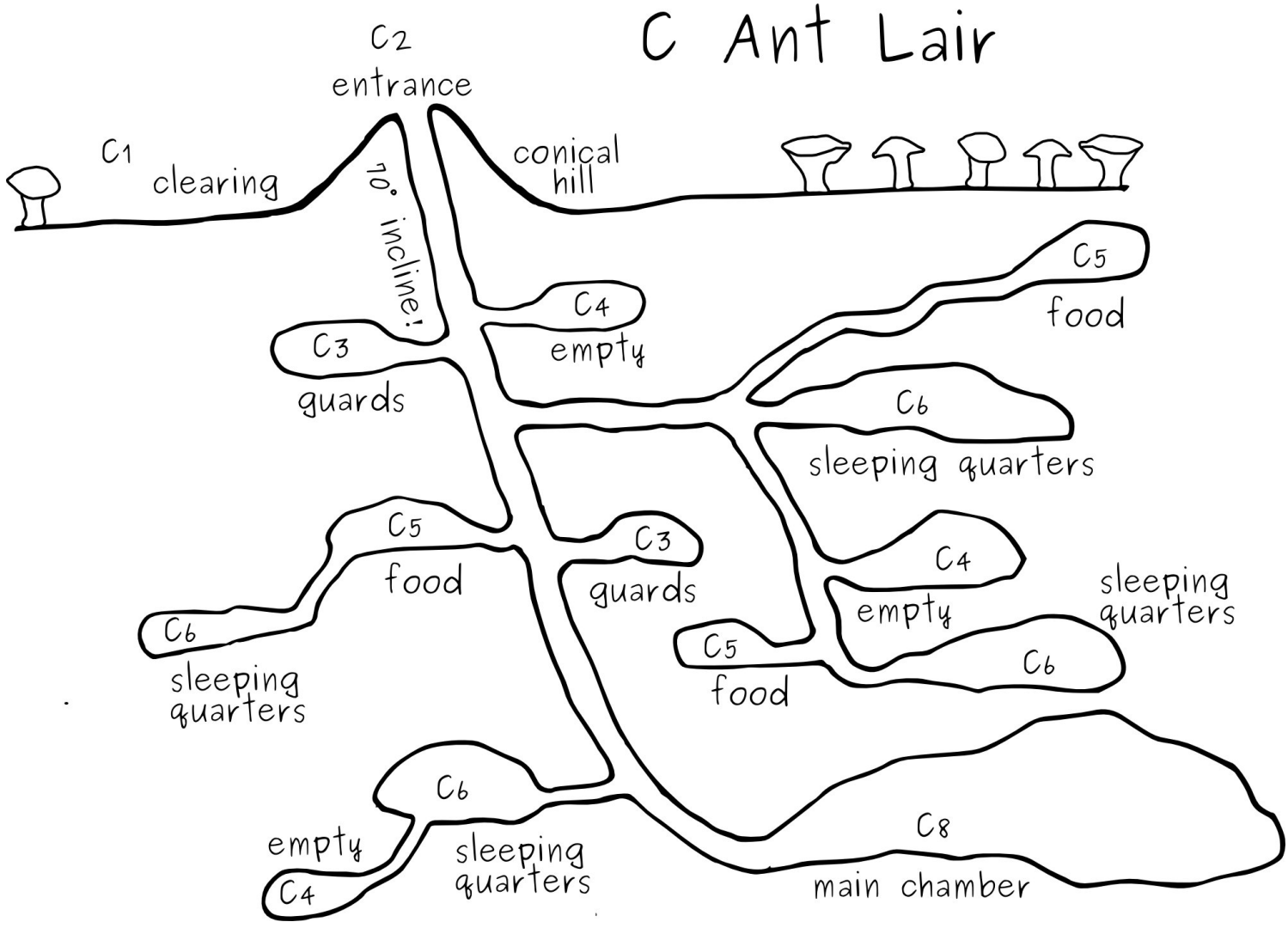
**C6. Sleeping Quarters.** Sleeping Quarters are occupied by 6-30 horrors, half in the chrysalid stage.

**C7. Dead Adventurer's Room.** The mold-covered remains of an adventurer who journeyed with the Dysfunctional Druid (see **E**) lies here. Among the bones lies a horde of magic items and armor:

- 1 Dwarven Chain Mail of Invulnerability
- 1 Shield –2 of Missile Attraction
- 1 War Hammer +3, Returning
- 1 Ring of Weakness
- 20164 gold pieces
- 3384 silver pieces
- 36 gems averaging 200 gold/gem
- 12 pieces of jewellery totaling 11400 gold

The dwarven chain mail protects the wearer from all weapon attacks unless a natural 19 or 20 is rolled and hits – then the wearer takes triple damage from the critical nature of the hit.

**C8. The Main Chamber.** This large lair is filled with *cordyceps militaris*, 20 – 30 horrors, and two tons of fist-sized chunks of mithril-silver ore.



**D. The Fungemoth Fountain.** This spectacular fountain lies in a 50' circular clearing. It is made from polished rose granite, picturing three 30' tall angels with trumpets angled upwards, from which jet clear streams of water which fall and are collected in the pristine 40'round basin. Nothing can pollute these waters, and fungus spores will not settle in the catch basin. One draught of this fountain cures 6-21 damage, a second clears any diseases, and a third draught in one day acts as a potion of growth. After its effect wears off, any character who grew from it has a 10% chance to grow one inch in height permanently overnight. The fountain's water loses potency outside the clearing. The clearing is guarded by the fungemoth. Any character who enters the clearing will draw its ire. The fungemoth will not be noticed as it is the same height and color as the fungus forest 'trees' that make up the bulk of the vegetation. The fungemoth is animal cunning and implacable. Standing 100' high, it uses its two 6d6 area effect stomps to attack the characters (all in 10' square attacked roll separately for each character to see if they are hit). Those that avoid the stomp are placed in an adjacent square and must make a save vs Wands or fall to the ground, stunned for 1-4 rounds. Fleeing characters will attract 2-12 homing death spores each (1d6 damage and save vs poison or gain disease that turns you into a fungus in two days). The fungemoth has 32 HD, is DC –2 due to the density of its construction, attacks two squares per turn with area-effect 6d6 stomp, and can fire 2-12 homing death spores each at up to eight creatures. The fungemoth only takes half damage from weapons, and gets a saving throw even against spells that do not allow one. The fungemoth may be too deadly for characters to take in combat, but a clever or/desperate party may be able to find ways around it, like luring the giant ants to the clearing to fight it, or forming an alliance with another group, for example. The druid from **E** may have ways of dealing with the fungemoth.

**E. Sanctuary of the Dysfunctional Druid.** In the south-east corner of the forest, behind a hidden aperture in the cavern wall, is the sanctuary of Woebegone Kernoble, a druid stranded ten years ago by the demise of his adventuring party. Unstable, and addicted to the mushrooms which give him the power to survive this harsh environment, he can be a great friend or a deadly foe. No outside creatures will ever enter the sanctuary – it is a safe resting place as long as you do not anger the druid.

**E1. Cave Entrance.** This 10' high crack in the base of the cavern wall is choked by lichen and will not be noticed except by determined and deliberate searching. The crack itself is two feet wide, and curves 15' before emerging into an underground cave complex. There is a 5% chance that the party will encounter Woebegone if they pass within 30' of the entrance. If not encountered, and the party finds and enters the cave, there is a 50% chance that Woebegone is at home. There is a very simple trap here that Woebegone easily circumvents with his druid powers. Across the cave corridor is a 80' deep chasm, 5' wide. It is hidden by a moss-covered blanket. Any reasonably cautious character will spot the oddity in the flooring.

**E2. Main Cavern.** The main cavern is long and irregular. Various technological relics in non-working order are scattered about the room. Woebegone spends a lot of his time tinkering with these devices, seeking to find a way to restore their function. As yet he has not been successful except with one small crystal ball which randomly displays one of 6 short holographic dramas when touched. Besides the entrance from outside, there are three other exits from this cavern. They lead to the wild boar den, the mushroom larder, and Woebegone's chambers (**E3, E4,** and **E5**). Any entrance into this chamber, unless silent, will bring the three aggressive wild boars from the den to investigate.

**E3. Wild Boar Den.** This small, roughly circular room is home to 3 wild boars, pets of Woebegone. They will attack any characters not accompanied by the druid. The interior of the room is covered with 6-8 inches of mud. It is very smelly. There is no treasure here.

> **Wild Boars**: AL:N, MV: 180' (60'), AC: 5, HD 5, #AT: 1, DG: 2d6, ML 10, Special: will fight one round after reduced to 0 hit points

**E4. Mushroom Larder.** This mushroom larder contains live patches of each of the five psionic mushrooms Woebegone is addicted to, plus edible mushrooms for food. See Woebegone's stats for the five types of psionics. Ingestion of five or six mushrooms is enough to bestow the psionic power on the individual, and these powers will be available for one hour. It takes time to build up tolerance for these powers, so any mixing of the mushrooms requires a save vs poison to avoid being rendered helpless with retching. In this case, no powers are gained, the character needs an entire day of bed rest, and one Consti-

**Wobegone Kernoble**
Level 11 Druid, AL:N
S:8 I:12 W:18 C:11 D:10 CH:15
DC: 7 HP: 54 Save: as Priest lvl 11

**Abilities:** +4 save vs elements, cannot be charmed by faery creatures, can pass through undergrowth/mushrooms with no move penalty, identify mushrooms/plants and safe water

**Spells:** Animal Friendship, Detect Pits and Snares, Locate Animals, Purify Water, Speak with Animals, Charm Person, Locate Plants, Create Water, Produce Flame, Cure Light Wounds, Cure Disease, Neutralize Poison, Water Breathing, Plant Door, Speak with Plants, Repel Insects, Insect Plague, Wall of Fire, Transport via Plants

**Psionics:** Once per round, at will:
**Telekinesis** – move 200 lbs at a speed of 20'/round
**Precognition** – can see likely futures 1-2 weeks ahead, but only once per day
**Telepathy** – can project own thoughts/ideas into the mind of any magic-using being as a means of communication
**Domination** – target save vs spells or obeys simple commands from target for next 1d6 turns
**Empathy** – with concentration can sense other feelings unless target saves vs spells.

**Weapon:** Sword of Light (ignores all armor (roll to hit AC9), 3d6 damage, slices off a random limb on a roll of 18+, no strength bonus for damage)

**Description:** Woebegone is an older adventurer, in his late 50's with a whitening beard. He wears nondescript homespun robes and looks harmless, but he didn't stay alive this long without being crafty and deadly. He is inclined to be friendly to the party if they give him the chance. He is addicted to the mushrooms that give him his powers, and will not leave the fungus forest.

tution point is permanently lost. If a player successfully makes his or her save, then that mix of powers works for them and they will not have to make it again in future.

**E5. Woebegone's Chambers.** These chambers hold Woebegone's comfortable moss bed, a sturdy treasure chest, and a work bench and distilling apparatus. He is trying to dry mushrooms, and distill into potions, but with limited success so far. His treasure chest is trapped with a poison needle in the lock (he holds the only key). This poison is so virulent the player must save vs poison at -4 or die. Inside the chest is his treasure: 3643 gold coins, 484 platinum coins, and a handful of gems worth approximately 7000 gold.

**F. The Mold Falls.** The mold falls are a spectacular and garish sight. Five shallow, meandering streams gather in a confluence that raises the water level slightly, then drips a thin sheet of water over the lip of a limestone cliff that falls 160 feet before draining into a distant tunnel

**F1. The Top of the Falls.** The streams that lead to the falls join in a wide, shallow sheet of water not more than ankle-deep, but 200 feet wide at the lip of the falls. Players taking basic care wading through water can walk right to the edge of the falls themselves, as the current is not strong at all. The only real danger is the green and moon slimes that float along the top of the water before plunging over the falls. The slime has built up so that the lip of the falls is completely covered in slime across its entirety. There is a 10% chance per person per turn that a slime (50/50 chance of green or moon slime) brushes against a wading character, and a 100% chance at the lip of the falls.

**Moon Slime**: AL:N, MV: 0', AC:9, HD:1, #AT: touch DG: 1d6, ML:12, Special: causes 1d6 damage per round, plus eats away one piece of equipment per round. Can be scraped off in 1d3 rounds (destroying scraper) or burned in 1 round, causing 1d6 fire damage to victim.

**Green Slime**: AL:N, MV: 0', AC:8, HD:2, #AT: touch DG: 1d6, ML:12, Special: turns flesh into green slime. Armor protects for one turn. Can only be burned off.

**F2. The Falls.** The falls are a huge, sheer limestone cliff. The water barely seeps over the edge, takings its time to splash, drip and fall 160 feet to a shallow meandering river. On either side of the falls, the walls of the cavern reach up to a vault 200 feet above the falls. The falls fill the entire width of the chasm, and there is no way around the falls. The cliff is uneven, with rocks and spurs jutting through the sheets of water. The rocks are covered with yellow, brown, purple and red mold, all of which have dangerous properties to human bodies. Spore clouds rise up half the height of the falls. The only way down would be to climb down one of the few moldy spurs that leads to the bottom. A thief would only have half his normal chance to climb, due to the exceeding slipperiness of the rocks. All traversing the bottom half must make a roll on the Spore Cloud table (next page) each round they breathe in the cloud.

**Yellow Mold**: AL:N, MV:0', DC:9 , HD:2 , #AT:1 , DG:1d6 plus spores , ML:12, Special: acidic, eats away wood and leather, does 1d6 to bare skin, 50% chance of releasing 10' spore cloud, save vs poison or choke to death in 6 rounds. Can only be damaged by fire.

**Brown Mold**: AL:N, MV:0', DC:9 , HD:2 , #AT: spec, DG:special , ML:12, Special: Drains heat (4d6 hp) each round from any character within 5'; only damaged by cold; heat attacks make it quadruple in size and hp

**Red Mold**: AL:N, MV:0', DC:9 , HD:2 , #AT:1 , DG:3d6, ML:12, Special: Contact causes 3d6 damage electrical sparks within 5'; save for half damage; impervious to fire, cold and spells

**Spore Cloud Table:** Roll 1d6 for effect – each PC must save vs poison or suffer the effect rolled:

1. Sleep (slumber lasting 1d6 turns)
2. Poison (save at +2 or asphyxiate)
3. Hallucinations (DM's choice, but characters should be delusional and paranoid, unable to function properly)
4. Disease (if not cured withn 2 days becomes zombies)
5. Rage (save vs spells or attack nearest being until it is slain – will even attack friends)
6. Levitation (character becomes lighter than air and will slowly drift in a random direction 20' per turn, 10 feet off the ground. Effect lasts 1d6 turns)

**F3. Spur A** (40' from the chasm wall on the east). This spur averages two-three feet wide, and is gently rounded. Here is a description of every 10' section of the spur from top (0') to bottom (160').

| | |
|---|---|
| 0': | 70° slope, slick, wet, half-covered with harmless green lichen |
| 10'-30': | 90° slope, damp, bare |
| 40': | slight overhang, covered in brown mold |
| 50': | gap – no spur |
| 60': | 70° slope, slick, wet, covered with moon slime |
| 70'-120': | 80° slope, slick, wet |
| 130'-160': | 60° slope, inhabited by red mold |

At the bottom of the spur there are some jumbled boulders covered in yellow mold. These boulders can be used as stepping-stones to the eastern shore.

**F4. Spur B** (just west of the center of the falls). This spur is a straight-down 90° knife-edge of slick limestone. While climbing down, there is a 2-in-6 chance of being splashed with water from above. 50% of the time, this dousing will bring green slime with it, with all the catastrophes that befall from that. The bottom of the spur ends in the pool at the bottom of the falls; characters will have to wade through the pool to reach the relative safety of the shore.

**F5. The Bottom of the Falls.** At the bottom of the Falls is a 6' deep pool that quickly narrows to a river of similar depth that slowly meanders towards a tunnel that leads to the slime pits (level 13 of *The Darkness Beneath* if you are playing the full megadungeon, or whatever underground area you choose if you have plugged this in to your own campaign). The river has worn a channel in the underlying rock, such that there is a narrow path on each side of the river. These paths end at the point that the river flows into a tunnel. The river itself is liberally sprinkled with pieces of green slime, moon slime, and washed away bits of the various harmful molds.

**G. The Guarded Grove**. The guarded grove is an area of the fungus forest that has been claimed by a nest of 8 intelligent mutated giant spiders. They have slowly been encroaching on the area inhabited by the faeries of the enchanted circle. (Sucking out faerie essence out helps bolster the spiders' abilities…) The spiders avoid the fungents wherever possible, as their poison does not work on them. The perimeter is entirely enclosed with their almost invisible webs (1 in 6 chance to notice or become entrapped), save for three exits/entrances. The interior of the grove is blanketed with an impenetrable magical darkness, and crisscrossed with numerous webs. Due to this darkness, party members will automatically be entangled in webs every 10' section. Enough fire and flame should slowly be able to burn a 10' section of web.

**G1. East Entrance.** This entrance is guarded by one spider, who will not attack until party members have penetrated far enough in to become entangled in the webs. Every round of combat after the second round, there is a 1 in 6 chance of another spider arriving with surprise.

**Mutated Spider:** AL:N, MV: 150' (50'), DC 2 , HD 10, #AT: 1, DG: 2d6+poison , ML 8 , Special: Poison, web

**G2. South Entrance.** This is the favored route for the spiders to sortie out and attack the faeries of the enchanted circle. There are two giant spiders guarding this webbed entrance, and they will aggressively attack the party if they get to within 10' of the entrance. The spiders will pursue the party if it runs, unless they are below half hit points.

**2 Mutated Spiders:** AL:N, MV: 150' (50'), DC 2 , HD 10, #AT: 1, DG: 2d6+poison , ML 8 , Poison, web

**G3. West Entrance.** This entrance is almost never used, as the fungents are patrolling most of the area to the west of the guarded grove. As in G1, this entrance is guarded by one spider, who will not attack until party members have penetrated far enough in to become entangled in the webs. Every round of combat after the second round, there is a 1 in 6 chance of another spider arriving with surprise.

**Mutated Spider:** AL:N, MV: 150' (50'), DC 2 , HD 10, #AT: 1, DG: 2d6+poison , ML 8 , Special: Poison, web

**G4. Faerie Death Ring.** This ghastly circle of death displays rotted rags of faerie cloths entangled in webs spanning large fungi trunks in a 20' diameter circle. On the ground beneath each bundle of cloths is a small pile of slightly glowing dust, all that is left of the faerie essence that has been sucked out by the spiders. There will always be at least one comatose but alive faerie hanging here, waiting for the spiders to feast on him. There is only a 5% chance that there will be a spider in this area. The faeries from the enchanted circle will reward the party for rescuing the victim here.

**G5. Treasure Trove.** This spot in the forest was where three adventuring companions of Woebegone Kernoble lost their lives. Their treasure lies underneath their rotted bones. Any spiders unaccounted for will be found here (usually 4). The loot includes 3569 gold pieces, 16000 gp worth of gems, a Ring of Spirits, a Sword of the Thief, and a Staff of Power. (Writeups for the first two items may be found in *Fight On!* #2.)

**4 Mutated Spiders:** AL:N, MV: 150' (50'), DC 2 , HD 10, #AT: 1, DG: 2d6+poison , ML 8 , Poison, web

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**H. Enchanted Faerie Circle.** This small region of the forest is devoid of the type of huge mushroom found almost everywhere else. Instead there is a 100' diameter circle of 30'-high toadstool mushrooms, glowing indigo with orange caps, spotted with fluorescent lime blotches. Inside the circle, the area is lightly carpeted with soft moss and edible and medicinal fungi. There is an enchantment on the area that keeps out all non-intelligent beings. Unfortunately for the 30 faeries that live here, the mutated giant spiders have gained intelligence, and are no longer repelled by the enchantment barrier.

The faeries have lost fully half their number to the spiders' encroachment, and are getting desperate. Any party finding themselves within 60' of the area will be approached by a group of 6 faeries, who will plead with the party to eradicate the spiders for them. The faeries have little to offer the party. They will reward the party by offering their circle as a safe spot to rest, and will provide them with any food or healing they need through their magical mushrooms. They will even offer the service of two of their number as invisible scouts, after the spiders have been dealt with. Finally, they will give each member of the party a necklace of crystallized faerie tears. These necklaces have no known magical properties, but are priceless. The GM should assign a value of approximately 10,000 gp per necklace, if forced to do so. If the party declines the request, the entire faerie group will use their *Charm Person* abilities to try to force the group to kill the spiders anyway.

**30 Fairies**: AL: C, MV: 180' (60'), AC 7, HD 2, #AT:1, DG: 1, ML: 8, Special: Invisibility, Flight, Magic

Fairies are fun-loving tricksters, beings of magic and nature. These fairies are a bit more hard-bitten than normal, having lost half their number to the Dark Spiders [q.v.] that live near them. They are naturally invisible, and can see invisible creatures, but can reveal themselves if they like, or can be detected by Detect Invisible. They fly at high speed and gain +1 to initiative. They can use any of their magic powers 3 times/day. These consist of the magic spells *Sleep*, *Charm Person* and *Magic Missile*.

**I. Enclave of the Fungents.** The fungents patrol this part of the forest, and there is a 5% chance per turn of encountering one. Since fungents look like 20-30' tall cap mushrooms, they will almost always surprise the party (5 chances in 6). A lone fungent, if given surprise, will automatically attack the party unless it is accompanied by faeries or the druid Woebegone. Fungents can sense faerie invisibility and pierce unnatural spider darkness. If a fungent feels in gave danger in combat, it will send out a telepathic call to its colleagues, who will begin straggling in 1-4 turns after the alert has been called. It will also direct nearby fungi against the party. It is up to the GM to determine how much and what type of aid this will comprise.

**10 Fungents:** AL:N, MV 60' (20'), DC 4, HD 8, #AT 1, DG: 4d6, ML: 6, Special: animate fungi. Fungents are 20-30' tall cap mushrooms with basic sentience. They stalk through the forest, protecting inanimate fungi from harm. Their attack comes in the form of a giant compression followed by an uncoiling of their main stalk, which launches them up to 30' towards their victim. This powerful attack does 4d6 damage and causes knockdown. Fungents can animate local fungi at will and send them to attack or entangle nearby foes. Fungents are scared of fire and of being cooked in garlic.

Despite their initial hostility, if the party can keep their cool or otherwise engage the fungents in dialogue, the fungents may be sympathetic to the party and leave them alone, although one fungent will shadow the party to make sure they do not damage the forest. Unfortunately, fungents can only communicate telepathically, so unless the party finds some telepathic mushrooms, or has some magical means, this is not likely to happen. If communication is established, the fungents will be happy to give information about the spiders from the guarded grove and the faeries' problems, the danger (and their hatred) of the fungeyes, and the existence of the techno caves. There are ten fungents that live in the forest, and there will always be five fungents at the heart of their domain.

**I1. The Heart of the Enclave.** This area of the forest is swampy and the undergrowth fungus is almost impassable. A party that forces its way in here will encounter five grumpy fungents, woken from a dormant state. The party will win initiative if they decide to commence hostilities.

**5 Fungents:** AL:N, MV 60' (20'), AC 4, HD 8, #AT 1, DG: 4d6, ML: 6, Special: animate fungi

There is no normal treasure here for the party to plunder. There is, however, a profusion of bizarre fungi encountered in no other area of the forest. The GM is encouraged to roll on the Random Mushroom Effects table to find the properties of any mushrooms tested, or to make up your own bizarre properties.

**Random Mushroom Effects Table**

1 – Edible and nutritious
2 – Deadly poison
3 – Medicinal (cure disease/poison)
4 – Poisonous (boiled in red wine, then distilled, will create Potion of Darkvision)
5 – Hallucinogenic (affects one sense for 1d6 hours)
6 – Delicacy (will fetch 50-100 gp/pound)
7 – Cause blindness (cures blindness if alcohol and mushroom paste is laid on eyes)
8 – Psychic (limited precognition)
9 – Foul taste, vile smell (no harm done)
10 – Releases spores (1 in 6 chance. All within 10' save or be infested with parasite and in two days be turned into a zombie mushroom)
11 – Powerful dye (could be permanent)
12 – Tasty and addictive (causes sterility)
13 – Psionic (brief telekinesis)
14 – Luminsecent (provides light equivalent to a candle)
15 – Acidic (burns tongue, causing muteness)
16 – Adrenal booster (character acts twice as fast, and does an extra dice damage for the next 10 minutes, but must save vs stone or be aged one year)
17 – Levitation (character slowly drifts upwards 10'/round, no limit to height. Wears off after 10 minutes)
18 – Character breaks out in spots that last three days
19 – Strong painkilling effect that puts a character to sleep for 1d6 hours
20 – One random limb doubles in size permanently

**J. Lake of Voices.** The Lake of Voices is a surprisingly large pool of water, ringed with giant mushroom trees. It takes in the stream from the dragon's waterfall and provides the plurality of the water that eventually meanders its way to the mold falls. The lake is black and murky, and its bottom, 30' deep at its deepest, can not be seen. This enchanted lake has trapped the voices of all who have died in it. These souls are tormented without cease, and cry out at random intervals in anguish, trying to warn others away. These voices can be heard once a party gets within 120' of the lake. There is no known way to destroy the enchantment of the lake, although the GM is free to devise one.

The lake is the home of three wisps, who *lure* adventurers to their death in its waters. Those who resist the *lure* of the wisps will find themselves attacked by 6 shambling mounds, who are used to eating the wisps' leftovers. Those drowned in the lake will add their voices to the chorus.

**3 Wisps**: AL:C, MV: 180' (60'), DC: -2, HD: 9, #AT: 1, DG: 2d6 electric bolt, ML:10, Special: *Luring*(save vs spells or follow wisp to your doom)

**6 Shambling Mounds**: AL:N, MV: 60' (20'), AC:0, HD: 9, #AT: 2, DG: 2d6 ea, ML:10, Special: suffocation, weapon resistance, elemental resistance

Scattered along the bottom of the lake is the treasure of all who have drowned there. Players dredging the lake have a 1% chance per turn of finding some treasure: roll on the following table. Rolls 4-6 can only happen once each/

**Lake Treasure Table**

1 – 1d100 gold pieces
2 – 1d6 gems (100 gp avg value)
3 – 1 piece of jewellery (1000 gp avg value)
4 – Shield of Spellcatching (from *Fight On! #5*)
5 – Axe of Wounding (+3, inflicts x2 damage on 18-20)
6 – Crown of Command: can be used 1/day like a potion of human control

**K. Radiation Rift.** The Radiation Rift is a deep gash in the cavern floor, up to 20' wide at the top but narrowing as it descends. The cleft extends down 200'-250', although the last 100' are so tight it is doubtful a human could pass. The rift is 10 degrees warmer than the rest of the cavern, and quickly increases in temperature with depth, reaching 150° by 100' down. This heat is generated by radiation, as this rift has exposed an extensive vein of plutonium on its west side. The rift itself has a series of steps/shelves and other jagged outcroppings that make it possible to descend without a rope. A thief would not even have to roll, but armored figures should probably make the occasional dex check to avoid plummeting 20'-120', taking appropriate falling damage. For each full hour that a character spends in the rift, they must save vs Poison or suffer radioactive poisoning. Failed saves are cumulative. 1d6 days later, the character's hair will start falling out, they will lose 1 point of Str and Con per failed save, and 1d6 damage per failed save. The Str and Con will return at the rate of 1 point per week. There are at least two reasons PCs may be interested in descending. All the mushrooms that Woebegone uses for his psionic powers are grown here, and from 100' – 200' there is an amethyst vein that can be seen embedded in the east wall. Although mining actions are outside the scope of this module, the GM should be willing to listen to any reasonable plans that ambitious players make to return and commence mining operations, with all the attendant dangers and problems that would cause. For a list of the psionic mushrooms and their powers, see **E**. Only Woebegone knows the powers of these mushrooms. The GM should create their decriptions, but also create some other mushrooms that are poisonous and/or inedible that the players will need to sort through. Woebegone, if with the party, will try to steer the party away from the rift, warning them of the danger, and will by no means let slip that his powers come from the mushrooms growing there.

**L. Domain of the Fungeyes.** The entire south-west quadrant is the domain of the fungeyes, mortal enemies of the fungents, and the wandering monster table reflects this. Other than this, this is an unremarkable area. There are only six fungeyes left, but numerous blast spores, which the fungeyes use as decoys or guards.

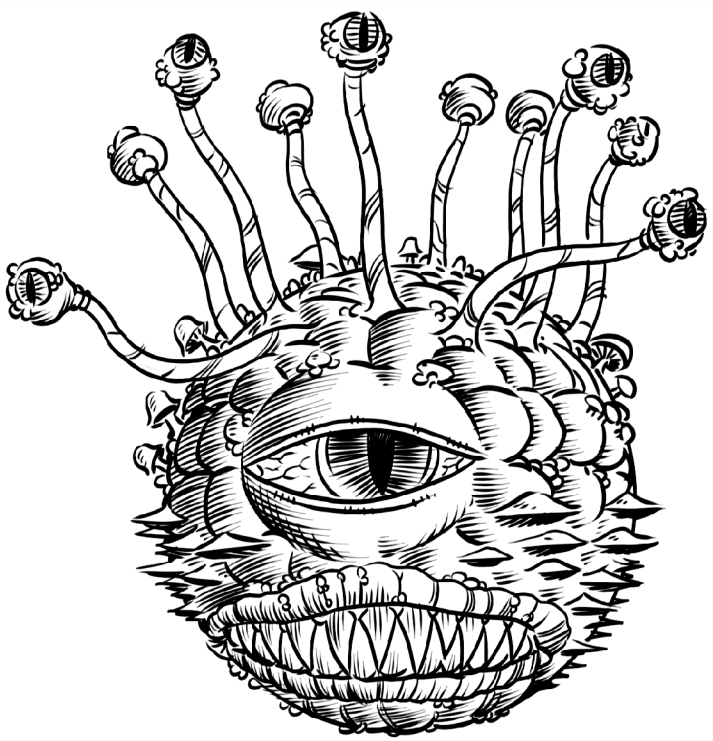
**L1. Fungeye Lair.** While the fungeyes usually roam the area looking for food, there are always three fungeyes here. The outside of this cave is guarded by ten blast spores, and any spore explosion will draw the fungeyes to investigate.

**10 Blast Spores:** AL:N , MV: 60' (20') , DC 8, HD 1 hit point, #AT:1, DG:0 , ML: 9, Special: explode for 5d6 damage if punctured. Blast spores look very similar to fungeyes (q.v.). However, this is just protective camouflage as they are harmless. If killed, however, they will explode in a 5d6 fireball with a 15' radius. If other blast spores are in this radius, a rather dangerous chain reaction can occur.

**Fungeyes:** AL:C, MV: 90' (30'), AC 0, HD: 8, #at: 1, DG: 2d4, ML:11, Special: Anti-Magic, spore attacks. These tough, floating, violet-and-tangerine colored 5' spherical puffballs have a giant eye that projects an anti-magic shield around them. Intelligent, they subdue their prey with sporicals before digesting their corpses. A fungeye can shoot one missile shaped spore per foe each round, up to a maximum of 10 foes. It can not be surprised. Roll a d10 and consult the following chart for spore effect if it hits (as well as taking 1d6 from the spore itself). All effects allow a save vs spells.
1 – Charmed; controlled by fungeye
2 – Paralyzed for 1d6 turns
3 - Slept for 1d6 turns
4 – Run away in panic for 1d6 turns
5 – Slowed to half speed for 1d6 turns
6 – Turned to Stone
7 – Disintegrated
8 – Quadruple damage
9 – Permanently Blinded
10 – Diseased; turn into zombie in 2 days

They are implacable foes of fungents, who are immune to their sporacles.

The fungeyes, after emerging, will try to mingle with the blast spores, then attack the party with surprise from three different directions. If half the party is killed, the fungeyes will let the rest retreat as long as they leave behind all their treasure, items and dead companions. The fungeyes have learned many languages over the half-millennium they have lived, and should be able to converse in most languages. The fungeyes have amassed a great treasure, taken from dead adventurers, dark trolls, and whatever else they've encountered over the last five hundred years. Inside the cave can be found the following treasure: 6549 gold coins, 1154 platimum pieces, 34 gems of all sorts



totaling 12000 gp, 10 pieces of jewellery worth 16000 gp, a mage scroll with Ice Storm, Lightning Bolt, and Passwall, Oil of Venom (when applied to a weapon, the next five creatures damaged by it must save vs. poison or die), and Tlozcap's Ring of Arcanocogitation (from *FO!* #3, allows mages to memorize spells of level *n*+1 in either their *n* or *n*+1 level slots, though it does not allow said mages access to spell levels they cannot actually cast (i.e. the highest level slots must still be used for the mage's highest level spells, although some GMs allow lower level spells to be memorized in higher level slots regardless).

**M. Plateau of the Mantis Folk.** The plateau of the mantis folk is sparsely populated with 10'-20' tall mushrooms. 40 mantis folk share this plateau, but rarely interact unless it is the mating season. Giant beetles roam the plateau, raised and herded by the mantis folk for meat. Moon moths fly overhead and occasionally get snagged by the mantids. A party exploring this plateau will draw the co-ordinated wrath of the mantis-folk, unless some means of communication is managed.

**M1. Cliff Perimeter.** The cliff perimeter is ringed with solitary mantids, every 30', waiting, watching and guarding. The mantids prey on the moon moths that stray too near the edge, or on any living thing that scales the cliffs. Mantids rely primarily on their sight, and the cavern is only dimly lit, so if a waiting mantis is taken out quickly and quietly, a party myt be able to penetrate into the interior without raising an alarm

**Mantis Folk:** AL:N MV: 60' (20') (double if flying) DC:3 HD:10 #AT:1 D:2d6 ML:10 Special: Surprise, Speed, Decapitation. Mantis folk are basically 12' tall praying mantises with human intelligence. They communicate with chirp-like sounds. Aggressive and carnivorous, they will attack anything up to twice their size. Although solitary by nature, they will organize a defense if threatened in detail. Mantises have three formidable attributes. They have a camouflage ability, and thus surprise 4 times out of 6. Their superior speed automatically wins initiative, and if their natural attack is a 19 or 20 their foe is immediately decapitated unless the victim makes a save vs Death.

**M2. Tricerabeetle Range.** The south half of the plateau is home to tricerabeetles that the mantis folk feed on if hunting is poor along the cliff edge. Each turn in this area, an encounter will occur on a 1 in 6 chance. If so, roll on the following encounter table

**Plateau Wandering Monster Table**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | 1d3 Tricerabeetles |
| 3 | Roll on Trap Table |
| 4-5 | 1 Mantis Folk |
| 6 | 1 Moon Moth |

**Tricerabeetles**: AL:N, MV: 150' (50'), DC: 2, HD 6, #AT: 1, DG: 3d6, ML 11

**Trap Table**

1 – 6'-10' deep sinkhole filled with Moon Slime
2 – trailing party member gets attacked by Noose Fungi
3 – random large fungi shoots out a penetrating tube; attacks as 8 HD monster, does 1d6 damage/round character is impaled
4 – erupting Giant Puffball
5 – a Giant Stinkhorn emerges
6 – Psionic Mold

**Moon Moths:** AL: N, MV: 120' (40'), DC: 4, HD: 4, #AT: 1, DG: 1d6, ML: 6, Special: *Sleep* cloud

**M3. The Sparkling Spring.** The sparkling spring lies in the middle of the north half of the plateau. This area is left alone, as the ground between the fungal growth is completely covered with green slime, 6 to 12 inches deep, out to a 120' radius from the spring. The spring is in a bit of a basin, so all the slime creeps gradually towards it and the stream leading from it. While the bubbling centre of the spring is clear from slime, the edges of it, and the river leading from it, tend to collect green slime that floats on top of the water-course. This fountain of pure, clear water creates the stream that leads to the waterfall and eventually flows into the Lake of Voices. The water is naturally carbonated, and rich with minerals. If tightly contained and tightly sealed, the effervescence will last for weeks, making the refreshing beverage a lucrative source of income for whomever can find a way to bottle and market it. Jake Longspear at the Halfway Inn might be interested in a business venture of this sort. Most animals/insects do not like the carbonation and would avoid the pool and spring even if the green slime did not hinder them.

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**N. The Slime Waterfall.** The clear but slime-covered stream that leads from the Sparkling Spring tumbles and splashes over the mantis plateau cliff to create a spectacular green and white waterfall that splashes into a 20' deep pool, before forming the stream that leads into the Lake of Voices. The slime wyrm that lives here swallows most of the slime that falls into the pool, but is always hungry for food of a different kind.

**Slime Wyrm:** AL: C, MV: 60' (20'), DC: -4, HD: 16, #AT: 1, DG: 4d10, ML:10, Special: Swallow attack, damage reduction. The slime wyrm is like a thick, undulating sea monster with an enormous head with foot-long spiked teeth. It is more at home in the water (double its movement rate). The slime wyrm is aggressive to any creature it can swallow (creatures about the size of a rhinocerous or smaller). When a slime worm attacks, if it rolls a 16 or higher it automatically swallows its foe, regardless of foe's armor class. As well as taking the 4d10 bite damage, the wyrm's digestive system is made of green slime which will turn an unarmored swallowed person into green slime in one round. Those in armor get an extra round as it will get dissolved first. Being made partially of slime, it absorbs damage like a sponge, thus all attacks, including magic, only cause half damage.

The bottom of the pool is coated with hundreds of uncut diamonds, which if somehow retrieved could end up being worth hundreds of thousands of gold coins.

**O. Techno Caves.** The techno caves are a series of limestone caverns that hold advanced technology from an ancient civilization. The air inside is fresh and cold, approximately 40 degrees, and there is no dust on any apparatus. The cavern walls have somehow been reinforced such that no excavation can be used to dig through to the cavern.

**O1. Prismatic Entrance.** The 8' wide, round, entrance to the caves is blocked by a permanent *Prismatic Wall*. From the outside it looks like a shimmering, ruby-red wall. In actuality, there are seven layers that need to be penetrated before the cave can be entered – only the first layer can be seen from the outside. The walls of light are each one foot thick, and can be penetrated easily enough just by walking through them. This does not dispel the walls, and the person penetrating will suffer consequences. The different colors can be brought down in order with the right spell. What follows are the colors of the walls of light, the spell that can negate them, and the damage inflicted if someone walks through:

1. Red – negated by *Ice Storm* – causes 12 damage
2. Orange – negated by *Lightning Bolt* – causes 24 damage
3. Yellow – negated by *Magic Missile* – causes 48 points of damage
4. Green – negated by *Passwall* – save vs Poison or die
5. Blue – negated by *Disintegrate* – save vs Turn to Stone or be petrified
6. Indigo – negated by *Dispel Magic* – save vs Wands(cold) or frozen; body irrecoverable
7. Violet – negated by *Continual Light* – save vs spells or permanently insane

**O2. The Golden Figures.** At this section of the cavern, a row of six golden man-sized statues of androgynous form stare blankly into space. These are six deactivated protocol droids whose energy ran down over the years. There are now no energy sources left that can re-power them.

**O3. Detritus.** In this are lies the detritus of a lost civilization – spent holocubes, tasteless iron rations, flashlights, empty power packs, and other assorted daily personal items. The Referee is encouraged to make the exploration of these wondrous, and occasionally delightful, like finding and figuring out a pen flashlight, for example

**O4. The Landspeeder.** Here at the back of the cavern is the grand prize – a fully functional landspeeder with enough power left to cover another 250 miles. It can be treated as a 6-person flying carpet that travels two feet off the ground. It can obtain speeds of 60 mph and has a turning circle of 30 feet. Passengers in it are protected to a degree – treat the 'speeder as DC 5. The speeder has a profusion of buttons and controls. Nothing will happen until the characters accidentally touch the starter button. Then, it will roar into life, giving off a high-pitched turbine sound, and the dials will light up. While the characters are unlikely to damage themselves, there is a 1 in 4 chance while they investigate that they will accidentally throttle it up to full speed, smashing the landspeeder into the walls, destroying it, and throwing passengers out and into the walls for 3d6 damage. The Referee can make it as easy or hard to figure out the speeder's functions as he deems fit.

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**P. The Canopy.** The canopy needs no map, as it is just the top of the forest, and all the landmarks have the same relative spots. The canopy itself is dangerous to traverse, as it consists of interlocked trumpet fungi with concave tops, inhabited by roaming giant wolf spiders, hungry moon moths, hunting mantis folk, giant carnivorous flies, and the occasional Mushroom Fly Trap. The canopy itself could be a means for the characters to reach the plateau of the mantis folk from the vantage point of height. The referee should check every turn, and on a 1 on a d6 should then refer to the encounter table:

**Canopy Wandering Monster Table**

1. 1-6 Giant Wolf Spiders
2. 1-2 Moon Moths
3. 1 Mantis Folk
4. 3-6 Giant Carnivorous Flies
5. Mushroom Fly Trap
6. 1 Caterpillar Horror

**Giant Wolf Spiders** AL:N, MV: 150' (50'), DC 6, HD 4, #AT 1, DG 1d6, ML 8, Special: Save vs poison or die, Surprise 1-4.

**Moon Moths:** AL: N, MV: 120' (40'), DC: 4, HD: 4, #AT: 1, DG: 1d6, ML: 6, Special: *Sleep* cloud

**Mantis Folk:** AL:N MV: 60' (20') (x2 if flying) DC:3 HD:10 #AT:1 D:2d6 ML:10, Surprise, speed,

**Giant Carnivorous Flies** AL:N, MV: 180' (60'), DC 6, HD 3, #AT 1, DG 1d6, ML 8, Special: successful hit causes fly to latch on and suck 1d6 hit points per turn until full or driven off

**Caterpillar Horror** AL:N, MV: 120' (40'), DC 3, HD 8, #AT 1, DG 2d6 bite, ML 12, Special: Save vs poison or disease, turn into undead zombie in 2 days.
These horrors will explode, showering the entire party with the deadly cordyceps spores.

**Mushroom Fly Trap:** AL:N MV: 0' (0') AC:6 HD:8 #AT:1 D:2d6 ML:12 Special: entrapment, digestion

## Monsters

**Blast Spores:** AL:N , MV: 60' (20') , DC 8, HD 1 hit point, #AT:1, DG:0 , ML: 9, Special: explode for 5d6 damage if punctured. Blast spores look very similar to fungeyes (q.v.). However, this is just protective camouflage as they are harmless. If killed, however, they will explode in a 5d6 fireball with a 15' radius. If other blast spores are in this radius, a rather dangerous chain reaction can occur.

**Blood Thumps:** AL: N, MV: 120' (40'), DC 4, HD 10, #AT:1 , DG: 2d6, ML: 7, Special: Trample charge. Blood Thumps are 10' long (20 with tail), 7' tall, and weigh about 1,500 lbs. They are covered in dark brown feathers with massive jaws, long tails and bird-like feet topped by a single massive curved hind-claw. Blood Thumps are trained to bite rather than use their formidable dagger-like claws, so as to not unsaddle their riders. These huge dinosaurs can trample opponents if able to charge into melee, causing 2d6 to all in a 5' wide by 20' long path, plus a save vs paralysis to avoid being bowled over and spending one round gaining footing.

**Caterpillar Horrors:** AL:N, MV: 120' (40'), DC 3, HD 8, #AT 1, DG 2d6 bite, ML 12, Special: Save vs poison or disease, turn into undead zombie in 2 days. These 9' long caterpillars have a grotesque violet and apricot colored stalk sticking 1-2' up from their skull. They have been overcome by a parasitic fungus *cordyceps lloydii* and now have become mindless zombies. Any damage inflicted by these horrors causes the victim to save vs poison or contract a disease that kills the host, then animates it as a zombie that wishes to infect more hosts. A *cure disease* spell within 48 hours will kill the infection. The player will not know he has been infected until the second day, when he becomes debilitated, nauseous and bed-ridden. These are the larval form of moon moths (q.v.).

**Creeping Mold**: AL:N, MV: 60' (20'), DC 9, HD 3, #AT 1, DG: 1d10, ML:10, Special: immune to weapon damage; slain by fire, damaged by other elements. Creeping molds are ~5' patches of greenish-purple mold that roam environments looking for food. They are as likely to travel on walls and ceilings as floors. Their touch is corrosive, doing 1-10 damage, and they are immune to weapon damage. Fire attacks do full damage and slay the molds instantly if a save is not made. Other elemental attacks do half damage.

**Dark Trolls**: AL: L , MV: 120' (40'), DC 4, HD 6+3, #AT: 1, DG: 1d6+2 , ML: 9, Special: Regenerate 3 hp/ round. Dark Trolls consider themselves the undisputed masters of the Underdark. They are arrogant, aggressive, and disciplined. They are likely to accept a party's surrender, and are susceptible to large bribes. Unless damaged by fire, they regenerate any damage taken at a rate of 3 points per round. They commonly ride their Blood Thump mounts (q.v.).

**Fairies**: AL: C, MV: 180' (60'), DC 7, HD 2, #AT:1, DG: 1, ML: 8, Special: Invisibility, Flight, Magic. Fairies are fun-loving nature tricksters, beings of magic and nature. They are naturally invisible, and can see invisible creatures, but can reveal themselves if they like, or can be detected by Detect Invisible. They fly at high speed, and gain +1 to initiative. They can use any of their magic powers 3 times/day. These consist of the magic spells *Sleep*, *Charm Person* and *Magic Missile*.

**Fungemoth:** AL:N, MV: 180' (60'), DC -2, HD: 32, #AT: 2 stomps @6d6 each area attack, ML:12, Special: Immunities, spores. The fungemoth is possessed of animal cunning and implacable. Standing 100' high, it uses its two 6d6 area effect stomps to attack the characters (all in 10' square attacked roll separately for each character to see if they are hit). Those that avoid the stomp are placed in an adjacent square and must make a save vs Wands or fall to the ground, stunned for 1-4 rounds. Fleeing characters will attract 2-12 homing death spores each (1d6 damage and save vs poison or gain disease that turns you into a fungus in two days). The fungemoth only takes half damage from weapons, and gets a saving throw even against spells that do not allow one.

**Fungents:** AL:N, MV 60' (20'), DC 4, HD 8, #AT 1, DG: 4d6, ML: 6, Special: animate fungi. Fungents are 20-30' tall cap mushrooms with basic sentience. They stalk through the forest, protecting inanimate fungi from harm. Their attack comes in the form of a giant compression then an uncoiling of their main stalk, which launches them up to 30' towards their victim. This powerful attack does 4d6 damage and causes knockdown. Fungents can animate local fungi at will and send them to attack or entangle nearby foes. Fungents are scared of fire and being cooked in garlic. They are implacable foes of the fungeyes, and are immune to their sporacles.

**Fungeyes:** AL:C, MV: 90' (30'), DC 0, HD: 8, #at: 1, DG: 2d4, ML:11, Special: Anti-Magic, spore attacks. These tough, floating, violet-and-tangerine colored 5' spherical puffballs have a giant eye that projects an anti-magic shield around them. Intelligent, they subdue their prey with sporicals before digesting their corpses. A fungeye can shoot one missile shaped spore per foe each round, up to a maximum of 10 foes. It can not be surprised. Roll a d10 and consult the following chart for spore effect if it hits (as well as taking 1d6 from the spore itself). All effects allow a save vs spells.

1 – Charmed; controlled by fungeye
2 – Paralyzed for 1d6 turns
3 - Slept for 1d6 turns
4 – Run away in panic for 1d6 turns
5 – Slowed to half speed for 1d6 turns
6 – Turned to Stone
7 – Disintegrated
8 – Quadruple damage
9 – Permanently Blinded
10 – Diseased; turn into zombie in 2 days

They are implacable foes of fungents, who are immune to their sporacles.

**Giant Carnivorous Flies:** AL:N, MV: 180' (60'), DC 6, HD 3, #AT 1, DG 1d6, ML 8, Special: successful hit causes fly to latch on and suck 1d6 hit points per turn until full or driven off. These giant (3' long) flies look like huge bluebottle flies. They are incredibly aggressive, usually attacking on site. These flies bite, then hold on and suck blood every round thereafter until they have sucked as many hit points from their victim as the fly's original hit points. Characters attacking flies that are attached (to themselves or others) suffer a -4 penalty to attack (due to the difficulty of fighting while being latched on to by a 3' long killer insect, or due to fear of hitting a friend who is so attached). The flies will normally stay attached until they are under 5 hit points, or full, but any energy attack (fire/lightning/cold), even a torch, will make them immediately disengage.

**Giant Puffball:** AL: N, MV: 0' (0'), DC: 7, HD: 12, #AT: 1 spore cloud DG: special ML:12, Special: There is a 1-in-6 chance that the puffball will erupt and all in a 20' radius must save vs spells against effect. Puffballs come in all colors or sizes, but the giant variety are at least 8' around. Most puffballs look a bit pebbly like an egg or a boulder. Occasionally (1 in 6) a puffball will erupt and all in range must save or be affected by the spore cloud. Roll 1d6 to see what type of spores the puffball has

1-Sleep (slumber lasting 1d6 turns)
2-Poison (save at +2 or asphyxiate)
3-Hallucinations (DM's choice, but characters should be delusional and paranoid, unable to function properly)
4-Disease (if not cured withn 2 days becomes zombies)
5-Rage (save vs spells or attack nearest being until it is slain – will even attack friends)
6-Levitation (character becomes lighter than air and will slowly drift in a random direction 20' per turn, 10 feet off the ground. Effect lasts 1d6 turns)

**Giant Stinkhorn:** AL: N, MV: 0' (0'), DC: 6, HD: 6, #AT: 0 DG:0, ML:12, Special: odor. Stinkhorn mushrooms lie dormant beneath the soil until suddenly erupting for no particular reason. A stinkhorn emits such a stench that all must save vs poison or suffer a -2 penalty on all actions.

This effect lasts 30 minutes. Insects love stinkhorns. There is a 2-in-6 chance that indigenous giant insects of the referee's choice will appear in 1-10 minutes. They will be hungry and aggressive.

**Giant Wasps:** AL:N, MV: 180' (60'), DC: 4, HD 4, #AT 2, DG 1-8 (bite) 1-6 + paralysis (sting), ML 8, Special: Save vs Paralyze or sting paralyzes. In 2 days larvae will hatch and kill the victim unless a *Cure Disease* is cast. These yellow-and-black wasps are 6' long and highly aggressive. They will land on a character and bite and sting simultaneously, then leave to attack the next creature until all are paralyzed or run away.

**Giant Wolf Spiders**: AL:N, MV: 150' (50'), DC 6, HD 4, #AT 1, DG 1d6, ML 8, Special: Save vs poison or die, Surprise on a 1-4. Giant wolf spiders are flattish, aggressive, 6' long spiders with huge strong legs that can jump 40' to attack. They are silent movers, and have exceptional eyesight and touch, and will sense prey long before it gets within ambush range, thus its high chance to surprise. A wolf spider will usually pounce on the trailer in any pack of animals (or PC parties). Its bite is poisonous.

**Green Slime**: AL:N, MV: 0', DC:8, HD:2, #AT: touch DG: 1d6, ML:12, Special: turns flesh into green slime. Armor protects for one turn. Can only be burned off. Green slime is sickly green slime that can sense movement and will drop on targets passing beneath it. Its touch is so deadly as to turn a person into green slime in one round, with no saving throw. Armor will take an extra round to eat through. It can only be killed with fire. Characters who have the slime burned off them take full fire damage.

**Mantis Folk:** AL:N MV: 60' (20') (double if flying) DC:3 HD:10 #AT:1 D:2d6 ML:10 Special: Surprise, Speed, Decapitation. Mantis folk are basically 12' tall praying mantises with human intelligence. They communicate with chirp-like sounds. Aggressive and carnivorous, they will attack anything up to twice their size. Although solitary by nature, they will organize a defense if threatened in detail. Mantises have three formidable attributes. They have a camouflage ability, and thus surprise 4 times out of 6. Their superior speed automatically wins initiative, and if their natural attack is a 19 or 20 their foe is immediately decapitated unless the victim makes a save vs Death.

**Moon Moths:** AL: N, MV: 120' (40'), DC: 4, HD: 4, #AT: 1, DG: 1d6, ML: 6, Special: *Sleep* cloud. Moon moths are giant purple moths with a 12'-15' wingspan. They are final form of the Caterpillar Horrors (q.v.) Moths will seek to disengage at all times. If attacked, they spurt a cloud of Sleep mist behind them as they fly away. Characters must save vs poison or fall asleep for 1d6 turns.

**Molds**

**Yellow Mold**: AL:N, MV:0', DC:9, HD:2, #AT:1, DG: 1d6 plus spores , ML:12, Special: acidic, eats away wood and leather, does 1d6 damage to bare skin, 50% chance of releasing 10' spore cloud, save vs poison or choke to death in 6 rounds. Can only be damaged by fire. Yellow mold is a bright saffron color, and highly corrosive. It eats away wood and leather in 1d3 rounds, and causes 1d6 damage to exposed flesh. When roughly contacted, there is a 50% chance it will release a spore cloud in a 10' area. All within must save vs poison or choke to death within six rounds. Yellow mold is especially tough and magic resistant, only taking damage from fire and fire attacks.

**Brown Mold**: AL:N, MV:0', DC:9, HD:2, #AT: special DG: special , ML:12, Special: Drains heat (4d6 hp) each round from any character within 5'; only damaged by cold; heat attacks make it quadruple in size and hp. Brown mold is a chocolate-colored fungal growth that sucks the heat out of all warm-blooded creatures. It also soaks up ambient air temperature, so that the air within 5' of a brown mold is always chilly. Unfortunately, any warm-blooded creatures within 5' get heat drained for 4d6 damage, so the cold warning does not do much good. On the bright side, those who survive this hypothermic attack will not be subject to the heat/hit point drain for another hour as the body warms up again. This brown mold is impervious to weapons. Cold causes damage to it, but heat makes it quadruple in size and hit points, and the new size may bring it into range of more victims.

**Red Mold**: AL:N, MV:0', DC:9, HD:2 , #AT:1, DG:3d6, ML:12, Special: Contact causes 3d6 damage electrical sparks within 5'; save for half; impervious to fire, cold and spells. Red mold is maroon in color. It is easily damaged by sharp weapons, but impervious to all energy or elemental attacks. Rough contact with red mold causes a discharge of electrical sparks that do 3d6 damage to all within 5'. A saving throw vs spells will cut the damage in half.

**Moon Slime**: AL:N, MV: 0', DC:9, HD:1, #AT: touch DG: 1d6, ML:12, Special: causes 1d6 damage per round, plus eats away one piece of equipment per round. Can be scraped off in 1d3 rounds (destroying scraper) or burned in 1 round, causing 1d6 fire damage to victim. Moon slime is a pale, lime-tinted slime with a faint luminescence. It falls on creatures it detects beneath it.

**Mushroom Fly Trap:** AL:N MV: 0' (0') DC:6 HD:8 #AT:1 D:2d6 ML:12 Special: entrapment, digestion. The Mushroom Fly Trap inhabits the concave cup of the large trumpet fungi in the forest, molding its shape to that of the cap. The inside of its cone is sticky – characters must save vs Wands or become stuck. They are then automatically hit by a fungal whip that wraps around them and sucks out 2-12 hit points per round. If the character avoids being stuck, the fly trap must roll to hit.

**Mutated Spider:** AL:N, MV: 150' (50'), DC 2 , HD 10, #AT: 1, DG: 2d6+poison , ML 8 , Special: Poison, web. These giant, armored mutated spiders are trappers, web

spinners, with a body circumference of 10'. They are intelligent, and co-operative within their species. They usually live in covens of 5-10 spiders, and work to slowly and systematically expand their territory. Their webs are all but invisible (1 in 6 chance to notice), and not only do they ensnare like a double-strength *Web* spell (no save), but if the character fails a Save vs Spells he is also struck blind, as these spiders ooze darkness. Any penetration of their webs into their territory leads into magical darkness that does not affect the spiders. Their poison kills outright, and is so potent that characters have a -2 penalty to save. These spiders can see invisible and into other planes.

**Mycedryad:** AL:N, MV: 120' (40'), DC: 5, HD 2, #AT: Spores, DG: special, ML 6, Special: Emits sporemones - save vs spells or become a mind controlled zombie. Mycedryads are mushroom spirits tied to their giant mushroom. If their mushroom is ever destroyed, they die. Normally mycedryads are shy, but they are whimsical, and there is a 1 in 6 chance they will attempt to mind-control passing strangers for their amusement. They release spore clouds called sporemones, and all within a 10' ball of spores must save vs spells or be mind controlled by the mycedryad. They will protect the mycedryad to the death.

**Noose Fungi:** AL:N, MV: 0' (0'), DC: 5, HD 8, #AT: 1s, DG: 2d6 strangulation, ML 12, Special: paralysis. Noose fungi are indistinguishable from many other 10'-20' high club fungi. When a prey brushes against its stalk, it erupts multiple fungi tendrils that cumulatively strangle its foe for 2-12 damage, as well as injecting a paralyzing agent into its victim. Once the victim ceases to struggle, it slowly dissolves the body over a few days.

**Psionic Mold**: AL: N, MV: 3' (1'), AC: 9, HD: 6, #AT: 1, DG: Special, ML:12, Special: Mind Blade. Psionic mold is a colony of puce-colored mold that grows on large fungi. It can slowly migrate, always searching for fresh prey, The sight of a mold colony on the move is enough to induce *Fear* in all intelligent creatures under 4 HD, and uneasiness in all others. When prey comes within 20', the mold blasts out a Mind Blade. The colony can blast once per round, using cumulative effects to kill its prey. Characters must roll *higher than* their Intelligence score or suffer the following effects: Feeblemind, then Insanity, then Coma.

**Purplepedes**: AL:N, MV: 90' (30'), DC: 6, HD 15, #AT: 1, DG: 5d6, ML 10. The purplepede is nothing but a big, dumb, hungry caterpillar. Rumor has them approaching 60 feet in length, and being 10 feet high.

**Shambling Mounds**: AL:N, MV: 60' (20'), DC:0, HD: 9, #AT: 2, DG: 2d6 ea, ML:10, Special: suffocation, weapon resistance, elemental resistance. Shambling Mounds are 12' tall rotting heaps of vegetation, slime, molds, lichens, moss and so on. They feast on meat if they can get it, and on fungus when meat is unavailable. Mounds will not usually surprise a party, as their rotting odor can be smelled up to 20' away. They attack with two club-like arms that do 2d6 damage each. If both hit, the character is drawn into the body of the mound, where they are immobile and will smother to death in 6 rounds unless rescued. Mounds are immune to blunt weapons and fire, take half damage from cold and edged weapons, and lightning attacks cause the mounds to grow in size, absorbing the lightning damage as new hit points.

**Slime Wyrm:** AL: C, MV: 60' (20'), DC: -4, HD: 16, #AT: 1, DG: 4d10, ML:10, Special: Swallow attack, damage reduction. The slime wyrm is like a thick, undulating sea monster with an enormous head with foot-long spiked teeth. It is more at home in the water (double its movement rate). The slime wyrm is aggressive to any creature it can swallow (creatures about the size of a rhinocerous or smaller). When a slime worm attacks, if it rolls a 16 or higher it automatically swallows its foe, regardless of foe's armor class. As well as taking the 4d10 bite damage, the wyrm's digestive system is made of green slime which will turn an unarmored swallowed person into green slime in one round. Those in armor get an extra round as it will get dissolved first. Being made partially of slime, it absorbs damage like a sponge, thus all attacks, including magic, only cause half damage.

**Tricerabeetles**: AL:N, MV: 150' (50'), DC: 2, HD 6, #AT: 1, DG: 3d6, ML 11. Tricerabeetles are 9'long beetles with slightly luminescent tangerine carapaces. They have three mandibles instead of two, and a bite/gore uses all three to inflict gaping wounds on any who annoy it. There is only a 1-in-6 chance that a particular beetle will attack, so most creatures give it a wide berth and leave it alone.

**Wild Boars**: AL:N, MV: 180' (60'), DC: 5, HD 5, #AT: 1, DG: 2d6, ML 10, Special: will fight one round after reduced to 0 hit points. These wild boars, about the size of a lion, roam the forest looking for truffles. They are territorial and will attack any that get within 60' of them. So ferocious are they in combat that even after being killed, they will still make one more attack.

**Wisps**: AL:C, MV: 180' (60'), AC: -2, HD: 9, #AT: 1, DG: 2d6 electric bolt, ML:10, Special: *Luring.* Wisps are a rare and strange creature, able to turn invisible, or manifest themselves as a light source ranging in size and brightness from a lamp to a 2', dazzling blue-white ball. Any sentient being who sees a wisp must make a save vs Spells or be *lured* towards the wisp, ignoring all danger from foes or terrain (such as pits or water). Once lured, the only escape for the person lured is for the luring wisp to be killed or forced to flee from visual range. If a wisp needs to defend itself, it will shoot a blast of electrical energy at its foe, once per round. Wisps usually live in areas of geographic dangers (marshes, lakes, swamps) and feed on the psychic anguish of their dying victims Ω

# The Blasphemous Shrine of the Tentacled God

*The Darkness Beneath* level 12, by Jeff Rients

**1. Chamber of Too Many Damn Doors.** Each door in this chamber has a number painted on it in vibrant yellow. From north to south the numbers are labeled 23, 13, 52, Six and 12b. The meaning of these numbers is long lost.

**1.a. Corpse Closet.** This niche is the storage area of a flesh golem who always attacks when the door is opened. The flesh golem will avoid attacking anyone carrying open flame if other targets are available.

**1.b. Broom Closet of Lurking Evil.** The brooms, mops, buckets and cleaning supplies in this room all radiate a bright aura of absolute wickedness should *detect evil* be cast upon them. Under *animate object* or similar magics these items will always attack the caster.

**2. Smelly Room.** This room is empty save for a thick layer of dust on the floor and cobwebs near the ceiling. For reasons unknown, it smells vaguely of paprika and sweat socks.

**3. Triangular Room.** Each wall of this room has a pair of bronze sconces sit at roughly eye level for a dwarf. If all six sconces are filled with torches and lit, a phantom dwarfess will appear in the center of the room. She is dressed as one of the long gone Warrior Queens of the Floating Mountain and holds a sword in one hand and a hammer in the other. She will silently offer one weapon or the other to any dwarf present. The hammer is a warhammer +3, 6" throwing range with return. The blade is a sword -2, aligned to Law but with no additional powers. After the selection has been made, the dwarf queen vanishes never to return, taking the other weapon with her. If no dwarf is present or the ghost is threatened she will fight as a double strength wraith (8 hit dice, 2 attacks per round with sword and hammer but also draining a level with each strike). If turned or slain the weapons disappear with the phantom.

**4. Workout Room.** This room is equipped with a set of iron weights and a heavy punching bag. Anyone stripping to their undergarments and training for at least 2 turns receives +1 to their Strength score. Anyone who watches and does not participate loses a point of Constitution. Wandering monsters rolled during a workout are 50% likely to simply desire to get some exercise.

**5. Lair of the Loneliest Elemental.** Here resides Rupert, the last living Electroweak Elemental (DC 2, HD 16, damage 3d6, immune to electromagnetic and weak force attacks, double damage from gravitic and strong force attacks). None of his elemental kindred survived the cooling of the universe $10^{-12}$ seconds after the Big Bang and he's been in a deep depression ever since, mostly staying in bed and rarely going out. Rupert's only treasure is a nearly complete run of the recently defunct *Modern Elemental* magazine. All but the last seven issues are poly bagged and boarded in six clearly labeled boxes. Due to the avid collectors' market for the earliest issues the box containing issues 1-14 is worth 250 gp, but all the others are valued at only 75 gp each. The seven issues strewn about the lair are too new and too badly damaged to have any resale value. As a result of the evil radiation from the idol in **30**, NO CLERIC SPELLS WILL FUNCTION IN THIS ROOM.

**6. Chamber of Holy Graffiti.** The walls of this chamber are covered with dozens of political slogans and rude suggestions rendered in numerous different languages from many species and cultures past, present and future. A piece

of chalk lies upon the floor. Any party member adding a message will earn a blessing of +1 on all saves from Cylroi, God of Presence in Absence. Erasing so much as part of a single character results in Cylroi dispatching an invisible stalker to slay the offender when he or she next sleeps. Note that the purple/indigo glow of the prismatic barrier in **28** is visible from here.

**7. The Horrid in Abstraction.** Behold, if you dare, the soul-crushing masterpiece of some eons-dead sculptor of preternatural ability. Here carved in black-flecked granite lies the perfect abstract representation of the concept of evil. So pure is the artistry that merely attempting to follow the stony curves and textures with mortal eye induces headache and nausea. Actively contemplating the totality of this ultimate offense to the very concept of art can lead to madness, despair, or alignment change as the referee adjudicates. Smashing the abominable sculpture nets 6,666 experience points split evenly between all who participate in the desecration of this desecration.

**8. Lair of the Space Ogres.** The four space ogres here are pretty much like regular ogres, except for their oversized laser rifles (4d8 damage, 20 charges, 17 Str to wield), posh accents, and shiny pants.

**8.a. Supply Room.** This shelved closet holds the space ogres' supplies (mostly Tang and dehydrated peanut butter sandwiches), a crucifix made of silver kryptonite (allows priests to turn undead, lycanthropes and Superman) and the clearly marked "Secret Emergency Exit" (which is a secret door from the other side).

**9. Empty Room.** Except for a few wisps of smoke lingering in the air. 2 in 6 chance that a party member hears the tinkling of chimes in an indeterminate direction.

**10. The Freezer.** Sitting near the center of this room is a large chunk of ice with sufficient clarity to show the silhouette of some sort of man-shaped creature inside. The room is not colder than the rest of the dungeon, but the ice shows no signs of melting. The trapped creature can be freed with fire magic and/or brute force. If the party has sustained losses a kindly ref may allow a replacement PC to be frozen in the ice. Otherwise roll 1d6 for the prisoner: 1-3 cave man or woman, 4-6 Captain America.

**10.a. False Door Trap.** Attempting to open this door releases a jolt of electricity, shocking the opener for 4d6. A faint odor of ozone may warn cautious explorers.

**11. Transporter Room.** Atop of the control panel of this six-person teleportation grid is a small handwritten sign warning the party "DO NOT USE - M. Scott". Attempting to use the controls with no one on the transporter pad with summon d6 demons of random type (d6). If anyone stands on the pad while the controls are activated roll 1d6 on the **Transporter Malfunction Chart:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Atoms scattered across time and space |
| 2 | Replaced with duplicate from evil parallel universe. |
| 3 | Sent to random location on campaign wilderness map. |
| 4 | Turned inside out (97% fatal). |
| 5 | Random demon type 1d6 arrives in every unoccupied space on pad. |
| 6 | Explosion, all in room take 8d6 damage (save for half), transporter mechanism destroyed. |

**12. Disturbing Dolls.** Suspended from the ceiling of this room are 10,000 dolls of various types, all hung by the neck from tiny nooses, dangling at heights from 2' to 7' from the floor. Visibility is highly limited as a result of these macabre decorations. Paranoid visitors are likely to feel the sensation that they are being watched.

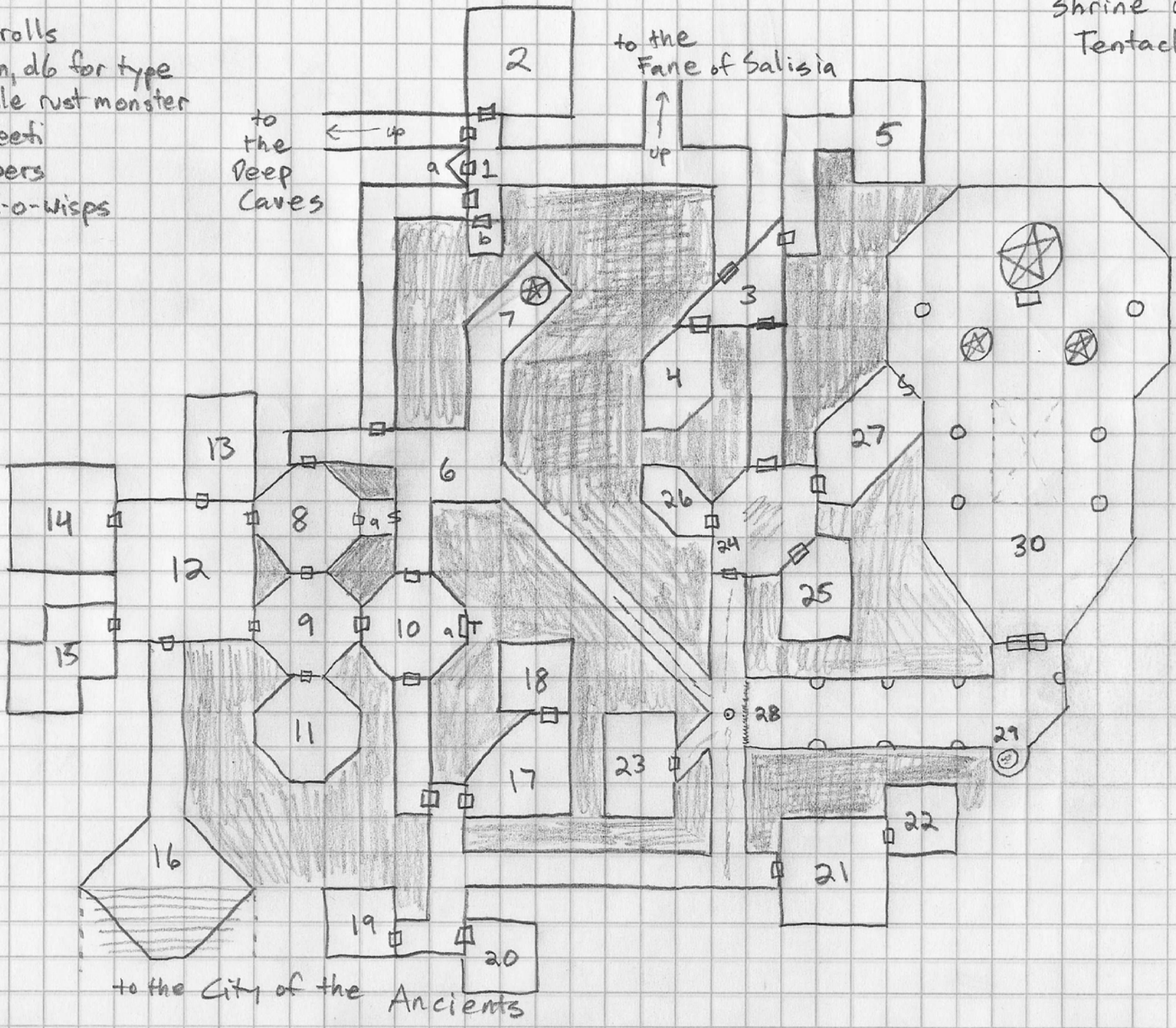
**13. Computer Room.** The central feature of this room is a large (2' x 4' x 8' tall) elaborate wood and brass cabinet. Several odd-shaped and knob-bedecked cabinet doors are open, revealing shelves of coruscating crystals of myriad colors. Anyone with infravision must save or be blinded for 1d6 turns as their eyes adjust to the alien spectra overloading their senses. The computer has not been operational for the past several centuries and its function will not be obvious to most adventurers. Twenty of the 66 crystals still glow. They are worth 500gp each, but the three infra-blue crystals are deadly (lethal dose of radiation in d6 days). The remaining 46 crystals are cracked, colorless and worthless.

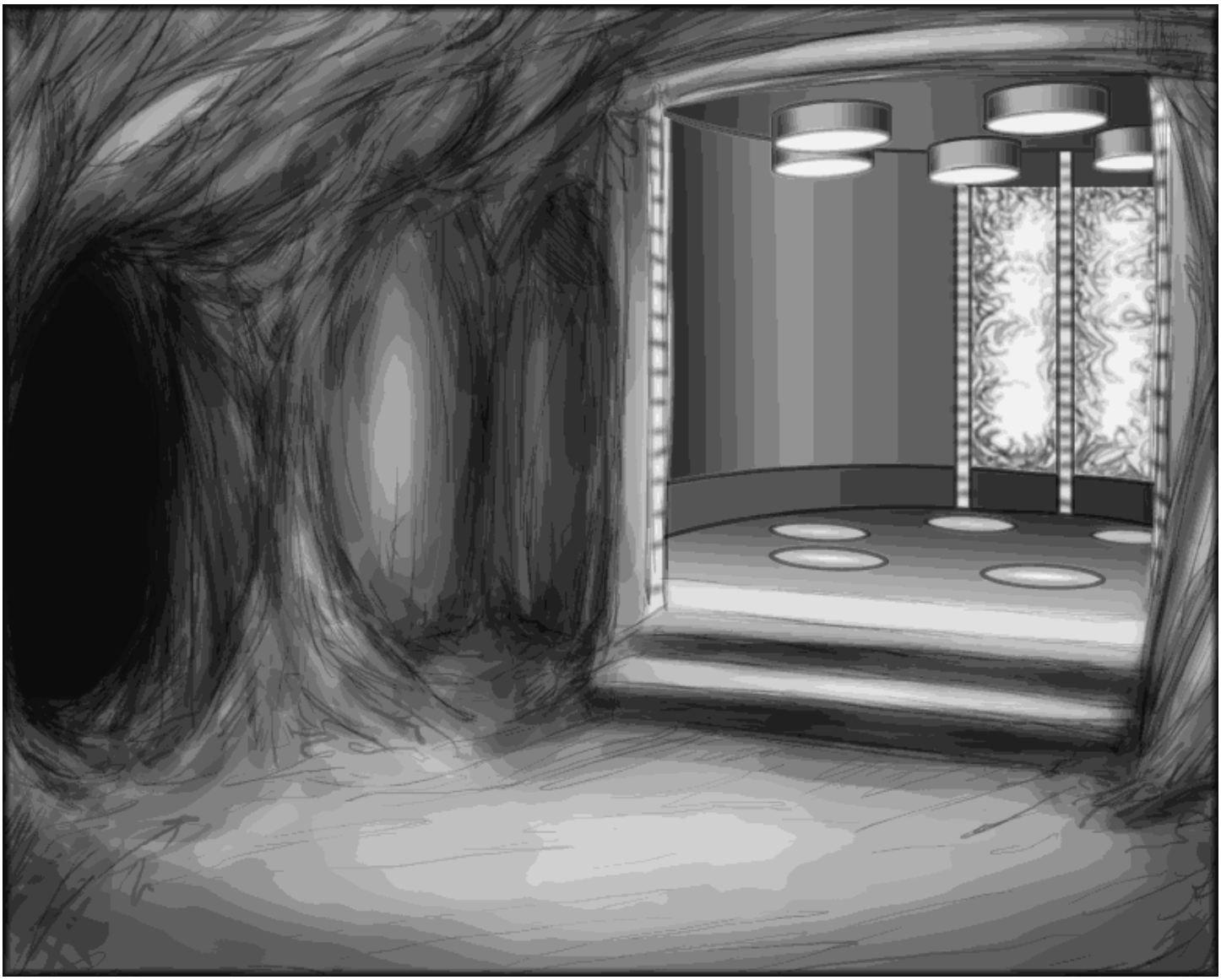
**14.The Imp Machine.** Occupying most of this room is a strange device that looks like something Dr. Frankenstein would use if he were a dentist. Anyone sitting in the reclining chair will automatically activate the Imp Machine. The victim will be physically restrained for 2-7 rounds. On the first round all clothing, equipment, armor, etc. will be neatly removed from the victim without harm to either. Every round thereafter a tiny imp will be welded to a random location on the body of the poor wretch, causing d6 damage and making the imp scream like you wouldn't believe. The victim's and imp's circulatory and nervous systems become commingled, and nothing short of death or divine intervention can remove an attached imp. Anyone with two or more attached imps has their charisma score effectively halved. The only way to deactivate the Imp Machine is with brute force; treat it as wearing plate armor and any hit points of damage inflicted become a cumulative percentage score to disable it (i.e. it automatically stops at 100 hit points of damage but may peter out before then). The imp storage tank only has 20 imps in it. After those are used up the machine will no longer function. Any spellcaster who survives sitting in the Imp Machine will find that the imps enhance their arcano-cogitation such that they will be able to memorize one

# The Darkness Beneath: Blasphemous Shrine of the Tentacled God

## Wandering Monsters

1) 2d6 trolls
2) 1 demon, d6 for type
3) invisible rust monster
4) d4 efreeti
5) d4 ropers
6) d6 will-o-wisps





extra spell level per imp attached. Note that sitting in the Imp Machine multiple times is dangerous: at the seventh imp attached the victim explodes fatally (and messily), doing 2d6 damage to anyone else in the room.

**15. Sealed Room.** The iron door to this room has been sealed shut with a leaden solder and marked with an ancient rune of danger. Any fool opening this door releases a vast quantity of purple gas, flowing through any open doors and potentially filling all rooms and corridors on the level. Every turn of exposure to this vile vapor calls for a save versus poison to avoid the loss of a Wisdom point. At only 2 points of Wisdom party members will fight among themselves at the slightest provocation. At 1 point of Wisdom basic precautions and procedures will be forgotten, such as a character in platemail attempting to wrestle a rust monster. At zero Wisdom actions beyond flight or fight are impossible. The gas will disperse over 2-12 months, leaving a purple stain on the walls and floors. Inside the room is a large black cauldron of an unknown adamantine alloy worth 5,000gp with a strange residue in the bottom. An alchemist given a sample of the residue may be able to recreate the purple gas.

**16. Stairway to the Unknown.** Strange sounds intermittently issue up from the dark void below, at times including whirrings, clickings, buzzings and inhuman laughter. No magical form of illumination will penetrate the darkness shrouding these broad steps; only good old-fashioned all-cleansing fire will show the way down.

**17. See No Weevil.** A trio of Giant Boll Weevils (DC 4, HD 5, Spd 12, damage 2d6 from proboscis, take double damage from cold attacks) claim this room as their office. The Giant Boll Weevils are presently typing up a manuscript using a trio of oversized typewriters. Their literary project is a treatise on methods for eliminating large populations of humans without damaging the cotton crop. A large map of the campaign world is tacked to one wall, colored with areas amenable to cotton cultivation and areas of human habitation. The regions where the two overlap are marked "infestation". Their only other treasure is a giant-

sized tea service worth 1,200gp, a barrel of potable water, and a crate half-full of Earl Grey.

**18. Last Refuge of the College Dropout.** This room is empty save for a filthy cot against one wall and a mini-fridge in the corner. This device hums with power even though a casual inspection reveals that the three-pronged power hook-up is not plugged into anything. Inside the fridge is a partial wheel of moldy cheese (yellow mold, which attacks immediately upon the door opening) and a six pack of Soylent Green brand cola. One of the cans of cola serves as the prison of Hepzubaal, Princess of Djinn-ettes, and whoever pulls the tab on that can will be granted one wish. Drinking the cola in the other five cans violates the cannibalism prohibition of most Lawful faiths, putting the religious powers of priests and paladins in jeopardy.

**19. Don't Look, Dude!** In the center of this room is a table with a corpse (obvious from the smell) under a white sheet. Lifting the sheet reveals the supine remains of a medusa and all present will need to save or be petrified, with whoever lifted the sheet getting a -2 on the roll. The only way to avoid possible petrification is for a player to specifically state their character is not looking in the direction of the table as the corpse is revealed. The corpse has been stripped bare (except for 100 gp gemstone earrings hidden by snake-hair), revealing that this particular medusa was a hermaphrodite.

**20. Hot Door.** The door to this room is hot to the touch, as 4 salamanders reside here. In addition to their usual spears, one salamander has a banjo that can be used three times per day to force the nearest d4 hearing it to save versus magic or dance the Charleston for 3 turns. The room contains several pieces of bronze furniture, including a bronze treasure chest that holds 8,000 sp, 5 gems (750 gp each), a cleric scroll (*heal*), a magic-user scroll (*ice storm*), a ring of weakness, and a potion of gaseous form.

**21. Lair of the High Priest.** This humble apartment serves as the home of the Murbag the Wretched, last priest of the Shrine of Blasphemy. Murbag will be found here fully half the time. If he is not home he will normally be found in the Shrine Proper (**30**). Although his mind is riddled with madness and his body is bent with age, Murbag remains a dangerous foe. He is a 13th level Evil High Priest with 35 hit points. Over his platemail +2 (DC 0) he wears the legendary Disco Robe, a wide-sleeved, high-collared robe decorated with over two thousand individual mirrors. No ray, beam, laser, etc. can effect him while so dressed. Murbag wields a Mace of Sharpness and a disintegration pistol (12 charges, as per mage spell). In addition to the spells normally allowed to an Evil High Priest of his level, Murbag may memorize 6 additional spell levels due to the six imps attached to his legs and torso (see **14**), whose presence is initially concealed by the Disco Robe. If the referee has access to any non-standard spells appropriate to an anti-cleric they should be assigned to Murbag. Murbag is capable of great cunning and will readily surrender if he thinks the situation can be thereby better played to his advantage. He may try revealing the imps under his robe and spinning a tale of how it is they and not he that are evil. Note that any trolls on the level will generally obey Murbag's commands.

**22. Treasury of the High Priest.** The door to this room is marked with an invisible glyph that will drain d4 levels from the first character touching it. *Detect magic* and similar spells will reveal the existence of the protection. It can be removed automatically with an erasing spell or dispelled if the magic of a 13th level caster can be overcome. Beyond the door are seven giant skulls inlaid with silver and converted to bowls. Each skull is worth 500 gp and six of them contain 250 gp. The seventh contains 205 pp and 10 gems worth 250 gp each.

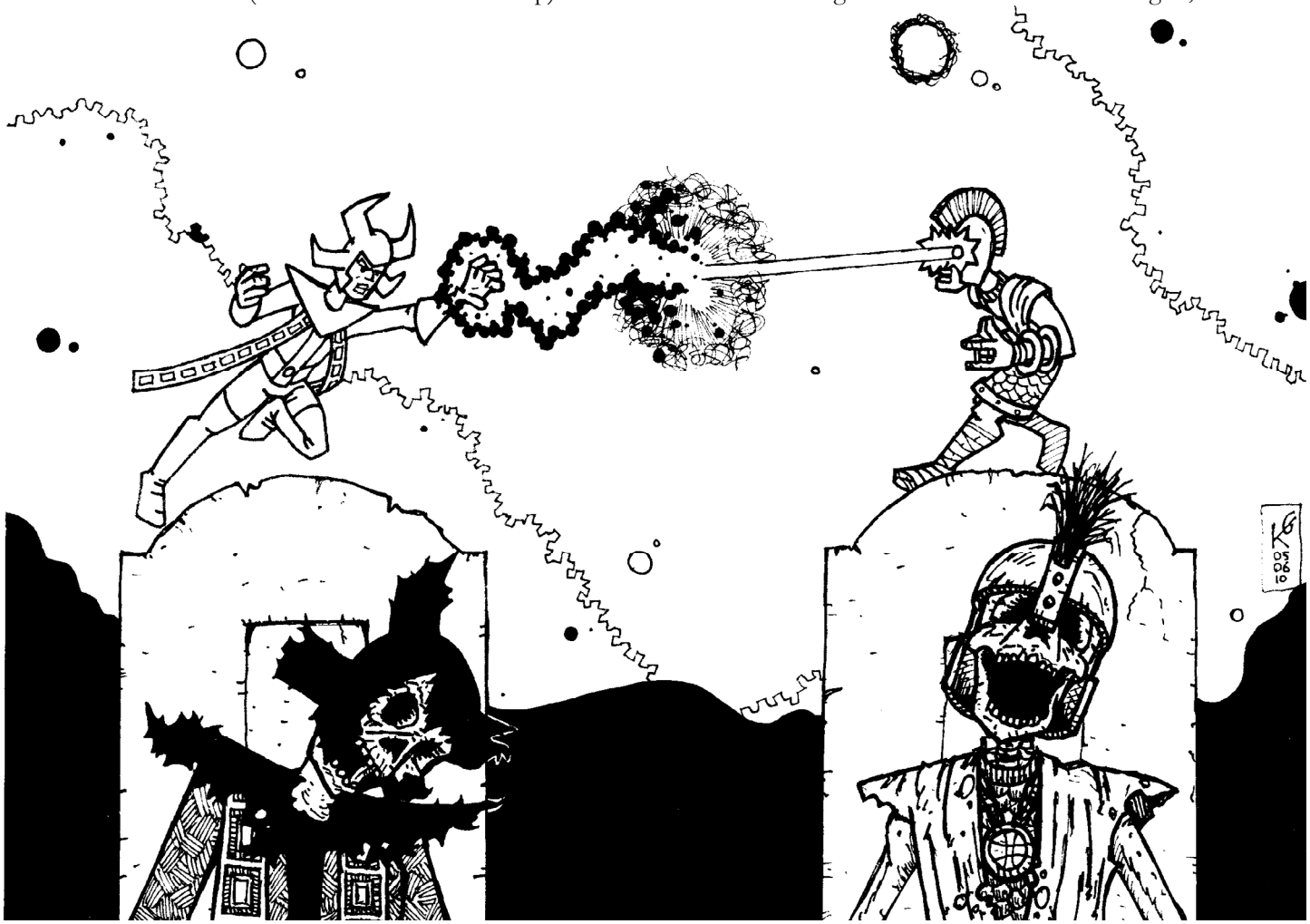
**23. Match of the Millennium.** Two robed skeletons sit here in the lotus position, facing each other across the room, the remains of a pair of mystics engaged in astral combat. They were so equally matched the duel continues to this day, but the titanic combat will only be visible to those who can view objects in the astral spectrum. The two robes are in phenomenal shape and composed of the finest silks (value 2,500 gp each), but disturbing the corpses will cause the astral forms to cease their centuries-old incorporeal wrestling match. They will precipitate out of the astral dimension and attack as spectres.

**24. Malodorous and Noisy Room.** The funk of forty thousand years reverberates through this room, both the music kind of funk and the smell kind of funk. Nothing can be done about the smell without a goodly selection of cleaning supplies, mops, etc., but the music and accompanying lightshow can be deactivated by smashing the glowing dodecahedron hanging from a chain attached to the ceiling. Turning off the music will incite the inhabitants of **25, 26,** and **27** to violence. Any wandering monsters here will be d6 trolls looking to shake their groove thing.

**25. Troll Lair Southeast.** 2-7 trolls will be found here playing dice to decide how they will divide the corpse of a two-headed circus bear (still in costume and makeup) with which they plan on making their supper. A favorable reaction roll indicates that the trolls will invite the party to play dice with them, with stakes of any and all sorts including the tastier-looking limbs of party members, their souls, sexual congress, etc. For their stakes in the game the trolls will offer information, assistance in clearing out the level, servitude for a year and/or some of their treasure: a large jug of wine worth 25gp, 3 gems worth 500gp each, $600 in Confederate bills and a slightly banged-up unicycle.

**26. Troll Lair West.** 1-6 trolls lurk here, the wimpiest and most dejected of the local tribe (none possessing more than 25 hit points). These wretches have no treasure save for a few rats roasting over a small fire and do not particularly want to fight, unless aroused to anger by the destruction of the Funky Dodecahedron of **24** or ordered to do so by higher status trolls in **25** or **27**.

**27. Troll Lair Northeast.** 2-12 trolls can normally be found here, smoking long-necked clay pipes and playing draughts. They'll pay top dollar (out of their stone jug containing 2,000 gp and 4 gems worth 1,000 gp each) for any wine or pipeweed in the party's possession. Should the party insist on combat with these mellow fellows, the leader will target the rudest foe with his net-gun, a device



capable of entrapping/disabling a target unless a save versus petrification is made. The net-gun only fires once and it takes a full turn to reload the net after each use. None of the trolls are aware of the secret door to **30**. As a result of the evil radiation from the idol in **30**, NO CLERIC SPELLS WILL FUNCTION IN THIS ROOM.

**28. Eye of Doom and Prismatic Wall.** Two protective devices guard the Blasphemous Shrine beyond. The Eye of Doom is a palantir-like sphere that fires a death ray every other round at any intruders coming down the corridor. Its ray can strike up to 3 adjacent targets at once, all of whom must save versus death ray or take 9d6 damage from anti-electricity, a crackling purple energy that acts as the inverse of electricity (magical metal armor protects, bonuses to save against lightning act as penalties, etc.) A successful use of *dispel magic* against a twentieth level caster will render the Eye inert. Smashing it with a magic weapon of at least +2 bonus destroys both the Eye and the weapon. Blindness or darkness effects will cause the eye to fire randomly down the four corridors it guards, targeting no more than one victim per attack. Otherwise the Eye is immune to anything short of *disintegration* or *wish* magic. The prismatic wall pulses eerliy in alternating indigos and purples. Attempting to pass through the wall or even touch it results in 6d12 prismatic damage, no save allowed. The wall can be brought down with a combination *passwall* (which eliminates the indigo portion of the wall) and at least 8 dice of magical fire damage (which brings down the purple part). Bringing down one color or the other reduces the damage to 3d12, but the barrier remains impassable. Anyone wearing the Disco Robe (see **21**) will be ignored by the Eye and able to safely pass the prismatic barrier.

**29. Ablution Pool.** The murky water in this small pool does 2d6 damage to any paladin or Lawful priest coming into contact with it. Furthermore, any holy object placed in the pool will be utterly destroyed. Neutrals drinking from the pool must save versus poison or join the forces of Chaos. At the bottom of the pool (only 8 inches down, but difficult to see) is a platinum bracelet set with a large diamond worth 7,500 gp.

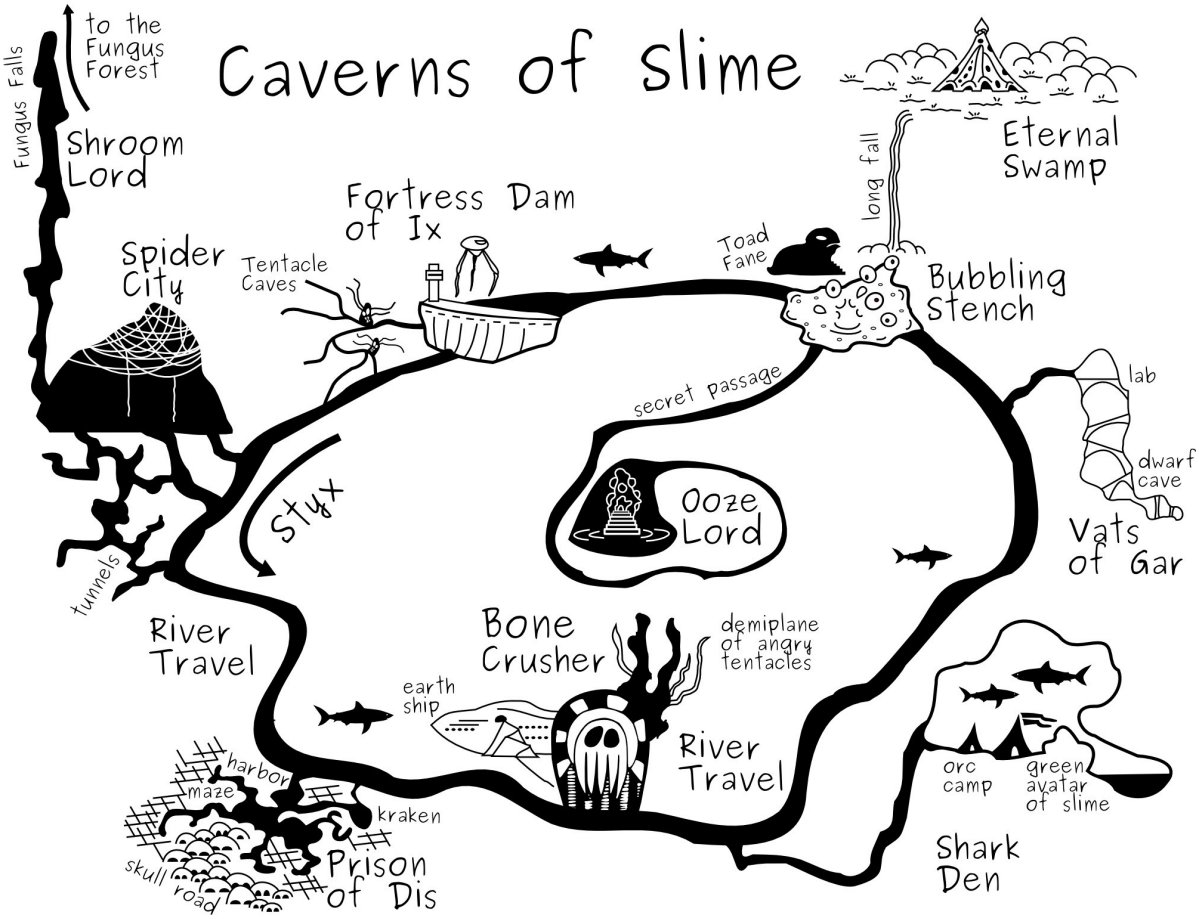
**30. The Shrine Proper.** Only those who have washed themselves in the Ablution Pool (**29**) will have any success in opening the doors to Shrine, whether they are using magic or muscle power. The room is lit with a shadowy, flickering *continual light* effect and the sounds of tinkling chimes can be heard often. Should more than one person cross the space between the four columns there is a 1 in 6 chance per extra person of opening the concealed pit trap, dropping all down a 60' shaft into a pile of (non-animated) skeletons. The pit door closes 3 rounds after the trap is triggered. At the far end of the the room are statues depicting the two Lesser and one Greater Lords of Blasphemy. Each of these bronze statues is depicted with a multiplicity of heads and limbs as in the fashion of some

*As with the rest of* The Darkness Beneath*, this Blasphemous Shrine is modular and may be placed on its own or in other underground locales. It has three links to other dungeon levels (6, 8, & 14) which may be removed or adjusted for your game. – Ig*

Hindu images. Some of heads of the Greater Lord will bear faces resembling the party, and that head will be depicted as committing the most impious or abominable act ever accomplished by the PC in question. One hand of each of the Lesser Lords holds a silver windchime. As long as the windchimes are free to sound no mage spell will function in the shrine. Similarly, the Greater Lord holds a glowing stone that cancels clerical (but not anti-clerical) magic in a 50' radius. At any given time the shrine will contain 2-7 trolls worshipping these strange deities, with a 50% additional chance each of 1-2 demons of random type (d6), 1-3 salamanders, and/or Murbag the Wretched (see **21**). If Murbag is present and things are going poorly he will escape through the secret door to **27**, either to flee or to rally the trolls therein at the referee's discretion. In addition to the windchimes and stone, each of the Lords has an additional item of treasure. The largest head of the Greater Lord wears the Lost Crown of the Storm Giant Kings, an oversized circlet of gold worth 25,000 gp with 15,000 gp worth of gems attached. One of the hands of the Lesser Lord to the east holds a Staff of Withering with 87 charges remaining. The western Lesser Lord wears a Girdle of Giant Strength. Ω

# Caverns of Slime


Alex Schroeder http://www.emacswiki.org/alex/RPG
Lior Wehrli http://kuzukistan.blogspot.com/
Chris Roberts http://thedoomedworldcarcosa.wordpress.com/
Ndege Diamon http://nezach-hod.tumblr.com/
Kelvin Green http://junkopia.net/kelvinsdirtybits/art.html


**Level Connections**: If you are running the *Darkness Beneath* megadungeon, there are two main entrances from above: you can reach the Shroom Lord from the Fungus Forest (*Fight On!* #13) and you can reach the Vats of Gar from the Deep Caves (*Fight On!* #12). In addition to that, you can connect any unexplored body of water to the river Styx (see River Travel). You could, for example, connect the waterfall in room #4 of the Upper Caves (*Fight On!* #1) via a long pipe with the river Styx and thereby provide a shortcut.

**Level Overview**: Assuming the party descends the Fungus Falls from an upper level of the *Darkness Beneath* megadungeon and wants to reach the lowest level, the *Tomb of the Black Lord of Nothingness*—what needs to be done? The party descends through the Shroom Lord lands down to the Spider City. This provides access to River Travel. They will soon learn that the river Styx flows in a circle, down here. Somebody has been meddling with space itself.

Following the river, the next two locations are essentially distractions. Bone Crusher is the origin of the roaming ghouls and the two panzer ships (metal warships) and the location of a marooned transdimensional ship, which the party could obtain once planar travel is no longer a problem. The Prison of Dis is where you can find another way out of this level, and you can get a *Lion Helmet* matching the *Lion Shield* carried by the troglodyte king of the *Warrens of the Troglodytes*.

If the party has been travelling along the river, they have hopefully met the orcs at one point or another. At the Shark Den the party can learn of a wizard specializing in extraplanar slime called Gar. At the Vats of Gar, they can get him to research the problem. Eventually, he'll realize that the Fortress Dam of Ix past the Bubbling Stench is causing this all. Once it is disabled, the river will eventually reconnect with the rest of the multiverse.

Gar will also tell the party about the Eternal Swamp where additional planar lore can be gained. This is where they learn about the hidden passage leading to the Ooze Lord and the *Tomb of the Black Lord of Nothingness* detailed in a future issue of Fight On!

Alternatively, use the Eternal Swamp as a starting point and have the party free somebody from the Prison of Dis and escape back up again.

**Random tables:** Ideally you'll scratch off any entries used and replace them with new ones for your next session.

**Accommodating Skills:** If you use skills in your game, replace some of the saving throws with skill challenges as appropriate.

**It's a trap**! This dungeon level is disconnected from most of the multiverse. There are ways to climb in and out of it, but if the players want to proceed further down they need to disable the Fortress Dam of Ix. To emphasize this, I suggest to limit access to spells such as teleportation, plane shift, and any spells that require contact with divine agents (such as high level cleric spells). You need to find the right balance for your campaign.

I suggest that praying for divine spells of level four and above results in a vision and that the effects of these spells be reduced or their onset delayed appropriately:

- An angel tries to speak to you but you hear no words, only a loud humming.
- As the divine light is about to reach you, it is sucked into a peculiar machine and destroyed.
- You see god's light disappearing behind a black wall and nothing but darkness surrounds you.
- Instead of a messenger of the gods granting you your most powerful spells, a winged pig man with four legs and wielding a blood falchion offers to teach you the secret ritual to summon *Bel, Slayer of Men* (HD 10; AC 2; Atk 1 flaming whip (no damage but on a hit it grants +4 on the hit with the sword in the same round, and on a 20 it disarms the opponent), 1 flaming sword (3d6); MV 9; *flaming aura* deals an extra 1d6 to everybody within 30 ft.; immune to non-magic weapons; immune to fire); this may be the same ritual that the mage-wraith in the *Warrens of the Troglodytes* learned.

**Performing Rituals:** Rituals are ceremonies and prayers that take many minutes to perform, usually powered by demon lords and devils. There are several of them that can be learnt down here.

# Shroom Lord

"The waterfall from the mushroom forest up above passes through this area of powerful shroom magic. The fungi undulate to a silent music, phosphorous lights and dancing glow bugs illuminate dancing myconids and glistening towers of fungal growth on the steep walls."

**Themes:** Mushroom people, a king in exile, faerie light, vertical area.

- The black walls are slimy and wet, water is falling all around you.
- A patch of faery grass is glowing in pastel colors.
- Dozens of spiders as large as cats scuttle away into small tunnels.
- Rocky pools are often filled with green slime.

**Area Overview:** This area provides one of the few two-way access routes to the upper dungeon levels: the Mold Falls from the **Fungus Forest** (level 11) lead to the realm of the **Shroom Lord**. This realm is a cleft that reaches into the bowels of the earth and beyond, into the *Caverns of Slime*. Accordingly, travel up and down in this realm is difficult. A party descending the Mold Falls and following the pathways along the river will soon find that they are in need of flying magic or adequate climbing equipment.

When fighting on the small outcrops and grass patches, anybody hit with a natural 20 needs to save vs. paralysis or stumble over the edge, taking 1d6×1d6 damage from the fall (unless prevented by magic). When connected by ropes, anybody on the rope team may attempt the save, but each failure adds another save that needs to be made by one of the remaining rope team members.

**Encounters:**

1. A giant intelligent spider called **Merquishti** (HD 8; AC 4; Atk 1 bite (1d6); MV 15; when bitten, save vs. poison or fall comatose for 24h; can set up area web traps) is hungry for meat and conversation; it speaks the language of giant spiders, a dialect of subsurface elves, and the common tongue of all demons. If asked about gold, the spider will know that a knight's golden armor was carried down this way by devil worshipers a "very long time" ago; if asked about the destination, the spider will mention a city of evil half-spiders preying on the caverns and tunnels below. When the conversation ends, the spider considers capturing a party member by triggering a web trap (save vs. wands or be webbed; the web prevents spellcasting; to escape, trapped victims need to deal 20 points of damage using a dagger or a similar small blade; free allies can aid trapped victims using larger blades), attacking and poisoning the least armored party member and carrying them off (when the rest of the party follows, roll just once for the best tracker in the entire party; the chances of following the spider into the branching tunnels depend on the number of rounds head start it had: 1-2 rounds: 4 in 6; 3-4 rounds: 2 in 6; 5-6 rounds: 1 in 6; longer: you need a spider scout from the Spider City to track it); treasure at the lair includes 200gp, 50ep and a *Helmet of Terror* (friends and foes within 10ft. suffer a -2 to hit).
2. These rocks extend into the Plane of Earth and not surprisingly **6 Earth Elementals** (HD 6; AC 0; Atk 1 bite (2d6); immune to fire and electricity; can melt into the surrounding rocks in one round) surface, eager to take back any gems the party may have "stolen" from the deep earth. Their gem caverns are probably unreachable (otherwise the gem encrusted walls are worth 60,000gp).

3. Large pools of water have formed between the rocks. Illuminated by sessile glow worms, **1d6 Nixies** (HD 3; AC 8; Atk 1 bite (1d6); *charm man* 3×/day, *kiss of water breathing for charmed men* at will) are enjoying a bath, apparently ignorant of any males approaching. As soon as there is a fight in the water, a further **3d6 Nixies** rush in through hidden tunnels; they will dive away through underwater tunnels and ambush any pursuit squeezing into their lair. Their treasure: a *Mirror of Comeliness* (studying your face in the mirror grants +1 to reaction rolls for a day whenever appropriate), a *Golden Lion Breastplate of Steadfastness +4* (can be used on its own or it can be swapped in as a replacement breastplate for existing plate armor, grants a +4 bonus on saves vs. fear, charm, and other mind bending effects), a closed, green *Helmet of the Water Lord* with bulbous eye pieces (*speaking to water born creatures* at will, the ability to grow gills for permanent *underwater breathing*, the ability to grow fins and *swim like a fish* at will when barefoot, the ability to cast *light* from small, fast-growing antennas), 400gp, and 2,000sp.
4. **4 Stone Polyps** (HD 6; AC 0; Atk 1 bite (2d6), 8 tentacles (save vs. petrification or fall unconscious and be dragged towards the mouth); MV 3) grow on the stone walls, immobile, their arms limp and soft. As soon as a warm creature passes nearby, they activate. Treasure: hidden in cracks along the walls are the crushed bones of victims, a *Jade Headband of the Phoenix Child* (eyes will glow red at all times; shoot liquid fire from the eyes dealing 4d6 damage at will (save vs. wands for half); if the save succeeds with a 20 the target stares back, causing a little delay such that the fire immolates the wearer of the headband instead); a *Ring of the Alph* (minor telekinesis performed by an air spirit at will, and three air explosions that protect against fireballs, poisonous gas traps, and similar emergencies, triggered automatically by the air spirit when required; after the third air explosion the air spirit will leave); 2,000gp.
5. The **Shroom Lord** (HD 15; AC 5; Atk 1 smash (2d6), 1 lick (poison); MV 9; licked victims must save vs. poison or be charmed) grows within its own *circle of psychotic colors*; each of the **12 Color Mushrooms** can release a cloud of spores at a simple touch by the Shroom Lord (it can affect six opponents per round; save vs. poison or roll d6: 1. close your eyes for just a second and fall asleep immediately, 2. chase an erotic fantasy and fall of a ledge taking 1d6×1d6 damage, 3. bad trip paralyzes you with fear, 4. drop weapons, bend over and barf, 5. close your eyes and enjoy the visions, 6. everybody else seems slow and stupid, take two actions). Any enemies that fall asleep due to the spores will die over night and rise as **Spore Zombies** (HD 2; AC 8; Atk 1 bite (1d6); when smashed, anybody in melee must roll d6 as described above). When in trouble, the Shroom Lord will try to crawl into tunnels, activating **6 Spore Zombies** on its way in. Far below the Shroom Lord the stones are covered in hundreds of broken bones, smothered in an inch of inactive spores: all the zombie victims eventually fall to their second death. After walking through the spore dust, sitting at a warm fire without washing off the inactive spores will grant one last attack (save vs. poison or turn into a spore zombie during the next night). The Shroom Lord is willing to make deals; it has the power to make a promise binding (breaking the promise causes visions of decay and decreases WIS by 1 per day spent in defiance).

*If you own Fight On! #13, page 87 lists Moon Slime as an alternative to green slime. Page 91 describes Fungeye and Blast Spores: one of these eye mutants is searching for enemies down here. The Gibbering Fungus God mentioned below makes an appearance in Fight On! #5, page 72.*

The Shroom Lord can be observed for days as it sings its telepathic praise to the Gibbering Fungus God. A very patient person interested in mushroom magic can learn the following rituals through simple observation:

1. *The Care of Magic Mushrooms* requires an appropriately dark and humid cave, spores, a rotting corpse, and a lot of spit. When cared for, these fungi will grow up to three feet in height within four days; each mushroom will keep for a single day only.
2. *The Summoning of the Gibbering Fungus God* requires a deep hole in the ground and a fresh magic mushroom. Partake of the mushroom and sing the *Psychic Psalm of the Greatest Mycelian Panopticon* (learning it requires some form of *ESP* even though anybody may notice that psychic energies emanate from the Shroom Lord as it sings to its flock). The Gibbering Fungus God will materialize in the form of a huge toad head within half an hour. Licking it will grant servants visions of the future; on a failed save vs. poison these visions are confusing and wrong, otherwise they act as powerful and lurid divination magic (the divination magic will only work for those people that ate of magic mushrooms grown with their own spit).
3. *The Circle of Psychotic Colors* requires a circle of at least six magic mushrooms. To each mushroom must be sacrificed a small animal such as a cat; the animal corpse is absorbed by the magic mushroom and a few hours later these mushrooms can be activated with a touch (save vs. poison or roll a d6: 1. close your eyes for just a second and fall asleep immediately, 2. chase an erotic fantasy and run away, 3. bad trip paralyzes you with fear, 4. drop weapons, bend over and barf, 5. close your eyes and enjoy the visions, 6. everybody else seems slow and stupid, take two actions).

# Spider City

"The tunnel opens into a massive cavern. On the ceiling, you see a glowing city with light bubbles and hanging bridges; gray webbing holds everything together."

**Theme:** Darkness, spiders, silver lights, ropes, webs, living on the ceiling.

**Area Overview:** At the far end of the cave lies a lake. The stone wall rising from the water is wet. A dark fungus moss grows here, fed by water raining down from a black hole above. Flying or climbing up this wet tunnel will lead you to the realm of the Shroom Lord. This city is one of the few places down here where the party can make friends and rest.

- Spider webs cover every hanging house.
- Rope bridges connect platforms.
- This huge mass of webbing is secured by glowing gas balloons.
- Water is diverted from the fungus falls at the back and distributed using wooden half pipes.
- Occasionally ropes reach down to the cave floor below.
- The cave floor itself is covered in broken bones, the fallen remains of what the spider people feed upon.

**Spider names:** Beshitraxa, Pitarishti, Hasachtra, Onoxatra, Gragarishti, Ifnahachtra

**Area Events:**

1. *Ghoul Siege of the Spider City.* Will the party help the attackers, the defenders, or neither of them? A company of **20+2d4×10 Ghouls** (HD 3; AC 6; Atk 2 claws and 1 bite (1d6 each); MV 9; victims must save vs. paralysis or be paralyzed; these ghouls prefer to eat their helpless victims during combat, in subsequent rounds roll d6 and lose 1. eye, 2. arm, 3. other arm, 4. liver, 5. heart, 6. brain; mutilated corpses rise as ghouls within the hour and grow terrible claws if an arm or two was lost) has set up camp; there is also a **Bulbous Demon** (HD 13; AC 6; Atk 1 bite (2d6); MV 3; victims need to save vs. paralysis or suffer the same fate as a ghoul victim; can only be hit by magic weapons) with **1d6 Lemures** (HD 1; AC 6; Atk 1 bite (1d6); MV 3) and **2 Psychic Lampreys** (HD 5; AC 5; Atk 1 bite (2d6) and 1 psi storm (save vs. paralysis or faint for 1d6 rounds); MV 3 fly) in their camp. They use a catapult and kites to launch themselves up at the Spider City; spider warriors lower themselves from ropes and counter attack while lightning bolts fill the air. Upon inquiry, the spider people will say that the lightning bolts were fired by the arachnomatrix **Atraxaka**. If the party does not get involved, the siege will fail. Helping the ghouls befriends the bulbous demon; the party may join the ghouls on their march back to the Bone Crusher after the slaughter.
2. **2d6 Spider Warriors** (HD 5; AC 3; Atk 2 tarsal blades and bite (1d6 each); MV 9 climbing) will bring any allies or captives to see their arachnid queen **Kilistrexta** (HD 12; AC 3; Atk 1 bite (1d6); MV 6 climbing), who is surrounded by another **3d6 Spider Warriors**. She will try to enlist foreigners in wars against her many enemies: stop the ghoul warbands, stop the panzer ships, or stop the flying orc raiders to befriend her. Treasure of the spider city: silken brocades with threads of silver and gold worth 100,000gp. This will go down in flames if the ghouls are successful.
3. A thousand tunnels branch off from this main cave, all of them filled by giant vermin. **6 intelligent Giant Spiders** (HD 6; AC 3; Atk 2 claws and bite (1d6 each); MV 9 climbing;

save vs. poison when bitten or fall unconscious as your internal organs are slowly digested; terminal damage after one hour) hunt for food. These are effectively spider barbarians, cruel and angry, always trying to rob and steal from their city dwelling relatives. They respect violence.

4. The tunnels are also home to a nest of giant ants; occasionally a group of **12 Giant Ants** (HD 4; AC 3; Atk 1 bite (2d6), acid spray (3d6); MV 9) on a war path can be found. Anybody able to *speak with animals* or with the power of *telepathy* will learn that they are in a perpetual war with all the other "chaotic" beasts down here. Their nest is ruthlessly controlled by a vicious secret police run by a strict and xenophobic matriarchy. There are 120 ants willing to defend the **Great Mother** (HD 15; AC 4; Atk 1 bite (3d6), MV 3; pheromone powers: all giant ants will know when their queen needs help; the acid vapours in the queen's cave require a save vs. poison every round to act) against all intruders. Treasure: there are 600 football-sized eggs down here, individually worth 500gp, in larger batches the value drops to 50gp per egg (30,000gp total).
5. Rats without number populate these tunnels. One of the creatures feeding on them is a **Gargantuan Centipede Queen** (HD 12; AC 3; Atk 1 bite (3d6), MV 6; save vs. poison or die in excruciating pain within three rounds) surrounded by a thousand eggs. Successful communication reveals this queen is in search of a king and she is willing to infect a man with the *power of extra limbs* (the victim will grow a chitinous breastplate granting AC 5 and four extra arthropod arms granting MV 3 when climbing). Treasure: Each egg is worth 20gp (20,000gp total).
6. One of the many sources of energy permeating these tunnels is a pool of *earth blood*; this looks like a glowing pool of cool lava with weightless globules that form and dissolve in the air above. With the correct ritual, one can bathe here and gain the *blessing of the earth* which grants empathy with all creatures of elemental earth (mostly elementals) and the ability to cause a single *earthquake* by calling out the secret names of the seven titans. This is an alternative way of breaking the Fortress Dam of Ix; the ritual can be learnt from Gar (see Vats of Gar) or Beldilabdineb (see Bone Crusher)

The arachnomatrix Atraxaka is willing to trade in spells and information. She also knows how to build a *Rod of Electric Destruction* (shoots *lightning bolts* for 3d6 at will with a 5% chance to hit somebody near the intended victim unless the wielder has four arms to aim it with).

Spells of the arachnomatrix Atraxaka (level 13):

| 1st level | 2nd level | 3rd level | 4th level |
|---|---|---|---|
| *the friendship of lesser minds* | *hunting and webbing* | *the tongues of strangers* | *jumping through space on the strands of our forefathers* |
| *power of mimicry* | *triangulation of known objects* | *electric powers of destruction* | *subjugation of reason* |
| *communion with animals* | *conquest of gravity* | *powers of flight* | *arachnophobia of the highest degree* |
| *telestrangulation using strands of webbing* | *detection of magical energies* | *silken words of binding* | |
| **5th level** | **6th level** | **7th level** | |
| *travel to the shadow lands* | *communicating with the ancient earth spirits* | *mysteries of astral chords and travel to foreign worlds* | |
| *contacting the spider lords of the beyond* | (unassigned) | | |
| (unassigned) | | | |

# River Travel

"The turgid black river carries you along slowly, forever gathering up small rivulets, flowing past cave entrances and ruins built on top of steep cliffs."

**Themes:** Slow passage of time, all the sewers, drains, and pipes eventually end here.

**Area Overview:** The river Styx down here is the ultimate sewer; it is the most Hellish *cloaca maxima* there is. Ever wondered what happens to people who fall into toilets? Some of them get sucked down miles of pipes and end up falling into this forlorn underworld. Some of the stuff flushed down toilets also ends up down here (see list below).

Unless dealt with before, the company of ghouls can be encountered on their way to a siege of the Spider City. Depending on how the party reacts, the bulbous demon may be interested in enlisting the party's help against the spiders. In exchange for this evil deed it might offer any of the following (see Bone Crusher for details) or equivalent services in return:

- An audience with its master, the earth mage **Tonnhotz**.
- Passage on a **Panzer Ship** to any location on this level.
- The resurrection of an evil comrade trapped in Hell.

This is one of the ways to get access to a ship. Other options for fast river travel include the following:

- One of the swan ships (see Eternal Swamp).
- A raft of the boglings (see Bubbling Stench).
- Air sharks of the orcs (see Shark Den).

**Names for survivors**: Blubella, Apu, Fatukobiri, Jammy, Kauri, Muja, Nefetari, Salco, Presto, Vif

**Encounters on the river:**

1. **1d6 Mutant Goldfish** (HD 3; AC 7; Atk 1 bite (1d6); MV 12 swim; when hit on a boat, save vs. dragon breath or fall over board; when overboard in metal armor save vs. death every round or drown) jump out of the water and try to bump people overboard.
2. Rapids ahead. Ignore if on a panzer ship; small boats can be carried over land (see shore encounters). If risking the rapids, save vs. paralysis or lose a random item in the chaos.
3. Barrier ahead. Behind a river bend a group of **3d4 Ghouls** have piled some debris on both sides of the river. They use mancatchers, meat hooks, harpoons and nets to snatch people from boats sailing through the narrow passage (save vs. paralysis when hit or be caught). A panzer ship will wreck the barrier and ghouls will jump aboard in desperation as their barrier disintegrates.
4. **1d4 Giant Alligators** (HD 5, AC 6, Atk 1 bite (1d6), 1 tail slap (1d6); MV 12 short sprint) attack if traveling on a raft.
5. A dead humanoid adrift in the water (human, ratling, dwarf, goblin). 1 in 6 chance that it is in fact a **Ghoul**. Otherwise, it carries something from the list of *Stuff Flushed Down the Toilet* (see below).
6. **1d4 Orcs on Air Sharks** throwing bottles containing green slime at any of the above (see Shark Den for more info about the orcs).

**Encounters on the shore:**

1. Dogs sniffing through the garbage follow the party and attack at an opportune moment; they are in fact **2d4 Werehounds** (HD 5; AC 7; Atk 2 claws (1d6 each), 1 bite (1d6); MV 12; can only be harmed by silver weapons or magic effects, e.g. when hit by a sword +1 only 1 point of damage is dealt; at the end of the day anybody bitten by a werehound must save vs. poison or contract lycanthropy).
2. **Uzitu the Troll** (HD 4; AC 7; Atk 2 claws (1d6 each); MV 9; regenerates 3/round) fishes here. It is a pacifist, polite but reluctant to leave its favorite fishing spot; might be recruited if promised a share of treasure and a way out of these Hellish sewers.
3. **2d6 Survivors** (HD 1; AC 9; Atk 1 club (1d6); MV 12), ordinary humans who have fallen into toilets, been sucked down drains, or stumbled into gullets.
4. **2d6 Ghouls**; roll d6: 1. spying on the party; 2. about to set up an ambush; 3. ambush! 4. busy attacking survivors; 5. snacking on former survivors; 6. searching through *Stuff Flushed Down the Toilet* (see list below).
5. A huge **Slime or Ooze** colony of random color blocks passage from shore to cave wall. If approached, it spits out barrel-sized slime or ooze (HD 3; see *Random Slimes and Oozes*)
6. **1d4 orcs on air sharks** throwing bottles containing green slime at any of the above (see Shark Den for more info about the orcs).

Ideas for useless stuff dropping from the ceiling (some toilets are inexplicably connected to these Hellish sewers by one-way pipes) or stuff to find in the possession of wandering monsters...

*Stuff Flushed Down The Toilet*

1. A gold wedding ring, engraved "To F.G., with love" (50gp)
2. A bundle of 3 large prayer candles. Each burns for 6 hours, and each is decorated with a well-known prayer (player chooses any prayer they like when lighting the candle).
3. A pack of 2d6 portions of weed. When burned and fumes inhaled, consult *Cabinet of Neurological Symptoms* with 1d6.
4. A sash with 2d4 portions of dried shrooms. When consumed, consult *Cabinet of Neurological Symptoms* with 1d6, +1 per portion consumed (max out at 8).
5. Stumble upon **2d4 Poisonous Snakes** (HD 1; AC 9; Atk 1 bite (poison); MV 3; when bitten, save vs. poison or suffer three days of feverish paralysis before finally dying).
6. A small **Homunculus** drenched in blood which follows the party, cursing them (all future reaction rolls suffer a -1 penalty). Can be killed with one hit.

The weed and shrooms don't have any magical effects. Instead, they have neurological effects:

*Cabinet of Neurological Symptoms*

1. Nothing happens, it's a dud.
2. Intense ecstasy and joy.
3. Complacency and passivity.
4. Arrogance and audaciousness.
5. Transcendent experiences of tremendous personality-shifting importance to the consumer.
6. Exhausting nightmarish hallucinations.
7. Seizures, paralysis, and death within 4d10 hours unless healed.
8. Total, death-like catatonia, death within 2d6 hours unless healed.

Whenever the party meets oozes or slimes, consult the following list (HD 1-8; AC –; MV 1).

*Random Slimes, Oozes, Molds, Jellies, and Puddings*

1. Transparent: attempted overrun (1d6 damage); practically invisible; surprise on 5 in 6.
2. Green: dissolves meat (1d6 automatic acid damage to its victim until killed).
3. Brown: deals cold damage (1d6/round to anybody in melee); immune to cold.
4. Olive: dissolves wood and leather, slam attack (1d6); divides in half when hit by weapons.
5. Yellow: save vs. spells or be forced to hit it; when hit, a cloud of spores rises; save vs. poison or begin slow transformation into yellow mold (treat as a disease, death within 24h).
6. Black: dissolves everything, including weapons used to strike it (1d6 automatic damage to its victim until killed); immune to magic (but not to mundane fire).
7. Purple: forces creatures nearby to sweat blood (1d6/round to anybody in melee); if targeted by a spell, the spell hits a random creature in melee range; if there is no such creature, the ooze suffers the full spell effect.
8. Ulfire: heats anything in its vicinity (1d6/round to anybody in melee due to boiling blood, an extra 1d6/round if wearing metal armor); immune to fire; if hit by magic fire effects, these are reflected back on the caster.

# Prison of Dis

"To the left and right you see canals with steep walls, and along the walls, thousands of barred windows. Cages are hanging from chains, carried by cranes, flocks of imps cling to every handhold and dance around big braziers."

**Themes:** Immense prison, skulls, vapors, devils, chains, barred windows, spikes, canals, bridges.

- Cries for help and mercy, howls of pain.
- Chains rattling, metal clanging, subsonic pounding.
- The water looks like boiling grey mud and smells of rotten eggs.
- Row upon row of cages and barred windows.
- Fluttering imps that taunt and poke prisoners.
- Savage beatings, with flying imps cheering the brutality.
- A road of crushed skulls and bones.
- Cockroach devils torturing victims, with imps sitting on beams and ledges nodding along.

Some names to help you improvise:

- **Imps and devils**: Ahuratum, Belshunu, Etirum, Imgursin, Kudiya, Lugatum, Merghetor, Nasha, Olgor, Pushuken, Rish, Sagilzimu, Taribum, Warassuni, Yayatum, Zamaranum.
- **Prisoners and slaves**: Asar, Herox, Isha, Kador, Lirdin, Medon, Nia, Oliof, Palok, Roxanna, Sar, Valon.

**Area Overview:** The prison is an immense maze. It's foundations are inundated like an underground Venice. There is a fortified harbor down here. The long and meandering skull road winds itself away from the harbor. Supposedly it leads up to the city of Dis itself.

Player characters enter the prison from the very bottom, where the hot iron foundations of Dis rise from the Stygian waters. What no one down here knows is that the prison has been disconnected from Dis itself. "Just follow the skull road until you reach the great stair!" But after five days of following the skull road you end up back at the harbor.

All inhabitants of Dis lead lives marked by maliciously pursuing injustice: barristers, false counselors, falsifiers, flatterers, hypocrites, murderers, panderers, schismatics, seducers, sorcerers, thieves, traitors, and usurpers. Most of the prisoners are punished for no apparent reason—down here, everyone deserves punishment.

Wherever the party goes, they will be watched by little imps and devils. Whenever appropriate, they'll offer to help... for a price. (See the end of this section for suggested pacts, their price, and the seals and curses to go along with them.)

If a significant number of prisoners are set free, there will be a prison revolt. The new masters will probably be just as bad as the old ones since both prisoners and wardens are on Dis for the same reasons. Just announce the revolt if the party has been releasing prisoners and expressed an interest in freeing as many as possible. The result will be an incredible massacre as demons, devils, and humanoids of various factions battle it out.

**Faction names**: Red Blood, Bone Pickers, Waruna the Magnificient, Death Knights, Order of the Vulture, Band of Brothers, Wardens, Skull Crushers

**Encounters during a prisoner revolt:**

1. **Marauding Devils** (HD 5; AC 5; Atk 1 pitchfork (1d6) or flaming oil (1d6 for two rounds if hit); MV 3 fly, MV 6 on foot; can only be hit by magic weapons) loot some corpses. Treasure: 50pp, 500sp, ring with ruby worth 500gp.
2. Doom captain **Bizacht** (HD 12; AC 0; Atk 1 *obsidian sword* (2d6, two handed, disrupts one memorized spell per hit); MV 3; *teleport* at will, immune to spells of level 3 and lower) and his **12 Doom Guards** (HD 3; AC 2, Atk 1 sword (1d6); MV 3) try to put down the insurrection and require help (disobedience to be punished by death).
3. A mob of **50 crazy inmates** (HD 1; AC 9; Atk 1 spear (1d6); MV 12) runs through the streets and tunnels, killing everything that doesn't join them.
4. A lynching of **20 Innocent Prisoners** (HD 1; AC 9; MV 1 while chained) by 7 **False Inquisitors** (HD 6; AC 2; Atk 1 mace (1d6 + 1d6 unholy blight granted by their demon while it lives; they prefer killing held victims of their demon); MV 3) and their floating **Protector Demon** (HD 9; AC 3; Atk 1 psychic blast of pain (6d6 area effect, save vs. spells for half) or *hold person* (at will, save vs. paralysis or be held helpless for one round; the inquisitors love cutting up helpless victims); MV 6 fly), a weightless nightmare worm.
5. A **dying man**, asking for water and asking for a mercy killing. As he espies his next life he cries "Not again! Noooo!" If asked to perform one last good deed before departing, he'll whisper "The siren *Viseraina* is innocent; save her, I'm begging you!" (true, but she needs to be freed); if asked for a way to escape from this Hell alive, he'll whisper "Parallax has been imprisoned, but years ago he claimed to know a way to Hell's gates through the forge fires" (true, but it doesn't work while the Fortress Dam of Ix still stands).
6. A crazy battle on the square up ahead between men and devils; from the melee emerges a **Bearded Devil** (HD 12; AC 0; Atk 2 *flaming swords* +2 (2d6+2); MV 3; *teleport* at will; prefers to kill magic users first; can only be hit by magic weapons; immune to fire; surrounded by an aura of disease: anybody who fights this devil in melee must save vs. poison or contract the wasting sickness and die in three days) surrounded by a swarm of flies. It approaches the party and asks for their help: will you slaughter fellow men or will you fight the devil?

**Encounters near the harbor**

1. Weary looking merman **Betran** (HD 2; AC 9; Atk 1 spear (1d6); MV 12 swim) rises from the fetid waters and throws some food to a prisoner nearby, blows his *Horn of Fog* before any guards can target him and disappears. He can be befriended—he knows that the Styx whale will let them pass if calmed by the sound of a magical horn, and he will blow it for them if they will help him rescue the siren Viseraina from the vampire octopus Khalapol.
2. The vampire octopus **Khalapol** (HD 17; AC 7; Atk 8 scythe-tipped tentacles (2d6); MV 3 swim; every hit drains two levels and heals the octopus for 5 hp; on a natural 20 the target needs to save vs. death or loose the shield arm to the Hellish blades; immune to spells of level 3 and lower) reigns in a steaming cave. The octopus can summon 1d4 **giant eels** (HD 8; AC 8; Atk 1 bite (3d6); MV 6 because the water is not deep enough). The steam reduces visibility to 10 ft. and the water is only knee deep in large parts of the cave (move at half speed when on foot). The siren **Viseraina** (HD 5; AC 9; MV 12 swim; males within 120 ft. hearing her sing must save vs. spells or be *charmed*) is chained to the wall at the back of the cave—when rescued, the merman **Betran** will help the party to bypass the Styx whale. Treasure: 10,000 pp, 20,000gp, the *Jale Crown of Dreams* (grants the wearer the ability to enter the dreams of one target per night; the wearer must own a lock of the target's hair; the dreamer can be talked to and the dream can be influenced; if desired the dreamer must save vs. death or suffer terrible nightmares; mechanical effects can include penalties to the morale of the victim's followers).
3. Getting into the prison is not a problem—getting out is the problem. The nameless **Styx Whale** (HD 24; AC 3; MV 3; his *transdimensional entanglement* makes sure than any form of teleportation, jumping, or beaming will dump users in an air bubble at the bottom of the prison's harbor in utter darkness 200 ft. below the surface; his *ethereal web* will detect any passage by mundane means; his *Hellstorm* at will can fill the air above the water with high winds (save vs. dragon breath every round or crash into the water) and lightning (save vs. spells or be hit for 6d6 every round) and the water itself turns into a maelstrom pulling characters into the depths (save vs. death every round while resisting or drown; if not resisting, end up in the air bubble at the bottom); individuals can be targeted by *shadow tentacles* (save vs. death every round or start suffocating and die the next round); the whale will accept surrender—prisoners will eventually be picked up by aquatic devils, stripped and imprisoned individually; repeat offenders will be maimed: lose a hand) is a *shadow sorcerer* and guards the main exit. When fighting under water, only stabbing weapons like daggers, short swords, or spears may be used. The whale's powers are legendary and asking around will uncover many failed escape attempts. Only very few know that blowing a magic horn will pacify the whale and allow passage (eg. the *Horn of Frog Birth* by Onbog, the *Horn of Fog* by Betran, the *Horn of the Mountain Cedar* by Kurmatesha, the *Horn of Pressure* by Belchion).

If the party is unable to secure a magic horn in order to escape, consider the appearance of a panzer ship (see Bone Crusher) and have the captain buy slaves and recruits for an attack on the Spider City or against an invasion of swan ships from the Eternal Swamp.

**Encounters while exploring the prison maze**

1. **12 screeching Bird Demons** (HD 5; AC 5; Atk 1 two handed sword (2d6), 2 claws (1d6 each) and 1 beak (1d6); MV 15 fly; can only be hit by magic weapons) carry an iron cage containing a bloated, blue woman in distress led by the pompous vulture guardian **Iarrackus** (HD 11; AC 5; Atk:2 claws (1d6 each) and 1 beak (1d6); MV 15 fly; *blight storm* at will surrounds it with a 60 ft. aura of shadow death causing 1d6 per round to all mortals; can only be hit by magic weapons). If the bird demons fight they will drop the woman into the canal below where she will drown in four rounds; if freed she can tell the party that the Styx whale will let them pass if calmed by a song (not quite true: a magic horn is required).
2. A red glow fills the canal. Before you is a round hall, hundreds of feet across, the ceiling invisible above. The canal flows in a circle around an elevated center where iron is molten, poured, and cast by hundreds of creatures; the noise makes it hard to hear yourself speak. The horned lord of Hell **Enisatum** (HD 15; AC 0; Atk 1 flaming whip (no damage but on a hit it grants +4 on the hit with the sword in the same round and on a 20 it disarms the opponent), 1 flaming sword (3d6); MV 3; *flaming aura* deals an extra 1d6 to everybody nearby; can only be hit by magic weapons; immune to fire; *teleport* at will) appears in the middle of the workspace and receives a new flaming sword. This distraction enables you to slip by unnoticed, if you so choose.
3. Behind iron bars in a dark hole knee deep with water you find the **Flame Stalker Parallax** (HD 5; AC 7; Atk 1 flame touch (1d6); MV 6; anybody attacking with a melee weapon will suffer automatic 1d6 fire damage). "Release me and lead me to a forge fire and I can take you to Avernus, the gates of Hell!" What he doesn't know is that the Fortress Dam of Ix has disabled all planar travel away from this plane. His plan will fail; attempting it will provide a clue: "Great energies are bending space and preventing our escape!" Should the adventurers take this route—after having disabled the fortress dam—they will note that Parallax deserts them in Tiamat's Cave filled with noxious gas. Tiamat itself is a dragon god, a *power*, the mother of all monsters, a mass of sleeping serpentine bodies 200 ft. high, currently asleep. Anybody who disturbs her sleep will be burnt to dust, no save. Escaping from Avernus back to the characters' plane of origin involves meeting the bone devil **Carcatrax** (HD 7; AC 3; Atk 1 scythe (1d6); on a natural 20 the target needs to save vs. death or lose their shield arm to the Hellish blade; can only be hit by magic weapons) and helping it evade a group of **12 Bird Demons** (HD 5; AC 5; Atk 1 two handed sword (2d6), 2 claws (1d6 each) and 1 beak (1d6); MV 15 fly; can only be hit by magic weapons). Once this is done, it will lead the characters to the dust witch **Chiramatra** (HD 11; AC 9; MV 3; can turn into a dust devil at will when outside; this causes automatic 1d6 sand damage to anybody within 10 ft. and she can no longer be hit by weapons; the sand devil form cannot be maintained inside a building; Atk 1 lightning bolt (6d6); MV 15 as a dust devil) who will *plane shift* them in exchange for something of value to the party (a magic weapon, a magic horn, treasure equivalent to 10,000gp). She can also be forced to do this if defeated.

**Encounters while exploring the skull road**

1. A huge platform on stone wheels is pulled by 200 slaves, **Slave Driver Devils** (HD 4; AC 4; Atk 1 pitch fork (1d6); MV 6 fly) with whips stand by and lash the slaves mercilessly. As the slaves stumble and fall, they are slowly crushed by the wheels and become one with the road. The whip masters use their whips to pluck replacements from bystanders (save vs. paralysis to move away from the road; once targeted by a devil, save vs. death or be hit and join the slaves as your soul is driven from your body). When a fight breaks out, up to 8 slavers will join the fight. On the platform is a anthracite ziggurat with a tent at the top. If the slavers are vanquished, a **Martyr Prince of Pain** (HD 15; AC 7; Atk 1 harpoon pistol (save vs. death or suffer 3d6 damage and be pulled to the Prince) and 5 impaling fingernails (1d6 each); MV 6; may drop the harpoon pistol and use a total of 10 impaling fingernails; can only be hit by magic weapons; immune to fire) will appear and attack unless appeased by the death or torture of half the party. Treasure: 1,000pp, 20,000gp, 20 silken carpets worth 500gp each, jewelry worth 20,000gp.
2. An iron bridge arches over the bone road: it is ornamented with spikes, demonic faces, gargoyles and black murder holes. Above the road hangs a golden lion helmet; this is in fact the *Roaring Helmet of Lior the Lion* (when roaring like a lion, opponents must save vs. paralysis to avoid suffering a -4 penalty on all their attack rolls for the next hour due to their *fear*), golden paladin of the most holy order of Marduk. Removing it will raise an alarm and summon **1d6 Infernal Minotaurs** (HD 8; AC 3; Atk 1 horns (1d6) and 1 two-handed hammer (2d6); MV 3), followed by the patron of this bridge, the **Horned Troll Lord of Dispater** (HD 15; AC 3; Atk 1 horns (3d6) and 2 steel-tipped claws (2d6 each); MV 6; regenerates 5/round) a round later. If asked about the rest of the lion armor, the Troll Lord will admit that he took it from a competitor who had lost the rest (it is currently in possession of Nixies, see Shroom Lord). With appropriate spells it might be possible to locate a member of said failed expedition.

Whenever player characters cannot make up their mind or whenever they are in danger, imps and devils appear and offer to help... for a price. They will enter a pact with player characters. Once the details have been hashed out, a pact requires a simple act to seal it. When a pact is broken by a player character, the character will suffer a curse.

| d6 | Pact | Price | Seal | Curse |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I will lead you to somebody who can help. | In return, you will fight for me when I summon you. | To seal this pact, you will wear this amulet with the copulating monkeys. Attempting to take it off will strangulate you. | If you don't give your utmost to win the fight, these monkeys will animate and grow and do their utmost to wreck your neighbors, your family, and your friends. |
| 2 | I will lead you to somebody who will help. | In return, you will wear this Hell sigil on your face for a year and a day, invisible to all except for those that can *detect evil*. | To seal this pact, I brand you with this painful *Hell iron*. | If you fail to do this for me, you will have sown the seed of evil in the hearts of those near you, triggering an alignment change, if appropriate. |
| 3 | I will summon somebody who can help you. | In return, you will forswear fighting all demons and devils for a year and a day. | We will drink each other's blood in order to seal this pact. | Should you break this pact, your muscles will wither and shrink. You will lose 4 Strength. |
| 4 | I will summon somebody who will help you. | In return, you will donate one tenth of any treasure found (not just your share of the treasure!) to evil deeds for a year and a day. | To seal this pact, you shall wear this ring of mine. | If the pact is not kept, this ring will poison you and you shall die. You can never take it off. |
| 5 | I will help you. | In return, you will suffer for seven long weeks in Hell when you die. You cannot be resurrected in that time. | To seal this pact, I will take a lock of your hair and keep it safe. | Even if you are rescued before you serve your time, I shall keep your mind locked up. Your body will be but an ordinary, 0-level mortal until your time is up. |
| 6 | I will solve this issue for you. | In return, your soul belongs to me and you can never be resurrected. | To seal this pact, I shall cut off your hand and replace it with this bejeweled gauntlet. | Anybody attempting to rescue you will have to face treachery and greed every step of the way. |

The above table only makes sense if there is temptation. The party must want the help being offered. Also note that the devils will try to prevent the simple removal of curses and circumvention of poisoning. They can be outwitted, but it shouldn't be easy. Make players work for a release from the curse! Some ideas:

- How to bypass the Styx Whale guarding the harbor exit (Betran).
- How to gain access to a Panzer Ship (Belchion).
- How to find the Tomb of the Black Lord of Nothingness (Gar).
- How to gain a dominion down here (Onbog).
- How to defeat the Ooze Lord (Kurmatesha).
- How to gain control of the earth ship (Tonnhotz)

# Bone Crusher

"The river Styx is dark and slow, here. On the shore you see dozens of torches illuminating a serene harbor between heavy stone columns, and broad stairs leading up to a bronze portal made for giants. As you come closer you recognize an ominous cephalopod relief."

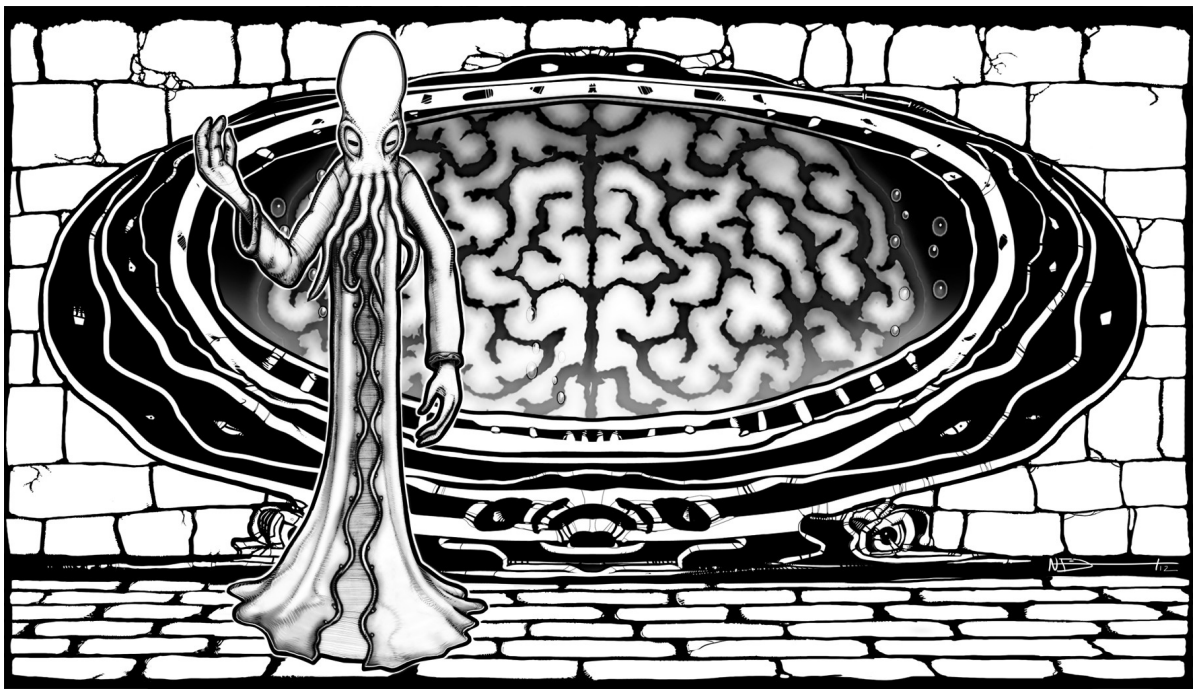
**Theme:** Bronze and brass illuminated by fire, meat and bones as raw material, brains, star gate.

**Area Overview:**

- The harbor is quiet and unattended, the gates are closed.
- The gate leads to a great hall full of zombies (see first encounter). The far end of this hall is the surface of a marooned *earth ship*—a mobile city of brass made for travel through time and space, to fly through air and glide through earth.
- A huge ballroom illuminated by magic candles and stairs going up to the galleries.
- An observatory with green glass walls—the view blocked by the deep earth.
- A big avenue inside the ship and multiple brass towers humming with power.
- Endless corridors with hundreds of prison cells for slaves.

Some random prisoners to get you started:

- Viert, a devil worshipper from Dis, arrived here from a slave ship.
- Jedda, an unrepentent toad demon worshiper.
- Gerd, a painter who cannot remember how he got here.
- Berta, an aristocratic judge, corrupt and fearful.
- Goll, an evil hunter among dark forests who wants to redeem himself.
- Liona, an athletic and cheerful gambler.
- Ford, a traveller who fell into a toilet and was dropped into the river Styx, where he was picked up by slavers.

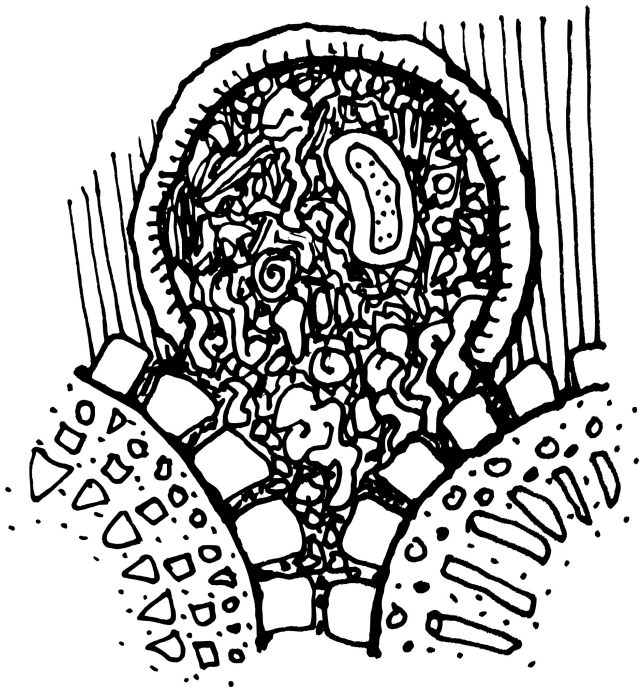


**Tonnhotz** is the head of the Mind Eaters and operator of the Bone Crusher. It knows that the tributary of meat and bones is alimented by all the dead creatures buried beneath mud avalanches, crushed by earthquakes, or fallen into the deep shafts of the earth. It is here to harness the residual energy. Similarly, it can use prisoners to make zombies and to power its spells. It will not relinquish them unless it fears for its life. Tonnhotz is also an Earth Mage, but all his special abilities in this area are used to control the *earth ship*, to extract metals and shape them via ritual magic.

**Beldilabdineb** is head of the free tribe in the ship's bowels. Its deceased father was a navigator on this ship and passed on some rudimentary knowledge to its progeny.

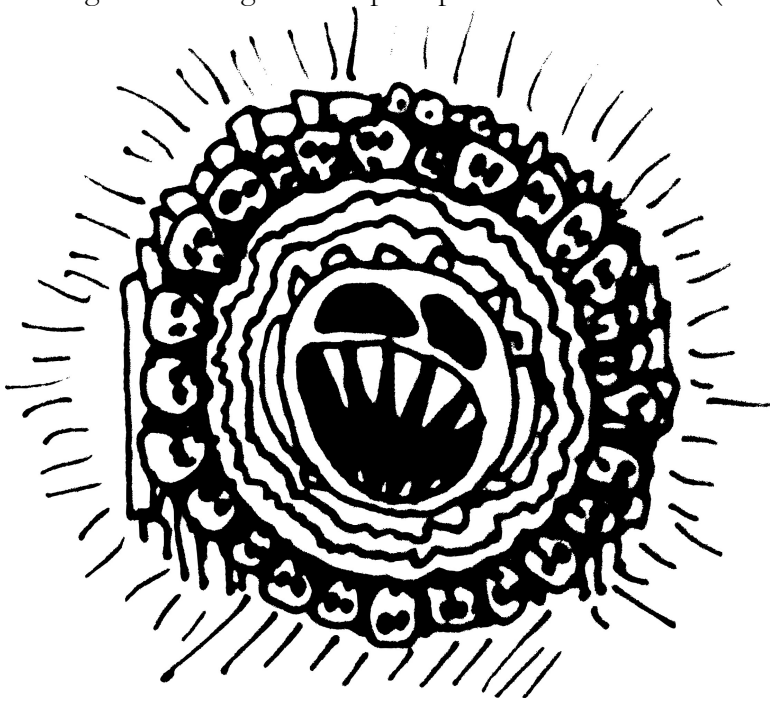
Here is a suggested list of tasks to accomplish in order to put this ship back into working conditions. Tailor this list to your needs.

| Task | Cost | Time |
|---|---|---|
| **Defeat Tonnhotz**—One ship, one captain, right? | – | – |
| **Purge or control the zombies and drive out the negative energies.** Unless the ship is hallowed with holy water (which is very expensive down here), the accumulated negative energies will ensure that anyone dying inside the ship will rise as a zombie under the control of the Mother Brain. | 50,000gp | 1 week |
| **Retrieve the helm** that Tonnhotz has stored in the *Pocket Dimension of Angry Tentacles*, reachable via his personal regenerator tank (see above). | – | – |
| **Dominate the Mother Brain**—Controlling the water and nutrient supply of the Mother Brain allows a captain to retrain it. Ingredients may be purchased from traveling merchants and Hellish bazaars. This requires regular access to the harbor market in the Prison of Dis. | 100,000gp | 4 weeks |
| **Rebuild the ship** using experiments and expensive rare materials with the help of Beldilabdineb's tribe. This requires regular access to the harbor market in the Prison of Dis. | 500,000gp | 4 weeks |
| Alternatively, **rebuild the ship** with engineers and supply material from the Fortress Dam of Ix. This requires a violent assault, kidnap of experts, and robbery of the required materials; it also attracts 2 panzer ships on a punitive mission. | – | 4 weeks |



Encounters

1. The brass harbor gate leads into a huge cavern with a stair that zigzags up five floors at the far end. **300 Zombies** (HD 2; AC 9; Atk 1 bite (1d6); MV 6) stand between you and the airlock leading into the *earth ship* at the top of the stairs. The zombies will attack any intruders they can see and reach.
2. Inside the *earth ship*, there is a huge hangar with a planar gate leading into a segment of the astral sea trapped down here in this Hell hole. It looks like a brass porthole 30 ft. across with a huge toothy **Ether Whale** (HD 20; AC 4; Atk 1 bite (4d6); MV 21 fly; grab on a natural 20 and deal automatic damage every round) silently trying to push through a wall of flesh into the room. Moving though the gate is easy, fighting the ether whale on the other side is not.
3. The brain room contains a **Mother Brain** (HD 15; AC 9; MV 0; at will *psychic lash* deals an automatic 3d6 headache every round to targets within 100 ft.; *telepathic conversation* is difficult but possible: -2 to reaction rolls) the size of a small house in a liquid behind a blue glass wall—it assaults weaker minds and tries to control them (save vs. spells or be dominated if 8 HD or less or be *slowed* otherwise). Possibly encounter the **Tentacle Sorcerer Tonnhotz** (HD 13; AC 9; Atk 1 *main gauche* (1d6); MV 12; in melee, a hit lets Tonnhotz wrap its tentacles around the opponents' head and crush it in 2 rounds; victims may fight normally for two rounds but cannot retreat; *invasive telepathy* allows Tonnhotz to locate enemies and to communicate with them, and to read their thoughts against their will unless they save vs. spells. *Tentacle blast* at will requires anybody within 60 ft. to save vs. petrification or be stunned for a round) here if it is forewarned. Stunned opponents are attacked by **2 black Tentacle Cats** (HD 5; AC 7; Atk 4 claws (1d6 each), 2 tentacles (1d6 each) and 1 bite (1d6); MV 15; surprise on 5 in 6) guarding Tonnhotz at all times. Damaging the Mother Brain is possible but will result in breaking the glass wall—without magic aid characters need to save vs. death every round or drown in the warm sludge. Killing the Mother Brain allows the ether whale to break through the planar gate; dominating the Mother Brain is necessary to take over the ship, see below.
4. The Bone Crusher itself is a huge hall with a multiplexing arrival gate at the far end. It is not possible to leave via this gate—a constant mass of meat and bones and mud pours through it and drives the turbines and cog wheels of the blood engines. There are several melancholy zombies watching over the mess (they don't fight). Somehow disrupting this meat influx (any reasonably involved and plausible plan players make should work) will result in all the lights dimming and complete power loss in 4 hours (stale air, darkness).



5. The deep bowels of the ship are flooded with a foot of blood and poisoned water seeping in through cracks everywhere (save vs. poison once per day or have a **Sentient Telepathic Silver Hagfish** grow in your bowels within a week, die of gut rot within another 4 weeks; enjoy the shared telepathic powers while it lasts; treat as a disease curable by magic). A part of the former **Fish Head Slave Crew** (HD 3; AC 7; Atk 1 spear (1d6); MV 9; amphibious) has formed a free tribe, with 21 members living down here under the leadership of **Beldilabdineb** (HD 5; AC 7; Atk 1 spear (1d6); MV 9; amphibious; *water kiss of healing* 5×/day, *mass invisibility* 3×/day, *favor of Shabriri* 1×/day, a water demon that can strike like a big wave for 7d6 or invisibly carry seven people along water ways). Beldilabdineb can tell the party how to gain control of the ship, see below; Beldilabdineb also knows about the titans of the earth and how to appease them (the ritual required for the *earth blood pool* near the Spider City).
6. The private quarters of the captain is where **Tonnhotz** rests. The walls are covered in art nouveau brass reliefs and the floor has various elaborate trap doors leading to dark, water filled tanks. One of these is of just the right size and temperature to act as the captain's regeneration tank. When the lid is closed, anybody that drinks blood will instantly be transported to the *Pocket Dimension of Angry Tentacles*.
7. The *Pocket Dimension of Angry Tentacles* is a dark, water-filled world inhabited by a **Deep Kraken** (HD 12; AC 8; Atk 8 tentacles (1d6); MV 6 swim; when hit by two tentacles, save vs. paralysis or be grappled and suffer an automatic 2d6/round until released), a monstrous creature grown to unnatural size in this pocket dimension. There are also **24 Smaller Carnivorous Fish** (HD 2; AC 8; Atk 1 bite (1d6); MV 9); large kelp forests, rock caves, and strange spires rising to the upper reaches of the pocket dimension abound (when fighting underwater, only stabbing weapons like daggers, short swords, spears, tridents, and the like may be used). On the highest needle there is a small flat area, maybe 20 ft. across, where Tonnhotz likes to meditate. This is where he placed the *helm* to his marooned ship. The small area here is covered by a permanent *anti-magic* effect. There is but little warning: the area is also covered by a permanent *silence* effect 30 ft. across. In other words, characters talking to each other as they approach will notice the *silence* before their *water-breathing* spells are canceled.

**Panzer Ships** are the armored steam boats used by on the river Styx. There are several of them, two are described below. If both have made an appearance, feel free to add your own. Note that if you want them to sail to the Prison of Dis to trade, the captain will need some sort of magic horn to bypass the Styx Whale.

It is possible to take hold of a ship. This requires a crew of 10 to operate the machines, someone with a nautical background to navigate the river, and someoe with an engineering background to control the engines.

1. The brass **Panzer Ship Warburg** arrives from the Prison of Dis carrying a **treasure** of 40,000gp and 153 slaves in recompense for sorcerous services rendered. It is operated by a crew of **40 Headless Zombies** (HD 1; AC 8; Atk 2 claws (1d6 each); MV 3) and defended by **40 hungry Ghoul Archers** (HD 2; AC 8; Atk 1 bow (1d6); MV 12). The captain is the **Merchant Sorcerer Belchion** (HD 9; AC 4; Atk 1 rapier (1d6); MV 12; *storm blast* stops any advance by creatures of ogre size or smaller; slams flying creatures against the floor or ship for 2d6; *bolts of lightning* against up to three opponents at the same time for 6d6 each, save vs. spells for half) who is in turn protected by **2 Brass Golems** (HD 11; AC 3; Atk 2 fists (2d6); MV 3; immune to magic; healed by fire magic; can only be hit by magic weapons). Treasure: the *Horn of Pressure* (when blown, every creature within 150 ft. with a heart to feel, ears to hear, and eyes to see except for the person blowing the horn must save vs. death or be temporarily blinded by their bulging eyes; when blown again, any creature that failed the previous save must save again or faint; when blown a third time, any creature that failed the previous save must save one last time or die from cardiAC arrest—undead and golems are immune); *Bracers of Armor +4* with the snake sigils of Set; *Ring of the Forked Tongue* (wearer grows a forked tongue and is able to see invisible, living creatures).
2. The black iron **Panzer Ship Zykanthor** brings the **Devil Captain Helicantus** (HD 12; AC 0; Atk 1 *electric eel sword* (2d6, two handed with a pommel showing an eel head, victims must save vs. paralysis or be stunned one round; the sword also forces the wielder to attack the stunned opponent the next round—possibly triggering another save); MV 3; *teleport* at will, immune to spells of level 3 and lower) with a host of **120 armored Mord Men** (HD 3; AC 2; Atk 1 sword (1d6) or 1 short bow (1d6); MV 3) and **5 Siege Trolls** (HD 7; AC 4; Atk 2 iron gauntlets (2d6 each); MV 6) to fight. Without intervention, the siege proceeds as follows: gate breached on the second day by side tunnels, flaming rivers of oil poured through the breach by the defenders kills a siege troll, maims three others, and kills about 40 men; the third day Helicantus keeps to his ships and looks for a way to sabotage the defenses (and will pay 10,000 gp to anyone who manages this); without help from the players the attempt will fail on the fourth day and Helicantus cuts losses and leaves. Treasure: 4 *scrolls of blasting* (used for structural damage and to breach the gate); 20 *scrolls of flaming death* (explosions dealing 6d6 fire damage to anybody within 20 ft.); 20 *scrolls of fiery arrows* (enchants 50 arrows to deal an extra 1d6 of fire damage); pay for the Mord Men, 12,000gp in a coffer protected by a poison needle.

If you need a third party, feel free to have orcs on air sharks arrive, throwing flasks containing green slime (see Shark Den for more info about the orcs).

# Shark Den

"Wild ululations and ecstatic pig snorting fills the air. High above, orcs riding sharks that float through the air are keeping watch while down below the crowd goes mad with the sound of party."

**Themes:** Orcs, slimes, flying sharks, witches, pigs, crows.

**Area Overview:**

- Orcish singing and dancing from the tents.
- Pink pigs run between the tents.
- Up above, a handful of air sharks glide lazily through the air.
- There are a few spots on the cavern ceiling where light as bright as the sun shines down on green grass below.
- Giant goats graze in the distance.
- There are several dozen crows perched on trees black as the night.

**Orc names:** Marashatta, Iraksha, Zarakosh, Tirrash, Boglosh, Lormokto, Jalash, Erdanishat, Adosh.

A 200 ft. shaft leads up to the main cave. There are no ropes, no ladders, and no handholds—the orcs use their air sharks and have no use for such things. At the top of the shaft are several guards (see the list of encounters below). Visitors must answer with the current pass phrase before being allowed to pass.

A list of pass phrases and popular comments by the guards upon hearing them:

- "Strong cheese and elves!"
  "Yum!"
- "Too many eyeballs spoil the broth!"
  "I see!"
- "We don't mix with slime!"
  "Ah, but others do!"
- "Wind is the elvish word for fart!"
  "Muahaha!"
- "Cheese is stronger than ale!"
  "Shut up!"

Encounters:

1. At the top of the entry shaft, **8 Orc Guards** (HD 1; AC 6; Atk 1 halberd (1d6); MV 6) stand by big amphorae containing **Green Slime** (HD 1; AC –; MV 1; will decompose organic matter and metal and turn it into green slime upon contact (orcs must hit AC 9+Dex bonus), armor will be destroyed but delays skin contact by one round for each point of AC granted (e.g. leather armor delays skin contact by two rounds); cannot be harmed by weapons; torches and the like deal 1d6 damage to both victim and green slime; it deals 1d6 damage per round once armor is bypassed). The guards pour the green slime on any trespassers ignorant of the current pass phrase.
2. A squad of **6 Orc Guards** with their **Leader** (HD 3; AC 6; Atk 1 sword (1d6); MV 6) and the **Quartermaster** (HD 2; AC 8; Atk 1 quarterstaff (1d6); MV 12) on duty move

toward the air shark stables. Before mounting the air sharks, the quartermaster opens the big bunker where the amphorae and flasks full of green slime and the smoke grenades are stored; the Green Avatar of Slime is locked away in the Crow Cave (see below).

3. An **Air Shark** (HD 6; AC 5; Atk 1 bite (2d6); will throw you around on a 20: take 1d6 extra falling damage if you cannot fly) passes overhead—will attack if it smells blood.
4. **2d4 Orcs** mounted on **Air Sharks** swoop in and drop little clay flasks containing **Green Slime**; the orcs avoid landing but will let the air sharks attack flying opponents. Without orcs to guide them, air sharks will enter a feeding frenzy attacking the most wounded victim (if any) until it is dead and then carry it away to eat at their leisure. When under attack, the orcs have 4 smoke grenades each which they use to escape unharmed.
5. The orc settlement is built into the walls of the cave such as not to reduce the illuminated grazing area. In all there must be about **300 Able-Bodied Orcs**; any residents met will assume that foreigners know the necessary pass phrases and are here to trade, no further inquiries will be made unless violence breaks out.
6. **Vialashta, One-Eyed Crow Priestess of the Orcs** (HD 9; AC 8; Atk 1 orcish hammer (1d6); MV 9; *curse* at will, roll d6: 1. slowed, 2. blind, 3. stupid like an ox, 4. weak as a baby, 5. contract the plague, 6. crippling pain; save vs. spells to avoid) and her **4 Witches** (HD 5; AC 8; Atk 1 cudgel (1d6); MV 9; *curse* 3×/day as above) bargain with the **Hanging Tree** (HD 15; AC 3; Atk 8 branches and roots (1d6 each); MV 0); the branches of the hanging tree are loaded with twitching corpses: **12 Armless Ghouls** (HD 2; AC 9; Atk 1 bite (1d6); MV 12) hang up there, unable to free themselves. The Crow Priestess is trying to develop a ritual to control free roaming ghouls using the tree's power. Treasure: the tree accepts gold offerings and pulls these down into a buried hoard containing 20,000gp plus 50 jewels and gems worth 1,000gp each amongst thousands of skulls and a beating troll heart (which will regenerate into a full troll if released from the roots).
7. Several pieces of *metal fire* burn like flood lights on the cave ceilings. Here, plants grow and giant goats graze. Each flock is guarded by a jealous **Giant Ram** (HD 4; AC 8; Atk 1 ram (2d6); MV 12); the **1d4 Orcs** watching the goats will tell visitors that they got the *metal fire* from Gar, a filthy dwarven wizard living along the river Styx.
8. The cheese factory houses **24 Orcish Cooks** and a **Slave Curd Demon** (HD 15; AC –; Atk 1 slam (3d6; swallow whole on a 20; victims must save vs. death every round or suffocate); MV 1). The Curd Demon is involved in the making of orc cheese; the orcs release it when under attack, knowing full well that it attacks anything in its proximity.
9. The Shrine of Hecate sits inside a black tent illuminated with a hundred candles; the altar is full of dried pig blood (pigs are sacrificed to placate Hecate's anger), many curse scrolls, and skulls that hang in the darkness above. Here lives the **Orc Witch Kurmatesha** (HD 9; AC 9; Atk 1 staff (1d6); MV 9; spells as per her spellbook below); she has the *Horn of the Mountain Cedar* which summons **12 Tengu** (crow-headed, flying swordsmen; HD 5; AC 7; Atk 1 two handed glass swords (2d6); MV 9 fly) once per day. If attacked she polymorphs into a **Shadow Wolf** (HD 9; AC 7; Atk 1 bite (2d6); MV 12; *howl of pain*: anybody touching the ground within 60 ft. must save vs. petrification or be stunned for a round and save vs. death or suffer 1d6 damage from bleeding ears).
10. The Cave of the Crow God is locked behind a magically-sealed door, its surface protected by a magic coating that makes it resistant to green slime. A flight of stairs leads down into a big cave filled with a lake of green slime—this is where the big amphorae are refilled once a month. The lake is protected by the **Green Avatar of Slime** (HD 19; AC –; Atk 1 pseudopod (deposits a blob of green slime); MV 1).

Successful telepathic communication with the Slime Avatar reveals that there is an "elder brother" in the area, a free manifestation of slime power, an Ooze Lord at the center of the big ring. To reach it, a petitioner must be fully covered in slime and wade past *The Three Teeth of Rana*. Kurmatesha's *protection from slime* spell may come in handy.

**Things to do:**

The orcs are interested in adopting humanoids into their tribe. Whosoever saves an orc's life is eligible for blood brotherhood and marriage into the tribe.

There is no religious conflict between the Crow God Odin and the Queen of Witches, Hecate. Both of them are required. What tension remains is entirely due to the personalities of Vialashta and Kurmatesha.

| **Vialashta says:** | **Kurmatesha says:** |
|---|---|
| Odin is the god of crows and he taught us how to read. | Hecate is the goddess of witches and taught us how to cast spells. |
| The Crow God's Hanging Tree gives us power over the undead. | The Witch grants us power over the beasts. |
| The crows are spying for us. | The air sharks fight for us. |
| Our temple has been turned into the lair of a Slime Avatar. | The fertility powers of Hecate makes our tribe strong. |

**Kurmatesha** would love the party to sink one of the Mind Eater Panzer Ships (see Bone Crusher). She is willing to trade spells for assistance.

**Kurmatesha's Spellbook**

| **1st level** | **2nd level** | **3rd level** | **4th level** |
|---|---|---|---|
| *the charming gaze of a witch* | *arcane locking of doors and portals* | *barriers against all sorts of aerial missiles* | *utter transformation of the self* |
| *detection of causal anomalies and arcane effects* | *riding a broom* | *protective coating against slimes and oozes* | |
| *the languages of men and animals* | | | |

**Vialashta** would love the party to help her seed the underworld with Hanging Trees. She knows of several rituals that she might teach students of the Crow God.

1. *The making of a crow cloak* requires the student spend seven days under a Hanging Tree with at least one corpse on it, sitting by a fire burning with myrrh and chanting the names of six hundred lesser bird demons. Every day a hundred crows will come and eat of the corpse, dropping a single feather; the student must collect these feathers and stitch them to a black cloak made using the hide of a black horse.
2. *The hallowing of a hill* requires the student to bury forty dead bodies under a hill. Each body requires the eyes to be gouged and the tongues to be cut; the mouth must be filled with crow feathers and the crow student must wear a *crow cloak* while performing the deed while singing *the praise of Odin* with a hoarse voice.
3. *The gallow runes of power* requires the student to obtain a twig of a black oak, a pound of silver dust, and twenty one pigs. A small ditch is dug around a *hallowed hill* with five lines forming a pentagram inside this circle. The ditch is filled with silver dust and then all the pigs are slaughtered on the hill, their blood filling the ditch; the student must do all this stark naked and smear their entire body with blood. At the end, the student must plant the twig at the top of the hill and water it with their own blood and tears; the Hanging Tree will draw demonic power from the ground and grow within the next night.
4. *The eye of wisdom* requires the student to carefully hang themselves from a Hanging Tree and scream Odin's name until their foaming lips turn black (this usually takes about an

hour). The student then needs to gouge their right eye with a glass knife and offer it to the dark god of crows; doing this will allow the student to turn into a crow once per day, speak to crows at will, and to see through any crow's eyes within a one mile radius.

5. *Mastery of the shapeless form* requires the student to raise two wolves. When howling together with these two wolves, all jellies, oozes, slimes, puddings, and other such amorphous monsters must recoil; this is how the Slime Avatar and the Curd Demon are kept confined to their respective basins.

# Vats of Gar

"The door leads into a room with a floor hundreds of feet below. The space in between is a mess of stairs, passages, hanging vats, huge distilling machineries and vats, hundred of vats with half formed creatures churning, trying to climb out, and dissolving again."

**Themes:** This lab is all about proterozoic life—the transition from living goo and slimes to huge amoebas, living molds, fungi, and myconids; vertical area.

**Area Overview:**

- Magical fires heat bubbling vats.
- Simple mechanical churning machines creak and rattle.
- Green liquid pours into a big vat, producing a cloud of foul odors.
- A polished metallic sphere hangs in the air; lightning bolts strike the iron rods that surround it.
- Endless shelves with collections of waters and soils gathered from all over the multiverse.
- Platforms with small artificial swamps, ponds, and groves under a glass bell (entry via iron doors and short tunnels).

When fighting in this vertical area without standing at the very bottom, anybody hit with a natural 20 needs to save vs paralysis or stumble over an edge, taking 1d6×1d6 damage from the fall (unless prevented by ropes, magic, or similar means).

**Area Encounters:**

1. A pink **Vat Man** (HD 3; AC 9; Atk 1 slam (1d6) followed by a bear hug next round (2d6); MV 3) climbs out of a huge vat. The vat man appears to be blind and unable to talk; ESP and similar methods will reveal a genius freshly trapped in this huge lump of flesh. Soon enough this will drive it mad with rage—can you find a remedy?
2. **12 Green Brain Sucker Worms** (HD 2; AC 8; Atk 1 bite (1d6); MV 6; when bitten, save vs. death or the worms deposit eggs in your bloodstream; terminal brain rot in three days) follow your tracks on their stubby feet, their thin tentacles waving back and forth.
3. A **Bori Demon** (HD 5; AC 9; Atk 1 cold touch (2d6 cold, save vs. dragon breath or faint); MV 3; can only be seen by its intended victim; can only be hit by magic weapons) stalks the party once they steal or break anything in the labs. It tries to kill the party one by one by leading them into fights and attacking the wounded. It's true name is known to Gar (which is why it can be controlled).
4. A group of a dozen barrels each contains a singing **Ooze Elemental** (HD 1; AC –; MV 1; when disturbing it, save vs. spells or be *charmed*).
5. A huge **Pink Brain** (HD 12; AC 9; MV 3 fly; can *dominate* others at will and keep up to three creatures under control at all times; save vs. spells or attack your friends, last man standing must commit suicide) rises on a stalk, as psychic energies surge around it. May be pacified if *telepathy* is used to contact it.

6. A **Giant Snail** (HD 7; AC 6; Atk 2 fists (2d6), 1 bite with its radula (3d6), 1 acid slime touch (1d6); MV 2) with two huge fists is angered by the intrusion; it roars incoherently and shakes its fists as it (slowly) approaches.
7. **6 Smoking Myconids** (HD 3; AC 7; Atk 1 kick (1d6), MV 6; release spores when hit, save vs. poison or fall asleep) are arranged in a circle in an artificial glade. The trees here are freshly planted and the smell of turned soil hangs in the air. A disc of magic *metal fire* illuminates the scenery. The myconids prefer not to be disturbed. Treasure: little seeds the size of a golf ball filled with distilled essences: two of *strength* (+2 to hit and damage in melee), four of *healing* (2d6 hit points healed), two of *dexterity* (+2 to hit with ranged weapons), four of *charisma* (+2 to reaction rolls). These effects last for an hour.
8. Deeper penetration into the warren of vats requires that a **Slime-Covered Open Space** (HD 12; AC –; Atk: 1 slam (1d6); MV 1; can only be hit with magic weapons; when hit, save vs. death every round or be covered in slime and suffocate the next round) be crossed... and it doesn't like being stepped on.
9. An alchemical forge is built atop a spire rising from the laboratory floor, there is no obvious way to reach it (Gar uses flying spells). Phosphorescent-green power lines crisscross the platform in the shape of a circled pentagram; the fire burning in the center leads to a small extra-dimensional forge-space (1d6 fire damage every round), home to **4 Fire Salamanders** (HD 5; AC 3; Atk 1 *flaming trident* (2d6, two handed, sets target on fire for an extra 1d6 damage the next round), MV 6). The circled pentagram prevents them from leaving. This forge-space is not connected to the rest of the multiverse; the salamanders dislike this and are eager to end their engagement with Gar. He cares little for their plight: a deal is a deal, and it didn't include regular visits to the Plane of Elemental Fire. Treasure: a nearly-finished **Burning Iron Snake Golem** (HD 12; AC 2; Atk 1 bite (3d6); MV 9; immune to magic; healed by fire magic; *breath liquid fire*: targets need to save vs. dragon breath or take 12d6 damage, 1 in 6 chance to use next round; anybody in melee distance takes 1d6 fire damage every round) that has not yet been keyed to a master, and a finished *rod of fire* (can shoot a *fireball* dealing 6d6 fire damage once per hour).
10. At the very bottom of the laboratory complex is a dwarven cave carved into stone: marble columns covered in golden flowers, alcoves house statues of armed angels, and at the very center of the complex under a soaring cupola, illuminated by magic *metal fire*, is the Slime Sorcerer himself, writing in his research notebook and protected by an **Iron Protector Golem** (HD 12; AC 2; Atk 2 slams (2d6); MV 6; immune to magic; healed by metal-heating magic (not just fire); when hit by lightning it gains an additional two attacks next round; *earth shaking stomp*: all targets within 20 ft. need to save vs. paralysis or fall prone and lose their next attack—getting up and moving is not a problem).

The greatest treasure to be gained down here is meeting the **Slime Sorcerer Gar** (HD 13; AC 9; Atk 1 *elf slaying dagger* +3 (1d6; triple damage against elves); MV 9; spells as listed in his spellbook) in his laboratories. Gar is a 13th level dwarven magic user on the eternal quest of finding the ur-slime, the slime that gave birth to life as we know it. If the party can prove that they have befriended intelligent plants or fungi—such as myconids or ents—they will gain Gar's respect. Alternatively, if magic users in the party have spells that could aid Gar to communicate with slimes or summon them, contact planes filled with slimes, or contact higher beings of the fungus realms (Lord Agaric, Father Muscarine, or the Mycelian Empire?) this will make him agreeable to barter spells.

## Gar's Spellbook

| 1st level | 2nd level | 3rd level | 4th level |
|---|---|---|---|
| *mass somnia for the restless* | *arachnid powers of netting* | *barriers against all sorts of aerial missiles* | *transmogrification of friends and strangers* |
| *the excellent fusion of doors and their frames* | *mechanical lordship over locks* | *control of lethal electrical energies* | *control of ocular powers in the earth* |
| *detection of causal anomalies and arcane effects* | *temporary cancellation of gravitational effects* | *stupefying growth of external gills* | *the charming of the most unnatural creatures* |
| *force projectiles of unerring accuracy* | *short range powers of ignition for martial purposes* | *control over aerial elemental propulsion* | |

| 5th level | 6th level | 7th level |
|---|---|---|
| *transportation of small groups of people through rifts in space* | *vivification of protozoic matter* | *conjuration of reusable phasic doors* |
| *summoning of snakes and snails of enormous size* | *liquification and mixification of cellular matter* | |
| *contacting and understanding the batrachian lords of chaos* | | |

**Stuff to learn:**

- Via contact with the Batrachian Lords of Chaos, Gar learned that the Styx section he is living in is disconnected from the rest of the multiverse. That in itself doesn't concern him much for the moment—should his research demand interplanar travel however, he will investigate the problem and discover the ultimate cause behind it all: the Fortress Dam of Ix. One way to get him started is to exchange summoning and planar travel spells, since he will realize that they currently do not work.
- Gar carries the 'secret blessing of ooze' which ensures that proterozoic lifeforms do not attack him. For services rendered and life or property saved, he will share the secret—anyone who learns this secret will not be attacked by slimes, oozes, and puddings.
- The true name of the Bori is *Aqrabuamelu*—it can be summoned by speaking its name thrice but it can only ride the winds, therefore no planar travel is possible and it cannot travel faster than a hundred miles per hour. Invoking its name in vain angers the demon; to placate it, a special dance must be performed. The dance is called *Greeting the Sun God Shamash at Dusk* and requires a scorpion mask to perform correctly. Gar has this mask stored away in his sleeping quarters and knows the dance, but intends to take this secret with him when he dies.
- Gar knows how to build an Iron Protector Golem (the rare metals and the master smith required to create the various pieces cost 100,000gp in all).
- Gar knows how to befriend Salamander Craft Masters; four of them live in his forge space. A magic user who spends two months in the service of Gar is able to learn it as well: enough of the Efreet language to communicate, how to greet them, how they like to be paid, and so on.
- Gar knows how to build magic *metal fire* (base ingredients are alkaline earth metals worth 500gp, the exact metals used determine the color of the light). The metal is slowly consumed over a hundred years as it shines as bright as day. The afterglow may linger up to a thousand years.

# Bubbling Stench

"The river opens out into a festering lake; your senses are assailed by bursting gas bubbles and the sickly stench of rot."

**Themes:** Frogs, floating eyes, unbearable stench.

**Area Overview:**

- The river Styx widens and widens, enough to lose sight of one or both shores.
- Big cave pelicans glide over the water.
- Gases bubble up from the depths.
- The stench of rotten fruit and excrement lingers in the air.
- Eyes of giant frogs watch.
- Worse, eyes bubble up from the water and float away.
- Big, snake-like creatures move in the murky water.

**Bogling Names:** Slap, Niwash, Blair, Darp, Oort, Karg, Ashzwash, Mort.

Beneath the lake an **Eye Tyrant Sorcerer** (HD 15; AC 4; Atk 1 bite (2d6); MV 9; disintegrating gaze (save vs. rays or take 3d6 damage), paralyzing gaze (save vs. paralysis or be held and helpless while the gaze does not waver), canceling gaze (save vs. spells or be unable to cast spells and all magic items lose their power while the gaze does not waver), charming gaze (save vs. spells or be charmed for a day)) named *Valkhazar* dreams in its palace; as it does so, eyes pop out from the lake floor, bubble up, and weave what they see into its dreams (see events below). If the sleeping eye tyrant is attacked it will dream up all sorts of defensive measures. Feel free to dream up a new measure every round or pick from the event list below. A determined party should be able to wake the eye tyrant. Sometimes it also feels events on the surface warrant investigation. Treasure (in Valkhazar's palace): 200,000sp, 50,000gp, 5,000ep, 1,000pp, *Helm of Telepathy*, 5 rubies worth 2000gp each.

**Area Encounters:**

1. A raft with **2d6 Boglings** (HD 1; AC 7; Atk 1 spear (1d6); MV 4 on foot; MV 15 swim; submerged they surprise on 5 in 6; jumping charge for double damage), they are too afraid to attack foreigners, instead will try to insinuate themselves as guides and lead the party to Onbog's Toad Fane.
2. A green glow at the shore outlines the Toad Fane occupied by **5d6 Boglings** and run by **Onbog** (HD 7; AC 4; Atk 1 *amputating meat cleaver* (1d8; will cut a limb on a 20); MV 12; roll 1d4 to determine arm or leg when maiming a foe) the undead servant of Tsathoga. Onbog will swallow the limb the next round and flee into the lake (he doesn't need to breathe). Its *Horn of Frog Birth* summons thousands of frogs and green fog from the surrounding ground, making pursuit difficult.
3. A camp with **1d6×10 Boglings** built around the decaying carcass of a Styx Whale that has been cut open, grubs everywhere, and an invitation to a poisonous feast (save or contract a debilitating gut rot giving you a -2 on all your rolls).
4. A **Giant Ancient Eel** (HD 8; AC 8; Atk 1 bite (3d6); MV 15 swim; will grab a victim off the boat on a 20 and dive next round; while grabbed, victims must save vs. death every round or drown; once the eel is dead victims in metal armor continue drowning) attacks.
5. **1d4 Giant Frogs** (HD 4; AC 8; Atk 1 bite (1d6); will grab a victim off the boat on a 20, swallow whole, and dive next round; victims takes 2d6 damage every round but may

breathe somewhat and fight from the inside using a dagger (AC 4); once the frog is dead victims in metal armor save vs. death every round or drown) decide to attack.
6. **Orcs on Air Sharks** throwing bottles containing **Green Slime** at any of the above (see Shark Den for more info about the orcs).

**Bogling knowledge:**

1. The eyes mean trouble: avoid them if you can or keep your emotions under control if you cannot. They don't know how to influence the strange events around them (see events below).
2. There are not many travelers down here because there are orcs on flying sharks that attack ships.
3. There is no escape up or down the river because it flows in a circle.
4. Down river is the Fortress Dam of Ix which is very dangerous... so don't go there.
5. Also avoid any armored boats, because invariably the people on these boats are evil.
6. The toad god is mighty and prefers sacrifice to approach on its own, or to be brought by its servants.
7. If asked about *The Three Teeth of Rana* (knowledge to be learned from the Avatar of Slime in the Shark Den), any bogling can lead the party to the three pillars (which is where the hidden passage to the Ooze Lord is).

**Onbog** was a priest of Mitra that was corrupted by Tsathoga many years ago. Now it maintains this fane along the river Styx, hating itself and everybody else. It enjoys the control it has over the frogs and likes nothing better than the hope of corrupting others into the service of Tsathoga in order to share its well-concealed misery. Onbog is also afraid of meeting Bilapudee, a frog demon ruling over the Eternal Swamp. Possibly that would reveal how minuscule its power is. Only if threatened will it reveal the passage to up the waterfall.

When the party leaves the region, Tsathoga or Onbog will consider the actions of the party and react accordingly:

- **Animosity**: Tsathoga is not amused to see its wretched servants abused; as the fight ends the creatures killed by the party are reanimated as **Zombies** to continue the attack. The zombies channel Onbog's twisted accusations and Tsathoga's angry demands for reparations (a sacrifice of a living sophont to serve as a replacement). Wherever the party goes, more dead will rise until 40 HD worth of undead have risen or until the party complies with the demands. If the party does comply and the players describe an appropriate ritual, you can switch to the "Friendship" reaction if appropriate.
- **Friendship**: If the party has parted on friendly terms with Onbog, it will mention the party favorably in prayers to Tsathoga. Choose one character to be Tsathoga's favorite; whenever that character is near the remains of a sentient creature, Tsathoga talks to him or her through that corpse and tries to seduce the character into its service by offering appropriate bargains (permanent water breathing; the ability to conjure living eyes in the area and see through them; the ability to find a little gem in mud or refuse once a week; a beautiful mate—soulless of course; a position in Hell after death—similar to Onbog's, naturally; the language of frogs; a fiefdom in a bog near the character's hometown). This goes on until the character either agrees or declines three times.
- **Neglect**: Onbog is offended that it was ignored and no sacrifice was made. It sends a team of **3d6 Boglings** after the party to capture and bring them back to him. At the beginning of the next three encounters there is a 2 in 6 change that the bogling expedition reaches and attacks the party while they are engaged.

**Events:**

1. If the river runs dry because the Fortress Dam of Ix has been destroyed, the Eye Tyrant Sorcerer is awakened and Onbog aggravated.
2. If a ghoul company marches along the shores of the lake, they avoid the muddier sections because of the weight of the cart; they will also fall upon any boglings and turn them into ghouls in order to replenish their ranks.
3. The eyes bubbling up from the lake will observe the party. What they see influences the Eye Tyrant Sorcerer's dreams—roll on the appropriate table below (these events are preceded with a lot more floating eyes bubbling up):

| d4 | Fights, Violence | Jokes, Laughter, Happiness | Magic, Spells |
|---|---|---|---|
| | This makes the tyrant giddy with energy. | This makes the tyrant jealous and aggressive. | This makes the tyrant happy and creative. |
| 1 | On the water, **4d4 Hairy Brain Children** (HD 1; AC 9; Atk 1 tiny knife (1d6); MV 3 fly; only attack moving targets) looking like fist-sized eyes with legs and arms and armed with everyday tools (needles, hammers, knives) attack anything that moves. If they see no moving target, they fall asleep and drift away. | Several **fuming balls of fire** rise to the surface and explode upon contact with air. Everyone takes 6d6 fire damage, save vs. dragon breath for half. | You see a flickering, silent image of a **frog demon** sitting on a petal throne, holding court. |
| 2 | On the shore are **2d4 Trauma Puppies** (HD 1; AC 9; Atk 1 bite (1d6); MV 6; charming gaze (save vs. spells or be charmed for a day) forces victim to take off any gloves and extend their bare hand to feed or fondle them; the puppies will bite the hand which is considered to be AC 9; getting bitten breaks the enchantment) seemingly cute but with a huge single eye above their mouth full of razor-sharp teeth. | A **raving maelstrom** develops, spinning the ship around. Save vs. paralysis or be thrown overboard; characters in metal armor save vs. death every round or drown. | You see a flickering silent image of a **huge machine** made of countless pipes, chimneys, and cog wheels; suddenly some of the pipes explode and the vision fades. |
| 3 | Every character looking into the water sees a drowning copy of themselves, silently pleading for help. Reaching out to them allows the copy to grab the character (once seen, resisting the urge to help requires a save vs. spells). The copy will desperately hug and kiss the characters; save vs. paralysis or be pulled down to the lake floor. Once under water save vs. death every round or drown; if water breathing, characters may end up seeing the Eye Tyrant's palace. Once shaken off the apparition will dissolve. | Countless **darts of anger** fly out of the water and stab any eyes looking at them; save vs. dragon breath for each eye or be hit by a needle. If hit, take a -4 on all rolls of the d20 until the needle is removed; removing a needle requires a *cure critical wounds* spell or a successful *pick locks* test. If the removal is botched, the whole eye is lost and has to be regrown using a *regenerate* spell. | You see a flickering silent image of **bird cages** hanging in the air, all of them holding a wide variety of creatures. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Any creature recently deceased opens its eyes, which then bulge and pop out of their sockets, to then float up and away. The dead crawl around on all fours to search for their eyes. | The **water boils**, every living being in the water takes 3d6 damage; save vs. dragon breath or take a -4 on all rolls of the d20 for the next three days or until treated with a *cure critical wounds* spell. | The spells just cast seem to draw their energies from the living. Hair turns gray and hands shake; every character within 60 ft. must save vs. death or suffer 1d6 damage. |

# Eternal Swamp

"You reach a small lake and see outlines of reed grass through heavy fog. The water flows languidly over a few black rocks before tumbling into the shaft you just climbed. Birds call out to each other."

**Themes:** Fog, bog, an alien palace.

**Area Overview:** It is practically impossible to climb up to this swamp from the Bubbling Stench. This area is a possible starting area for a party arriving via planar travel. As this place is far enough from the Fortress Dam of Ix in order to allow planar travel, this is also where you can use magic to leave this place and where high level clerical spells work.

- Building a boat with the reeds available is possible.
- A giant crane is standing still and suddenly comes down to swallow a giant leech that has been following the boat.
- Out of the mist rises a white, filigree sponge pyramid, a fractal construction without a clear separation of rooms or corridors; no furniture, no tools, no people.
- At the bottom of the sponge pyramid, in the very center, lies a circular silent harbor where ebony light falls on amazing swan ships. (A lever on these boats throws hundreds of yards of animated silk up into the air, like fluttering wings; this will break a fall and allow the boat to sail over waterfalls).
- At the top of the sponge pyramid, above the mist, there is a closed red flower as big as a house; a disturbance will let it unfold, and leads to an encounter with Bilapudee.

**Bilapudee** (HD 17; AC 4; Atk 1 two-handed *chaos spear* (2d6 + mutation); MV 9; jumping charge deals double damage; roll 1d6 for mutations during the night after being hit at least once by the *chaos spear*: 1. useless arm, 2. useless leg, 3. inimical face on your belly, 4. unnatural skin color, 5. budding psi powers (telepathy), 6. disturbing aura at will; *chaos storm* once per day to deal 12d6 damage due to spatial deformation, save vs. spells for half; *psi confusion* at will, anybody within 60 ft. must save vs. spells or attack an ally the next round; 80% chance to summon another demon frog 1×/day; *aeronautic dream* is a ritual involving the inhalation of sweet chrysantheme incense fumes and the subsequent levitation of the ship the dreamer is on for as long as the dreamer does not wake) is a demon frog and the Lord of the Sulfur Kingdom—except that there is no sulfur apparent in the swamps, and the air up above the mist is clear and bright and clean.

**Things to learn:**

- The waterfall provides access to a Hell hole. Bilapudee rarely goes there; he might give the party a swan ship to be rid of them. He is not interested in teaching them the *aeronautic dream* to come back.
- The Hell below Bilapudee's swamp is preventing planar travel and teleportation (he doesn't know about the limited access to high level clerical spells).
- It is possible to reach the Prison of Dis via the river Styx.

**Encounters during the day:**

1. In the swamp, a group of **2d6 Giant Leeches** (HD 6; AC 8; Atk 1 bite (2d6); MV 15 swim) attack; half of them attach themselves to the boat if there is one while the others try to reach for warm bodies. Leeches attacking the boat do automatic damage; if your boat has no hit-points, assume 50.
2. It is possible to follow the **Giant Crane** (HD 8; AC 7; Atk 1 beak (2d6); MV 6 on foot; MV 21 fly) mentioned above to its nest. Within the nest are three man-sized jade urns containing ashes, bones, and various gems for a total of 30,000 gold; each of the urns is worth an additional 2,000gp.

**Encounters during the night:**

1. A sulfur fog rises, and oozes bubble up from the water (see River Travel for a list of random slimes and oozes).
2. A long chain-gang of **Morlokhs** (HD 1; AC 9; Atk 1 pole (1d6); MV 1 chained) walk through the fog and search for something using poles. They are guarded by a **Toad Slaver** (HD 3; AC 4; Atk 1 two handed trident (1d6); MV 9; jumping charge for double damage).

During the night, the servants of Bilapudee search for moon silver in this swamp. Bilapudee will occasionally buy more slaves on other planes and bring them here. Sometimes he will bring more of his frog demon friends and they'll raid the world below. If your players want to investigate this some more, you'll have to expand this yourself—I just used it as a starting point.

# Fortress Dam of Ix

"You hear creaking, churning, and hammering long before you see the huge cog wheels. The flow of the river slows and finally you see the rim of a fortified dam."

**Themes:** Industrialism, the necessity of things, bureaucracy, flood lights, surveilance, submarine-like interior with hatches, narrow passages, loud clanging

- There are watch towers on the dam and search lights look for boats.
- Subsonic hum and vibration of the turbines deep beneath the ground.
- Omnipresent loudspeakers report on the current status of the fortress:
    - "General announcement of watch 314: no intruders, no disturbance. Nominal power output is 107%."
    - "General warning on watch 576: code yellow, code yellow. Intruders were seen near watch tower 41. Nominal power output is 109%."
    - "General alert on watch 742: code red, code red. We have fighting in tunnels 251 and 253. Nominal power output is 87%."

The energy generated by the river at this dam powers the space/time distortion that causes the river Styx flow in a circle forever downhill through the *Caverns of Slime*. The Escher machines responsible depend on a constant flow of water and the rotation of many dozens of magically charged axles, cogs, and flywheels. The damned souls manning the fortress and maintaining the machinery depend themselves on the power of the dam in order to live, assuring the creator of eternal loyalty.

The guards manning the dam fortress are various goons in exoskeletons—damned souls wearing a parasitic exoskeleton that supports them and grants them great strength, but the exoskeleton also forces them to help maintain and defend the dam.

Disrupting the power supply is possible and dangerous. Assume any reasonable suggestion made by players will work, but throw in an appropriate number of complications. Here are some ideas your players might come up with and how you might react to them:

**Getting into the dam**

- A **frontal assault using captured Panzer Ships** (see Bone Crusher): Defensive fire slowly destroys the ship but cannot prevent a beach head in a protected corner. Breaching the sealed outer gates takes 10 rounds; appropriate spells reduce the time required by one round each. On rounds 2, 5, and 8 a **Three-Legged Stalker** (HD 8; AC 0; Atk 2 blaster (6d6 each; save vs. wands for half); MV 21) arrives to stop the intruders.
- An **aerial assault using captured air sharks or kite catapults**: Soon the searchlights will discover the flying attackers (unless *invisible*) and blasters will trace defensive patterns into the air (blasting chunks out of the ceiling hundreds of feet above). The approach takes 5 rounds, save vs. wands every round or be hit for 6d6 damage. After the second hit, fall and take damage as appropriate (shot down in the 2nd round: 4d6, 3rd round: 3d6, 4th round: 2d6; last round: 1d6). Finding and breaching a sealed outer gate still takes 10 rounds (see first entry).
- An **underwater approach using magic or a submarine** (this adventure does not include a submarine, perhaps your players have extraplanar help): Finding and breaching a sealed outer gate still requires 10 rounds (see first entry), but no stalkers arrive to defend the gate; instead, the noise attracts **2 Giant Ancient Eels** (HD 8; AC 8; Atk 1 bite (3d6); MV 15 swim; will grab a victim on a 20 and swim away the next round; while grabbed, victims save vs. death every round or drown unless *water breathing*; drowning victims in metal armor cannot swim and continue to drown unless they have a way to return to the surface).
- An **infiltration using captured exoskeletons**: Getting into the exoskeletons is easy, they automatically adapt to different body plans. After 2 minutes needles and tubes insert themselves into the pilot; removing a pilot now does 5d6 damage, anyone else present may use *open lock* for half damage. After fusing with the exoskeleton, save vs. spells every time you try to refuse orders from central command. Infiltration is otherwise unproblematic while inside an exoskeleton; wearing an exoskeleton also has benefits (AC 3, Atk 1 slam +3 (1d6+3) due to Str 18; MV 6).

**Inside the dam**

- **Jam the generator**: Once inside, heading deeper and deeper to follow the humming of the turbines, PCs end up in the generator hall. Let characters with blunt weapons roll damage every round: a total of 20 points of damage halts some cog wheels; 30 points results in sparks flying and strong vibrations; a total of 40 points results in dramatic power failure, red alert in the entire dam fortress, red emergency lights; 50 points results

in loss of control over the main axle, turbines turning loose and ripping through the walls, and major flooding in a few moments... think about the Titanic sinking.

- **Take over the control room**: Once inside, heading higher and higher up leads the party into the control room. There are **12 Goons** (HD 5; AC 3, Atk 1 slam +3 (1d6+3) due to Str 18; MV 6) and their master **Leverage of Fear** (HD 12; AC 2; Atk 6 blades (1d6 each); MV 9; two shields it can use as a last defense to block a mortal blow, shattering the shield and ignoring the damage dealt), an eight-armed monstrosity of steel and a few human elements. See below if the party decides to parlay.

Leverage of Fear is an eight-armed monstrosity of steel and a few organic elements of human origin. It hates what needs to be done but does it anyway—maintaining the dam, picking up survivors and turning them into goons, waiting until they are fused and therefore dependent on the dam. It can usually be found in the dam's control room.

Once the power supply is disrupted, an emergency response kicks in designed to fight disruption and restore power. Alarms are ringing, lights are flashing, goons are searching for intruders and blast doors are closing. Players need to succeed at two of the tasks listed below in order to save any captured friends and they need to succeed at two more tasks in order to prevent restoration of power. If the players fail, they must make a daring escape through a maintenance tunnel and take one of the many speed boats downriver. They must flee into the **Tentacle Caves** to avoid death or imprisonment in Hell (improvise a cell and guardians in the Prison of Dis).

1. **3d6 Goons** (HD 5; AC 3; Atk 1 slam +3 (1d6+3); MV 6; in combat the poor creature locked inside will be begging for forgiveness and cry for help even as it fights) are alerted to the party's presence by imperceptible sensors embedded into the walls and ceilings of the building.
2. **2d6 Goons** have activated a **Tunnel Digger Juggernaut** (HD 12; AC 1; Atk blades (1d6 against all); MV 6; the rotating blades attack all creatures in its path with a single attack roll; it cannot attack flanking creatures).
3. The party is deceived into a low-lying dead end. As they realize their mistake, a torrent of water floods the room. If the party deals 30 points of damage to the gate using blunt weapons or magic, they succeed. If the water keeps rising, during the fourth and fifth round anyone who wants to deal damage must save vs. death or gasp for air in panic instead. If the party fails, they may escape via small air ducts and end up losing a lot of time trying to find higher ground.
4. The party is lost as the water rises, quickly ask them to reverse the following sequence: down the steep steel stair, past the gallery overlooking the turbines, down past the parked tunnel digging juggernauts, through the gate with the red and white stripes, and then down the concrete stairs into the bedrock. Don't let them take notes and don't let them discuss their answer for too long, but be generous when comparing their answers with the list. Failure to answer correctly is just that: another failure in the attempt to prevent the restauration of power.
5. A sentient **Iron Golem Snake** (HD 12; AC 2; Atk 1 bite (3d6); MV 6; immune to magic; anybody hit must save vs. death or be overrun and suffer an additional 2d6 the next round) as big as a train gives chase. Escape requires that every player is faster than the golem, or that the party can lock three doors behind them using magic. If the party fails they can fight or they can make a desperate escape using emergency floats down waste tunnels and end up in the **Tentacle Caves** (see below).
6. The tunnels are flooded with poisonous gas: save vs. poison or lose consciousness for half an hour (no waking using ordinary means). Soon after **4 Mechanical Hounds** (HD 4; AC 2; Atk 1 bite (2d6); MV 12) appear; again, the party can make a desperate escape using emergency floats down waste tunnels and end up in the **Tentacle Caves**.

If the party flees into the **Tentacle Caves**, they must face a group of **1d6 Stone Polyps** (HD 6; AC 0; Atk 1 bite (2d6), 8 tentacles (save vs. petrification or fall unconscious and be dragged towards the mouth); MV 3). Remember that this location is the complication that arises from failing the previous challenge; that's why there is not a lot of treasure or information to be found in these caves. Allow a thoroughly beaten party to emerge without a fight if they sacrifice important equipment and significant treasure.

# Ooze Lord

"The slow underground waterway reaches a large cavern illuminated by a phosphorous light emanating from a lake. In the center sits the statue of the Ooze Lord."

**Themes:** ancient, ooze religion, apocalyptic showdown, lurid color mix in the water

- A lake lit by green phosphorous green light.
- Huge statue of a vaguely humanoid Ooze Lord.
- An ooze storm is unleashed if the statue is approached.

**Area Overview:** All the slimes and oozes drifting in the water feel a lingering pull towards the Ooze Lord. This is where they are purified, made compatible, merged; this is where they *transcend*. For all of the slimes and oozes lazily drifting toward their final destination, the Ooze Lord is a gate to ooze heaven. Interference results in a catastrophic ooze storm as their distilled essences are whipped into divine frenzy.

Obviously, reaching the **Tomb of the Black Lord of Nothingness** requires interference with the Ooze Lord. You need to land on the statue, climb its hidden stairs, and break the wards that were placed here when oozes still ruled the primordial sea.

The lake begins to boil as soon as a non-ooze touches it. The waters churn and waves splash as soon as the statue is touched. The air cuts like blades (1d6 damage per round) as soon as the gate is reached. The ooze storm begins as soon as the wards are interfered with. I hope the party has prepared for this occasion. Breaking the seals and reaching safe passage takes ten rounds.

When the ooze storm rages, the slimes and oozes start whirling around and flying through the air. The roar of a thousand slaughtered pigs fills the air. Pieces and bits of slime starts hitting you. Pudding waves rise out of the lake and crash into you. This is is the ooze apocalypse!

- Purified ooze-essence fills the air; suffocate unless you can breathe under water.
- Take 1d6 acid damage every round as small blobs of green slime splash you.
- Take 1d6 cold damage every round as you are sprayed with brown pudding particles.
- Take 1d6 bludgeoning damage every round as pudding waves crash into you.
- All non-magic organic matter on you is dissolved within three rounds because of the crazy mix of green and olive slime.
- All non-magic metals on you are dissolved within six rounds (but note that all bags, straps and the like have already dissolved) as the black pudding essence starts reacting with the metal.

Suggested solutions: freezing the ooze lake in time; a magic earth tunnel reaching across the lake to the right place on the statue, sealing it; transforming into a golem of appropriate type and weathering the bludgeoning damage; use Kurmatesha's *protection from slime* (see Shark Den) and be protected against all effects except for the suffocation and the cold.

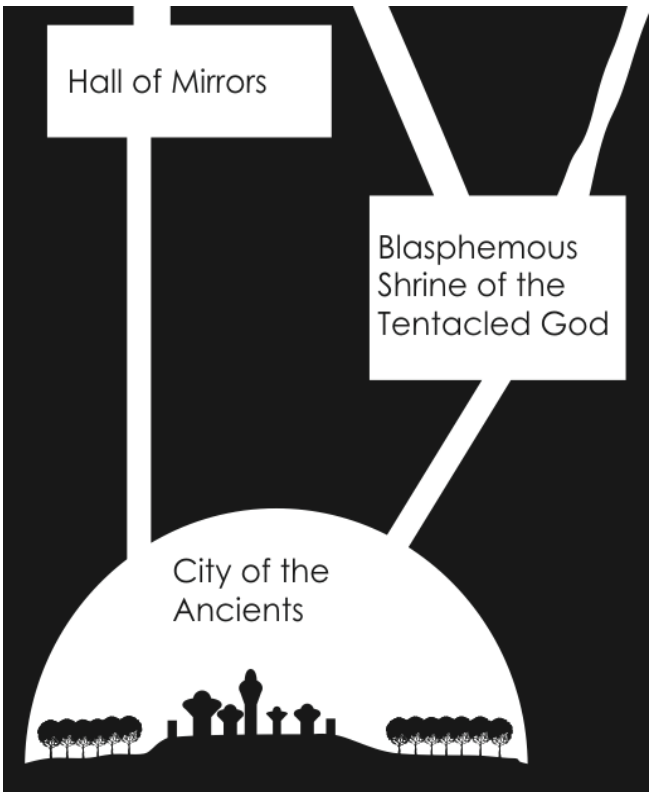
# THE DARKNESS BENEATH

# City of the Ancients

Carcosan megadungeon installment by Chris Robert

**Introduction:** Welcome to "City of the Ancients," level 14 of *The Darkness Beneath*. The defining characteristic of the City is a tumultuous mixture of genres – swords & sorcery, post-apocalyptic, science-fiction, and fantasy – inspired by Geoffrey McKinney's outstanding ***Supplement V: Carcosa.*** Although designed for use as part of *The Darkness Beneath*, City of the Ancients is suitable for use in any game inspired by the collision of Old School mechanics with gonzo aesthetics.

Within the City and its environs, a wide range of challenges await, from both the environment itself and the inhabitants within. The dangers here can be extreme, and players will soon learn that discretion is the better part of valor...particularly if their PCs are robbed of their most potent magical powers and items. Accordingly, lower level PCs – should they somehow make their way to the City – are not at an insurmountable disadvantage, but they will certainly have a harder time of it than a more experienced party. But the bottom line is, this adventure is going to be deadly for any who wade in heedlessly looking for a fight.




**Background:** The origins of the City of the Ancients are shrouded in mystery. It was founded upon the dread planet Carcosa, a cursed world torn between technology and sorcery, apocalypse and oblivion. It is a citadel erected by the hand of some ancient tribe of Man, although no men upon that blasted world today could create its like. Today, the City of the Ancients is... here. The Space Alien factions who contest the City had discovered it, abandoned, upon Carcosa. They probed... experimented... contemplated... tinkered... and eventually disturbed something beyond the powers of their vast technology to rationalize. The City was propelled through time & space to its current location deep within *The Darkness Beneath.*

For a time, the Space Aliens worked to reverse whatever effect had thrust them amok. Years became decades... and then centuries... and yet, their technology and toil offered no insights. Certain of the greatest minds among them began to doubt the capacity of logic to provide a solution – this faction dubbed themselves the 'Irrationalists', and they commenced secret studies into sorcery and related highly disordered energies. The schism between the 'true' Space Aliens and the Irrationalists was impossible to bridge. Mutual mistrust soon evolved into open hostility, and the Irrationalists were banished from positions of prominence; they responded with ever more irresponsible excursions into forbidden knowledge & techniques. Their travesties became impossible to ignore, and internecine warfare flared into the open. The two sides battled one another ferociously, eventually barricading themselves into opposite sides of the City in an uneasy stalemate. For over two hundred years, they have remained separate, launching endless patrols and excursions, sniping at one another's flanks, but incapable of dealing a decisive blow to upset the balance of power. Occasionally, interlopers wander in from the lower levels of *The Darkness Beneath*, but they never survive long – neither the Space Aliens nor the Irrationalists desire interference from the unclean things of this unknown world...although those attitudes may be changing.

**Getting to Level 14:** *This section may be ignored if you are plugging the City of the Ancients into your own megadungeon or setting.* There are two entrances to Level 14 – one from "The Hall of Mirrors" (*FO! #8*) and another from "The Blasphemous Shrine of the Tentacled God" (*FO! #9*):

**1. The Way of The Guardian.** The floor hatch in the Hall of Mirrors opens to a sturdy metal ladder descending straight down through a narrow tunnel into the depths. Including stops to rest it takes five hours to safely descend the two-mile length of ladder. The bottom deposits climbers into a chilly, 15' wide x 10' high x 300' long passage with a metal catwalk floor, and walls & ceiling of softly glowing icy white crystal. Visibility is no greater than 30' due to frigid vapors that rise from a

river of liquid nitrogen beneath the catwalk (inaccessible unless catwalk is destroyed). 50' in, further passage is blocked by a man dressed in heavy fur robes and carrying a silver scepter. He doesn't look that tough...

The Guardian responds to any attempts to proceed by firing emerald beams from his scepter at the PCs. The exertion of combat will cause The Guardian to gradually shed flesh and robes, revealing a construct of metal and technology beneath. It will defend the entrance to the City of the Ancients to the death. At the end of this passage is a ladder up and metal hatch that opens into the UnderJungle. **The Guardian**: DC 4, SPD 9 (3), HD 10 [45hp], ATT gamma radiation beam scepter [3 dice] or crushing grip [2 dice], SD ½ damage from fire, cold, & electricity attacks; charm/sleep immunity; full suite of special detection systems, SV D10, ML 12, AL L.

**2. The Exposed Balcony.** The broad stone staircase leading from The Blasphemous Shrine of the Tentacled God narrows quickly into an increasingly steep stair that seems to plummet endlessly, deep into the underground. The descent is two miles of torturous switchbacks and spiraling steps that takes four hours (including rest stops) to navigate safely. At the bottom, the passage lets out into an exposed natural balcony that juts out from the side of the uneven cavern wall 75' above the floor of the UnderJungle. A thief will be able to climb down without much trouble, and there are ample crevices to secure a grappling hook & rope to allow others to rappel down. On the underside of the balcony are several Piercers, who will attack anyone who attempts to descend the cavern wall. There are several treasures amidst the heaped bones and stony debris at the foot of the wall: 94cp, 231sp, 72gp, a *Ring of Water Walking*, a *Wand of Cold* [2 charges], a battle axe, 21 arrows, and several worthless scraps of rusting chainmail. **9 Piercers:** DC 3, SPD 10' (3'), HD 3, ATT death drop [3 dice], SV F3, ML 10, AL N [unintelligent].

## Overview of Level 14

**Layout:** The cavern is a five mile diameter rough half-sphere, partly natural and partly expanded and engineered by succeeding generations of Space Alien technicians. The ceiling is over a mile above the floor at its highest point. Water trickles down from above in generous quantities: drips fall like rain, trickles & splashes tumble down the walls, and roiling vapors frequently erupt from thermal vents in the floor. Dense mists and drifting fog sometimes obscure sight, though never for long. The one mile diameter City is visible from most points within the cavern, and many points within the jungle – finding it is never a challenge. Five towers are readily discernible, in varying states of visible decrepitude. Strange lights, whooshing Space Alien Anti-Grav Sleds, and solitary explosions can be witnessed at odd intervals, if anyone watches long enough.

**Visibility:** In the first years of their confinement in this new place, the Space Aliens created a small artificial sun to bring light to the vast cavern. In the center of the ceiling, a mile above the cavern floor, they installed various machineries that generate and sustain a white hole, which spews filtered photonic radiation in abundant quantities. This radiation provides prodigious light & heat, but is free of more dangerous radiations. The Space Aliens designed the artificial sun to mimic conditions on their native world. A 'day' in the cavern lasts 24 hours: 18 hours of bright daylight followed by 6 hours of relatively dim light equivalent to a clear night with a full moon. Temperatures never stray from a balmy range that is generally tolerable. There is a very abrupt event horizon surrounding the white hole – anything approaching closer than 100' will be overwhelmed by radiant energy and destroyed.

**Magic & Sorcery:** The Space Aliens control the use of magic in the City with their Order Generator, a hi-tech artifact that emits energy on a highly-structured wave-length disruptive to magical & sorcerous emanations. Within their citadel, the machine is infallible, and all magic is canceled out; with distance, the effects of the machine are diminished, and magical energies may or may not be allowed. Localized effects of the Generator:

**The UnderJungle:** The effects of the Order Generator do not extend beyond the City, and the UnderJungle is slightly magical in nature itself. Magic & sorcery function as normal here.

**Dead City:** The effect of the machine is greater here, but not overwhelming. Artifacts function normally. The 'pluses' of magical weapons & armor also function normally. Lesser magical items, special magical powers of weapons & armor, and magical abilities of monsters and the like may malfunction if used (roll per use): 50% they function normally, 40% they are rendered inert for 1d12 hours, after which time they function normally, 10% they are permanently de-magicked. Spells & rituals may malfunction. The caster will sense resistance and may voluntarily halt casting to ensure safety. If casting continues, caster level x5% is the chance that the casting is successful. Failed casting of a spell means the spell is lost and the caster is dazed for 1d2 turns. Rituals fail 50% of the time, although even in failure the caster still unnaturally ages as if casting was successful.

**Sanctum of the Irrationalists:** Over the centuries, the Irrationalists have devised makeshift solutions to the problem of the Order Generator: they have imbued their lair with persistent magical energies and

developed substances from certain rare elements that reflect the energies the machine emits. The base effects are as in the Dead City, but magic items, monsters, and spellcasters within the Sanctum roll twice when determining any effects of the Order Machine, keeping the result of their choice. Rituals may be cast as normal, without the additional chance of failure.

**Citadel of the Space Aliens:** The power of the Order Generator is insurmountable here. Magical artifacts teleport themselves away through time and/or space to a safe location – the level of the owning PC is the % chance that its new location is known (getting there to recover it is another question). Lesser magical items will be destroyed instantly: they may glow red-hot and explode, vaporize in a spray of raw magic, or simply be rendered inert, GM's choice. Monsters with innate magical abilities will be de-magicked, and must save vs. spell or suffer an immediate reaction of utmost terror. Monsters of surpassing power (Titans, ancient Dragons, unique Demons and Devils, etc.) will instantly depart for greener pastures, as with artifacts. Spells & rituals will malfunction violently. Caster must save vs. spells – success means magical feedback provides a warning and casting of the spell/ritual may be halted safely, failure means there is no warning, the spell/ritual automatically fails, and the caster takes 1 die damage per spell level, or 6 dice damage for a ritual. Caster is also rendered comatose for 1d6 days.

These rules are brief and cannot cover every situation, and the GM is encouraged to use common sense and best judgment when ruling on unique cases.

**The UnderJungle:** Decades ago, the Irrationalists engaged in a sorcerous ritual that ran wild. They had intended to transport the City to a new location in time & space, a magic-laden jungle world that had appeared to them amidst fevered dreams born of narcotic fumes. Instead, a portion of that world was brought to *The Darkness Beneath*, and the UnderJungle was born. In the years since, the jungle has thrived under the nourishing radiation of the 'sun' built by the Space Aliens, and it is now as much a part of Level 14 as is the City itself.

Movement in the UnderJungle is as normal for dense jungle, i.e. at ½ the normal rate. The chance of losing direction is diminished to 10%, due to the unique nature of the cavern. Water occasionally collects in the UnderJungle. There are minor streams, smalls pools, and areas of swampy terrain. Most of this water, however, is fouled by various slimes and fungi that make it unpalatable to drink. Water collected before it strikes the ground is safe to consume.

**UnderJungle Random Encounters:** Roll 1d100 once every six hours, or whenever the PCs engage in behavior that is likely to draw attention (fighting, arguing, lighting a campfire, etc.) and consult the following descriptions:

**01-70 No Encounter.**

**71-75 Dinner.** The UnderJungle is home to only a few species of what might be considered game animals: capybaras, hobtoads, slugfish, and olive jellies. The PCs stumble across 1d6 of a randomly-determined species – if they hunt quickly and skillfully, they may keep what they kill.

**76-78 Slime Pool.** A riot of tangled vines and mosses conceals a deep pool of mucous-y slime. If the party is moving cautiously, only the lead PC will fall in on a roll of 1-3 on 1d6. If they are moving carelessly, each PC must roll1d6, with a result of 1-4 indicating they have fallen in. Victims will sink & suffocate in 3d4 rounds (heavily encumbered victims sink twice as fast), unless they are helped out by someone outside the pool, or can devise some other means of escape.

**79-80 Giant Jungle Ant Column.** A rapacious column of Giant Jungle Ants surges through the jungle. If left undisturbed, they will not attack; if interlopers approach within 30', they will attack with gusto. Their path can be easily tracked back to the Giant Jungle Ant Colony (area **6** below). **1d10x100 Giant Jungle Ants**: DC 6, SPD 150' (50'), HD 1, ATT bite [2 dice, save vs. poison for ½ damage], SV F1, ML 12, AL N [unintelligent].

**81-90 Implacable Hunter.** Years ago, a humanoid combat droid achieved sentience and escaped from its Space Alien masters. Now it fancies itself the protector of the Jungle, and it stalks and slays any creature that trespasses in its domain. The droid relishes the thrill of the hunt – it will snipe at enemies for 2d6 rounds, close for a single melee attack, and then disappear again into the leafy depths, leaving its victims to wonder what the hell just hit them. It collects trophies from kills and displays them in its lair (**7**). **Droid XXA-936Ω/H.7**: DC 3, SPD 150' (50'), HD 10 [45hp], ATT x-ray pulse rifle [2 dice]; vibro-shortsword [2 dice, ignores armor], SD invisibility; infrared+long-distance vision; self-destruct [10 dice to any within 300'], SV D10, ML 12, AL L.

**91-92 Fungus-Men Watchers.** The glint of reflective eyes betrays the presence of several Fungus-Men among the surrounding foliage... just watching. Their motives and methods are inscrutable – the Fungus-Men flee into the jungle if pursued, and defy all attempts at capture or violence.

**93-94 Gross Beast.** Trolls that make their home in the UnderJungle become a part of it, so completely covered in bizarre growths, drooping vines, shaggy mold, and rotting slime that they are virtually indistinguishable from the surrounding flora. If one hits with its bite attack, it will vomit green slime onto the victim. **Mutant Troll**L DC 4, SPD 120' (40'), HD 6+3, ATT 2 claws + bite [1 dice each / 2 dice], SA green slime vomit; surprise on 1-5, SD regeneration, SV F6, ML 10, AL C.

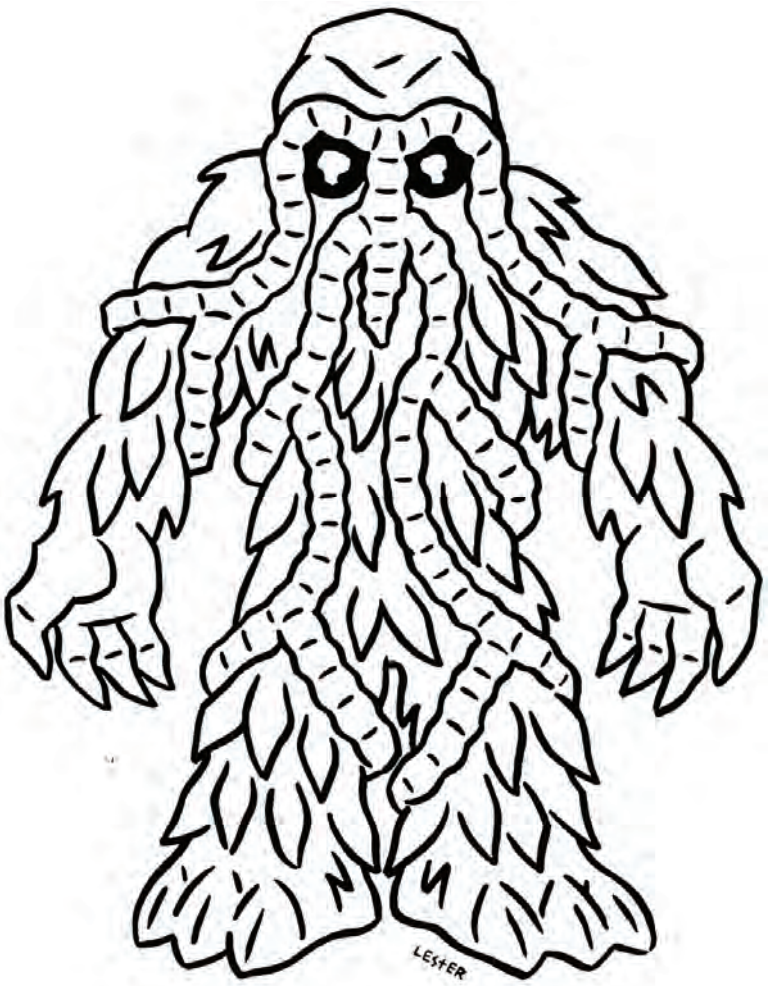
**95-96 Rotting Plant Monster.** Sounds like it's in the right place...**Ambling Shambling Mound**: DC 0, SPD 60' (20'), HD 11, ATT 2 bashes [2 dice each], SA smother, SD ½ damage from weapons; electrical growth; damage immunities, SV F11, ML 12, AL N.

**97-98 Confused War Party.** A war herd of Minotaurs wanders the jungle, transported here randomly by an enemy wizard in the heat of battle. They wear a hodgepodge of chain and plate armor, and wield heavy chopping blades. The Minotaurs' usual savagery has only been increased by the confusion of their current circumstances, and they fight with an additional +2 on all to hit rolls, and an additional +2 damage. Each Minotaur possesses gems and crude jewelry worth 1d100gp. **8 Minotaurs**: DC 4, SPD 90' (30'), HD 6, ATT chopper [2 dice+4] or gore + bite [1 dice+2 / 1 dice+2], SV F6, ML 12, AL C.

**99-00 Search Party.** Several Irrationalist Space Aliens are diligently searching for the *Totem of the Putrescent Blooms*, the existence of which was recently delivered in a fever-dream. They will barter for information regarding its whereabouts, but will inevitably seek to capture any humans, demi-humans, or humanoids they encounter (with special attention paid to any Purple Men or similarly hued beings among them). There is an 80% chance that one will be armed with a *Mutation Inducer*. Each Irrationalist carries 5d10gp in jewelry and trinkets. **4d4 Irrationalist Space Aliens**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT hand weapon [1 dice], SV MU1, ML 9, AL C.

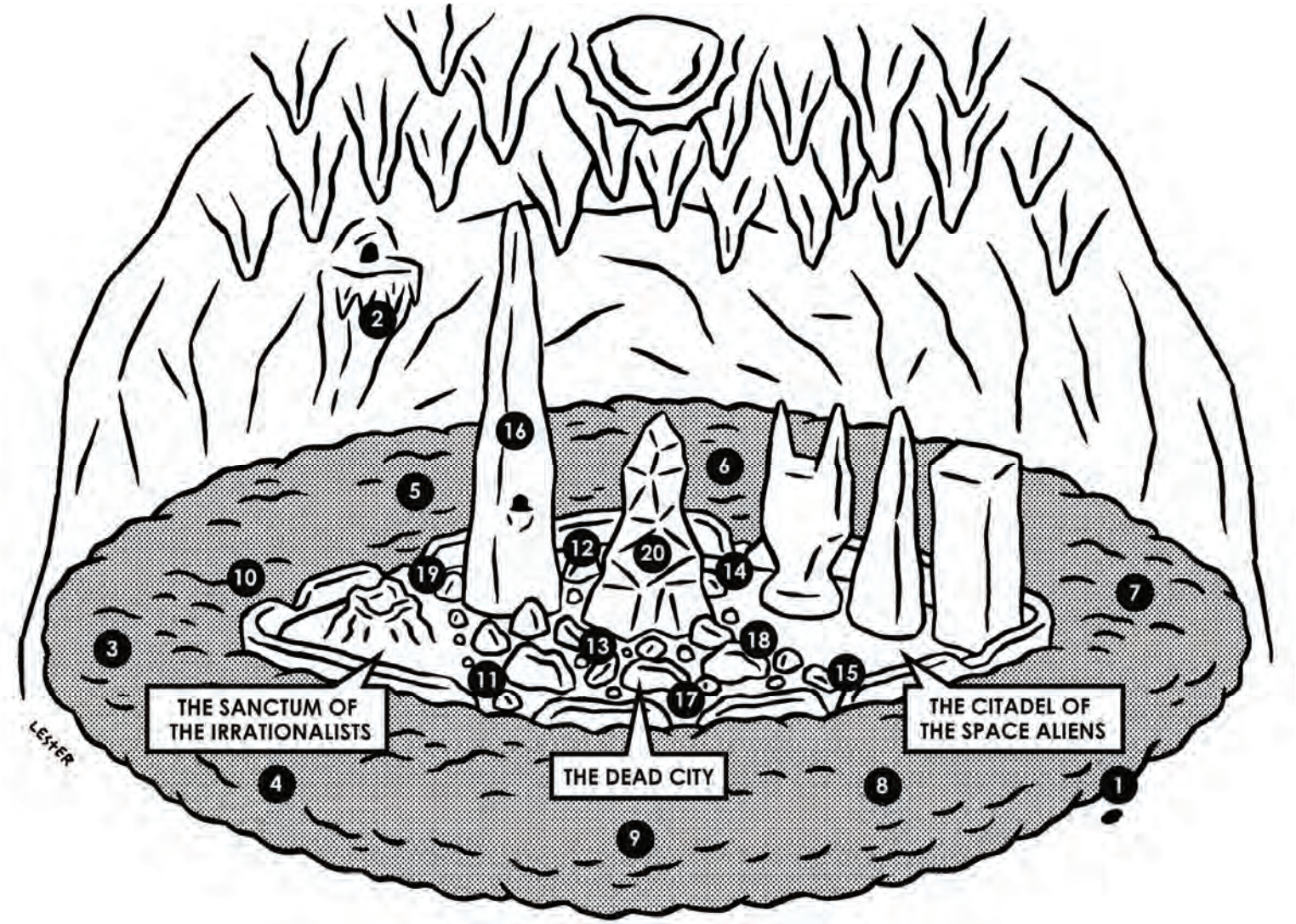
**UnderJungle Keyed Encounters:**

**3. Corrupted Treefolk.** Long ago, several Treants arrived in the jungle from parts unknown. Being stranded, they did their best to survive, and that struggle has twisted and scarred them. They have descended into savagery, and will attack lesser beings with ferocious enthusiasm. This tribe lairs within a dense portion of the jungle – they are of hardwood stock, and the GM may allow keen-eyed PCs a chance to notice them among the tropical flora. Their leader is particularly powerful & reckless, and wields a laser weapon taken from a vanquished Space Alien. The group venerates a make-




shift altar that is topped by a huge spur of unfinished jade, worth 8500gp. **Boss Mistreant**: DC 0, SPD 60' (20'), HD 10, ATT ulfire laser beam bazooka [3 dice, 6 charges remaining] or 2 crushing blows [2 dice each], SA surprise on 1-3; animate trees, SV F10, ML 12, AL C. **7 Mistreants**: DC 2, SPD 60' (20'), HD 8, ATT 2 crushing blows [2 dice each], SA surprise on 1-3; animate trees, SV F8, ML 9, AL C.

**4. Hidden Nest.** Without warning, the ground beneath the PCs collapses into a large, musty, fungus & mold-filled chamber (no damage from soft landing). This is the nest of a pack of Boring Beetles, who attack ferociously in defense of their home. PCs may attempt to scramble up the pile of dirt & debris and out of the nest. After two rounds (during which no attacks or spell-casting is permitted), save vs. petrify to escape; failure means the PC slides back down into the nest to attempt escape again, or else to face and fight the beetles. A refuse pile contains treasures: 92sp, 34gp, 10 lumps of unfinished sardonyx worth 35gp each, and a leather headband with platinum bangles worth 95gp. The beetles will not leave their nest to pursue enemies. **9 Boring Beetles**: DC 3, SPD 60' (20'), HD 5, ATT bite [2 dice], SV F5, ML 7, AL N [unintelligent].




**5. Lost Flying Machine.** At the center of a particularly dense tangle of giant spiny palms, curtained mosses, and dripping slime molds (3d6 turns to hack through) rests a *Space Alien Anti-Grav Sled*. Though abandoned for decades and slightly battered, it is still in working order. It will require a further 6d6 turns of effort to free the vehicle so that it may fly. If the machine is activated, it will broadcast a locating signal that will attract a substantial Space Alien patrol in 2d12 hours, consisting of several sleds and a cohort of combat droids.

**6. Giant Jungle Ant Colony.** A 40' high, 80' wide irregular mound of mud and debris marks the site of a large colony of Giant Jungle Ants. Extensive tunnels exist beneath the surface. Ants will emerge at the rate of 1d10 per round from each of five different openings to deal with intruders, who will be attacked savagely, but not pursued more than 100' from the nest. If a substantial threat to the colony materializes, the Giant Jungle Ant Queen will attack psionically from deep beneath the earth. Divided between several rooms within the colony are numerous treasures amounting to Horde Classes X, XII & XIII. **1d100x100 Giant Jungle Ants**: DC 6, SPD 150' (50'), HD 1, ATT bite [2 dice, save vs. poison ½ damage], SV F1, ML 12, AL N [unintelligent].

**7. Predator's Lair.** The jungle thins slightly around a small rise that is crowned with several tumbled boulders and slabs of natural granite. This is the lair of the robotic hunter, as might be evident from the profusion of skulls that are carefully maintained here. Some dangle from tall trees, some are heaped in tidy pyramids, and others are arranged in geometric patterns on the litter-strewn floor. There are several dozen Space Alien skulls, half as many human skullss, and several others as well, some identifiable (Dwarf, Minotaur, Tentacle Faced Brain Eater, Orc) and some not. There is a 30% chance that the robotic hunter is encountered here, and it will defend its lair to the death. It has assembled further trophies and a small cache of treasure in a cubby beneath a granite slab: an elaborate bronze helmet with silver accents (250gp value), a platinum medallion with a skull motif (450gp), 2 exquisite rubies (1200gp each), a *Periapt of Wound Closure*, a mithril belt buckle (300gp), a Naga-skin headband featuring 4 large opals (2250gp), a pink & green *Ioun Stone*, 7 titanium torcs of Space Alien design (1300gp each), and an obscene gold and emerald pendant (950gp).

**8. Suicide Pool.** Moisture is everywhere in the Under Jungle, but it collects into clean pools in very few places. This attractive watering hole is quite large and inviting; however, incautious drinkers will be ambushed by the Aquatic Hydra that has made its home here. Treasures have collected in the muck at the (35' deep) bottom of the pool: 13cp, 44sp, 9ep, 139gp, 10pp, an Ogre-sized ornamental club of bronze and carnelian worth 410gp, a tarnished *+1 buckler*, a *Helm of Teleportation*, and 3 large black pearls worth 250gp each. **Aquatic Hydra**: DC 5, SPD 120' (40') [swim], HD 9, ATT 9 bites [2 dice each], SV F9, ML 9, AL N [unintelligent].

**9. Detestable Bog.** After thickening notably, the Under Jungle clears a bit here, and a gentle rise marks the lip of a broad bowl of shallow, slime-befouled water. Several twisted, tentacular fungi of remarkable size emerge from the muck; though harmless, they can be observed to writhe and squirm with subtle malignity. At the center of this bowl, the fallen shaft of a massive tree sits partially submerged. Known to sorcerers as the *Totem of the Putrescent Blooms*, despite the soggy conditions it shows no sign of decay. Weird glyphs, sinister runes, and obscene pictographs are carved upon its entire length. Sprouting from the underside of this trunk are six types of fungi required for the ritual *Conjuration of the Foul Putrescence*. If any of these blooms are removed, a Fungal Obscenity will bubble up from the mire and attack. Treasure amounting to Horde Class XXII is scattered in the muck. **Fungal Obscenity**: DC 7, SPD 60' (20'), HD 9, ATT 3 bashing extrusions [1 die each, if victim is hit with all three in a round save vs. petrify or unconscious for 1d10 rounds], SA spew Yellow Mold spore cloud 3x per day, SD charm/sleep immunity, SV F9, ML 12, AL C.

**10. Rude Camp.** Several 'beds' of heaped muck and damp moss mark the campsite of a group of Deep Ones. They were brought to the City of the Ancients via the Irrationalists' sorcery, and are now negotiating the performance of various uncouth deeds on their behalf, but prefer the comfort of the bog for their accommodations. The group totals eighteen members – if a lesser number are encountered here, the remainder are off conspiring with their confederates, and will flee back into the Sanctum in great haste if they return to discover their campsite has been destroyed. A sealed ceramic urn contains mixed coins and small gems of 230gp total value. **3d6 Deep Ones**: DC 5, SPD 90' (30') or 240' (80') [swim], HD 1+1, ATT coral clubs [1 dice+3],SA +3 STR bonus to hit, SV D1, ML 10, AL C.

**City of the Ancients:** Near the center of the UnderJungle, the ground rises gently and the foliage clears to reveal the City of the Ancients. It will be plain to observers that the City is largely in ruins: the wall is battered and crumbling, rubble is piled high, and the few remaining towers are visibly in disrepair – an air of decay and dissolution permeates the area. The City is divided into three zones:

**The Citadel of the Space Aliens** is where these visitors from another world have pledged to make their last stand, protected (for now) only by the potency of their technology. Their three towers are partially restored, some rubble has been cleared, and the area is thick with detection devices and automated defenses.

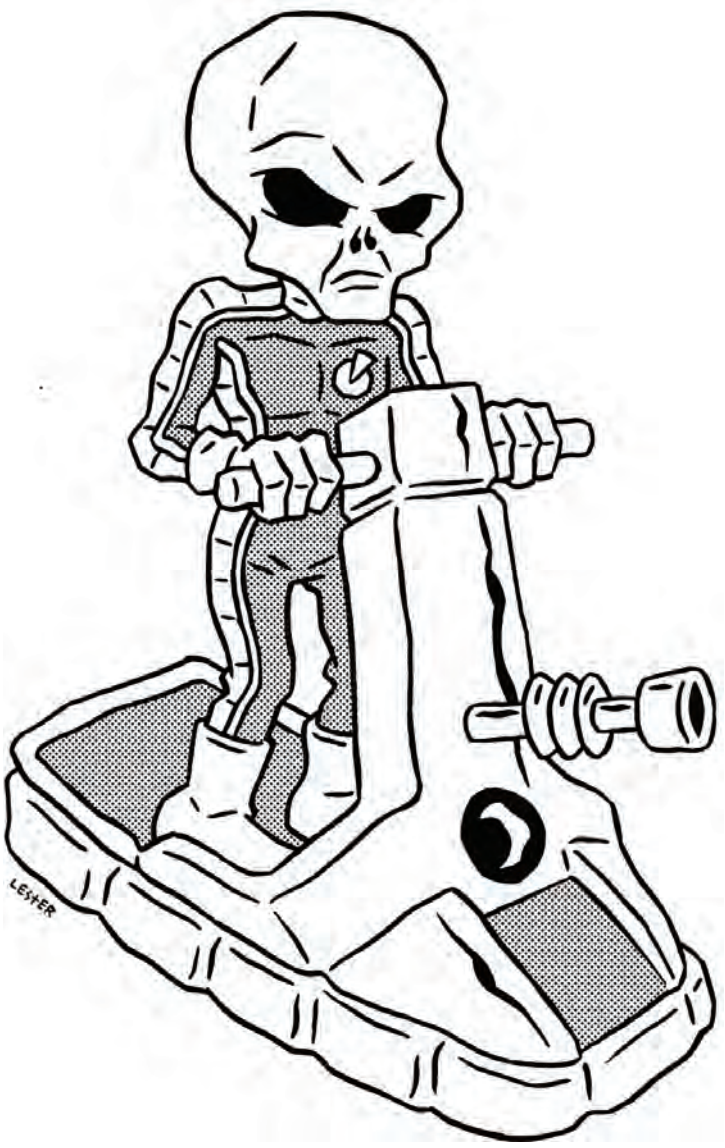
**The Sanctum of the Irrationalists** is a shattered tower that has been occupied and excavated by deranged Space Aliens who have turned their backs on logic, reason, and science in favor of sorcery, emotionalism, and unrestrained savagery. The approaches to this fastness are guarded by fell beasts and stealthy watchers.

**The Dead City** is the ruined remainder of the metropolis – across its rubble-strewn boulevards and crumbled splendor, the Space Aliens do battle with the Irrationalists, while interlopers from the levels above and mutated beasts from the City gnaw away at both and each other. One mighty tower remains intact, but its obsidian walls are dark and forbidding. Another tower, of a cloudy ruby-colored crystal, shows obvious battle-damage, and a foul effluent erupts from its upper reaches at irregular intervals – it leans noticeably to one side, and how it stays standing is anyone's guess.

The City of the Ancients is not huge by any means, but traversing its length takes quite some time, as movement is constrained by the dangerous terrain – streets are clogged with rubble, unstable buildings threaten constant collapse, and hazards abound. In order to avoid these dangers, PCs must move with extra caution. Safe movement occurs at 1/3rd the normal rate. This does not completely guarantee safety, and movement at this rate requires each PC to save vs. breath attack once every six hours, with failure requiring a roll on the City Movement Hazard Table on the next page. There is no chance of losing direction, as the remaining towers are obvious landmarks. If PCs insist on moving faster (either by impatience or the need to flee more immediate dangers), each must save vs. breath attack once per turn or roll on the city movement hazard table. The perimeter areas around the Citadel and the Sanctum are somewhat clear of rubble and less dangerous – normal movement rules should be used, and there is no need for saving throws.

**Affecting the Balance of Power:** PCs are under no obligation to become involved in the larger struggle gripping the City. They can attack both sides, try to ignore each, skulk among the ruins and plunder & raid as opportunities allow, or depart as quickly as possible. The City is a (tremendously dangerous) playground, and PCs should be free to conduct themselves as they see fit.

| d12 | City Movement Hazard |
|---|---|
| 1-3 | **Road Rash.** Minor bumps, bruises, and scrapes add up to 1d2 damage. |
| 4-6 | **Twisted Ankle.** 1d4 damage, movement reduced by ½, all attack rolls and saving throws suffer a -1 penalty until healing is received. |
| 7-8 | **Broken Leg.** 1 die damage, no movement, attack rolls and saves at -4 until lost hp are healed. |
| 9-10 | **Cracked Skull.** A nasty spill ends in a head-first landing. 1 die damage, knocked unconscious for 1d6 rounds, and thereafter attack rolls and saving throws are at -4 until lost hp are healed. If the victim is wearing a helmet, all effects are halved. |
| 11 | **Trapped.** The ground collapses and the PC drops into a narrow crevasse. 1 die damage, and they're gonna need some help getting out. |
| 12 | **Collapsing Building.** An unstable ruin turns into an ad hoc deadfall trap, take 4 dice damage (save vs. breath for ½). Award the PCs one free roll on the dead city scavenging table (opposite). |




However, after two centuries of stalemate, each side is now open to assistance from like-minded outsiders. Should the PCs attempt to make contact with one faction or the other, and display motives and an outlook seemingly in line with their own (Law for the Space Aliens and Chaos for the Irrationalists), an alliance may be formed. Of course, each faction will be ruthlessly true to their own goals – once their nemeses are destroyed, the PCs will be disposed of as quickly as is convenient. The Space Aliens and the Irrationalists know how to destroy one another, they simply lack the means. PCs can tip the balance by accomplishing any of the following:

**Helping the Space Aliens**

- **Recover the Ytterbium Coil:** The Order Generator is only operating at a fraction of its potential. Recovering the Ytterbium Coil, stolen long ago by the Irrationalists, will allow the effects of the Order Generator to envelop the entire level. Without their sorcery, the Irrationalists would quickly fall.
- **Infiltrate a Nuke**: The Space Aliens have diligently scraped together enough fissionable material to rig a small nuclear bomb. Detonating the bomb outside the Sanctum will not destroy it – they need someone they can trust to get it inside the complex and set it off.

**Helping the Irrationalists**

- **Destroy the Order Generator**: The Order Generator is the most potent tool the Space Aliens have to hold off the Irrationalists; with magic & sorcery free to run wild, they could be quickly overwhelmed.
- **Destroy the Clone Bank**: No more clone bank would mean the Space Aliens could no longer replace their losses in personnel. From there the Irrationalists could kill off the rest, or even just wait them out.
- **Recruit an Army**: The Irrationalists have tried recruiting allies from among the few humanoids that wander down to the City, but have had no luck in finding help. Powerful PCs might be able to raise an army to cast down the walls of the Space Aliens.

GMs are encouraged to devise additional plots to effect a change in the status quo, particularly if these play to the strengths or motivations of their players' characters.

**The Dead City** is choked by piled rubble, mostly shattered concrete. In a few places, more exotic debris marks former buildings – fractured obsidian blocks, rusted steel girders, and twisted sheets of unidentifiable metal. There are numerous small pools and damp areas, but these are visibly contaminated with poisonous effluents of every color and consistency. Smoke billows in places from fires that rage deep beneath the rubble. A scattering of buildings still stand, after a fashion. Most are missing at least one wall or the roof, and they are all unstable and prone to collapse – using one for shelter

increases the chance of misfortune. Ancient treasures and forgotten technologies still exist amidst this destruction, but uncovering them is hazardous work. Two towers remain standing in the Dead City, but both the Irrationalists and the Space Aliens give them wide berth.

The Dead City has been warred over for generations, and in that time the ruins have been blasted and picked clean repeatedly. However, much of value remains undisturbed beneath the rubble, and enterprising PCs who do not mind attracting attention to themselves can profit handsomely from excavating the debris. PCs may dig down into the rubble wherever they please. This labor is quite noisy – for each hour spent digging, roll once on the Dead City Random Encounter table. Two cumulative hours of excavating the same location allows the PCs to roll 1d100 on the Dead City Scavenging Table (next page). The GM is free to adjust the amount of digging allowed to match the expectations of the campaign. If you want the PCs to have access to more loot, simply allow more digging; to limit loot, reduce the allowance for excavation. A good benchmark is to allow digging in one spot every 500'. Some encounters reward the PCs with free rolls on this table – in these cases, no additional random encounter rolls need be made, simply roll the dice for scavenging and apply the results.

**Dead City Random Encounters:** Roll 1d100 once every six hours, or whenever the PCs engage in behavior that is likely to draw attention (fighting, arguing, excavating rubble, etc.), and consult the following table:

**1-85 No Encounter.**

**86-88 Ravenous Mynocts.** A flight of Mynocts is on the prowl, looking for something to eat. If surprised, they are found picking at the remains of ancient machinery; otherwise they swoop in to attack. **2-16 Mynocts**: DC 6, SPD 180' (60') [fly] and 30' (10') [crawl], HD 3, ATT bite [1 dice x ½], SA electric discharge, SV F3, ML 7, AL N [unintelligent].

**89-91 Prowling Beast.** Sometimes the monsters created by the Irrationalists escape...and sometimes they are simply turned loose. Generate a **Spawn of Shub-Niggurath** randomly (per *Carcosa* or your own tables).

**92-95 Recon Patrol.** A Space Alien patrol, ready for trouble. If they meet up with a serious threat, they will retreat to the Citadel, and a much more powerful strike force will be unleashed. **Space Alien on Anti-Grav Sled**: DC 0, SPD 600' (200'), HD 8 [36hp], ATT cosmic radiation pulse rifle [4 dice], SV D10, ML 7, AL L. This Space Alien wears a titanium torc worth 1300gp. **1d4+2 Space Aliens in Battle Armor**: DC 2, SPD 180' (60'), HD 1-1, ATT micro-wave pulse pistol [1 dice] or stun baton [1 dice + save vs. wands or stunned 1d6 rounds], SD 20hp force field; communicator; telescopic+nightvision sights, SV D10, ML 7, AL L.

**96-99 Hunting Party.** The Irrationalists often infiltrate the Dead City in order to spy on the Space Aliens, probe for weaknesses, and disable detection devices & defenses. They will flee if they meet with more than they can handle. Each Irrationalist carries 5d10gp in jewelry and trinkets. **Tough Irrationalist**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 2+1, ATT hand weapon [1 dice], SV MU2, ML 10, AL C. Implanted with a *Command Crystal*. **3d4 Irrationalists**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT hand weapon [1 dice] or dart [1 dice], SV MU1, ML 10, AL C. 50% chance that one wields a *Mutation Inducer*.

**00 Unique Brute.** No one knows where this beast came from. Mutated zoo escapee? Irrationalist creation run wild? Some dark demon from parts unknown? It preys upon all that it comes across, and Irrationalists and Aliens alike know to flee its savage wrath. **Dead City Devil**: DC 3, SPD 150' (50'), HD 13, ATT 2 slashing claws+gore [2 dice each/3 dice] or trample [4 dice], SA surprise 1-4; invisible 3x per day, SV F13, ML 12, AL N.

| d100 | Dead City Items Scavenged |
|---|---|
| 01-75 | Nothing found. |
| 76 | A melted lump of solid gold worth 1250gp. |
| 77 | Snake-Men artifacts: ancient decorative tiles, metal containers, and mundane personal items worth 1500gp to a sophisticated collector. |
| 78 | Working jale laser pulse pistol w/drained cell. |
| 79 | Set of twelve nested titanium beakers, worth 1000gp to an alchemist. |
| 80 | Peculiar and lovely small metallic object d'art of unknown manufacture, has powers that are non-magical but identical to a *Periapt of Health*. |
| 81 | 5 lb. solar power cell charger, can recharge energy weapons one charge per hour during daylight (white hole illumination counts). |
| 82 | 1000' spool of very fine silver wire, 750gp. |
| 83 | Crude soapstone idol of Nyarlathotep, utterly foul for non-Chaotics to behold. Once per month it can cast *Charm Person*, and will direct victims to commit evil acts. Weighs 20 lbs., worth 10,000gp to the wrong type of person. |
| 84 | Hi-tech sack of unknown, incorruptible material: waterproof, does not burn, impervious to acid, extremely resistant to tearing & puncturing, can hold volume equivalent to a large sack, though much more weight. |
| 85 | Small wood chest containing 294 gold coins – each worth 10 gp due to thickness and purity. |
| 86 | Skeleton of long-dead Gnoll hero. Personal effects include *sword +1, flame tongue* (command word "Zooost!"), *leather armor +3*, engraved pearl charm bracelet worth 800gp, and 3x *potion of healing* (more potent with age, if drinking one takes imbiber's hp beyond normal max, extra hp(s) are permanent). |
| 87 | A vaguely pistol-shaped EMP device. If aimed at a spell-caster and activated, a burst of magical energy engulfs the target, causing all currently memorized spells to be wiped away. Only works against memorized spells, not spell-like abilities or innate powers. Small dial on grip indicates 6 charges left. |
| 88 | Ornate and heavy (17 lbs.) necklace of gold plates and tiger's eye stones. When casting a ritual, the wearer may make a second save to avoid unnatural aging if the first is failed. Worth 1800gp to the uninitiated, but beyond calculable value to a Chaotic spellcaster; any owner will be subject to constant scrutiny and plotting from jealous sorcerers. |
| 89 | Small dagger carved from single emerald, worth 8000gp. |
| 90 | Barrel-like torso of a deceased Primordial One. Holster contains a curious raygun. Can be fired once/day (recharges by itself), but the odd grip makes it -4 to hit; victim must save vs. spells or be affected as if by the Mage spell *Antipathy*. |
| 91 | Loose gemstones of various types in a rotting satchel: 1d100 gems worth 1d10x10gp each. |
| 92 | Holocrystal of Space Alien manufacture. When activated, displays a map that shows a secret entrance into Sub-Level 1 of Beta Retreat. |
| 93 | Non-magical circlet that functions identically to a *Necklace of Adaptation*. |
| 94 | Space Alien locator beacon – when activated, a strong patrol of several sleds and a cohort of combat droids will arrive 2d12 hours later. |
| 95 | 1d12 miniaturized Irrationalists encased in amber. Worth 300gp each to a sophisticated buyer. If exposed to significant electrical charge, amber shatters, and the Irrationalist within returns to life at normal size. |
| 96 | A very large corpse is entombed in a thick layer of ulfire mold. The mold is harmless, the body is of an Ogre Mage – a thick book chained to its belt contains pages with the spells *Fly*, *Paralyze Person*, *Icy Storm*, *Magic Jar*, *Control Weather*, and *Vanish*. |
| 97 | A heavy (50 lbs.) metal canister containing one gallon of thick, lustrous liquid. This is a bizarre type of pure gold that remains liquid at room temperature. Virtually any price can be asked of an alchemist for this fabled substance of sublime potency. |
| 98 | Strange tools of obscure, though recognizably human, design. Worth 2500gp to a collector. |
| 99 | 3d12 tablets in a small metal vial, these are preserved foodstuffs of hi-tech manufacture. Each one of these small tablets provides complete nourishment for a single humanoid for three days. |
| 00 | Roll twice, ignoring results less than 76. |

**Dead City Keyed Encounters:**

**11. Rusty Lake.** A sunken plaza filled with rust-colored water that smells strongly of metallic decay. The water is highly corrosive to metal: immersion causes instant disintegration of anything short of an artifact, a splash requires metal items to save vs. breath (magic items get 'plus' as a bonus) to avoid destruction. Drinking the water requires a save vs. poison to avoid death. Water removed from the lake loses its destructive properties after 24 hours, but remains poisonous indefinitely.

**12. Ambush Stairs.** What looks at first like a deep pit is actually a very steep set of stairs leading down into the

ground. After 40', the stairs end in an impenetrable clot of rubble, the lair of a **Giant Wolf Spider**. Buried in the debris is an uncut sapphire worth 900gp, a dozen normal arrows, a tarnished silver pitcher worth 125gp, an *Elder Sign*, and the results of one free roll on the Dead City Scavenging Table. **Giant Wolf Spider**: DC 6, SPD 60' (20'), HD 5 [33hp], ATT bite [1 dice], SA paralytic poison, SV F5, ML 10, AL N [unintelligent].

**13. Cunning Trap.** A dozen dead Space Aliens litter the perimeter of a gently smoking crater; their weaponry and abundant hi-tech supplies are scattered around them, completely intact. This is actually a holographic image projected by a small transmitter at the center of the illusion. If any non-Space Alien entity approaches within 50', a proximity-fused explosive detonates doing 5 dice damage to all within 100' (save v. breath attacks for ½ damage). Hi-tech sensory devices or equivalent magicks may reveal the nature of the deception (GM discretion).

**14. Belligerent Droid.** A dwarf-sized service droid stumbles among a field of charred and broken plascrete pylons. It has suffered modest damage and extensive program corruption, and acts erratically. It hurls a stream of obscenities (in Space Alien) at any who come within 100', and attacks those approaching closer than 10'. Knowledgeable scavengers can harvest this unit for several useful spare parts. **Droid FTC398.ALPHA**: DC 4, SPD 30' (10'), HD 2 [9hp], ATT two pincers [1 dice x½ each], SV D10, ML 12, AL L.

**15. Kaboom!** A lone Kobold sits quietly on a rusted beam. If it sees the PCs, it will approach slowly in a non-threatening manner. This is an early prototype of a Space Alien cyborg weapon – if it is allowed to approach within 10' of any humanoid, or if it is killed, an explosive charge in its head will detonate for 3 dice damage to all within 50'. The explosion will disturb the rubble enough to allow one free roll on the Dead City Scavenging Table. **Weaponized Kobold:** DC 7, SPD 30' (10'), HD ½ (2hp), ATT explosive charge [3 dice], SV 0 level Human, ML 12, AL N [unintelligent].

**16. Tower Eternal.** This looming obsidian needle rises to a height not far short of the cavern ceiling. An open balcony about where the thirteenth level should be is the only apparent entrance. Through a low arched doorway is a small room with yellow plaster walls. Every available surface of this room is covered in bizarre scrawls, nauseating pictographs, and sanity-shaking runic script. Anyone who attempts to decipher any of this, by means magical or mundane, must roll 1d4 on the table at right. A secret panel in the north wall of this room slides open to reveal a small shelf that holds a ceremonial dagger (worth 500gp to a Chaotic buyer), a large chrysoberyl (470gp), a neat stack of 20sp, and a diary including the Mage spells *Duo-Dimension*, *Fiery Cloud*, and *Enmazement*.

**17. Safe House.** Beneath some light debris is a spiral staircase descending into the ground. The passage is very narrow and menacing, but after winding for 50' opens into a plain 20'x30' concrete vault. If care is taken to replace the debris and camouflage the entrance, this provides a sanctuary of sorts within the Dead City – no random encounter checks need be made while the party is completely within this room. Additionally, valuable items from ages past have been safeguarded here – the PCs are allowed three free rolls on the Dead City Scavenging Table when they first find this room.

**18. Sleeping Giant.** The PCs clumsy movement awakens a dormant warmachine. A 30' tall arachnid-form robot bursts from beneath the rubble and attacks. Its movement is hampered by three damaged legs, and it only has power for a limited number of shots from its primary weaponry, but it will attack all non-Space Alien targets relentlessly. **Droid A11101010.Σ.X:** DC 5, SPD 60' (20'), HD 20 [90hp], ATT cosmic radiation beam bazooka + blue laser Gatling rifle + flechette cannister gun [5 dice, 5 shots remaining / 6 dice, 3 shots remaining / 4 dice to all within a 30' wide, 100' long cone, 2 shots remaining] or 2 scything leg sweeps [3 dice each], SA surprise on 1-4, SV D10, ML 12, AL L. Any battle with this machine guarantees that both the Space Aliens and the Irrationalists will send patrols to investigate. If defeated, the machine will prove to be a treasure trove of spare parts for technological items. Additionally, the rubble kicked up by this monster allows three free rolls on the Dead City Scavenging Table.

| d4 | Tower Eternal Reading Table |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Minions.** Several B'yakhee coalesce outside the tower and attack the trespassers. **3d4 B'yakhee**: DC 9, SPD 240 (80) [fly]; 90 (30) [land], HD 4, ATT claw [1 dice], SA psionics [1d3+1 powers, 4 times per day], SD teleport, SV F4, ML 9, AL C. |
| 2 | **Madness.** The reader must save vs. spells – failure means drooling, slack-mouthed incoherence for 2d12 hours. Upon recovery, the victim's WIS score is halved permanently, and he suffers terror when confronted with emblems of Hastur. |
| 3 | **Monster.** The reader is transformed into an Avatar of Hastur and attacks all in sight. After 5 rounds, the victim recovers with no memory of what just happened. **Avatar of Hastur**: DC 2, SPD 240 (80) [fly]; 90 (30) [land], HD 15, ATT 6 throttling tentacles [2 dice each], SA electrical burst [1 dice damage to all within 30']; psionics [all powers once per day], SD immune to charm/sleep, heat, cold & electricity, SV F15, ML 12, AL C. |
| 4 | **Mold.** The walls of the room eject a burst of Yellow Mold spores – all within must save vs. poison or die of suffocation in 6 rounds. |

**19. Sneaky Pudding.** A small pool beneath an exposed water main looks inviting, but a Black Pudding will burst out from the pipe to engulf any who investigate. **Black Pudding**: DC 6, SPD 60 (20), HD 10, ATT acidic smother [3 dice], SA dissolve, SD harmed only by fire; split into smaller puddings, SV F5, ML 12, AL N [unint.].

**20. Ruby Tower.** Reeking effluent spews occasionally from the upper reaches of this decrepit, crystalline tower, forming a large pool nearly 10' deep in places that surrounds the base of the spire. There are no doors or windows, but gaping holes in several places high in the tower allow entry. Within are narrow corridors comprised of ruby walls that seem to shift and change, and create weird reflections that easily confound trespassers. Any who enter must save vs. spells for each round they walk the corridors. Three failed saves in a row means the victim is lost forever, doomed to wander the endless maze for eternity; three successful saves in a row means a fractured panel of pure ruby is found, worth 1d6x 10,000gp. The top of the tower, and source of the effluent, confounds investigation.

**Sanctum of the Irrationalists:** Formerly a soaring, slender tower of sublime beauty, this edifice has been hideously altered by battle and the sorcery of the Irrationalists. Now only a stumpy scab of outer wall remains above ground. This wall is bulbous and misshapen, clad in a chitinous sheath of irregular, jagged, giant dolm scales. These scales are impervious to all types of energy weapons and radiant emissions; old scales are regularly shed and replaced with new growth – the outer wall is alive in some uncouth fashion.

Below ground, the Irrationalists have excavated a substantial basement level, wherein they conduct their most obscene rituals and outré sorcerous explorations. They are active – gathering prisoners, planning raids into the City, conducting sorcerous experiments – and intruders will be hard-pressed to remain undiscovered. They will mount a vigorous and intelligent defense of their base, using every opportunity to overcome intruders with guile and strength of numbers. There are 125 Irrationalists in the Sanctum. The entry to the perimeter of the Sanctum is a subtle transition, and most visitors will not realize they are entering an inhabited area until they come under attack. The approaches to the Sanctum are guarded by teams of Irrationalist dart-throwers, as well as bizarre creatures spawned within the complex. The Irrationalists have recently been active in trying to recruit allies to rid the City of the Space Aliens once and for all. Attempts to parley will be greeted enthusiastically; vanquished enemies will be captured and enticed to join the Irrationalists by more direct means. Generally, individual Irrationalists carry 5d10gp in jewelry and trinkets as treasure.

**Sanctum Perimeter Random Encounters**: 1d10 once per turn. Results may overlap, so that the PCs might e.g. come under attack by dart-throwers for a turn and then be approached by an envoy.

**1-4 No Encounter.**

**5 Envoy.** A representative of the Irrationalists emerges, to parley and determine if the PCs would make suitable allies, or simply fodder for experimentation. Total the levels of the PCs in the party – that is the percentage chance that they will be invited in and asked to join in the destruction of the Space Aliens. Those that do not make the cut – or refuse the alliance – will be captured, likely to suffer a fate worse than death. **Tough Irrationalist**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 2+1, ATT hand weapon [1 dice] or net [entangle], SV MU2, ML 10, AL C. Also implanted with an *Insanity Crystal* (50% chance) or a *Command Crystal* (50%).

**6-8 Dart Patrol.** Several Irrationalists attack from cover. **1d4+1 Irrationalists**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT hand weapon [1 dice] or dart [1 dice], SV MU1, ML 10, AL C.

**9-0 Savage Guardian.** A product of the Irrationalists' monster factory has caught scent of the PCs and moves in to attack. Generate a **Spawn of Shub-Niggurath** randomly (per *Carcosa* or your own tables).

**Sanctum Random Encounters:** Roll 1d100 once every six turns, or if the PCs engage in behavior that is likely to draw attention (fighting, arguing, reckless movement, etc.) and consult the following table:

**1-80 No Encounter.**

**81-90 Busy Bodies.** Several Irrationalists on a mundane errand. They are not expecting trouble, and are likely to flee any threat to gather reinforcements. **2d4 Irrationalists**: DC 8, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT hand weapon [1 dice], SV MU1, ML 5, AL C.

**91-92 Prisoner Transfer.** A group of prisoners is being escorted to the pens in the lower level. If their captors are slain, roll 1d100 for each surviving prisoner: **1-50** terror-stricken, flee in random direction, **51-00** maniacally vengeful, will fight with reckless abandon against Irrationalists and Space Aliens alike. **4 Irrationalists**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT spear [1 dice], SV MU1, ML 9, AL C. There is a 75% chance that one is implanted with an *Insanity Crystal*. **3d6 Human Prisoners**: DC 9, SPD 120' (40'), HD 0 [1d4hp], ATT fists [1d3], SV 0 level Human, ML 6, AL N. Generate race/color randomly.

**93-96 Outgoing Patrol.** Several Irrationalists, headed out into the City and looking for trouble. **Tough Irrationalist**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 2+1, ATT hand weapon [1 dice] or net [entangle], SV MU2, ML 10, AL C. Also implanted with an *Insanity Crystal* (50% chance) or a *Command Crystal* (50%). **3d4 Irrationalists**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT hand weapon [1 dice] or dart [1 dice], SV MU1, ML 10, AL C.

**97-98 Routine Inspection.** The second in command and several guards make the rounds. If attacked, one will gather reinforcements and the rest will fight. **Call of the Void** – see Excretory Room (**32**) for stats. **4 Irrationalists**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT spear [1 dice], SV MU1, ML 9, AL C. There is a 75% chance that one is implanted with an *Insanity Crystal.*

**99-00 Special Inspection.** The guy in charge is checking things out. If attacked, one will gather reinforcements and the rest will fight. **Incommensurable Appeal** – see Boss Room (**36**) for stats. **8 Irrationalists**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT spear [1 dice], SV MU1, ML 9, AL C. One is implanted with an *Insanity Crystal* and two others have *Command Crystals.*

**Sanctum Lower Level Keyed Descriptions.** The lower level is generally well-lit by torches, and the Irrationalists are attentive: missing personnel, signs of battle, and disrupted operations will be noticed, and the Sanctum will be alert to the presence of intruders.

**21. Hall of Blasphemers.** Crude statues of lacquered offal leer at visitors, who may recognize depictions of the Great Old Ones, various uncouth entities, Astarot, Geryon, and others less notable, if equally repellent. The Irrationalists here are on guard for any trouble. Assorted decorative items (jugs, platters, and the like) are scattered about this hall, worth 100gp total. **1d4+1 Tough Irrationalists**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 2+1, ATT hand weapon [1 dice], SV MU2, ML 10, AL C. Also implanted with an *Insanity Crystal* (50% chance) or a *Command Crystal* (50%). **3d6 Irrationalists**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT hand weapon [1 dice] or dart [1 dice], SV MU1, ML 10, AL C.

**22. Humming Room.** A deep bass hum that can be felt from up to 100' away emanates from this room. The source of the hum is a jagged block of obsidian in the center of the floor. The block is circumscribed by a thick ring of coarse salt. Breaking the ring of salt, or removing the block, will cause the hum to cease; if the ring is restored or the block returned, the hum will resume. The block, salt, and room are magical, though no other effects are noteworthy. The obsidian block weighs 700 lbs., and is worth 6000gp. The salt is tasty on prepared meats and vegetables.

**23. Prisoner Pens.** There are thirteen pens here, with humans of a different race in each – the Irrationalists are diligent in separating one race from the next. If attacked, one of the guards will always try to flee to gather reinforcements. (You may substitute your own campaign races for those of Carcosa if you wish, or use these as special peoples from distant lands.)

**a. Black Pen**. 1 Black Man occupies this pen, "The Capacity of Precision," a lawful 4th level Mage. He knows two rituals: *Measureless Chimes of the Uttermost Rim* and *Impediment of the Iridescent Fume*. He is reckless, and will plumb the depths of the Sanctum for hidden knowledge if freed.

**b. Blue Pen**. 4 Blue Men and 9 Blue Women huddle here. They are terrified and superstitious, and cannot be convinced to leave their pen – only some powerful magic could compel them to emerge.

**c. Bone Pen**. 1 Bone Man cowers in the corner. If the guards are killed, he can be goaded from the pen, as an animal might, and will follow very simple orders. At the most inopportune time, the fog of dementia will lift and be replaced with murderous rage – he will attack the nearest PC savagely, rolling to hit as a 10 HD monster, and fight to the death.

**d. Brown Pen**. Empty.

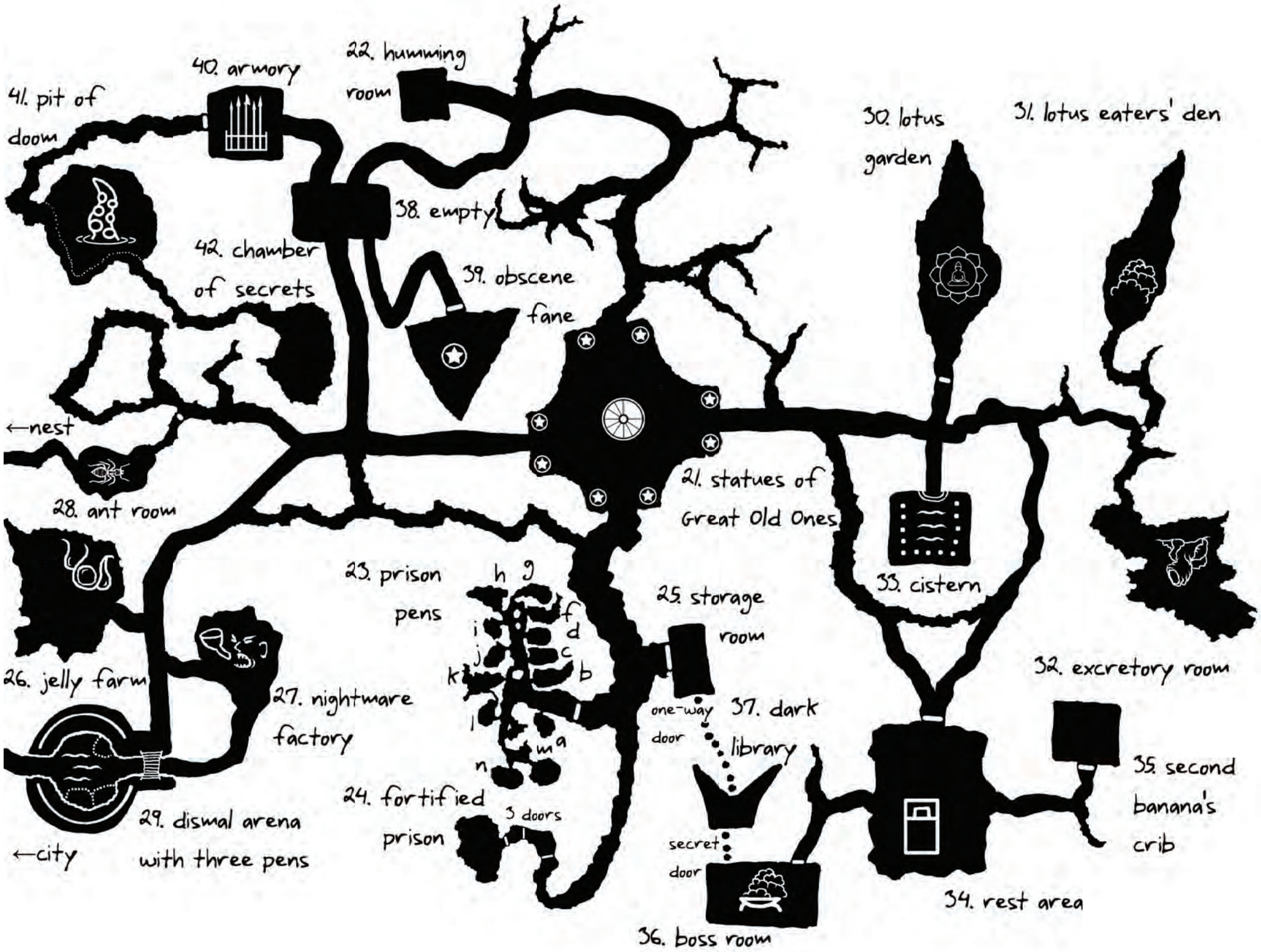
**f. Dolm Pen**. 14 Dolm Men of martial bent, led by "The Private Desire," a neutral 5th level Warrior, are confined here. They bear a grudge against the occupants of the Red Pen, who are notorious slavers. If freed, these men will immediately attempt to slay the Red Men – if allowed, they will remain to fight the Irrationalists, otherwise they will turn on any who attempt to restrain them.

**g. Green Pen**. 6 Green Men pace this pen. If freed, these men will flee immediately, causing a great ruckus in the process.

**h. Jale Pen**. A single Jale Woman slumps in this pen. She has been experimented upon cruelly, and bears four hideous mutations: her legs have fused into a worm-like lower body, her eyes are bulging and unblinking, her tongue is a tentacle, and she has long, venomous talons. If freed, she will remain to fight the Irrationalists, but kill herself after 2d6 days.

**i. Orange Pen**. There a single Orange Girl here. She is catatonic, and powerful magics are required to restore her.

**j. Purple Pen**. Empty.


40. armory
22. humming room
41. pit of doom
30. lotus garden
31. lotus eaters' den
38. empty
42. chamber of secrets
39. obscene fane
←nest
28. ant room
21. statues of Great Old Ones
33. cistern
23. prison pens
h
g
f
i
d
j
c
k
b
l
m
a
n
25. storage room
32. excretory room
26. jelly farm
27. nightmare factory
one-way door
37. dark library
35. second banana's crib
24. fortified prison
3 doors
secret door
34. rest area
29. dismal arena with three pens
←city
36. boss room

**k. Red Pen**. 11 Red Men, led by "Dawn's Darkest Dream," a chaotic 3rd level Fighter, plot within this pen. They have burrowed a narrow, concealed tunnel that links with the Ulfire Pen, and together they await an opportunity to strike at their captors. They know the danger posed by the Dolm Men, and will not hesitate to slay them if given the opportunity. Beyond that, they are only interested in escape.

**l. Ulfire Pen**. The 4 Ulfire Men await word from the Red Men to attempt an escape. If freed, they will flee immediately.

**m. White Pen**. Empty.

**n. Yellow Pen.** An aged Yellow Woman squats here, cackling to herself enthusiastically. She will accompany those who free her, and help with non-combat tasks as she can. Although now feeble and insane, she retains some of the powers of the witch she once was – with one hour of uninterrupted ministering to a wounded person, she can heal them for an extra 1d6hp per day. If she is ever led at night into a bog or a swamp, 10d10 Amphibious Ones will erupt from the stagnant water and attempt to drag her back to their watery realm.

**2d6 Irrationalists**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT spear [1 dice], SV MU1, ML 9, AL C. One is implanted with an *Insanity Crystal*, and another wields a *Mutation Inducer*. **Prisoners**: Generate stats as normal for type, but reduce hp by 50% owing to torture and deprivation.

**24. Fortified Prison.** Each of the three doors to this room are particularly stout, double-locked and barred. Within is a captive Ettin – the Irrationalists have been trying to convince it to join with them, but have met with little success. It is covered with numerous heavy manacles, chains, and bindings – while restrained in this fashion, the Ettin cannot attack, can be hit freely, and can only move at SPD 10' (3'). If freed, it will fight enthusiastically against its captors. The Ettin wears silver bracers with elaborate antique scrollwork, worth 300gp each. **Ettin**: DC 3, SPD 120' (40'), HD 10 [currently at ½hp], ATT 2 pummeling fists [1 dice+2 & 2 dice+2], SD surprised on 1, SV F10, ML 9, AL C.

**25. Storage Room.** Some of the lesser possessions of captives and the conquered are stored here: 2 very large clubs, a set of horse barding, 3 backpacks (one contains 3 bricks of *Incense of Meditation)*, a 10' pole, a lightly-damaged canoe, a large rock bearing a crude pictograph of a Troll (worth 500gp to a Troll), a set of cooking pans and utensils, a tattered cloth standard (actually a *Flying Carpet*, command word: "Make it so!"), and a shovel.

**26. Jelly Farm.** The floor here is spongy, moist, and rank. A dozen or more gently palpitating tumor-like growths hang from the ceiling via slender, hairy vines, and a yellow translucent jelly bubbles obscenely from the bottom of each into a metal container. A mutated Irrationalist of abnormal strength tends these disgusting blossoms, with the help of a curdled Spawn that typically clings to the ceiling – they will both fight to the death. There are 3 containers filled with *Primal Yellow Jelly* on a low bench. Treasure is secreted in dirty rags, beneath some soil in a corner: a gold medallion with sunburst motif (600gp), a Leprechaun-sized *Shield +1*, and an uncut emerald (350gp). **Mutant Irrationalist**: DC 8, SPD 120' (40'), HD 3+1, ATT pickax [1 dice+2], SV MU3, ML 12, AL C. **Spawn of Shub-Niggurath**: DC 9, SPD 60' (20'), HD 4, ATT acidic excretion [1 die], SD harmed only by fire, SV F4, ML 12, AL C: purple ooze with thousands of eyes on tiny stalks and no mouth.

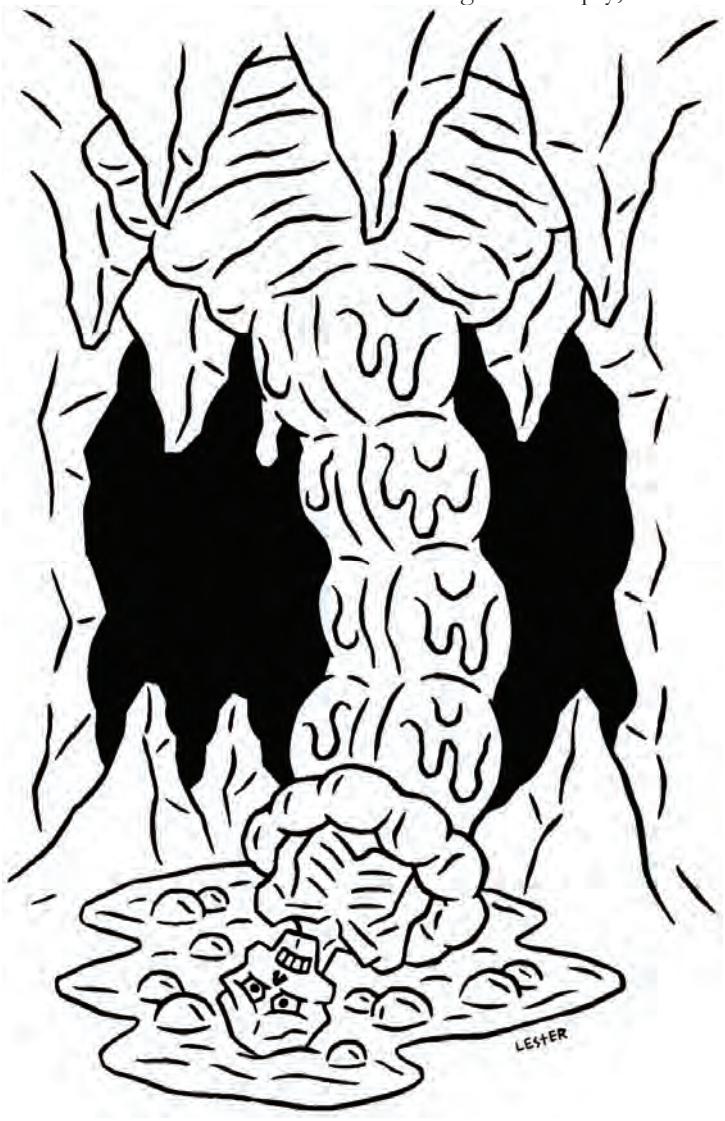
**27. Nightmare Factory.** Captives are brought to the three restraint-studded tables here and force-fed *Primal Yellow Jelly* in order to create new monsters. 30% chance that 1d3 prisoners and an equal number of attendants are here in the midst of transformative ceremonies – Irrationalists will flee intruders to gather reinforcements. **1d3 Irrationalists**: DC 9, SPD 120' (40'), HD 1+1, ATT fists [1d2], SV MU1, ML 2, AL C. **Prisoners** – Generate stats as normal for type, but reduce to 1 hp owing to torture and deprivation.

**28. Ant Room.** This portion of the complex has been long abandoned, so the recent incursion of Giant Jungle Ants here has not yet been noticed. The ants are currently working to expand the tunnels, and they will aggressively attack any intruders. Canny PCs will be able to lure the ants into conflict with the Irrationalists. **1d4x 10 Giant Jungle Ants**: DC 6, SPD 150' (50'), HD 1, ATT bite [2 dice, save vs. poison ½ damage], SV F1, ML 12, AL N [unintelligent].

**29. Dismal Arena.** The sunken portion of the floor is filled with 1' of stinking, slimy water (if you use disease/ infection rules, anyone that goes down there is gonna get sick). A wooden ramp to access the pit is propped against the east wall. Newly-created Spawn are brought here to fight one another, with the victors kept and groomed for service. Three untrained Spawn currently occupy the pens – the attendants will unleash them upon intruders and then join the attack. If wounded, the Spawn will frenzy and attack a random opponent each round (including other Spawn and Irrationalists). **1d4+2 Irrationalists**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT spear [1 die] or net [entangle], SV MU1, ML 9, AL C. **Spawn of Shub-Niggurath #1:** DC 5, SPD 90' (30'), HD 7, ATT 2 claws [1 dice each], SV F7, ML 10, AL C: yellow-feathered insectoid with one eye and a tiny suckered mouth. **Spawn of Shub-Niggurath #2:** DC 6, SPD 180' (60') [fly], HD 4, ATT savage bite [2 dice], SA touch causes paralysis, SV F4, ML 7, AL C: ulfire-

suckered octopoid with four eyes and a beaked feeding appendage. **Spawn of Shub-Niggurath #3:** DC 2, SPD 60' (20'), HD 7, ATT crushing pincer [3 dice], SD regenerate 1HD every 1d3 rounds, SV F7, ML 8, AL C: black-scaled crustacean with no eyes or mouth.

**30. Lotus Garden.** A low-ceilinged grow operation, delicate green and blue lotus plants stretch as far as the eye can see. Ornate braziers along the walls burn weird coals that emit an ultraviolet glow for illumination, as well as a dense, smoky fume that nurses the plants. The Irrationalists have bred a minor species of Spawn of Shub-Niggurath to tend and harvest the crop. These monsters are built low to the ground, and have an increased chance at surprise due to the obscuring smoke – they will attack anyone that is not escorted by an Irrationalist. The weird light is not meant for human eyes and may complicate harvesting. Anyone without ultravision (or UV technology) that harvests this lotus has a 10% chance of contaminating the batch with deadly black lotus fragments. The braziers are made of bronze (100 lbs. each) and are worth 250gp apiece. Near the door are several aluminum urns: eight are empty, nine are filled with raw blue lotus flowers, and three are filled with raw green lotus flowers. Raw lotus flowers are worth quite a bit, exact value depending upon prevailing market prices. **11 Spawn of Shub-Niggurath:** DC 5, SPD 210' (70'), HD 3, ATT 2 scything appendages [1 dice each], SA surprise on 1-4; spew green lotus 3x day [save vs. breath attacks or unconscious 1d4+8 hours, feeble additional 1d4 days], SD immune to poison, SV F4, ML 8, AL N [unintelligent]: jale-furred myriapods with three eyes and a circular gaping maw.




**31. Lotus Eaters' Den.** A whorl of pungent fumes clouds this chamber, some acrid and bitter, others fragrant and voluptuous. A dozen or more Irrationalists recline here on heaped, ratty cushions, in various states of lotus intoxication – most are deeply unconscious, while a handful are awake but incapacitated. The smoke here is thick and heady, and anyone who remains more than one round will automatically suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls due to a contact high – the effects wear off one turn after leaving. The attendants wear filtering mouth-pieces that protect them as they care for the lotus eaters. They will flee intruders to gather reinforcements. 4 doses of *Blue Lotus Powder* and 26 doses of *Green Lotus Powder* can be found in this room, along with 2d4 precious snuff boxes worth 2d10gp each. **3 Irrationalists**: DC 9, SPD 120' (40'), HD 1+1, ATT fists [1d2], SD filter, SV MU1, ML 2, AL C. Mouthpiece filters may be used by any race and offer outstanding protection against inhalants.

**32. Excretory Room.** The acute stench of death in this room is insufferable, and a stack of partially-masticated corpses is heaped near the entrance. The only other notable feature is a bloated, sticky, membranous entrail that quivers nauseatingly from the ceiling – blood and digestive fluids pool sickeningly beneath it. All of the Irrationalists' prisoners from Carcosa originate from this room. On that doomed planet, a beast known as the *Flapping Maw* preys upon villages near the Bottomless Lochs, devouring men insatiably. Through some bizarre sorcery its digestive tract spans time & space, and the unfortunates it swallows emerge here. Most are dead on arrival, but those unlucky few that were swallowed whole are seized by the Irrationalists, and quickly learn that there are fates worse than death. If the entrail is destroyed, it will grow back in 4d4 days. Guards are on duty here at all times, and the Call of the Void, second in command, supervises their activities. To determine what emerges, roll 1d6 for each six hours spent in this room: **1-3)** nothing, **4-5)** dead victim, **6)** living victim (generate race randomly from list of Carcosan types). **Call of the Void**: DC 4, SPD 90' (30'), HD 4+4, ATT bastard sword [1 dice+2], SV MU4, ML 12, AL C. It has a *Command Crystal*, a single *Javelin of Lightning*, and a *Potion of Invisibility*. It wears ornate bronze bracers (125gp) and a necklace of gold and obsidian (450gp). **1d4+1 Irrationalists**: DC 6, SPD 90' (30'), HD 1+1, ATT

spear [1 dice], SV MU1, ML 9, AL C. There is a 75% chance that one is implanted with an *Insanity Crystal*.

**33. Cistern Room.** Fresh water is gathered and stored here. If a random encounter is rolled in or near this room, there is a 50% chance that it is 1d3 Spawn from **30**, arriving to siphon water for the plants.

**34. Rest Area.** Each cubby contains 1d3 Irrationalists as well as their personal effects. Occupants are meditating, conversing quietly, etc.; loud noise in one cubby will attract the attention of the occupants of nearby cubbies. A handful of new Irrationalists arrive periodically, and rested ones depart. **??? Irrationalists**: DC 9, SPD 120' (40'), HD 1+1, ATT fists [1d2], SV MU1, ML 6, AL C.

**35. Second Banana's Crib.** These are the private chambers of the Call of the Void, second in command of the Irrationalists. There is a 25% chance it will be found in here alone; if PCs camp, roll each hour to check if it arrives, accompanied by 1d4 spear-wielding Irrationalists. The furniture is sparse: a plain cot, a chest containing the loose clothing favored by this race, and a rack containing several ornate examples of common hand weapons (each worth 10x normal value). The chest has a false bottom that is trapped with a small explosive charge (-50% to disarm chance unless from a tech-savvy background, 2 dice damage): within are 35 thin platinum sheets worth 100gp each.

**36. Boss Room.** This door is strong, and double-locked. These are the private chambers of the Incommensurable Appeal, leader of this coven of Irrationalists. There is a 50% chance it will be found in here alone; if PCs camp, roll each hour to check if it arrives, accompanied by 1d4 spear-wielding Irrationalists. Within is a meditation couch, a brazier filled with the same coals as in the Lotus Garden, a wardrobe filled with simple robes and loose garments, and a hidden chest (under a loose flagstone beneath the heavy couch) that contains 500pp, a *Potion of Gaseous Form*, 6 doses of *Green Lotus Powder*, and 3x *Potion of Healing*. **The Incommensurable Appeal**: DC 8, SPD 120' (40'), HD 5+5, ATT scimitar +2 [1 dice+2] or *Insanity Crystal*, SV MU5, ML 12, AL C. This villain is an Irrationalist sorcerer of sublime talents. In addition to possessing psionic abilities (1d6 powers, 1d6 times per day), it knows all of the rituals associated with the Lurker Amidst the Obsidian Ruins, the Manifestation of the Putrescent Stench, the Lurker of the Putrescent Pits, the God of the Primal Void, the Suckered Abomination, and the Amphibious Ones, and ceaselessly directs its minions to seize the components to enact those foul sorceries. It always carries on its person an *Elder Sign*, a *Necklace of Strangulation* (used for executions), 3 large rubies of uncommon beauty (1600gp, 1950gp, and 2800gp), and a technology-derived *Cube of Force* (which is not magical but functions in the same way).

**37. Dark Library.** The Incommensurable Appeal has penned many volumes of sorcerous knowledge and gathered many more from lands known and unknown. His own works comprise seven volumes, front and center on an elaborate wooden desk – they are written in the incomprehensible notation of the Space Aliens (GM discretion whether they can be deciphered, but it should take something more profound than *Read Languages*), and contain a full description of each ritual the Incommensurable Appeal knows. Atop one volume is a *Deck of Many Things* in a velveteen bag (the current focus of much study). Other volumes (over 100 in all) are in shelves carved from the rock walls, and include a *Manual of Quickness of Action*, a book of 9 first level and 4 second level Mage spells (determine randomly, written in Gnollish), a tome that describes how to create a Stone Golem, a scroll that includes three different recipes to create a *Potion of Healing*, a chart that details the star system containing the planet Yuggoth, 5 scrolls of Priest spells (determine randomly), and a primer describing the innate vulnerabilities of avioid-type Spawn of Shub-Niggurath.

**38. Empty Room.** Seriously... there's nothing in here.

**39. Obscene Fane.** This temple is dedicated to the Suckered Abomination, and a loathsome idol to this demon, life-size and composed of lacquered offal, dominates the room. A pile of manacles is in one corner, and the floor is caked in dried grime, blood, and waste. This room is very disquieting, and those who do not worship the Suckered Abomination suffer a minor curse for trampling its domain: -1 to all rolls until a bath is taken in fresh, fragrant water along with application of *Remove Curse* magic. The Ytterbium Coil of the Space Aliens is hidden in the base of the idol – the idol must be destroyed to recover it. The Incommensurable Appeal will be instantly psychically aware of anyone who touches the idol, or if the idol is tampered with, and will direct his forces to plan an ambush of intruders.

**40. Armory.** Several dozen suits of the bizarre bone & carapace armor the Irrationalists wear are stored here. Also here are a number of spare weapons: 92 darts, 14 nets, 12 short swords, 1 battle axe, 6 scimitars, 21 spears, 3 daggers, and 8 clubs. Guards arrive fairly regularly to don or remove armor and exchange weapons.

**41. Pit of Doom.** A magical gloom that cannot be dispelled pervades this room – all light sources (even magic ones) emit only 1/10th their normal light. A 2' wide pathway of crushed coal (easy to miss against the dark floor) leads around the western perimeter of the room, linking each doorway. Anyone in this room who strays from the coal pathway will be immediately attacked by a swarm of grasping, rending, bashing tentacles that erupt from the depths of the pit. Tentacles attack each target each round in one of three ways:

**Grab** – No damage on a successful hit, but victim is lifted up and toward the pit. Victim must roll under STR each round to attack or use an item. 20hp of accrued damage are required to free the victim (attackers must state they are targeting the tentacles holding the victim). Any victim held for three consecutive rounds is dragged into the pit, never to be seen again.

**Slice** – Razor-sharp talons cause extra bleeding. On a successful hit, victim takes 2 dice damage and then loses 2hp/round until receiving some form of healing. Bleeding damage stacks, i.e. on a second slicing hit 4hp/round are lost, third hit 6hp/round lost, etc.

**Throw** – On a successful hit, the victim is picked up and tossed against the wall (roll 1d12 to determine direction); 2 dice damage, plus save vs. petrify or knocked unconscious for 1d4 rounds (helmet grants a +4 bonus to save).

Once the tentacles sustain 80hp of damage, they will retreat back into the pit and not emerge again for 4d4 days. **Deadly Tentacles**: DC 7, SPD 0, HD 12 [80hp], ATT grab or slice or throw [special], SD charm/sleep/hold/poison immunity, SV F12, ML 12, AL N [unint.].

**42. Chamber of Secrets.** This room radiates palpable evil, and non-Irrationalists who enter must save vs. spells: success means an effect identical to a Priestly *Curse* takes hold, failure means the subject is affected as by *Cause Fear*. This is the scene of many of Incommensurable Appeals' sorcerous rituals, and obscenely powerful and hateful entities have emerged into existence with the sacrifice of countless lives in this room. The ceiling is over 40' high, and a raised altar sits against the western wall. Manacles and restraints are piled about the floor, which is caked with blood and viscera, and empty braziers line the walls. Rituals occur irregularly, as the Irrationalists only have such sacrifices as are provided by the Excretory Room. Additionally, certain entities have become unruly, having been summoned and then felt the wrath of the Space Aliens technology – they are often more trouble than they are worth. More often, Incommensurable Appeal comes here with several attendants and a like number of prisoners to conduct sorcerous experiments. The GM may wish to schedule rituals or experiments that coincide with a visit by the PCs, either as participants or of a mind to thwart such disturbing proceedings.

**Citadel of the Space Aliens:** The rubble in this quarter of the city is partially cleared, and the area surrounding the three intact towers here is relatively tidy. Entering the perimeter of the Citadel can be quite deadly – the area is festooned with surveillance devices and automated defenses. The Space Aliens know the difference between Irrationalists and visitors from the upper levels, but they usually follow a 'shoot first, ask questions later' philosophy. Only five true Space Aliens remain: all of the other Space Aliens here are clones of these five. These Space Aliens know that they face a clock that ticks toward extinction. Their lives have been extended far beyond the usual for their species via the advanced medical technology at their disposal. But even their technology has limits, and decrepitude is setting in. Additionally, the viability of their clones is rapidly declining, as the quality of their own genetic material is diminished by age. PCs may make a concerted effort to contact the Space Aliens. Expressions of non-hostility include not destroying automated defenses and surveillance equipment, repeatedly signaling the desire to communicate, and walking in the open in a non-threatening manner. Attempting to return Space Aliens or Space Alien equipment is guaranteed to create a favorable impression. Non-threatening PCs will not have to roll on the Citadel Perimeter Random Encounters table, and will be invited into Spire Exponential for parley.

**Citadel Perimeter Random Encounters:** Until the PCs are deemed non-threatening, roll 1d10 once every turn. Results may overlap, i.e. combat versus defense droids may last for a turn, at which point the PCs may also begin to receive automated sniper fire:

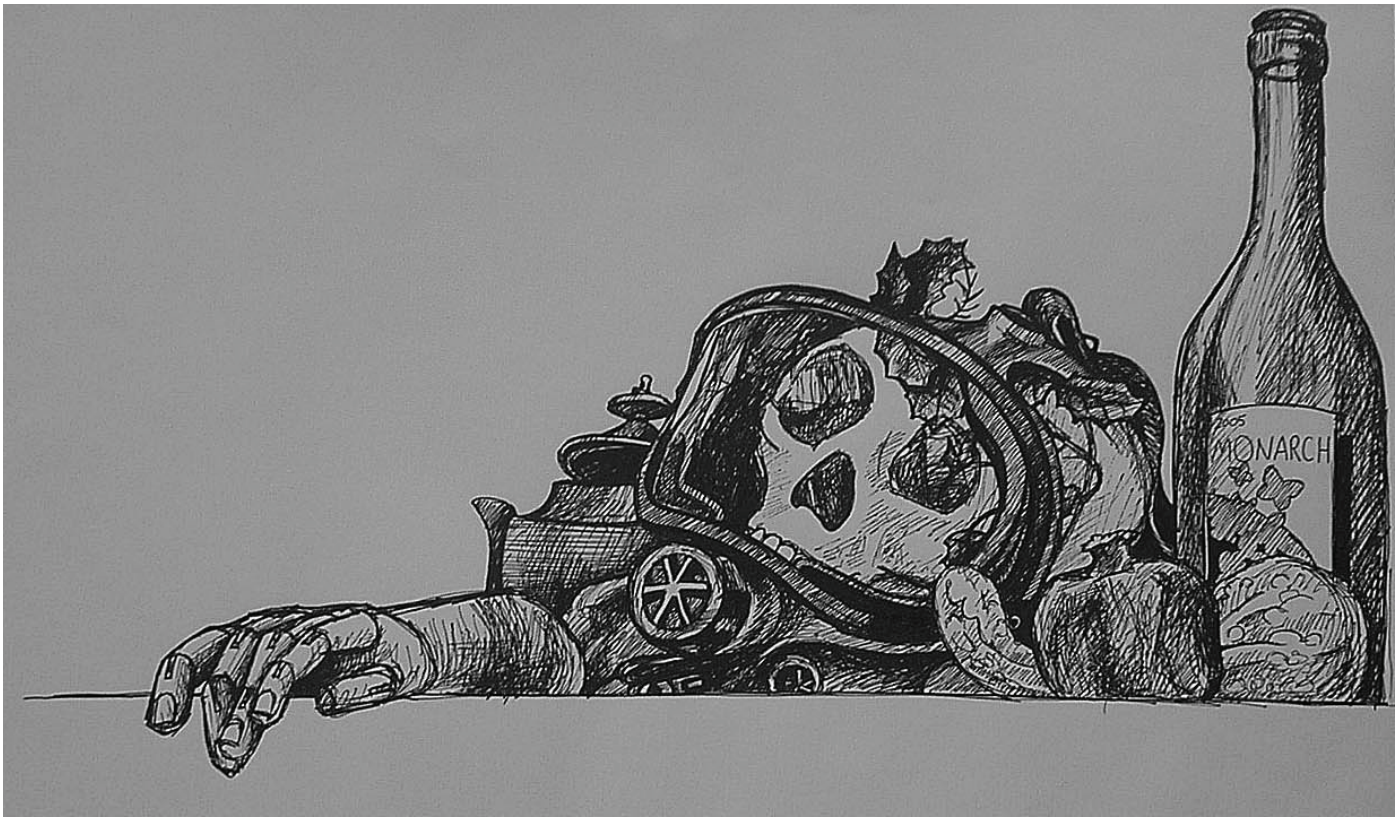
**1 No Encounter.**

**2-3 Nerve Gas.** A mortar shell detonates 1d100 feet from the PCs, ejecting a cloud of dense, toxic gas. The initial burst creates a cloud 20' in diameter – this cloud expands by 20' each round, to a maximum size of 500' in diameter. The gas is otherwise identical in all respects to a *Cloudkill* spell.

**4-7 Mechassassins.** Several insectile attack droids deploy from the roof of one of the towers. They will attack and pursue fleeing enemies until one or the other is dead. **1d4+1 Droid LTC093Φ/V.8**: DC 3, SPD 240' (80') [fly], HD 5 [23hp], ATT microwave beam pistol [1 dice], SD telescopic+nightvision sights, SV D10, ML 12, AL L.

**8-9 Sniper.** An automated sentry system opens fire on the PCs. It is located 1d10x100 yards away (determine direction randomly). **Autogun Sentry:** DC 4, SPD 0, HD 4 [18hp], ATT x-ray pulse bazooka [3 dice], SV D10, ML 12, AL N [unintelligent].

**0 Recon Patrol.** A Space Alien patrol, ready for trouble. If they meet with a serious threat, they will signal the Citadel for reinforcements. **Space Alien on Anti-Grav Sled**: DC 0, SPD 600' (200'), HD 8 [36hp], ATT cosmic radiation pulse rifle [4 dice], SV D10, ML 7, AL L. This Space Alien wears a titanium torc worth




1300gp. **1d4+2 Space Aliens in Battle Armor**: DC 2, SPD 180' (60'), HD 1-1, ATT microwave pulse pistol [1 die] or stun baton [1 die + save vs. wands or stunned 1d6 rounds], SD 20hp force field; communicator; telescopic+nightvision sights, SV D10, ML 7, AL L.

**Citadel Layout & Adventure Seeds:** Entry into the three towers that comprise the Citadel of the Space Aliens is either by invitation or conquest – the monitoring devices of the Space Aliens are omnipresent and nigh-infallible, and the Order Generator prevents the use of magic that might otherwise allow a stealthy incursion. Accordingly, encounters within the Citadel are abstracted. If the PCs make a good impression and are invited to assist the Space Aliens, use the adventure seeds to generate scenarios. If the PCs attack the Citadel, use the layout information to construct the battle.

**Spire Exponential**

Levels: 75 (40 active)

Space Aliens: Essential Singularity + 89 clones, Irrotational Plane + 71 clones, Holonom Gamma + 73 clones.

Portfolio: Command

Description: This soaring titanium tower is the command center for the Space Aliens, housing critical facilities including the Order Generator, the clone banks, and the Space Alien surveillance hub. Outsiders who demonstrate a capacity to assist the Space Aliens in eradicating the Irrationalists will be invited into the lower levels of Spire Exponential to parley. Should an alliance be forged, the newcomers will be invited to stay in the tower, and will be provided with food, water, and a limited amount of hi-tech weaponry & equipment to help in the fight. Essential Singularity runs a tight ship, enforcing a rigorous protocol that ensures emotion and illogical thought have no place among the Space Aliens. There is tension within the group, and Elliptic Perspective was recently banished to another tower as punishment for entertaining disordered thoughts.

**Order Generator (Sub-Level 3):** The Order Generator is housed deep beneath Spire Exponential, and is only accessible via a teleporter located in the surveillance hub.

**Robot Factory (Levels 3-9):** As scavenged materials and scarce elements become available, new droids are cranked out to serve in a variety of roles, including security and research. Essential Singularity favors the use of droids over the fanciful creations of Elliptic Perspective, while Terminal Metric resents the intrusion of either into matters of defense.

**Surveillance Hub (Levels 10-11 & 15):** The entirety of the City is monitored from these floors, on banks of videoscreens, holo-displays, and analytic devices. The personal quarters of Essential Singularity, Irrotational Plane, and Holonom Gamma are also located here, as well as large supply rooms that hold items and treasures accumulated from vanquished foes.

**Clone Banks (Levels 27-39, 42-44 & 48-58):** Essential Singularity enforces command over the other Space Aliens by controlling the clone banks. Hundreds of clones of all five original Space Aliens are housed here, in various states of development. These areas are more securely monitored and guarded than any other.

**Medical Center (Levels 59 & 60):** The life-extension technology developed by the Space Aliens is housed here. Clones are rarely treated, as it is more resource-effective to simply activate a new clone than heal a damaged one. In extraordinary circumstances, allies of the Space Aliens may be offered healing here.

**Beta Retreat**
Levels: 65 (17 active)
Space Aliens: Terminal Metric + 97 clones
Portfolio: Defense
Description: This sullen tower is composed of a dull, unreflective dolm metal that is impervious to damage. Beta Retreat is the headquarters of the defense infrastructure of the Space Aliens, and is overseen by Terminal Metric, who dwells in seclusion, attended only by a select few of its clones. Terminal Metric is extremely cautious and distrustful of outsiders, and entry to the tower is forbidden under all circumstances.

**Space Alien Hover Tank (Sub-Level 1):** The Space Aliens' most feared weapon platform is housed in a vault beneath Beta Retreat. The Hover Tank will only be deployed under extreme conditions: imminent or ongoing catastrophic attack, in response to an active god/entity of surpassing power, or to destroy other outsiders who demonstrate surpassing magical power.

**Armory (Levels 1-7, 9-11 & 16):** Most of the Space Aliens' weaponry and battle armor is stored here. Here also is the machinery used to create new weapons – only shortages of specific elements prevent the Space Aliens from cranking out an endless profusion of hi-tech weaponry. A number of potent magical weapons, claimed from vanquished foes, are held here for examination. A tactical nuclear device is also secreted here, a weapon of last resort.

**Surveillance Sub-Command (Levels 41 & 42):** Unknown to the other Space Aliens, Terminal Metric has access to all cameras, detectors, and sensor feeds throughout the City.

**Aerie (Levels 63-65):** Terminal Metric's personal chambers – these levels have been seen by his eyes alone, and it is rumored it has accumulated substantial treasures to indulge an obscure fancy.

**The Lodge of Fractal Persistence**
Levels: 42 (9 active)
Space Aliens: Elliptic Perspective + 43 clones
Portfolio: Research/Experimentation
Description: This plain, hardened-concrete tower was only recently re-occupied, and is now the residence of Elliptic Perspective and its clones – Elliptic Perspective was invited to leave Spire Exponential when the other Space Aliens decided that his cyborg experiments were growing increasingly dangerous, if not borderline unsound. Elliptic Perspective is under increased scrutiny from his associates: his thought patterns are straying into Irrationalist territory, and his clones have demonstrated a marked propensity for defecting to the enemy.

**Changing Rooms (Levels 33-39):** Elliptic Perspective is obsessed with creating cyborg defense systems from available resources, and several specimens are imprisoned here in various states of completion. Soon they will be ready to unleash upon the Irrationalists:

**Kobolds** – Over a dozen of these little savages have had their craniums hollowed out and their brains replaced with rudimentary guidance electronics and 5lbs. of high explosives. Once the kinks are worked out, these will be used as walking bombs.

**Marilith –** This captured demoness' six arms have been amputated, and the snake-like lower body has been replaced with a single, wide tank tread. Deployment will proceed once new arms have been fashioned and attached; Elliptic Perspective has several interesting concepts, including two chainsaw arms, a laser Gatling cannon, and a plasma lance. Most of its brain has been lobotomized, but the Marilith is feigning docility – if freed, it will lash out animalistically at the Space Aliens.

**Purple Worm** – The rear half of this beast remains intact, while the fore portion has been completely replaced with an articulated titanium carapace and whirring diamond-coated oral shears for optimized burrowing. In the head is a cramped cockpit, from which this monstrosity is piloted. Elliptic Perspective's clones are in the final stages of fitting the cybernetic relays that will bond pilot to warmachine.

**Personal Quarters (Levels 41 & 42):** Elliptic Perspective keeps these two floors for itself, and with good reason – if the other Space Aliens could see the bizarre, engineered creatures it dotes on as pets, they would realize that a descent into irrationality is well underway.

**Citadel Adventure Seeds:** Pick adventures as needed, create new ones, or roll 1d6 to generate randomly:

**1 Hunting Party.** Ten of Elliptic Perspective's clones have fled the Citadel, intending to defect to the Irrationalists – this is an increasingly frequent problem, and the Space Aliens are spread thin. Essential Singularity asks the PCs to find and eliminate the clones before they can reach their goal. They are likely accompanied by several outré biomechanical creations.

**2 Scavengers.** Holonom Gamma is in charge of securing resources to operate the robot factory, and the PCs are offered the chance to help out. The wreck of an ancient warmachine has been located – the PCs will be given directions where to excavate, and porter droids to haul what can be recovered.

**3 Guinea Pigs.** The Order Generator requires periodic calibration, and Essential Singularity requests that the PCs help with the testing. They are escorted into the Dead City by a team of a dozen Irrotational Plane-clones (monitors) and a handful of Terminal Metric-clones (guards) and asked to cast several spells, activate magic items, etc. They confiscate any items that are rendered inert. This commotion is certain to attract attention, and the Space Aliens are likely to leave their allies behind if the going gets tough.

**4 Bug Hunt.** Essential Singularity has taken offense at one of Elliptic Perspective's weirder creations, and demands it be exterminated. It is currently loose in the Dead City. Elliptic Perspective's clones will not be cooperative.

**5 Intruder Alert.** A mob of humanoids has entered the City from the levels above, and the Space Aliens are concerned that they will become allies of the Irrationalists. The PCs are ordered to exterminate them or drive them away.

**6. Bug Hunt II.** The PCs are dispatched to the UnderJungle, with instructions to capture three specimens of Spawn alive. They will be given appropriate hi-tech weaponry, and surveillance clones will guide the party to their quarry.

## Notes on Selected Monsters

**B'yakhee** (cf. *Carcosa*, p.43): One of the stable species spawned by Shub-Niggurath, these massive bat-like creatures are over 18' tall and can teleport anywhere in the universe. They are dedicated servants of Hastur.

**Irrationalists** (cf. *Carcosa*, p.84): Space Aliens who reject logic and technology and embrace disorder and sorcery. They wear bone/hide armor cobbled from Spawn parts, and favor primitive weaponry and bizarre, sorcelogical devices.

**Mynocts:** These loathsome scavengers are a rare nuisance in large subterranean areas. The basic physique is that of an octopus, though the eight tentacles are notably stubby and thick. Broad, leathery wings spanning 4-6' allow for short bursts of flight and long glides. They typically feed on carrion with their short, suckered feeding tubes, but will attack anything that looks meal-worthy. Curiously, they also feed on electricity, which they are able to store within their bodies. If wounded, a Mynoct will respond with an electrical discharge: its next hit will deal 2 dice damage to the victim, who must also save vs. petrify or be dazed for 1d4 rounds. A Mynoct can only generate one such shock attack per day. Mynocts can often be found attached to power conduits and electrical cables in underground hi-tech cities.

**Space Aliens** (cf. *Carcosa*, p.54): Visitors from other worlds, these fragile, grey humanoids toil at inscrutable agendas. Though enemies of the Great Old Ones and their ilk, these beings are no friends of humans or demi-humans.

**Spawn of Shub-Niggurath** (cf. *Carcosa*, p.37): Twisted, vile creatures spawned from the quivering, viscid bulk of a pestilential god. They exist in an endless profusion of forms, all of them intent on wanton rapine.

**Spiders, Giant Wolf:** Giant Wolf Spiders do not spin webs: they are burrowers who dig tunnels from which to strike at passing prey. They prefer soil with a screen of light vegetation, but will also make themselves at home in loose rubble, man-made tunnels, the warrens of humanoids, and the like. Their paralyzing venom is not deadly, although victims will need to be rescued quickly to avoid being eaten. Loose treasure often collects at the bottom of a Giant Wolf Spider's burrow.

## Special Magic and Technology

**Elder Sign** (cf. *Carcosa*, p.67): Flourishing an Elder Sign at any Deep Ones will cause the fiends to immediately flee (no saving throw).

**Lotus Powder, Black** (cf. *Carcosa*, p. 56): Nature's most lethal toxin, save vs. poison at -6 or die in agony.

**Lotus Powder, Blue** (Ibid.): Causes the imbiber to fall into a deep stasis, in which years pass as mere hours for the nightmare-haunted sleeper.

**Lotus Powder, Green** (Ibid.): Inflicts a trancelike stupor upon imbibing and a sickly weakness upon awaking.

**Mutation Inducer** (cf. Carcosa, p. 68): A spiked and bulky contraption, vaguely rifle-shaped, it emits a beam

that requires victims to save vs. poison at -5 or undergo a random mutation.

**Primal Yellow Jelly**: Any humanoids that consume this disgusting, phlegmy substance must save vs. poison – failure means painful transformation into a randomized Spawn of Shub-Niggurath over the course of two weeks (roll a new characteristic each day). This transformation can only be interrupted and reversed via powerful healing/cleansing magic (*Heal* plus *Cure Disease* or *Neutralize Poison* or similar), or similarly potent medical technology.

**Psychic Crystals:** These are jagged shards of magical, colored crystal that are stabbed into the base of the brain, with an inch or two left to jut grotesquely from the back of the neck. Once per hour, the wielder can focus on any other sentient within sight and cause them to save vs. wands or suffer an effect based on the crystal type. These crystals work for any sentient being, but the implanting process is a closely-guarded Irrationalist secret – uninformed attempts will likely result in permanent mental disability or immediate death. Novice attempts at removing crystals are equally prone to disaster.

**Command Crystal** – A deep ruby red in color, and flashes garishly while implanted. A failed save means a single command may be given and will be obeyed, i.e. "shoot yourself," "stab your companion," "jump out the window," etc. The command must be very precise, and able to be accomplished instantly. Lack of common language is not a barrier to using this power.

**Insanity Crystal** – These crystals are light purple in color, and strobe softly once implanted. Failed save means gibbering insanity for 1d6 hours.

**Space Alien Anti-Grav Sled:** DC 0, SPD 600' (200'), HD 8 [36hp], ATT cosmic radiation pulse rifle [4 dice], SD 20hp force field; communicator; telescopic+ night vision sights, SV D10. Anti-Grav Sleds are always -2 to hit due to their speed and agility, and a further -2 to hit if moving faster than 300' (100'). Sled controls are easy for anyone to learn to operate, but the extreme high speed and maneuverability of these vehicles often leads novice pilots to disaster. Any hit to a sled or pilot that does 10hp+ damage (after force field penetration), or reduces either to 0 or fewer hp, requires a roll on the Space Alien Anti-Grav Sled Critical Fail Table. Note that reducing the sled to 0 or fewer hp does not automatically destroy it – only critical results can disable or destroy the sled. Additionally, acceleration/deceleration of more than 210' (70') in a round, or a turn greater than ninety degrees while moving faster than 210' (70') by a novice rider requires a save vs. petrify to be made – failure results in an immediate roll on the Space Alien Anti-Grav Sled Critical Fail Table.

**Space Alien Hover Tank:** DC 2, SPD 240' (80'), HD 40 [180hp], ATT plasma tank gun [4 dice + save vs. breath attacks or immolated]; 2 phosphorus pulse bazookas [3 dice, x2 damage to Blue Men & Brown Men each]; 360° stun emitter; insanity beam; SD 50hp force field; telescopic+nightvision sights; communicator; full suite of special detection systems; room for 3 crew (driver, gunner, commander) and 10 passengers, SV

| d8 | Anti-Grav Sled Critical Failure Table | Hover Tank Critical Failure Table |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Hands slip from yoke; sled decelerates by 90' and next chance to fire is lost, but next round is normal. | No movement or weapons fire for 1d6 rounds due to main computer reboot. |
| 2-3 | Temporary loss of control. Roll 1d12 to determine new heading, roll 1d3 to determine steep climb, level, or steep descent, roll 1d6x100 to determine new speed. | Tank spins uncontrollably for 3d4 rounds. Firing weapons while out of control results in friendly fire worst-case-scenario (GM choice). Tank is fine once control is regained. |
| 4-5 | Controlled crash landing. Roll 1d12 to determine direction of impact site, 1d10x100 reveals distance in feet from last location. Rider suffers 3 dice damage (save vs. breath ½); sled requires major repair to fly again. | Ruptured anti-grav nacelle. Movement is ½ normal, and tank must save vs. spells each turn: failure means complete propulsive breakdown. Call a tow truck. |
| 6-7 | Sled bucks wildly, ejecting the rider in a steep, pinwheeling arc. Unless local terrain includes a large pile of feathers, rider suffers 1 die damage for each 60' of speed and each 10' of altitude; sled is destroyed. | Plasma round detonates in main gun barrel. All occupants suffer 6 dice damage (save vs. breath attacks for ½). Main gun and insanity beam are damaged and cannot be fired again until substantial repairs are performed. |
| 8 | Cratering strike. Rider is killed instantly (90% chance), or rendered unconscious for 1d6 turns and left with only 1hp (10%); sled is reduced to confetti. | That tingling sensation lets you know the core breach is working! A fluorescent green inferno eradicates all organic lifeforms within 100 yards, and destroys everything else. For a further 500 yards, structures and machinery are heavily damaged and all organisms must save vs. poison: success means hp are reduced to ½ and roll twice on *Mutation Table* (results take effect in 1d6 days), failure means hp are reduced to ¼ and death occurs in 1d6 days. |

D10. The Space Alien Hover Tank is -4 to hit due to its sturdy armor, and is immune to non-hi-tech weaponry. Certain very powerful magical non-hi-tech weapons may do normal damage: +5 or better weapons, items or combos that provide Cloud Giant strength or greater, etc. It only suffers ¼ damage from fire, cold, and electricity attacks. The main gun is turreted, has a range of 10 miles, can fire every other round, and has ammo for 25 shots. The pulse bazookas cover 180° right and left side arcs, have a range of 3000', can fire every round, and have unlimited ammo. The stunner has a range of 150', can fire every round, and can be fired an unlimited number of times. The insanity beam is turreted, has a range of 1000', can fire every round, and has unlimited ammo. The tank can be used as a ram to kill people and destroy other vehicles, smaller buildings, etc. GM discretion determines exact effects. The hover tank's controls are relatively intuitive to use for individuals accustomed to magic, technology, and otherwise weird stuff. GM discretion determines learning curve for rookie operators. Any hit to the tank that does 60hp+ damage (after force field penetration), or any hit that reduces the tank to 0 or fewer hp, requires a roll on the Space Alien Hover Tank Critical Fail Table. Note that reducing the tank to 0 or fewer hp does not automatically destroy it – only critical results can disable or destroy the tank. Ω

# Merlyn's Mystical Mirror

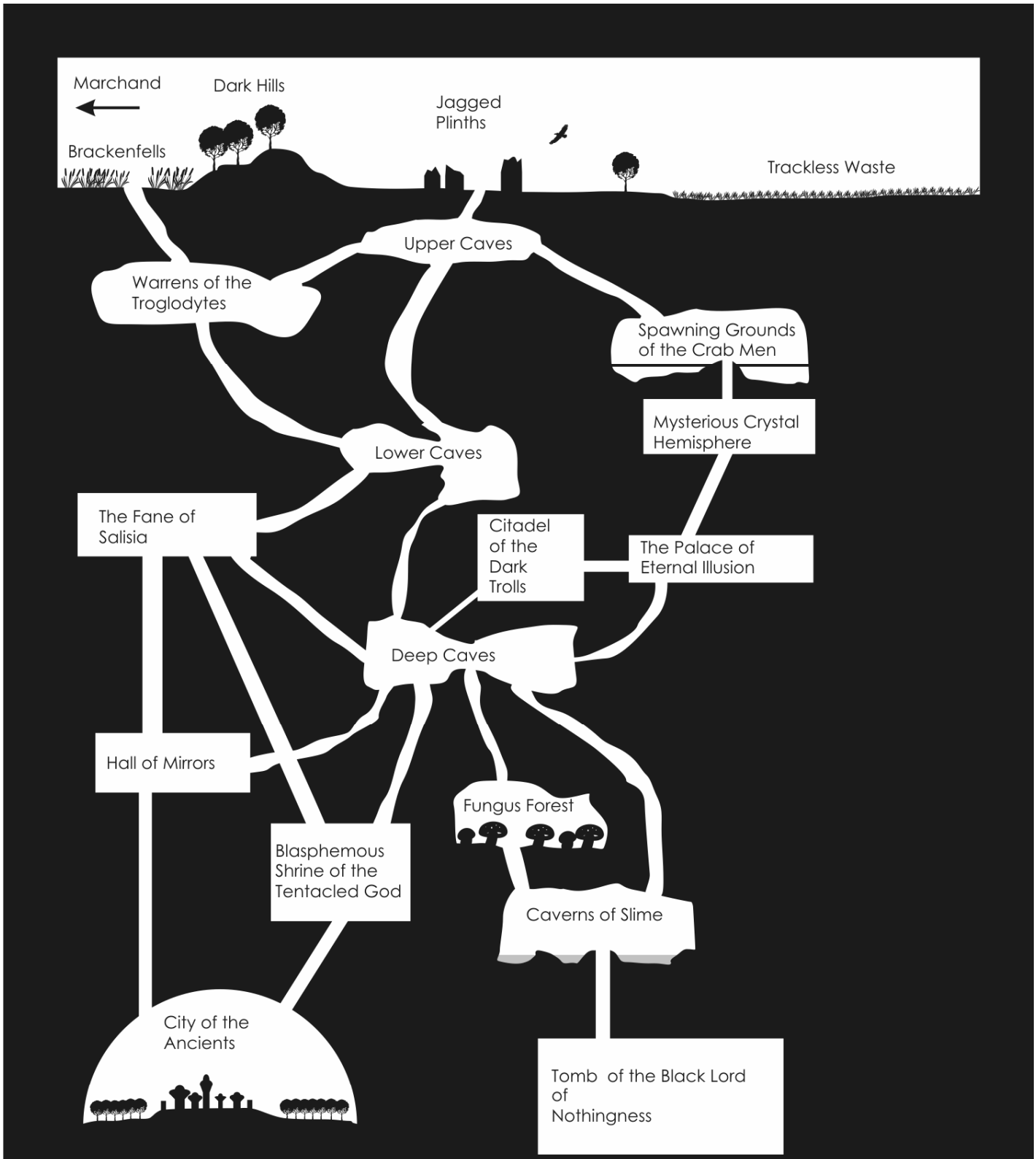
reviews by James D. Hargrove, Rob Hewlett, and Pookie

**Arduin Eternal** is the fourth and latest incarnation of the Arduin role playing system that started life as a hand-typed, saddle-stitched, document entitled *The Arduin Grimoire* published by Dave Hargrave in 1977, a loose collection of rules that made reference to the then emergent *Dungeons & Dragons* game system. Since that time, the Arduin role playing system has undergone a number of significant revisions, seeing two other new editions along the way and, ultimately, culminating in this massive 822 page core rule book for use by both players and Game Masters alike. The pages of *Arduin Eternal* are dedicated to four general types of information: character creation, action and combat, special effects (e.g., psychic powers, spells, etc), and tools designed to aid the Game Master in running adventures. Finally, a large number of sidebars have been added throughout the book that give valuable insight into the setting of Arduin itself (i.e., Khaas), making the book a useful guide of sorts for those who have not previously ventured into the wilds of the infamous kingdom and its surrounding environs.

**The Physical Book:** *Arduin Eternal* is a sturdy, digest-sized, hardcover with stitched binding and a glossy black cover depicting a full color image of an intrepid adventurer, surrounded by a swirling vortex of magical sigils, fighting a large, green-skinned, humanoid that is hell bent on making him dinner. This image alone gives the prospective buyer a good idea of what awaits them inside the book, though the back cover teases one's imagination even more, noting that "It's all there; inspiration, blood, guts, glory, and battle! All the feats of derring-do and bare-assed wickedness that made Arduin an infamous legend!" Arduin is *the* original Metal fantasy game and the cover of this most recent incarnation makes no bones about it As I mention above, this is a *massive* tome. If you have any doubt that you are getting enough content for the asking price of $74.95 (USD), it will immediately vanish as soon as you actually see the book. Indeed, I have to admit that, when my review copy arrived, I briefly wondered if I had bitten off more than I could chew. The book measures roughly two inches from its front cover to its back cover, ranking it up there with such giants as Monte Cook's *Ptolus* and *The World's Largest Dungeon*. *Arduin Eternal* isn't just a rule book – it's a monster! Finally, *Arduin Eternal* boasts a utilitarian two-column layout and makes use of black and

# LEVEL 15 Was Never Made

Level 15: The Tomb of The Black Lord of Nothingness was not completed before the magazine stopped publishing.




# THE DARKNESS BENEATH

RSC